The average Purdue Global military student is awarded 54% of the credits needed for an associate's and 45% of the credits needed for a bachelor's. Most Commonly Searched: Most Commonly Searched: The statistics are frightening, and they continue to rise. Addiction to and death from opioid drugs—including prescription pain medications such as oxycodone and hydrocodone; the anesthetic fentanyl, which is increasingly being combined with other opioids; and the street drug heroin—are at their highest levels ever: Opioid epidemic statistics are dire, as the epidemic takes a devastating toll on addicts, their families, and the ever-increasing costs of treating substance use. The opioid crisis has also created a national emergency in another area: there simply aren’t enough addiction counseling professionals in the United States. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 23% rise in employment for substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors from 2020 through 2030, much faster than average for all occupations. Multiple factors contribute to the shortage, including the stigma of mental illness, an aging workforce, and compensation that is just now catching up to demand. But, according to a study cited by the National Institutes of Health, the largest increase in need is likely due to the Affordable Care Act, which requires all insurers to cover treatment, meaning that millions more people now have access to mental health care. Opioids became widely prescribed as painkillers beginning in the late 1990s, after pharmaceutical companies assured doctors the drugs were not addictive, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. But, as overdose rates began to rise, it was clear this was not the case. This is a common scenario: Treatment for opioid addiction usually includes inpatient rehabilitation, behavioral counseling, and medications to ease withdrawal symptoms. But, it can take time and relapse is common. Substance use counselors treat and support a patient through the process, providing information, ongoing therapy, and coordination with medical doctors. In addition to treating patients, addiction counselors can work to educate the community, create an ongoing dialogue with young people in school settings, and speak to civic organizations and other groups. A drug addiction counseling career  can open the door to many professional opportunities, including community health workers, addictions case managers, outreach specialists, and addictions treatment technicians.\* Purdue Global offers: Both programs are accredited by the National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC). Graduates of the bachelor’s degree program are eligible to sit for the National Certification Commission for Addictions Professionals' (NCC AP) National Certified Addiction Counselor, Level I and II certification exams. The certificate program meets the coursework requirements to prepare graduates who meet eligibility prerequisites to take the National Board of Certified Counselors’ Master Addictions Counselor (MAC) examination.† Request more information today. About the Author Purdue Global