

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 8, 2015  
TO: The Graduate Council  
FROM: Dr. Linda Thomas, Dean  
Dr. Denis Griffith, Chair  
School of Education

REQUEST:

The School of Education seeks the Graduate Council's approval of its "*Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance.*"

DIVISIONAL APPROVAL:

This program was unanimously approved by the School of Education during its March 31, 2015, meeting.

PROGRAM JUSTIFICATION (RATIONALE):

Becoming an effective counselor in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century requires that counselors work collaboratively with counseling profession colleagues, related helping professionals, administrators, and policymakers to bring resources, personnel, programs, and expertise together to solve problems in all areas of practice. Counseling changes over the past few decades, inclusive of reform initiatives, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, have created the need for leaders who understand the challenges of improving counseling outcomes for all practitioners.

Currently, The School of Education (SOE) offers a Master of Arts degree with three concentrations, one of which is in Counseling and Guidance. This degree consists of 36 credits, 15 of which are directly related to the area of counseling. This degree is pursued by individuals who wish to become school counselors. For many years, this degree has met the needs of only those students living in the Virgin Islands. This, however, has changed at both the level of the Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBE) and the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE). For a candidate to become certified as a counselor in the Virgin Islands, and in the United States for that matter, the candidate needs to earn at least a total of 48 credits. Therefore, the time has come for the SOE to offer a program in school counseling that will not only provide students with the necessary content and professional skills and dispositions required to become certified in the Virgin Islands, but throughout the United States and abroad.

At this time, the School of Education is in a very good position to meet this mandate. Over the years, the SOE has developed and offered four additional courses in school counseling and guidance to assist graduates in their quest for certification. However, these courses were not required for graduation. Thus, students could graduate with their degree in School Counseling without having taken these courses. Given that all but one of the additional courses are already approved by the Graduate Council, and the other which was offered as a selected topic is brought forward for the Graduate Council's approval, and that the SOE has the necessary resources for the delivery thereof, this change can be accommodated without any need for additional resources by the university.

Adding the needed courses to the program will increase the number of credits required in the program and at the same time raise it to the level of a degree, thus making it necessary to eliminate the concentration and replace it with a degree, which will be called a Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance. The SOE is requesting the change of the degree from Master of Arts in Education/Concentration in School Counseling and Guidance to Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance. The additional four courses listed below will be added to the current listing in School Counseling and Guidance. They are: 1) EDU 566 *Ethics and Professional Issues in Counseling*; EDU 586 *Pre-Practicum in Interpersonal Skills*; EDU-587 *Cross-Cultural Counseling*; EDU 588 *Advanced Human Development*;

#### PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The proposed Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance will consist of 15 credits of core requirements and 27 credits in the concentration as outlined below. Additionally, candidates in this program will have an option of selecting as a final project, a 3-credit *Independent Study* (EDU 530) or a 6-credit *Thesis* (EDU 600). Candidates selecting the Independent Study as a final project will be required to take a 3-credit elective and a comprehensive examination. The required number of credits for the degree in School Counseling and Guidance will be 48 credits.

Additionally, nearing the completion of the program, students will be encouraged to take the *National Counselor Exam* (NCE), which qualifies all graduates to be automatically granted status as Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC's).

#### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance is a rigorous program designed to prepare aspiring school counselors to become strong and effective leaders that are capable of facing the challenges of a changing territory, Caribbean

and world. The program provides students with professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills in core requirements and solid content knowledge in the area of school counseling and guidance. Individual courses are aligned with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards, thus ensuring that the program represents a synthesis of content and experiences that result in the students' demonstration of the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions articulated in those standards needed for successful practice.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

<b>Core Requirements</b>	<b>Credits</b>
EDU 500 Basic Research Techniques	3
EDU 501 Tests and Measurements	3
EDU 504 Educational Psychology	3
EDU 505 Anthropological and Sociological Foundations of American Education with Reference to the Virgin Islands	3
EDU 506 Foundations of Guidance	3
Subtotal	<b><u>15</u></b>
EDU 600 Thesis	6
or	
EDU 530 Independent Study- plus one additional course	3 + 3
Subtotal	<b>6</b>
Total	<b>21</b>

**No-Thesis Option**

Students majoring in education who do not write a thesis must enroll in EDU 530, Independent Study, and must pass a comprehensive examination. School Counseling Courses

	<b>Credits</b>
EDU 542 Theories, Strategies and Techniques of Counseling	3
EDU 543 Group/Family Counseling and Consultation	3
EDU 544 Career Development Counseling	3
EDU 545 Seminar in Current Trends and Problems in	

Counseling and Guidance	3
EDU 546 Practicum in Counseling	3
EDU 566 Ethical and Legal Issues in School Counseling	3
EDU 586 Pre-Practicum in Interpersonal Skills	3
EDU 587 Multicultural Counseling	3
EDU 588 Advanced Human Development	3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b><u>27</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>48 credits</u></b>

School Counseling and Guidance Courses: The description of the additional courses as found in the Bulletin are:

**EDU 566: (EDU 5XX). ETHICS and PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN**

**COUNSELING.** This course delineates the ethical foundation, which guides the profession of counseling and includes a study of the history, philosophy, ethical and legal considerations, and professional organizations related to the delivery of counseling, consultation, and advocacy. Students will learn about the ethics, credentialing practices and standards of the counseling profession, the suggested disposition and self-care practices of counselors, and the administrative procedures of counseling, consulting, and referral services in multiple settings. Students will also receive an introduction to the supervision processes and practices in the role of the professional development of counselors. 3 credits

**EDU 586. PRE-PRACTICUM IN INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.** This course is an introduction and application of basic counseling skills including: interviewing, clinical observation, and a general orientation to counseling settings. Counselors and other helping professionals will benefit from this action-learning course. Evaluation will be based on strengths and deficits in intra and interpersonal skills and on demonstration of counseling skills in checkout role-play and/or written situation. 3 credits

**EDU 587. MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING.** This course provides a theoretical, research-based understanding of the cultural contexts of relationships, issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society related to factors such as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, values, customs, belief systems, socio-economic status, relation, language, and lifestyle. It covers the

influence of views, multicultural counseling theories, and professional competencies for counselors and practical examinations of cultural groups represented in the Virgin Islands. 3 credits

**EDU 588. ADVANCED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.** This course covers the bases of human development across the life span and the many layers of contexts that influence development. Students will receive advanced coverage of recent empirical evidence, current theoretical perspectives on human development as well as emerging approaches, and learn how to keep abreast of empirical research in this field. Traditional as well as authentic forms of assessments will be used to evaluate student's learning.

Prerequisites: EDU 500, EDU 542. 3 credits

**PROGRAM PREREQUISITES:** Students who possess a BA degree from an accredited institution with a GPA of 2.50 are eligible to enroll in this program.

**COREQUISITE(S):** NA

**CHANGES TO GRADUATE BULLETIN:**

1. On page iv, delete Counseling and Guidance Concentration.
2. On page iv, Insert Masters of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance before Education Leadership Concentration. Insert lines for core requirements, Thesis and No Thesis Option, and School Counseling Courses.
3. On page xii, insert Masters of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance before Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership.
4. On Pg. 1 under the heading 'School of Education', for both campuses, add 'Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance' before Master of Arts in Educational Leadership';
5. On page 2 under the heading 'Education' add 'C. as Master of Arts in School Counseling and Guidance'.
6. On page 16, modify the Overview to include the MA in School Counseling and Guidance and its components, including credit hours. Rework parts that make reference to 'three areas of concentration'.
7. Remove all reference to Counseling and Guidance concentration.
8. On page 17, remove reference to Counseling and Guidance concentration.
9. On page 18, under the heading "Other Courses" delete all counseling courses.
10. On page 19, insert the description of the Master of Arts School Counseling and Guidance.

3/8/2015