

Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, Counseling Programs
Annual Program Assessment
2024 CACREP SECTION 4: Evaluation in the Program

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Date: April 29, 2026

In attendance: Dr. Jill Sauerheber, Dr. Lacreteria Dye, Dr. Cynthia Mason, Dr. Sara Pickett, Bethany Johnson, Rhonda Jones

PROGRESS TOWARDS 2024 CACREP STANDARDS AND SELF-STUDY

Beginning this academic year, 2025-2026, counseling faculty/staff began discussing and making programmatic improvements, as well as updates to meet the [CACREP 2024 Standards](#).

Revisions, as of this academic year include but may not be limited to the following:

- SECTION 3: FOUNDATIONAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM; SECTION 5: CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING; MARRIAGE, COUPLE AND FAMILY COUNSELING. Updating the counseling curriculum to meet the new Foundational Counseling Curriculum and Entry-Level Specialized Practice Areas (CMHC and MCFC) standards. Associated standards have been updated and formally approved through WKU's Curriculum process. Updates are reflected in the Department's *CACREP 2024 Counseling Curriculum & Key Performance Indicators* documents.
- SECTION 4: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE. The Professional Practice guidelines and requirements now align with the new standards, as detailed in the [Counseling Professional Practice Handbook](#).
- SECTION 2: ACADEMIC QUALITY.
 - The admissions process has been updated to reflect related Standards as incorporated in the updated *Admissions Application Rubric* (SECTION 1: H., J.1-3.; SECTION 2:C.2.a.-b.) and *Admissions Group Interview Rubric* (SECTION 1: H., J.1-3.; SECTION 2:C.2.a.-c.)
 - Surveys (Student Exit, Site Supervisor and Employer) have been updated to reflect the relevant 2024 Standards.
- Created Department AI Mission Statement as noted below. Counseling Faculty/Staff believe it necessary to rely on AI-related statements from its credentialing bodies and professional organization (American Counseling Association) for how best to engage in this mission. *Our department is committed to preparing graduates who understand and responsibly apply artificial intelligence within their professional fields. We emphasize the development of critical awareness regarding the ethical implications and prepare them to engage with AI in ways that are thoughtful, effective, and aligned with professional and ethical standards.*

SECTION 2: ACADEMIC QUALITY

PROGRAM MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

A. PROGRAM MISSION

The counselor education program has a mission statement that:

1. defines and outlines the fundamental purpose of the program;
2. reflects input from persons involved in the conduct of the program: counselor education program faculty, current and former students, and community partners;
3. reflects counseling practice in a diverse, multicultural, and global society with marginalized populations; and
4. is on the program website in a location accessible to the public.

B. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The program objectives:

1. reflect current knowledge and projected needs concerning counseling practice in a diverse, multicultural, and global society with marginalized populations;
2. reflect input from persons involved in the conduct of the program: counselor education program faculty, current and former students, and community partners;
3. are written in measurable terms so they can be evaluated; and
4. are on the program website in a location accessible to the public

The Counseling Faculty/Staff met on February 24, 2026 to discuss these standards. Dr. Sauerheber introduced and reviewed the current program mission and program objectives; and invited faculty/staff to consider updates/changes. Based upon a review of the literature and programs, faculty/staff examined other examples of mission statements and objectives. Faculty/staff agreed to keep both the mission and objectives as is, as they continue to represent the program.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT

C. Counselor education program faculty continuously and systematically assess how students individually demonstrate progress toward and mastery of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions as required for program graduates.

1. The counselor education program faculty systematically assess each student's progress throughout the program by examining student acquisition of both knowledge and skills. The assessment process includes the following: a) key performance indicators in each of the eight foundational curricular areas and each CACREP specialized practice area ~~(for doctoral programs, each of the five doctoral curriculum areas)~~; b) minimum performance expectations for each of the key performance indicators; c) measurement of each key performance indicator must be conducted (1) using multiple measures and (2) across multiple points in time; d) for a minimum of one KPI, one measurement must be taken during fieldwork; and e) review or analysis of individual student data for the purpose of retention, remediation, and dismissal.

In the fall of 2025, Counseling Faculty/Staff met to discuss how to update the CMHC and MCFC programs to meet the 2024 CACREP Standards. The results of that meeting included mutual

decision making about where all the standards would be covered within the curriculum; of which are outlined in the *CACREP 2024 Counseling Curriculum & Key Performance Indicators* spreadsheet. During the spring of 2026, faculty were assigned courses within the curriculum to update and revise according to the new standards, as well as to document what manner the standards are covered (i.e., required reading, the creation of Key Performance Indicators). The *CACREP 2024 Key Performance Indicators Multiple Measures & across Multiple Points in Time* document includes the Key Performance Indicators associated with courses across the curriculum. The revision of courses, along with updated Blackboard course shells will be finalized for fall 2026.

As mentioned in last year's meeting, the college's electronic portfolio system, Chalk and Wire was expiring in the summer of 2025 and being replaced with Watermark. Since Watermark has not yet been launched, faculty are collecting data manually. While this has been a cumbersome process, over the course of the year, template spreadsheets have been created for faculty use, and a *Key Performance Data Collection Over Time* spreadsheet has been created that includes the average total score for each Key Performance Indicator in each course for any given semester.

2. The counselor education program faculty systematically assess each student's professional dispositions throughout the program. The assessment process includes the following: a) identify and define professional dispositions to be assessed; b) measurement of student professional dispositions over multiple points in time; and c) review or analysis of individual student data for the purpose of retention, remediation, and dismissal.

The [Counseling Student Handbook](#) outlines the professional dispositions, including definitions expected of counseling students, and the process of Professional Performance Reviews (OOR) (conducted twice across the academic year). During a faculty/staff meeting held on March 25, 2026, the PPR criteria were edited, revised and updated to meet trends in student concern and need for support and clarity around expectations.

The Department maintains a confidential *PPR Spreadsheet* for each semester, as well as a *PPR Statistics Over Time* spreadsheet. Due to consensus among counseling faculty/staff to create a retention, remediation and dismissal process that was perceived and experienced as more supportive the following updates have been made within this academic year:

- A formal Support Process for Students, described as the following in the Handbook: When it is deemed necessary that a student should have additional guidance and resources to remain or be successful in the program and as a future Counselor, a Support Plan will be created that outlines goals, as well as specific ways and strategies that students can engage in to be successful. Students are encouraged to initiate their own Support Plan by contacting their advisor, faculty or staff.
- A two-tiered Remediation Process and Dismissal Process: When concerns arise about how a student meets any of the Professional Performance criteria, the student may be placed on a Level One Remediation Plan. If additional concerns arise, if the student is not observed as meeting expectations, or if they are not demonstrating a fit for the profession, they will be placed on Level Two Remediation, which can involve a formal recommendation for dismissal. To continue matriculation through the program, students

will be asked to review and sign the related document that outlines concerns and expectations.

- So that students can experience being a part of the Professional Performance Review (PPR), we now communicate through the New Student Orientation that students are welcome to check-in with their advisors shortly before the PPRs take place to provide self-feedback.

	1. Respects divergent points of view	2. Awareness of diversity and non-discrimination	3. Academic performance(in both face-to-face and digital platforms)	4. Appropriate in-class behavior (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)	5. Collaboration; contribution to positive environment (in both face-to-face and digital platforms)	6. Reflective practice and personal responsibility including ability to receive and integrate feedback	7. Personal, interpersonal & professional growth	8. Engagement in digitally delivered courses and programs	9. Ethical and legal compliance (per respective profession)	10. Fit for the Profession	TOTAL Average
2026 Spring CMHC R	3.3	3.4	3.3	3	3.4	3.3	3	3.38	3	3	3.3
2026 Spring CMHC D	3.3	3.3	3.3	3	3.3	3.3	3	3.3	3	3	3.3
2026 Spring MCFC	3.8	3.7	3.6	4	3.7	3.6	4	3.6	4	4	3.65
2026 Spring Jump	3.7	3.7	3.7	4	3.7	3.7	4	3.67	4	4	3.66
2025 Fall CMHC R	3.37	3.35	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.35	3.35	3.4	3.4
2025 Fall CMHC D	3.13	3.13	3.13	3.06	3.06	3.06	3.07	3.07	3.13	3.13	3.1
2025 Fall MCFC	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.23	3.3	3.23	3.31	3.31	3.3	3.3	3.3
2025 Fall JUMP	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2025, Spring JUMP	3.16	3.166	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
2025, Spring, MCFC	3.417	3.416	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.4
2025, Spring, CMHC	3.274	3.258	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
2024, Fall, MCFC	3.64	3.64	3.45	3.64	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.45	3.64	3.56
2024, Fall CMHC	3.77	3.73	3.59	3.67	3.70	3.69	3.64	3.66	3.66	3.74	3.68

Stronger, restorative support systems are in place throughout a given student's matriculation. The support system has been revised in a way that may feel less punitive to students. The first level is referred to as a Support Plan and is separate from the Remediation process. Support plans are created for students when they are observed and evaluated as not meeting minimum thresholds across any one of the Professional Performance criteria. The goal is that this formal support helps them reach minimum thresholds across professional and academic performance. The data above reflects that our students are meeting expectations across all PPR criteria.

3. The counselor education program has a systematic process in place for communicating feedback to students on their individual assessments of knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions.

After each Professional Performance Review, the Department emails each student individualized feedback.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

D. CONTINUOUS AND SYSTEMATIC IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM

The counselor education program has a written comprehensive evaluation plan for systematically evaluating, monitoring, and reporting achievement of program objectives on an annual basis. The plan includes:

- 1. academic quality indicators aligned with program objectives;**
- 2. minimum thresholds for academic quality indicators, as determined by counselor education program faculty;**
- 3. the data that will be collected;**
- 4. a procedure for how and when data will be collected;**
- 5. a method for how and when data will be reviewed or analyzed;**
- 6. a process for addressing unmet minimum thresholds;**
- 7. a procedure for identifying and analyzing trends in the data across multiple years; and**
- 8. an explanation for how data will be used for curriculum and program improvement.**

The faculty/staff discussed the term, minimum thresholds. We believe this term is associated with at a grade B, as well as “meet requirements” on any given assessment and/or evaluation.

E. ACADEMIC QUALITY INDICATORS

At minimum, programs must collect and analyze the following data annually as part of their comprehensive evaluation process

1. Aggregate Assessment of Student Success:

The program provides trend analysis of student learning outcome data and reports in aggregate the achievement of minimum thresholds across multiple points in time for:

- a) all key performance indicators for entry-level programs for which data were collected that year**

The Microsoft Power BI *CACREP E.1.a. KPI Data* Attachment (CSA Faculty/Staff only) includes rubric data for each KPI. According to the Power BI report, students tend to earn a score of “2/of possible 4” (somewhat meet expectations) in courses that are taken during the first semester (i.e., CNS 560, 588) and during the first internship class. While a score of “2” indicates somewhat meeting expectations, such ratings should be expected and are indicative of a formative assessment process that reflects our program’s philosophy of supporting students as they evolve and grow over time. These assignments reflect the 2016 standards; it should be noted that they will be comparative to future data as the curriculum will have been updated to the 2024 CACREP Standards as of the fall.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, none of the counseling students were placed on academic probation (for earning a GPA of less than 3.0). Thus, they have all met the minimum academic threshold.

b) (if applicable) all key performance indicators for doctoral programs for which data were collected that year

c) professional dispositions for entry-level students, and d) (if applicable) professional dispositions for doctoral students.

As of the spring 2026, the Admissions Application Rubric and Admissions Group Interview Rubric have been updated to reflect 2024 CACREP Standards. Both are on a 4-point Likert scale with a total of 16 points each. The 4-point Likert was created with the intention for consistency so that data analysis and resulting considerations will be more effective and meaningful.

The Admissions Application Rubric measures the following:

1. Transcripts (CACREP SECTION 1.J.2.)
2. *Statement of Interest* provides support for Career Goals consistent within the field of the Counseling Profession (CACREP SECTION 1.J.1.)
3. *Statement of Interest* provides support for Aptitude for Graduate-level Study (CACREP SECTION 1.J.2.) including: (a) Consistent with Program Delivery Type and (b) Writing Skills
4. *Statement of Interest* provides support for Professional Dispositions including: (a) Potential Success in Forming Counseling Effective Relationships with Diverse Populations and in Diverse Settings (CACREP SECTION 1.J.3.) and (b) Sensitivity to Interpersonal Relationships (CACREP SECTION 1.J.3.)

The Admissions Group Interview measures the following:

1. Career Goal of Becoming a Professional Counselor; potential fit for the profession (CACREP SECTION 1.J.1.)
2. Potential Success in Forming Effective Counseling Relationships with Diverse Populations (CACREP SECTION 1.J.2-3.)
3. Respect for Diverse Populations and Divergent Points of View (CACREP SECTION 1.J.2-3.)
4. Insight, Awareness and Personal Responsibility (CACREP SECTION I:J.2-3; SECTION 2:C.1.a.)

Data will be compared and contrasted with each subsequent admission cycle. Below includes fall admission data (from spring 2026); the first cycle of data collection consistent with the new criteria, associated rubrics and Likert scale.

	CMHC-D	CMHC-R	MCFC	JUMP
TOTAL APPLICANTS	35	28	1	6
MEAN APPLICATION SCORE	10.44117647	12.35714286	11	12.83333333
INVITED TO INTERVIEW/DENIED	23	23	1	4
TOTAL ATTENDED INTERVIEWED	23	23	1	4
MEAN INTERVIEW SCORE	14.25	14.36842105	12	12.75

ADMITTANCE INVITATION	23	23	1	4
STUDENT PLAN TO ENROL	23	21	1	4

We have witnessed that applicants and students are demonstrating more awareness about diverse populations and divergent points of view. While the demographics of students are similar across time, students seem to have more awareness and exposure to those who are different from them. Faculty/staff have observed them to be more sensitive in their listening and sharing during class discussions and activities. Applicants also seem to have more knowledge about the counseling profession. This is likely due in part to our diligence in better informing inquiries and in our marketing materials. Additionally, instructors of our CNS 432 and 110 undergraduate courses are also emphasizing the counseling profession as a career option in professional helping.

2. Graduate Outcomes:

The program analyzes graduate outcomes and reports in aggregate, by program delivery type and CACREP specialized practice area, the achievement of minimum thresholds determined by the program for each of the following: a) pass rates on credentialing examinations,

	WKU n=24 2026	National n=1325 2026	WKU n=27 2025	National n=750 2025	WKU n=15 2024 Spr	National n=554 2024 Spr	WKU n=18 2023	National n=646 2023
C1: Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	12	12.1	12.5	12.13	11.2	10.82	11.3	11.09
C2: Social and Cultural Diversity	8.7	9.4	10.4	10.63	10.6	10.23	8.1	10.03
C3: Human Growth and Development	9.6	9.8	11.5	11.82	11.1	11.27	9.8	10.47
C4: Career Development	10	11	11.4	11.36	11.1	11.01	9.6	10.39
C5: Counseling and Helping Relationships	10.3	11.3	11.8	11.15	9.7	10.85	9.3	9.87
C6: Group Counseling and Group Work	10.8	11.4	12.9	12.88	10.4	10.25	10.9	11.76
C7: Assessment and Testing	9.2	9.6	10.2	10.54	11.5	10.75	10.1	9.97
C8: Research and Program Evaluation	10.5	11.4	11.1	10.35	12.4	12.08	11.6	11.55
Total	81	85.9	91.9	91	88	87.29	80.7	85.1
Pass Rates	20/24		26/27		15/15		14/18	

Faculty discussed the importance of reminding students throughout their matriculation that required reading can help them prepare for and/or impact their scores on comprehensive scores. Faculty have intentions to be more forthcoming about the expectation of completing required reading. Rhonda Jones, the Comprehensive Exam Coordinator, has communicated to students on

multiple occasions that there is a practice CPCE exam. Unfortunately, there is a fee associated with the exam.

It appears as if students are scoring lower in Social and Cultural Diversity. The required reading in the CNS 555 Social and Cultural Diversity course will have been updated for the 2026-27 academic year. We also believe that many of our students have limited interest in Testing and Assessment, possibly due to the contrary values it has with holistic mental health.

b) degree completion rates,

Degree Completers									
Program	Term								Total
	Spring 2022	Summer 2022	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	
CMHC-D	10	0	1	15	15	1	1	24	67
CMHC-R	20	0	1	19	15	1	1	21	78
MCFC	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	4	10
Total	32	1	2	36	31	2	2	49	155

and c) employment and doctoral admission rates.

At the time of *CMHC MCFC Student Satisfaction Exit Survey* distribution (semester before last semester):

- Full-time employment as a Professional Counselor 33% of participant response
- Have not been hired in the field of my degree 44% of participant response
- I was hired at my internship placement 11% of participant response
- I plan on applying to doctoral programs within the next 5 years 11% of participant response

The degree completion rates are consistent with the CMHC MCFC program growing enrollment. At this time, there is not a system in place that can track students *who are eligible to graduate* but who have not.

3. Diverse Learning Community: CACREP is temporarily suspending this standard. You will not be required to report on this standard and no compliance citations will be issued for this standard. As part of identifying underrepresented populations and the continuous and systematic efforts to recruit, enroll, and retain a diverse group of students and faculty, the counselor education program analyzes, by program delivery type and CACREP specialized practice area, demographic data with regard to: a) Students: 1) applicants, 2) enrolled students, and 3) degree completion rates. b) Full-Time Faculty: 1) (if applicable) applicants for open faculty positions, 2) employed faculty, and 3) retention rates.

While this standard is being temporarily suspended, general related data as it pertains to Full-Time Faculty is provided below.

Full-time Faculty are as follows: Dr. Cynthia Mason, Dr. Loretia Dye (LPCC) and Dr. Sara Pickett (LPCC). Dr. Jill Sauerheber (LPCC) is not teaching courses as she is serving in a full-time administrative position that includes the role of Department Chair, CMHC MCFC Program Coordinator, Admissions Education Graduate Certificate Program Coordinator, and CACREP

Liaison. Dr. Rhemma Payne (LPCC) resigned in December of 2025. Dr. Sara Pickett will be resigning at the end of this academic year.

During 2025-2026 a search was conducted for an Assistant/Associate/Professor of Counseling. Basic requirements included in the Job Description were as follows: *Requirements for all levels include: a doctorate from a CACREP-accredited counselor education and supervision program; experience as a Professional Counselor, eligibility for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC) credential in Kentucky; formal academic or professional training and experience in marriage, couple and family counseling. Additionally, they should be familiar in the history of participation in relevant professional organizations and demonstration of success or potential success in scholarly productivity.* Of the pool of applicants, three met or slightly met the requirements. The result of the search, however, was successful, as Dr. Candace Sneed, highly experienced, as well as academically and professionally trained across the requirements accepted full-time employment beginning the fall of 2026.

The following data was collected and calculated by WKU's Institutional Research Director, Dr. Tuesdi Helbig:

FTES: Using Winter 2024, Spring 2025, Summer 2025 and Fall 2025 terms

- 113 distinct students enrolled in the 043 major in at least one of the terms
- During the year, they took 1,845 credit hours
- Since 9 hours is considered to be full-time in fall, spring, and summer, the following calculation was made: 1,845 divided by 27 (9+9+9) = FTES of 68.3.

FTEF: Using Winter 2024, Spring 2025, Summer 2025 and Fall 2025 terms

- 4 full Counseling faculty members for the program
- Listed below along with the credit hours taught each semester
- Because a full course load is 18 hours/year, the total annual hours taught was divided by 18 for each faculty member. Because no faculty member can be more than 1.00 FTEF, those over 1.00 FTEF were converted to 1.00 FTEF.
- Sum of the FTEF Conversion Column is, FTEF = 3.33.

Faculty Member	Winter 2025	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	Fall 2025	Annual Total	FTEF Calculation	FTEF Conversion
Lacretia Dye	3		9	9	21	21/18=1.17	1
Cynthia Mason		9	6	9	24	24/18=1.33	1
Rhemma Payne		3		3	6	6/18=0.33	0.33
Sara Pickett		9	3	9	21	21/18=1.17	1
Total	3	21	18	30	72		3.33

4. Fieldwork: The program reports in aggregate the achievement of minimum thresholds for student placement rates at practicum and internship sites.

Per CACREP SECTION 4: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, A. *The counselor education program provides ongoing support to help students find fieldwork sites that are sufficient to provide the quality, quantity, and variety of expected experiences to prepare students for their roles and responsibilities as professional counselors within their CACREP specialized practice*

areas. As Director of Professional Practice, Bethany Johnson coordinates the following activities that meet this accreditation requirement:

- **Practicum Orientation** – Provides guidance on selecting fieldwork sites and accessing previously approved placements.
- **Practicum, Internship, and Job Fair** – Facilitates student connections with prospective sites.
- **Open Office Hours** – Offers individualized support for site selection and questions regarding the practicum and internship process.

As of this academic year, 25 students were eligible for placement, and all secured sites. One student changed sites because their site supervisor transitioned to a new position, one student added a secondary site to ensure they could complete the required hours for the professional practice experience, and one student changed sites due to a conflict of interest and a site dismissal request. In these cases, the Director of Professional Practice brings forth any concerns, as well as placement changes to the full faculty for discussion. The Director always meets with students when changes are necessary and may involve their advisors when appropriate. To provide even greater support, we will be offering Professional Practice Information meeting during the fall (prior to the Orientation held in the following spring).

F. COMMUNITY PARTNER ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The purpose of community partner engagement is to solicit and use feedback from parties outside of the counselor education program faculty who are knowledgeable about the counseling profession and the communities the program serves.

1. The program collects and analyzes systematic follow-up studies to analyze the extent to which the program is achieving its program objectives by collecting data from community partners that include: a) graduates, b) fieldwork site supervisors, and c) employers of program graduates.

Counseling Faculty/Staff reviewed the reports from each of these surveys and concentrated on particular questions from the survey (including those listed below), including both positive and constructive feedback. Perplexity (an AI platform) was used to analyze the quantitative data as outlined below. Participation across all surveys was particularly low, even though multiple requests were emailed.

a) Graduates through *CMHC MCFC Alumni Satisfaction Survey 2026 Spring*

Emails were sent to the respective e-mail list requesting completion of the survey. Only 6 responded. Below are summaries of the results from the survey questions.

QUESTION: Please describe your satisfaction with how the Counselor Education program helped you develop both knowledge and skill across the following areas of FOUNDATIONAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM as it pertains your experiences in your clinical employment after graduation (CACREP Introduction).

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Overall, graduates expressed moderate satisfaction with their preparation in foundational counseling curriculum areas. The strongest positive ratings were in Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice (4 of 6 respondents agreed or strongly agreed) and Assessment and Diagnostic Processes (3 of 6 agreed). Research and Program Evaluation was also rated fairly well, with most respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. In contrast, Social and Cultural Identities and Experiences and Group Counseling and Group Work showed mixed satisfaction, with several neutral or disagree responses. Lifespan and Human Development and Counseling Practice and Relationships had the most neutrality, indicating neither strong confidence nor dissatisfaction in those skill areas. In summary, the program was most effective in professional ethics, assessment, and research areas, while respondents felt less confident in multicultural competence, group work, and applied counseling techniques after graduation.

QUESTION: The following areas are not CACREP required curriculum objectives. However, based upon your experiences employed as a Professional Counselor, rate your agreement related to the importance of knowledge and skill acquisition in these areas. (In other words, in your employment, how do you agree with the necessity of training in the given area?) - Abuse (domestic, reporting)

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Graduates overwhelmingly viewed these supplemental training areas as highly important in their work as professional counselors. The strongest agreement was seen for Abuse (domestic and reporting), Integrative Mental Health, Telehealth Counseling, Trauma-Informed Counseling, and Spirituality in Counseling, with most respondents strongly agreeing that these are essential to effective practice. Children and Adolescent Counseling, Crisis Counseling, Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling, and Special Populations were also valued, showing high agreement overall. In contrast, Business Practice, Counseling Supervision, and Neuropsychology received more neutral responses, suggesting these were considered less central or less frequently needed in typical employment settings. Overall, the results emphasize a strong perceived need for training in practical, trauma-informed, and holistic counseling approaches, along with competencies for modern contexts like telehealth.

QUESTION: Please rate your agreement regarding the extent to which you believe the counseling programs are achieving its Program Mission and Objectives (CACREP SECTION 2:F).

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Overall, respondents expressed high confidence that the counseling programs fulfill their mission and CACREP objectives. Most participants strongly agreed that the programs effectively provide necessary coursework and supervised clinical experiences for credentialing and that the academic and clinical training prepare graduates with skills valued by employers. Perceptions were slightly more mixed regarding the department's broader mission—while several strongly agreed, one respondent selected “neither agree nor disagree,” suggesting some uncertainty about how consistently the mission is realized in practice. Similarly, the statement on providing relevant, practice-oriented, and culturally responsive education received positive but fewer strong endorsements, indicating overall satisfaction but room for strengthening applied and diversity-focused training.

Again, the above responses are a sample from only 6 overall survey participants. Results to one of the questions emphasized “a strong perceived need for training in practical, trauma-informed, and holistic counseling approaches, along with competencies for modern contexts like telehealth.” The faculty/staff agree with this, however due to the number of CACREP standards, as well as limited faculty who are experienced in these areas, it’s not always conducive to offer an entire related course. The Department hosts a Professional Development series on related topics and seeking presenters. However, attendance is consistently limited, and recruitment of presenters is often challenge as we do not have a budget to pay them. Beginning in the summer of 2026, all practicum students are now required to complete an Ethical Practice in Telehealth Training.

a) Graduates through *CNS Student Satisfaction Exit Survey 2026 Spring*

We have attempted to distribute this survey in a way that would ensure completion by tying it to each student’s comprehensive exam application. Since participation is still limited (only 10 students responded) and because this limitation may skew the experiences of the overall group graduating, we will now include it as a requirement in the CNS 596(2) CMHC MCFC Internship course (shortly before they actually graduate). Below are summaries of the results from the survey questions.

QUESTION: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT & ACADEMIC QUALITY (CACREP SECTIONS 1-2). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

NARRATIVE RESPONSE: Graduates showed strong overall satisfaction with the counselor education program’s learning environment and academic quality. Nearly all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the program provided appropriate training spaces, technology, and supervision conditions that maintained privacy and confidentiality. They also affirmed that the program fosters an inclusive and equitable community, offers adequate technology resources, and ensures exposure to ethical and professional expectations early in the program. Participants agreed that faculty were knowledgeable, prepared, and credentialed, and that the program delivered education and training consistent with professional counseling roles. The institution’s efforts to promote diversity and inclusion were also positively recognized. Areas showing more varied responses included academic advising and faculty mentoring, where a few participants felt less supported or less connected to advisors and mentors. Despite these minor concerns, the majority indicated that the program environment was high-quality, inclusive, and effectively prepared them for the counseling profession.

QUESTION: The counselor education program must provide opportunities for students to demonstrate both knowledge and skill across the following FOUNDTIONAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM (CACREP SECTIONS 3 & 5). To what extent were you satisfied with your educational experiences and preparation in these areas?

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Respondents showed high overall satisfaction with their preparation in core counseling competencies. The strongest positive ratings were for Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice, where all respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and for Lifespan and Human Development, Group Counseling and

Group Work, and Social and Cultural Identities and Experiences, all of which received predominantly favorable ratings. Career Development, Counseling Practice and Relationships, and Assessment and Diagnostic Processes were also rated positively overall, though each included a few neutral or disagree responses, indicating areas where graduates felt slightly less confident in their preparation. Research and Program Evaluation received generally positive marks as well, though one strong disagreement suggests some variability in perceived depth or applicability. Overall, the data reflect that graduates felt well-prepared and satisfied with their foundational training, especially in professional ethics, group work, and human development, with minor opportunities for deeper skill development in assessment, applied counseling techniques, and career counseling.

QUESTION: Below is a list of other areas of counselor and clinical competencies which are not required curriculum objectives within CACREP accredited programs. Please rate each according to your desire for increasing knowledge and skill in the area either during the program (i.e., as a course elective or workshop) or after graduation.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Graduates showed the strongest interest in added training for highly practical, high-demand areas such as abuse, crisis counseling, trauma-informed counseling, telehealth, and counseling supervision. Interest was also generally high for children/adolescent counseling, integrative mental health, neuropsychology, and marriage/couple/family counseling. By contrast, business practice, spirituality in counseling, and—somewhat—addictions counseling and special populations drew more mixed responses, with more neutral or not-interested ratings than the other areas. This suggests respondents saw these as less universally necessary, even though some still valued them. Overall, the pattern indicates a clear desire for extra training in specialized, real-world clinical skills, especially in areas that support immediate practice demands and emerging service delivery formats like telehealth.

QUESTION: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (CACREP SECTION 4). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Overall, respondents were highly satisfied with their practicum and internship experiences. Most agreed or strongly agreed that these experiences provided opportunities to apply theory, build counseling skills, and work with diverse clients. They also reported that the program offered good support in securing appropriate practicum and internship sites, and that their experiences helped them become familiar with a range of professional activities, resources, and technology. Satisfaction with the site and site supervisor was also generally positive, and most respondents said they were satisfied overall with their practicum and internship experience. A small number of neutral, disagree, or no-basis responses suggest a few participants had less consistent or less applicable experiences, but the overall pattern reflects a strong and positive field training experience

QUESTION: Use the space below to provide further feedback on the Learning Environment and Academic Quality. For example, what recommendations do you have? What are your ideas about recruiting, enrolling and retaining a diverse group of students?

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Students generally expressed positive views of the program's learning environments and academic quality, but they also identified several areas for improvement. Suggested enhancements included more campus-wide recruitment, especially from other departments, more elective courses, and better communication about the program's distinct features so incoming students can make more informed decisions. Several comments pointed to the need for stronger academic support, including tutorials on assignment software for older students and more preparation for comprehensive exams. One student also emphasized that social and cultural diversity training should be more intentionally prioritized, noting that the current asynchronous format may limit deeper learning and application. Overall, the feedback suggests that while students valued the program, they want more flexibility, clearer preparation, and stronger emphasis on diversity and engagement.

QUESTION: Use the space below to provide feedback on your knowledge and skill acquisition in the Foundational Counseling Curriculum.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Students generally felt strongest in assessment and diagnosis, but wanted more hands-on career counseling training, more emphasis on treatment planning and case notes, and better coverage of counseling techniques and theories. Feedback also highlighted concerns about CPCE preparation, with several students feeling the exam format did not match their study materials or practical preparation. There were also comments that some courses were too limited or too asynchronous to support enough interaction or feedback, and that faculty communication and responsiveness could be improved. Overall, the program was viewed as solid in some core areas, but students want more applied learning and better support in certain classes.

QUESTION: Use the space below to provide further feedback on your Professional Practice (practicum and internship) experiences.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Students' practicum and internship experiences were mixed: several reported valuable learning, but others described rushed placement processes, inconsistent site expectations, and concerns about site ethics and supervision quality. A common recommendation was to strengthen site vetting, clarify expectations before placement, and update site visit/forms regularly to better protect students and improve the experience.

QUESTION: Do you have any other comments/suggestions you would like to share to help improve the courses and the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs?

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Students were very positive about the program overall, but wanted more elective/specialty courses, more cohort and alumni connection opportunities, and more varied course resources beyond textbooks. They also suggested stronger support and clearer expectations for internship sites, including better guidance before placement, more structured site learning objectives, and more faculty oversight.

As previously mentioned, to increase participation, this survey will be a required task embedded in Supervision Assist during their last internship. The faculty/staff agree with the interest and need in offering education on various topics outside of the scope of the current curriculum, however due to the number of CACREP standards, as well as limited faculty who are

experienced in these areas, it's not always conducive to offer an entire related electives course. Further, offering an elective course must be done with the consideration that all full-time faculty course elective courses meet enrollment measures. The Department hosts a Professional Development series on related topics; attendance is consistently limited. Beginning in the summer of 2026, all practicum students are now required to complete an Ethical Practice in Telehealth Training.

Overall students are satisfied with the professional practice experience. While there was feedback regarding a "rushed placement process," it is important to note that there was a transition of Professional Practice leadership last spring. Further, beginning this fall, there will be a Professional Practice Information session; and then the Professional Practice Orientation held in the following spring. To generate more available sites for students, 14 additional sites (a total of 43) have been approved over the course of this last academic year.

b) fieldwork site supervisors, and c) employers of program graduates through *Counseling Site Supervisor & Employer Satisfaction Survey*. Participants were as follows: Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, 71% of participants' response; Licensed Clinical Social Worker 29% of participant response. Below are summaries of the results from the survey questions.

QUESTION: To what extent do you believe Counseling students are prepared, trained and have developed knowledge and relevant skills in the following Foundational Counseling Curriculum areas? (CACREP SECTIONS 3 & 5)

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Supervisors generally felt WKU counseling students were well prepared in the core curriculum areas, with most ratings in "Strongly Agree" or "Agree." The strongest areas were professional orientation, counseling practice, and ethical practice, while assessment/diagnosis, group work, and social/cultural development drew more mixed ratings and suggest room for growth.

QUESTION: Below is a list of other areas of counselor and clinical competencies which are not required curriculum objectives within CACREP accredited programs. However, based upon the clients served at your site, as well as personal and professional experiences, rate your agreement related to the importance of knowledge and skill acquisition in these areas.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Respondents viewed these additional competencies as important, especially abuse, crisis, trauma-informed, children/adolescent, telehealth, and special populations counseling. Interest was more mixed for addictions, business practice, marriage/couple/family, neuropsychology, and spirituality, suggesting these areas may be useful but less universally prioritized.

QUESTION: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. (CACREP SECTION 4: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE)

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Supervisors were generally satisfied with the interns' professional practice experience. Ratings were strongest for exposure to professional activities and group leadership opportunities, while orientation, evaluation usefulness, and overall satisfaction were positive but showed some mixed responses.

QUESTION: The Counselor Education program is required to assess how students progress toward and mastery of professional dispositions. (CACREP SECTION 2: C.) In the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, counseling students are reviewed and expected to meet Professional Performance Criteria. As you reflect upon your experience supervising WKU's counseling students, please rate your overall agreement that the student/s you supervised meet each of the criteria. (For the sake of privacy, please do not include or refer to names of students in this survey).

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Overall, supervisors rated WKU counseling students positively on professional dispositions, with most items receiving “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” The strongest areas were respect for diverse viewpoints, relationships with diverse populations, and ethical/legal compliance, while growth areas included academic follow-through, in-class/in-meeting behavior, feedback integration, and overall fit for the profession.

QUESTION: Please rate your agreement regarding the extent to which you believe the counseling programs are achieving its Program Mission and Objectives (CACREP SECTION 2:F).

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: Overall, respondents were positive that the counseling programs are meeting their mission and objectives, with most ratings in “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” Across the items, the strongest support was for preparing students for credentialing and employment, while one response area showed slight neutrality, suggesting room for improvement in practice-oriented training and feedback.

OPEN ENDED FEEDBACK (summarized): WKU counseling interns are generally strong, ethical, compassionate, and clinically well prepared, with good use of theory, techniques, and client rapport. Main growth areas are group work with court-mandated clients, broader diagnosis and crisis/neurodivergent training, and more professionalism and supervision preparation.

Faculty/staff are pleased with the results of the survey. Bethany Johnson, Director of Professional Practice, noted that she has received strong feedback from Site Supervisors about our students’ knowledge and preparedness as compared to interns from other universities. They also have commented on our students’ professionalism. Dr. Sauerheber (Department Chair) and Bethany meet monthly. During the last academic year, these discussions have resulted in many enhancements including, but not limited to the following:

- Updating the CMHC/MCFC programs to all of the 2024 CACREP Professional Practice Standards, as reflected in the [Counseling Professional Practice Handbook](#)
- Revising practicum and internship syllabi to meet 2024 CACREP standards, as well as feedback from satisfaction surveys
- Updating required student, site supervisor and faculty supervisor forms to better fit criteria and areas needed for more effective evaluation
- Updating Supervision Assist to include reference to all necessary CACREP Standards and updates
- Revising the Site Supervisor Orientation, including reference to supervision theory
- Adding a Professional Practice Information Session during the fall before Professional Practice Orientation offered during the following spring.

2. The counselor education program solicits feedback from a designated advisory committee regarding proposed curriculum modification and program improvement. The advisory committee comprises representatives from the program and community partners with diverse identities and perspectives.

The Department's Advisory Council met on October 20, 2025; refer to the Counseling Advisory Council Meeting Minutes 2025.10.20. The make-up of the committee was carefully created and includes those representing our counseling students, alumni, mental health business owners, addiction, as well as the medical field (pediatrician, psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner) and community school system (principal). We believe that holistic nature of this council can provide a more well-rounded analysis of trends, needs and gaps within the mental health care support system, as well as potential opportunities for us as a counselor education program.

Council members offered observations related to mental health needs within the community, opportunities/gaps/strengths in the Department's counseling curriculum, and after a review of CACREP SECTION 3: FOUNDATIONAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM and SECTION 5: ENTRY-LEVEL SPECIALIZED PRACTICE AREAS, suggested the importance of the following standards:

CACREP SECTION 3: FOUNDATIONAL COUNSELING CURRICULUM

A. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

A.4. the role and process of the professional counselor advocating on behalf of and with individuals receiving counseling services to address systemic, institutional, architectural, attitudinal, disability, and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success.

A.11. self-care, self-awareness, and self-evaluation strategies for ethical and effective practice

B. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES

B.8. principles of independence, inclusion, choice and self-empowerment, and access to services within and outside the counseling relationship

B.10. guidelines developed by professional counseling organizations related to social justice, advocacy, and working with individuals with diverse cultural identities

C. LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT

C.5. theories and neurobiological etiology of addictions

C.9. the role of sexual development and sexuality related to overall wellness

C.11. systemic, cultural, and environmental factors that affect lifespan development, functioning, behavior, resilience, and overall wellness

C.12. the influence of mental and physical health conditions on coping, resilience, and overall wellness for individuals and families across the lifespan

D. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

D.2. approaches for conceptualizing the interrelationships among and between work, socioeconomic standing, wellness, disability, trauma, relationships, and other life roles and factors

D.6. career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation

E. COUNSELING PRACTICE AND RELATIONSHIPS

E.2. critical thinking and reasoning strategies for clinical judgment in the counseling

process

E.6. ethical and legal issues relevant to establishing and maintaining counseling relationships across service delivery modalities

E.14. development of measurable outcomes for clients

E.16. record-keeping and documentation skills

E.17. principles and strategies of caseload management and the referral process to promote independence, optimal wellness, empowerment, and engagement with community resources

F. GROUP COUNSELING AND GROUP WORK

F.3. therapeutic factors of group work and how they contribute to group effectiveness

F.4. characteristics and functions of effective group leaders

F.10. direct experiences in which counseling students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term

G. ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSTIC PROCESSES

G.11. diagnostic processes, including differential diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic classification systems

H. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

H.2. identification and evaluation of the evidence base for counseling theories, interventions, and practices

SECTION 5: ENTRY-LEVEL SPECIALIZED PRACTICE AREAS

C. CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

C.5. Techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues

F. MARRIAGE, COUPLE AND FAMILY

F.1. sociology of the family, family phenomenology, and family of origin theories

F.4. interactions of career, life, and gender roles in marriages, couples, and families

F.10. techniques and interventions of marriage, couple, and family counseling

F. 14. third-party reimbursement and other practice and management issues in marriage, couple, and family counseling

These standards are an affirmation, across an interdisciplinary team, of conversations we (faculty/staff) have been having throughout the year, and as communicated both formally and informally by our students and other constituents. While it is impossible to address each standard in depth, we have taken steps to enhance programing and offerings. For example, three new CMHC MCFC course electives will be offered during the summer and fall 2026 to better meet the aforementioned standards, specifically related to SECTION 3: B & C and MCFC, as to address antidotal interest among students and graduates. Experienced and credentialed instructors were sought to teach: Psychology of the Gifted; Integrative Mental Health Counseling; and Spirituality in Counseling.

The CNS 592 Crisis Trauma and Violence Counseling will now be offered, with at least a portion of it in a synchronous face to face or digital platform. While this curriculum change does not specifically address feedback provided by the Advisory Council, it was made after faculty discussion regarding the need for more discussion and conversation among students and faculty.

As Program Administer for the NBCC ACEP, Dr. Sauerheber strives to build free professional development programming that includes topics aligned with clinical/community need, student interest, as well as advisory, alumni and student feedback. The 2025-2026 programming included the following workshops: OCD Treatment and Intervention; Understanding the Basics of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD); Lessons Learned: Preparing Counselors to Work in Child Welfare; What is Integrative Health Care and How Does it Apply to Me?; Using the Early Recollections Technique in Counseling Therapy; Early Recollections of Adolescents; Understanding the Basics of Intensive Therapy: What New Counselors Need to Know; Polyvagal Theory and Working with Children and Adolescents; The Basics of Sandtray; and Clinical Treatment of Children and Adolescents: Best Practices and Considerations

3. Counselor education program faculty create an annual report for entry and doctoral (if applicable) levels that includes: a) a summary of the program evaluation results, including achievement of academic quality indicators; b) subsequent curriculum modifications and program improvement informed by program evaluation; and c) any other significant program changes.

This document serves as the annual report.

4. The annual report is published on the program website in a location accessible to the public.

Annual reports are housed on the Department's website, under the tab "About Us," Program Evaluation.