

PATHWAYS TO IMPACT:
Exploring Graduate
Programs in Professions
that Help Others



AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

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Introduction



The increasing need for compassionate and skilled professionals in helping professions has led some individuals to view the choice of pursuing a graduate program focused on creating a positive impact as more than just a decision—it becomes a calling.

Professions that help others are projected to see **employment growth of about 7.8%** over the next decade—nearly three times faster than the average growth across all occupations. These careers offer promising paths for individuals who hope to make a meaningful impact in the lives of others.

With advanced education, professionals can enhance their ability to address societal challenges and individual needs effectively.

If you're considering a master of education program that aligns with the values and goals of helping professions, you're in the right place. This guide will serve as a resource to help you find an M.Ed. program that correlates with your career aspirations, kickstarting your path to success.

CHAPTER 1

What are Helping Professions?

Helping professions encompass some of the most meaningful careers that make a difference in individuals and communities. These professions address diverse needs, including physical, mental, emotional, and social concerns, and enhance the well-being and quality of life of those they serve through targeted interventions and support services.



The **employment landscape within helping professions** is expanding rapidly, offering rewarding career options to help you answer the call. Some key professions falling under this category include:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Social Work
- ▶ Psychology
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Human Services

Professionals within these fields undertake various roles, including:

- ▶ Educators
- ▶ Social Workers
- ▶ Counselors
- ▶ Nurses
- ▶ Therapists
- ▶ Community Organizers

Responsibilities in these fields are broad and may include assessing needs, developing intervention plans and strategies, delivering services, advocating for clients, and fostering positive outcomes through collaborative efforts and partnerships. Embracing a career in a helping profession allows you to make a tangible difference in the lives of others, promoting growth, healing, and empowerment within diverse communities.

THE IMPACT OF Professions that Help People



By addressing societal inequalities, promoting positive mental health and well-being, and fostering inclusivity and empowerment, helping professions impact individuals, families, and communities.

While these careers can present unique challenges, such as navigating complex societal issues, managing emotional demands, and advocating for marginalized populations, they also offer significant rewards. A career in a helping profession offers the chance to:

- ▶ **Make a meaningful difference in people's lives:** By providing support, guidance, and resources, you can positively impact the lives of those you serve.
- ▶ **Witness positive transformations:** From witnessing personal growth and development to seeing individuals overcome obstacles, you can experience the rewarding journey of positive change.
- ▶ **Foster resilience and empowerment:** Through advocacy, support, and encouragement, you can empower individuals to build resilience, gain confidence, and take control of their own lives.

By dedicating yourself to a profession that prioritizes the well-being of others, you will contribute to an equitable, compassionate, and supportive society for all.

EXPLORING GRADUATE PROGRAMS that Lead to Meaningful Careers

Advanced education in the helping professions equips you with the skills and knowledge needed to make a lasting impact in people's lives. Beyond technical expertise, graduate programs instill a deep understanding of the complexities within these professions, preparing you to navigate challenges, contribute to the well-being of others, and confidently access a variety of meaningful careers.

Specialized training in education and other helping fields is crucial as these professions require a specific understanding of human development, psychological frameworks, instructional methodologies, and effective intervention strategies. Advanced training provides you with the expertise to address diverse needs and tailor interventions to individual strengths and challenges.

Auburn University's Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling emphasizes a values-driven approach within its programs. By providing you with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in helping professions, you will graduate equipped with a strong foundation for ethical practice and compassionate care.

Let's explore the unique benefits and opportunities each program offers.

CHAPTER 3

MASTER'S IN Special Education

A graduate degree in Special Education equips you with advanced knowledge and skills to effectively support students with diverse needs. Typically, a Special Education Master's Degree is designed to enhance teaching practices and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

One significant benefit of pursuing a Master's in Special Education is the opportunity for higher pay. Research shows that **teachers with master's degrees earn a higher salary** than those with a bachelor's degree alone at all career stages. In fact, teachers in every state can expect a salary increase of about 10-15% upon completion of a master's degree.



AUBURN'S SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Within Auburn's Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, two Master's in Special Education programs are offered:

M.ED. IN SPECIAL
EDUCATION (K-12)

M.ED. IN EARLY CHILDHOOD/ELEMENTARY
SPECIAL EDUCATION (PRE-K-6)

These programs are similar and provide a foundation in evidence-based practices and strategies to support those with diverse learning needs, preparing you with specialized knowledge and skills to excel in the field.

“I gained real-life experience working with people who have disabilities as a student at Auburn. I so strongly value the lessons and experience I gained in my practicums.

- ERIN GREER '22

M.ED. IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (K-12)

The **M.Ed. in Special Education (K-12)** program is designed for individuals seeking to advance their teaching skills and knowledge to effectively serve students with disabilities in elementary (K-6) and secondary (6-12) grade levels.

This program is tailored toward those **already certified*** in special education and equips you with the tools and strategies to support diverse learners in inclusive educational settings. Graduates are prepared to work with children and youth who have disabilities, implementing evidence-based practices to meet their individual needs.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- ▶ 30 hours of coursework
- ▶ Three 1-hour practicum courses with hands-on field experience
- ▶ Specialized special education courses
- ▶ Volunteer opportunities for in-person students through organizations like **Best Buddies**

*Are you an individual seeking initial certification or a general educator aspiring to enter the special education field? The M.Ed. in Special Education (K-12) **alternative degree option** provides the necessary training and qualifications for a successful career in special education.

M.ED. IN EARLY CHILDHOOD/ ELEMENTARY SPECIAL EDUCATION (PRE-K-6)

The **M.Ed. in Early Childhood/Elementary Special Education (Pre-K-6)** program is designed to prepare educators to serve a wide range of students, including infants and toddlers (0-2 years), preschool-aged children (3-5 years), and students in K-6 settings.

This program is tailored toward those **already certified*** in special education, and graduates are prepared to implement evidence-based practices to support families and the development of young children and elementary-aged students with developmental delays or disabilities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- ▶ 30 hours of coursework
- ▶ Three 1-hour practicum courses with hands-on field experience
- ▶ Specialized special education courses
- ▶ Volunteer opportunities for in-person students through organizations like **Best Buddies**

*Are you an individual seeking initial certification or a general educator aspiring to enter the special education field? The M.Ed. in Early Childhood/Elementary Special Education (Pre-K-6) alternative degree option provides the necessary training and qualifications for a successful career in special education.

CHAPTER 4

MASTER'S IN Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling



About **one in four U.S. adults are living with a disability** that impacts their everyday life.

A Master's in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling prepares you with specialized expertise to empower individuals with disabilities as they navigate their personal and professional lives. It can deepen your understanding and enhance your skills in providing comprehensive rehabilitation services that optimize your clients' independence, inclusion, and well-being.

Investing in this degree can unlock a pathway for your professional and personal growth. Across various career stages, individuals holding a master's degree in clinical rehabilitation counseling benefit from **increased earning potential** and expanded career opportunities.

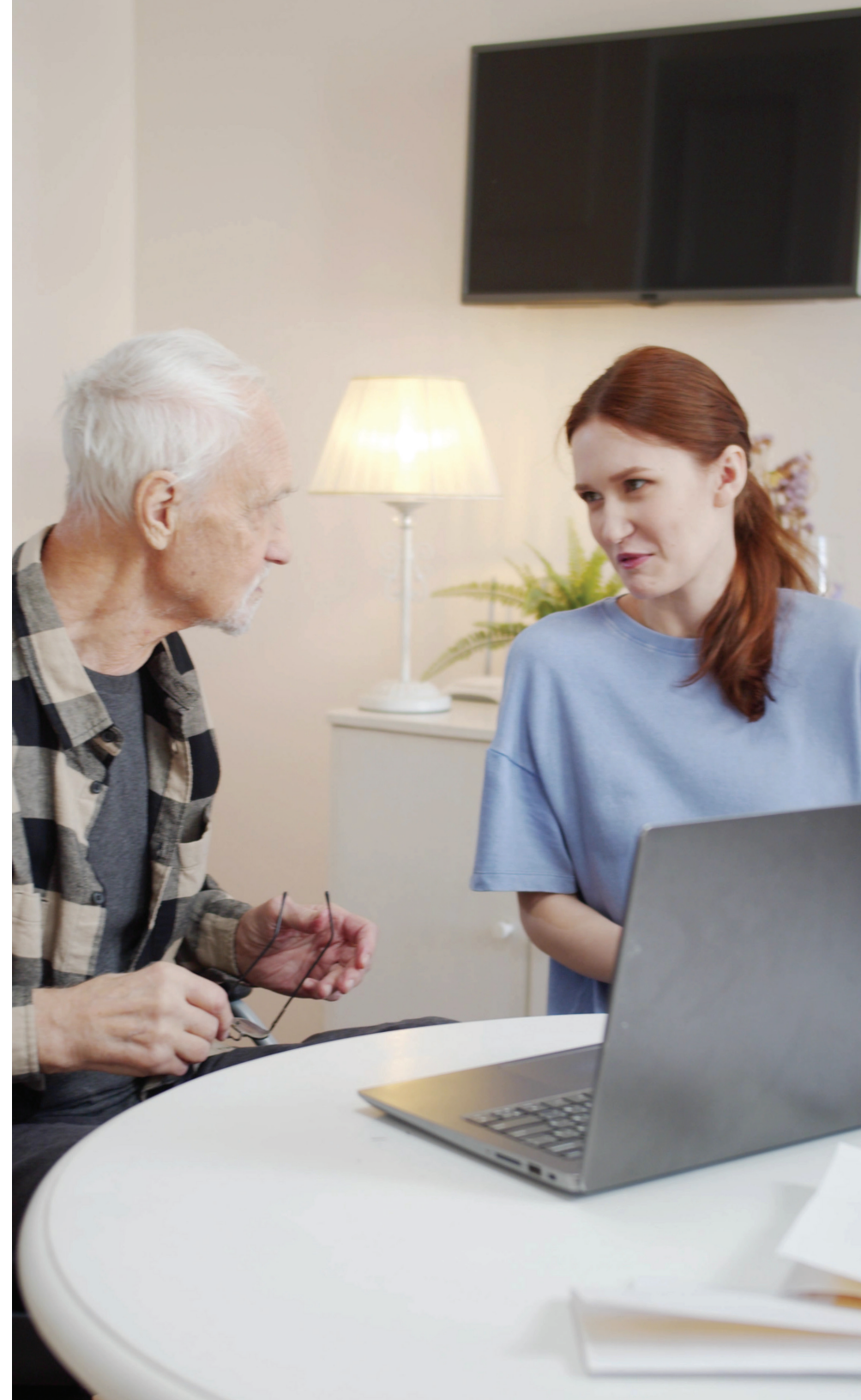
M.ED. IN CLINICAL REHABILITATION COUNSELING

Auburn's CACREP-accredited **M.Ed. in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling** is **ranked #19** by U.S. News and World Report for rehabilitation counseling programs and will prepare you to become a proficient rehabilitation counselor. It is designed to equip you with the skills and knowledge to assist people with disabilities, helping them improve how they live, work, and socialize in the community.

Graduates of this program effectively impact the lives of youth and adults with diverse needs through employment in state and federal vocational rehabilitation programs, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), independent living centers, university disability offices, and community-based rehabilitation programs.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- ▶ 60 hours of coursework
- ▶ 3-hour practicum course
- ▶ 100 clock hours of counseling practice
- ▶ 9-hour clinical practice or internship
- ▶ **Certified Rehabilitation Counselor** exam administered by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and completion of Comprehensive Portfolio in Tevera



CHAPTER 5

MASTER'S IN School Counseling

School Counselors are social justice change agents and advocates who work with all students in K-12 schools in the academic, career, and social-emotional domains. A school counseling Master's Degree prepares you to address students' diverse needs, promote mental health awareness, and facilitate a positive school environment conducive to learning and growth.

Not only will a school counseling degree enhance your expertise and impact on student success, but it will also set you up for a career full of employment opportunities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment growth of **5.4% for school counselors by 2032**. During this time, around 18,400 jobs will become available.



M.ED. IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

Auburn's CACREP-accredited **M.Ed. in School Counseling** follows the **ASCA National Model** and will prepare you for professional roles as a school counselor in public or private elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools. Through program coursework, practica, and internships, students graduate with the skills and knowledge to be highly competent in the field.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- ▶ 60 hours of coursework
- ▶ 3-hour practicum course
- ▶ 9-hour internship
- ▶ Courses in all eight **CACREP common core areas**
- ▶ Specialized courses to prepare school counselors
- ▶ Recommendation for Class A Alabama Professional Educator Certification

“*School counseling is one of the most rewarding fields to which you can dedicate your career*”

- **MALTI TUTTLE, PH.D., LPC, NCC, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

CHAPTER 6

OPEN DOORS TO Careers that Make a Difference at Auburn



Pursuing an advanced degree in a helping profession can deepen your expertise, broaden your career prospects, and pave the way for higher earning potential and the chance to create positive change in people's lives.

GET STARTED AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Through their values-driven nature, programs in the **Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling** within **Auburn University's College of Education** enhance your ability to make a positive difference in your chosen field.

WHY AUBURN UNIVERSITY?

Prepare for post-graduate success with a 95% teacher certification eligibility rate .	Auburn's College of Education is ranked #10 by U.S. News and World Report for online graduate education.	Benefit from an impressive 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio .
Online students pay a distance fee rather than traditional tuition fees.	All programs within Auburn's Counselor Education (CED) Program are CACREP-accredited programs .	On-campus or online options provide flexibility for working professionals.

The hands-on coursework and clinical experiences in Auburn's Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling will leave you more than prepared for impactful roles in schools, healthcare, and communities. Plus, in-person learners can anticipate collaborative experiences in the **new state-of-the-art College of Education building**, slated to open in the summer of 2025.

IT'S TIME TO KICKSTART YOUR IMPACTFUL JOURNEY IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS.
WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU REACH YOUR POTENTIAL.

Explore Our Programs

Request More Information

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