

Intro Page 3: Annual Programmatic Review and Changes

Professional Considerations

NKU's Counseling Program returned to face-to-face instruction as its primary educational modality in the 2021-22 academic year, shifting away from the predominantly online approaches used during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. Due to faculty-related health concerns, several courses remained online through the fall and spring semesters, but all courses were cleared for a return to in-person instruction by summer 2022.

Data Points

Program Data Point 1. Counseling Program Vital Statistics

A review of demographic information indicates an increase in underrepresented minority enrollment in the Counseling Program, rising from 11% in the 2020-2021 academic year to 16% in 2021-2022. Despite that, the faculty recognizes a continued need to expand racial, ethnic, and gender diversity within the program. This will involve the continuation of recruitment efforts in the university's undergraduate Human Services & Addictions (HSR) Program, one of the more ethnically diverse programs in the College of Health & Human Services, as well as ongoing outreach at institutions of higher learning in the region that do not have graduate counseling programs.

Program Data Point 2. Counseling Program Admission and Enrollment

In the spring of 2022, the Counseling Program altered its admissions requirements. This included the removal of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) as a mandatory component of all applications. As of fall 2022, only applicants with an undergraduate GPA lower than 3.0 must submit official scores on the GRE. Applicants will also need to submit a 500-700-word essay demonstrating evidence of one's potential to work effectively with people, reasons for pursuing education to become a professional counselor, any relevant work or volunteer experiences, and professional goals. They will also be required to submit an academic writing sample. This may be a paper from the applicant's undergraduate/graduate studies that evidences their academic capacities or a new paper (3-5 pages in length) in response to one of the prompts generated by the counseling faculty. Faculty will evaluate all writing submissions for clarity, grammar, and structure/organization, using a rubric developed for that purpose.

In terms of completion rates, NKU is a regional public university that values access to higher education. Historically, NKU has offered opportunities for students who would be unable to attain admission to more selective universities. This philosophy also permeates the counselor education program. The faculty believes traditional admission metrics are far from perfect, and that within reason, individuals should be given the opportunity to demonstrate success in the program. However, said leniency does not extend to the matriculation process. The program holds students to high standards, and as described elsewhere, NKU's students typically score very high on the CPCE, pass the NCE at high rates, and are successful in attaining licensure. It is through that lens the faculty views its completion rates.

Program Data Point 3. Annual Student Professional Development Plans

Faculty advisors propose and track Professional Development Plans. Students satisfy conditions for PDPs at an adequate rate. In the 2021-22 academic year, 100% of students placed on a PDP successfully completed the associated requirements.

Program Data Point 4. Counseling Program Learning Objectives

The program's Key Objective Assessments (KOAs) serve as a vehicle for collecting data, specifically identifying student outcomes, addressing CACREP core areas, and encompassing the CACREP curricular standards for knowledge and skills deemed necessary to serve as an effective counselor. Faculty base their assessments of performance on a variety of factors associated with a course identified as foundational to the pertinent key objectives, as well as through comprehensive curricular evaluations conducted during each student's practicum and internship experiences.

Faculty review the KOAs at the end of the academic year. This provides a springboard for discussions of student and program performance, which can lead to decisions pertaining to modification of courses, as well as assignments. Should the assessment score for a particular standard demonstrate significant change or drop below a certain threshold (e.g., 1.75), the faculty will analyze overall student performance in the course during the identified semester. Such issues typically arise prior to the review of KOAs, during the "Program Updates" or "Student Issues" components of biweekly faculty meetings.

A review of KOAs for the 2021-2022 academic year triggered consideration of new course materials and class sizes, and sparked discussion about possible changes to the professional dispositions.

Program Data Point 5. Admission to Practicum and Internship

Starting Fall 2021, COU 690 became a common practicum course, shifting its title from "Clinical Mental Health Counseling Practicum" to "Counseling Practicum". As such, COU 693: School Counseling Practicum is no longer offered. Enrollment in Practicum and Internship is consistent with admissions and matriculation.

Program Data Point 6. Evaluation of Internship

The program currently employs several systematic approaches to obtaining site supervisor and graduate data. These approaches include site supervisor evaluations at the cessation of students' clinical field experiences, as well as the university's Destination Survey.

Based on the data collected, the stakeholders are satisfied with the program's efforts. One stated the program "Establishes a solid foundation, emphasizes growth and teaching over perfection." Another offered, "In my experience, students from NKU always seem motivated, enthusiastic, and clinically knowledgeable and skilled." The faculty has begun working to address some of the recommended changes (i.e., offering CE trainings for supervisors, shifting paperwork to an online system).

Program Data Point 7. Counseling Program Comprehensive Exam (CPCE)

Our students continue to score above the national mean on the CPCE.

Program Data Point 8. National Exams

Pass rates on National Exams are 100%.

Program Data Point 9. Recommendations for Certifications and/or Licensure

The Commonwealth of Kentucky does not require school counselors to pass credentialing examinations as a condition of practice. Kentucky's Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB), which oversees school counselors within the state, issues certifications for the field. Recommendations for certifications remained consistent with graduation rates.

Program Data Point 10. Post-Graduation Review

The Destination Survey is sent out by the university every fall and spring semester and asks recent graduates about their current employment status. The school and clinical mental health counseling program directors collaborate with analysts from NKU's Office of Institutional Research to develop counseling-specific questions (Yes/No) and prompts (evaluated via a Likert Scale) for program graduates. Given the low response rate, the faculty continues to investigate alternative means for collecting more reliable program data from graduates. These include conducting using social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn), and using other forms of technology (e.g., e-mail, text) to notify recent graduates of the availability and importance of the Destination Survey.

In terms of job placement, more than 90% of program graduates in the 2021-22 academic year found employment as either a clinical mental health counselor or a professional school counselor.

Program Data Point 11. Supervisee Evaluation of Site and Site Supervisor

The data suggest students believe their sites and site supervisors are providing effective training experiences.

Program Data Point 12. Counselor Disposition Rating

In addition to assessing knowledge and clinical performance of counseling students at NKU, the counselor education program also collects data assessing professional dispositions. As such, students are assessed on the following literature-supported professional performance dispositions: (a) openness to new ideas, (b) flexibility, (c) cooperativeness with others, (d) willingness to accept and use feedback, (e) ability to give feedback constructively, (f) awareness of own impact on others, (g) ability to deal with conflict, (h) ability to accept personal responsibility, (i) ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately, (j) attention to ethical and legal considerations, and (k) initiative and motivation.

Student Dispositions are incorporated in the KOAs. Dispositions on average improve throughout the program. Disposition survey questions are included in the KOAs for the orientation courses (COU 600, 602), ethics (COU 601), techniques (COU 640), and the field placement courses (COU 690, 691, 692).

Program Data Point 13. Faculty to Student Ratios

Faculty-to-Student Ratios are within the parameters established by CACREP.