



WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

Department of Special Education, Professional Counseling, and Disability Studies • Professional Counseling Program
1600 Valley Road • Suite 3010 • Wayne, New Jersey 07474
973.720.2118 • Fax 973.720.2737 • wpu.edu

Professional Counseling Program Annual Assessment Report 2022-2023

The Professional Counseling Program assesses the program on an ongoing basis. The following is a summary of the assessment activities over the 2022-2023 academic year. Information includes exam (e.g., CECE and NCE) outcomes and student, graduate, and alumni surveys. All surveys were scored on a five-point Likert type scale (1= Poor Preparation, 2= Somewhat Poor Preparation, 3=Fair Preparation, 4= Good Preparation, 5= Excellent Preparation).

Program survey results that were sent to alumni, including recent graduates, resulted in the largest response our program has received in many years. We had 25 participants complete the survey, and while the response rate is still low, it provided valuable feedback to the program. Alumni reported their preparation in the eight core curriculum areas was, on average, good or excellent. Additionally, data revealed that participants felt they were “quite a lot” to “very much prepared” to function as a competent counselor (88%), with the same percentage indicating they felt “very much” prepared for practicum/internship and received the skills they needed. Participants responded that the knowledge of the faculty was good to excellent (100%).

The 2023 annual survey to assess preparedness for clinical work via the 8 CAREP domains from, both, internship site supervisors and employers yielded ten responses this year. Although this is an improvement to previous years where we received zero responses, the low response is something that we historically face despite inviting them to participate by sending consistent reminders. We continue to discuss strategies to improve the response rates for these annual surveys. Since we have regular contact with site supervisors throughout the year regarding interns’ progress, each university instructor will now send the annual survey to the site supervisors directly. We are hopeful this will continue to yield more results than a uniform email coming from our Graduate Assistant. The 10 responses were from site supervisors; we had no responses from employers. Regarding annual surveys from employers, we are working to

continually update our database and continuing outreach to graduates and alumni to ensure we have current employer information.

Although the response rate from supervisors was low, data revealed positive feedback. Overall, participants indicated that students were prepared for their role as intern or professional when entering the field. Areas of strength that were noted included professional identity, human growth and development, social & cultural diversity, career development, group work & theories, assessment & appraisal, research & program evaluation, work with families and children, consultation, individual counseling theories, research and program evaluation, normal and abnormal behavior, legal and ethical issues, case conceptualizations, and professional dispositions. Areas in which participants indicated a need for their continued improvement included crisis intervention and report writing, although these were still rated above average. The anecdotal comments from site supervisors showed recognition that students still need time to naturally develop. Specifically, participants provided comments that noted how interns and new professionals are still learning skills, finding ways to balance their work environment, and practicing self-care. Comments also included that over time students will have continued training on note taking and specific agency skills. Areas of improvement to the overall program included telehealth training, role playing crisis intervention scenarios, and clinical documentation. Other suggestions included inviting site supervisors into classes to share with students expectations and procedures at their agency.

This year, the Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam (CECE) was used for the second time to be cognizant of costs for our students and use of an online system. Since this is our second time administering the exam, there is less comparable data. We administered the CECE in the Spring 2023 semester, and we had a pass rate of 78%. This is consistent with our pass rate in 2022, on the first administration of the CECE, although still lower than our pass rate on the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) from 2020. We understand that there were continued extenuating circumstances due to the pandemic that are still impacting some of our students and using a different exam may impact scores. As we prepare for the upcoming academic year, the results provide areas of focus for improvement. Program faculty also plan to evaluate the continued use of CECE exam.

This past Spring 2023, some of our students (n=13) took the National Counselor Exam in their final semester before graduation. The overall pass rate of the exam was 77%. This is a slight decrease from the 2022 pass rate. A further look at the scores reveal that the students on the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) track, as we have two tracks of CMHC and School Counseling, had a pass rate of 89%. As a program, we continue to monitor these scores to assist in our annual review of syllabi, course content, matching faculty to areas of expertise and classes, and analyzing each year's data to provide direction to help strengthen our program.

For further details about our assessment activities, or if you would like to see the raw data, please contact, Dr. Meredith Drew at drewm2@wpunj.edu or Dr. Michelle Hinkle at hinklem@wpunj.edu.