

## Western Carolina University Counseling Program Annual Report 2020-2021

The mission of the Western Carolina University (WCU) Counseling program is to subscribe to the standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Program (CACREP) and prepare ethically-bound professional counselors for entry-level positions in clinical and school settings. During the 2020-2021 academic year, approximately 81.5 (full- and part-time) students were enrolled in both the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) and School Counseling (SCH) tracks. Twenty-three students graduated (21 CMHC, 2 SCH), indicating an overall 88% completion rate (four students (1 CMHC, 3 SCH) withdrew due to personal reasons); resulting in a 95% completion rate for CMHC and 67% for SCH. Note: the SCH track had a small class of 9, therefore with the withdrawal of 3 students their first semester, this created a significant, and unusual, decrease in program completion.

Of those who graduated, 100% of those we were able to obtain information and who sought employment in a professional counseling role within 3 months of graduation were employed as professional counselors (15 CMHC, 2 SCH). Ninety-six percent passed the National Counselor Exam in Spring and Fall 2020 (N = 25; 20 CMHC, 5 SCH), 100% passed the Comprehensive exam (N = 23; 18 CMHC, 5 SCH), and 100% passed the North Carolina Praxis-II (Professional School Counseling portion) exam (N = 5).

The WCU Counseling program's objectives and student learning outcomes (SLO) are as follows: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in:

- 1) Ethical practice
- 2) Social and cultural diversity
- 3) Human development
- 4) Career development
- 5) Individual counseling
- 6) Group counseling
- 7) Assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning
- 8) Research and program evaluation
- 9) Specialty area: Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling
- 10) Professional dispositions and behaviors

The WCU Counseling program faculty conduct continuous, systematic program evaluation, both formally and informally, to determine how student learning outcomes are met. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed, both semesters (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021), and included: (a) faculty end-of-semester review of each student, (b) site supervisor evaluations, (c) graduate exit survey, (d) Comprehensive exam scores, (e) National Counselor Exam (NCE) scores, (f) NC Praxis-II (Professional School Counseling portion) exam scores, and (g) alumni and/or employer surveys.

The Faculty End-of-Semester Review is conducted by Counseling program faculty of each student, each semester (Fall and Spring). Performance measures include academic performance, counseling skills, and professionalism, with scales of 0 – 3 (0 = harmful, 1 = below expectations, 2 = meets expectations, and 3 = exceeds expectations).

Site-Supervisor Evaluations are conducted by site-supervisors in schools and agencies. Each student is measured on all 10 student learning outcomes, each semester (Fall and Spring), with scales of 0 – 3 (0 = harmful, 1 = below expectations, 2 = meets expectations, and 3 = exceeds expectations).

Graduate Exit Surveys are given to students at the end-of-the-semester they graduate (December and May). Measures of graduates' self-report include preparedness in terms of knowledge and skill for all 10 student learning outcomes, and their perceptions of the quality of instruction, supervision, and advisement they received. Ratings are on a 1 - 5 scale (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = not Sure, 4 = strongly disagree, and 5 = disagree); the rating scale for perceptions of program quality is a 1 – 5 scale (1 = highly satisfactory, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = not sure, 4 = unsatisfactory, and 5 = highly unsatisfactory).

Comprehensive Exams are given to students in their last semester of the program (Fall or Spring). The multiple-choice exam covers eight SLO and includes 110 questions. The exam does not include the specialty areas or professional dispositions and includes a section on Family Counseling and DSM/Effective treatment planning. Students must pass all SLO sections with a minimum score of 70% per section. If any sections are not passed, students have one opportunity to re-take the section, that semester; if they do not pass the re-take section(s), they are required to take the entire comprehensive exam the following semester.

National Counselor Exam is offered by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) testing administrators in Spring and Fall semesters.

NC Praxis-II (Professional School Counseling portion) Exams are offered to Counseling students in the Fall and Spring semesters by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) via Western Carolina University.

Alumni Surveys are given to attendees at two program-offered conferences, each year, and/or emailed to graduates or made available via our program's Facebook page. Employers measure students on all 10 student learning outcomes, with a scale of 1 = 5 (1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent).

Employer Surveys are given to attendees at two program-offered conferences, every 2 -3 years, and/or emailed to graduates to share with their employers or made available via our program's Facebook page (last measure Spring 2021). Employers measure students on all 10 student learning outcomes, with a scale of 1 = 5 (1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent).

Assessment	Data Collected & Analyzed by Faculty
Faculty End-of-Semester Review of each student	131 total; 72 students reviewed Fall 2020, 59 students reviewed Spring 2021
Site-Supervisor Evaluations	52 total: 24 students (14 practicum, 10 internship) Fall 2020; 28 students 14 practicum, 14 internship) Spring 2020

Graduate Exit Survey	13 total: 22 surveys sent to graduates in December 2020 and May 2021 (57% completion rate)
Comprehensive Exam (Comps)	23 of 23 students passed comps (10 Fall 2020, 13 Spring 2021)
NCE scores	24 of 25 students passed exam (Spring 2020 and Fall 2020; Spring 2021 scores not available at time of report)
NC PRAXIS-II (school counseling portion)	5 of 5 school counseling students passed (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)
Alumni Surveys	34 received Spring 2021 (19 cmhc grads, 15 sch grads)
Employer Surveys	4 received from employers Spring 2021

Following is an aggregated report on each SLO, a program modification plan by the Counseling program faculty to maintain or modify curricular offerings, and an Appendix that identifies SLO, methods of measurement, and assessors.

### **SLO #1: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Ethical Practice**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.5 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.5 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	9.3 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree to being prepared in knowledge and skill in ethical practice
Alumni surveys	97% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in knowledge and skills in Ethical Practice. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will continue teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills related to professional orientation and ethical practice. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

### **SLO #2: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Social and Cultural Diversity**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2.04 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.4 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.4 (meets expectations level = 2)

Comps	9.2 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in social and cultural diversity
Alumni surveys	89% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in knowledge and skills in Social and Cultural Diversity. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills related to social and cultural diversity. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

### **SLO #3: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Human Development**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2.1 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.3 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.3 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	8.6 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in human development
Alumni surveys	97% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	100% (met/exceeded expectations)

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in knowledge and skills in human development.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills related to human development.

### **SLO #4: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Career Development**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.14 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.2 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	9.0 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average

Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in knowledge and skill in career development
Alumni surveys	91.4% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in career development. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills related to career development. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

### **SLO #5: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Individual Counseling**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2.1 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.4 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.34 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	9 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average (Helping Relationships subsection)
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in individual counseling
Alumni surveys	97% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in individual counseling. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills in individual counseling. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions

### **SLO #6: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Group Counseling**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2.03 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.3 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.5 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	9.8 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in

	knowledge and skill in group counseling
Alumni surveys	97% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in group counseling. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills in group counseling. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

### **SLO #7: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2.02 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.23 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.24 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	9.5 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning
Alumni surveys	89% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

### **SLO #8: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Research and Program Evaluation**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.2 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.3 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	8.6 (min. score 7)
NCE	Above national average
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	71% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in research and program evaluation

Alumni surveys	86% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in research and program evaluation. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question. The percentage of graduates' agree/strongly agree responses was lower this year; however, the decrease was based on two students' responses of 'disagree'.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills in research and program evaluation. Based on graduate exit surveys, we will monitor if there is continued disagreement on students' perceptions of preparedness for this SLO. Also, we will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

**SLO #9: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Specialty area: Clinical Mental Health Counseling**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2.1 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.3 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.3 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	Not assessed on comps
NCE	Not assessed on NCE
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in clinical mental health counseling
Alumni surveys	97% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in the specialty area of clinical mental health counseling. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills in clinical mental health counseling. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

**SLO #9: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Specialty area: School Counseling**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.3 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.32 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	Not assessed on comps
NCE	Not assessed on NCE
NC PRAXIS II	100% pass

Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in school counseling
Alumni surveys	97% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in the specialty area of professional school counseling. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' knowledge and skills in professional school counseling. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

**SLO #10: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Professional dispositions and behaviors**

Faculty End-of-Semester Review of Students F20/S21	2.13 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Fall 2020	2.5 (meets expectations level = 2)
Site-Supervisor Evaluations- Spring 2021	2.5 (meets expectations level = 2)
Comps	Not assessed on comps
NCE	Not assessed on NCE
Graduate Exit Surveys (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)	100% students reported strongly agree/agree being prepared in knowledge and skill in professional dispositions and behavior
Alumni surveys	97% (met/exceeded expectations)
Employer surveys	No responses received on surveys

Summary: The aggregate data indicate students met or exceeded expectations in professional dispositions and behaviors. We are uncertain why employers did not respond to this survey question.

Action Plan: Faculty will maintain current practices, including teaching and assessing students' professional dispositions and behaviors. We will continue to collect more employer responses, both in quantity and completion of all survey questions.

**Additional data:** From the Graduates Exit survey, students measure the quality of the instruction, supervision, and advisement received during the program. Twelve graduates reported 100% satisfaction (either highly satisfactory or satisfactory) in overall quality of instruction in content courses by counseling faculty, and in overall quality of supervision in field experiences by counseling faculty. Additionally, faculty met with the Counseling Program Advisory Board (consisting of 22 alumni, site supervisors, employers, and community stakeholders) and discussed student and program outcomes and initiatives and sought feedback and suggestions for improvements. The Council was supportive of the program's plans to begin

using Tevera software with field placement and creation of a new program diversity and inclusion statement to be posted on our webpage.

### **Program Modifications Based on Data Findings**

In addition to the above action plans, faculty will continue efforts to increase the number of completed Employer surveys and begin using Tevera software Fall 2021. Tevera will help streamline field placement procedures and assist graduates during the process of obtaining post-graduation licensure.

## Appendix

Student Learning Outcomes	Measures of Assessment	Assessor(s)
SLO #1: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Ethical Practice	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Professional Orientation and Ethics	COUN faculty
	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsection of Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #2: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Social and Cultural Diversity	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Social and Cultural Foundations	COUN faculty
	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsection of Social and Cultural Diversity	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #3: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Human Development	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Human Growth and Development	COUN faculty
	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsection of Human Growth and Development	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #4: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Career and Lifestyle Development	COUN faculty

in Career Development	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsection of Career Development	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #5: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Individual Counseling	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Helping Relations	COUN faculty
	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsections of Helping Relationships and Counseling Process	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #6: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Group Counseling	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Group Work	COUN faculty
	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsections of Group Work	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #7: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Appraisal, Research, and Program Evaluation	COUN faculty
	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsections of Assessment and Diagnostic & Assessment Services	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #8: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Comprehensive exam subsection on Research and Program Evaluation	COUN faculty

in Research and Program Evaluation	National Counselor Exam (NCE) subsection of Research & Program Evaluation	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #9: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Specialty area: Clinical Mental Health Counseling  --OR--	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	National Counselor Exam (NCE) overall score	National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #9: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Specialty area: School Counseling	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Praxis II: Professional School Counselor exam overall score	Educational Testing Service (ETS)
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates
SLO #10: The counselor-in-training demonstrates knowledge and skill in Professional dispositions and behaviors	Faculty End-of-Semester Review	COUN faculty
	Site Supervisor evaluations	Site supervisors
	Alumni Survey	Alumni of WCU Counseling program
	Employer Survey	Employers of WCU Counseling graduates