

Intro Page 3: Annual Programmatic Review and Changes

Professional Considerations

In the 2023-24 academic year, NKU welcomed a new university president and provost. The institution continued to deal with the ramifications of a multi-million-dollar budget shortfall, but the Counseling Program maintained the lecturer position afforded to offset any impact to the program and its accreditation. Professional development funds for faculty remain lower than in recent years, with priority being given to tenure-track faculty. Several members of the faculty took on additional coursework throughout the year, as a member of the core team was called away unexpectedly to attend to a non-academic crisis.

Data Points

Program Data Point 1. Counseling Program Vital Statistics

The faculty is continuing to engage in on-campus recruitment efforts. As in previous years, counseling faculty discuss graduate study in the university's undergraduate Human Services & Addictions (HSR) Program, one of the more ethnically diverse programs in the College of Health & Human Services. In addition, counseling instructors have offered presentations for and attended career fairs associated with the Department of Psychological Sciences. In terms of off-campus opportunities, program representatives met with contingents of undergraduate students from universities in Missouri and Indiana.

Program Data Point 2. Counseling Program Admission and Enrollment

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 2023-24 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 2023-24 academic year evidences satisfactory performance. That said, in an effort to stay current, the instructors for several courses (e.g., Ethics, Practicum, Internship) took steps to assess the potential impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) on counselors-in-training.

Program Data Point 5. Admission to Practicum and Internship

Enrollment in Practicum and Internship is consistent with admissions and matriculation. The percentage of students eligible for practicum in Fall 2024 appears lower than usual (i.e., 75%), but can be attributed to low enrollment in the pre-practicum course (i.e., Techniques) during Spring 2024.

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 noted, "Individual and small-group counseling is definitely well-planned and taught throughout the program, and I can tell through [the student's] work. Also, the feedback they get from their professors is really valuable." Another wrote, "The NKU Counselor Education Program seems to foster a supportive learning environment where students reportedly feel valued, respected, and supported in their academic and personal growth. Faculty members have been accessible and approachable, providing guidance and offering a strong community partnership."

The faculty maintained its efforts to enhance communication between site and university supervisors, and will continue to explore avenues for enrichment. One university partner recommended the program provide "education and feedback to sites on how they can improve or provide the appropriate environment for students (i.e. having appropriate caseload, ongoing communication with students)."

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 2023-2024 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

In the summer of 2022, the program developed a new form for students to evaluate their placement and site supervisors, increasing the number of data points for both instruments. The data suggest students believe their sites and site supervisors are providing effective training experiences. In the summer of 2024, some students struggled to gain a full complement of hours at their sites, resulting in lower scores on the evaluation. The program responded by developing relationships with sites that could afford students therapeutic opportunities (e.g., group counseling, equine-assisted therapy) during the summer term.

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).

In the Spring 2024 semester, the dispositional scores in Orientation to School Counseling (COU 602) were uncharacteristically low (i.e., 1.50). A review attributed the incongruence to enrollment; the section assessed involved only two students, one of whom was ultimately dismissed from the program for academic reasons.

Program Data Point 13. Faculty to Student Ratios

Ratios for the 2023-2024 academic year (9.97:1) fell within the parameters established by CACREP. During the Fall 2023 semester, a moderate increase in enrollment, combined with a slight reduction in the number of sections offered (attributed to the lack of availability of a core faculty member), inched the program slightly above the 12:1 faculty-to-student ratio (i.e., 12.3:1). The program directors took steps to address the matter, and said changes reduced the ratio to 10.5:1 in Spring 2024 and 9:1 in Summer 2024.