

LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans
Department of Counseling 2021-2022 Annual Report

Program Outcomes

The Department of Counseling (COUN) in the School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP) at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans is fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) through 2023. The department awards the Master of Health Sciences degree in Counseling (MHS-COUN) upon successful completion of 60 credit hours of required coursework and fieldwork. All academic courses are classroom-based and the fieldwork courses (Practicum and Internship I & II) include a weekly supervision seminar facilitated by one to two faculty members in the department. Students in the Practicum and Internship courses are supervised and formally evaluated by a faculty and an onsite supervisor at the assigned agency.

During the 2020-2021 semesters, there were five full-time faculty members in the department. Four of those faculty members held doctoral degrees from CACREP approved programs and one faculty member held a doctorate in psychology and is licensed as a psychologist. Four faculty members were licensed as Licensed Professional Counselors, and one also held a license as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. The faculty were active in the field of counseling; often participating as board members on professional organizations such as the Association for Play Therapy, Louisiana Counseling Association, American Counseling Association, and many more.

The cost of the Counseling program per semester is \$9,398.60, including tuition, fees, health insurance, and books. Approximately 14 applicants are accepted annually. The program currently has 4 first-year students and 11 continuing students, totaling 15 students. For the following recent years, the Department of Counseling accepted: 5 (2021); 7 (2020); 15 students (2019); 15 students (2018); and 8 students (2017) the number of students who graduated in those years were: 8 (2021); 12 (2020); 6 (2019), and 12 (2018). Most students complete the program by attending full-time for five semesters, including one summer semester. Students are expected to participate in and reflect upon extra-curricular, professional-development activities each year. These include conferences, topical seminars, advocacy and support group meetings, informational site visits, community service work, and interdisciplinary workshops. Students can choose to do a research practicum or supervised independent project as one of their two elective courses. This involves working with a faculty member in designing, conducting, evaluating, and disseminating the results of a research or resource-development project. Upon completion, most students who choose this elective collaboratively create and participate with the faculty member in a platform or poster presentation of the project at a regional, state, or national professional conference. All qualified students must pass a comprehensive examination, which assesses student learning across all knowledge domains covered in the CACREP standards before being accepted into Internship II.

Our graduates have obtained employment in various settings. These include but are not limited to federal and state health and rehabilitation agencies, supported employment programs, psychiatric treatment centers, substance abuse treatment facilities, community mental health centers, private practice settings, and school settings. Students are eligible to sit for certification exam and pursue licensure post-graduation.

Summary of Surveys

Surveys and/or feedback were obtained from five groups of stakeholders: students at the completion of the program, advisory board members, alumni, practicum/internship site supervisors, and employers. Respondents were asked to complete a brief survey about their levels of satisfaction with the program areas being evaluated. The surveys also included a section to provide free-response comments about aspects of the program not assessed in the survey's main structure.

Exit Survey of Graduating Students

Students in their final semester before graduation were encouraged to complete a 15-item program-evaluation questionnaire using a five-point Likert Scale. It is designed to capture their post graduate plans and evaluation of how well their education and experiences in the program prepared them on a comprehensive list of knowledge items and skills in the Counseling program. Questions 1-4 ask about their post graduate plans in education, certification, and employment. Questions 5-13 are Likert scale response options ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). Questions 14 and 15 are open-ended seeking feedback on the strengths and areas of growth for the program.

In May of 2021, four students (out of 8) completed the survey. With a 50% response rate, we cannot provide a unanimous summary of how students viewed the program. Three students reported they would be pursuing additional postgraduate education in Counselor Education in the next 12 months, while one did not plan to pursue further education. Three respondents reported they accepted counseling or related employment while one did not plan to search for employment in the next 12 months. Additionally, all four completed the National Counseling Exam (NCE) and planned to seek licensure. In the areas of preparedness, the respondents reported the following:

Question:	Mean Score
The program prepared me well in the area of Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice.	4.25
The program prepared me well in the area of Social and Cultural Diversity.	3.75
The program prepared me well in the area of Human Growth and Development.	3.25
The program prepared me well in the area of Career Development.	3.25
The program prepared me well in the area of Counseling and Helping Relationships.	4.75

The program prepared me well in the area of Group Counseling and Group Work.	4.75
The program prepared me well in the area of Assessment and Testing.	3.5
The program prepared me well in the area of Research and Program Evaluation.	3.5

The commented areas of growth for the program included:

- *Lack of multicultural diversity and inclusion/ discussion of racial issues that affect the counseling community. These issues are only discussed in multicultural class unfortunately. -There is no transparency regarding student issues. When issues arise, they are vaguely addressed as a collective and not individually. -Minimal discussion and information shared regarding NCE. -Transitioning from a student to a provisional professional is not discussed as well. These discussions can help us on our next journey.*
- *I would have wanted to learn more about post-graduation steps in the form of a class lesson.*
- *Less DIY would be appreciated.*

The commented areas of strengths for the program included:

- *Awesome professors who each have their own specialties. -informative emails are sent out weekly that encourage students to join activities in the community.*
- *This program has given my resources and tools to blossom in my counseling career. Strengths of the program include the professors and the flexibility.*

Feedback from Advisory Board Members

The advisory board is made up of representatives for the clinical mental health and rehabilitation track. The 2021 CRC advisory board met on October 20, 2021, during which the board provided feedback to the department. Each year the advisory board is provided with updates on the department including admissions, recruitment, graduation rates, grant applications, Chi Sigma Iota events, clinic activities, practicum and internship site placement, and workshops held in both the department and clinic.

Members are asked each year to respond to each area. Minutes are recorded during the meeting and members are encouraged to provide written feedback after reviewing the departmental documents and attending the meeting. During the 2021 meeting, the advisory board supported the results of the new online application system and modifications to said process. Members also brainstormed with the faculty on methods to share information regarding engaging students beyond the remote classroom to encourage careers in the field of counseling during the ongoing pandemic that resulted in restrictions on professional gatherings, networking, and conferences.

Survey of Program Alumni

An electronic survey using a five-point Likert Scale was e-mailed to about 84 alumni who graduated from 2009 to 2020. Twenty-nine alumni responded to the 15-item survey requesting information on their current certification, license, and work status. Additionally, the survey requested information on the alumni's perception of preparedness in the foundational counseling areas. Alumni responded from 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016. The alumni reported the following work settings:

Answer Choices	Percentages
Clinical rehabilitation setting	13.79%
Mental health setting	31.03%
School setting	17.24%
Marriage, couple, and family setting	0.00%
Postgraduate counseling studies	0.00%
Postgraduate unrelated studies	3.45%
Not currently working	3.45%
Other (please specify)	31.03%

Responding alumni from the LSUHSC counseling program are certified in a variety of ways, National Counselor Examination (55.17%), Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Examination (72%), National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (3.45%), other certification examination (6.90%). Additionally, the responding alumni reported as Licensed Professional Counselor (41.38%), Provisionally Licensed Professional Counselor (13.79%), Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor (13.79), Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (44.83%), National Certified Counselor (10.34%), and "Other" representing three clinicians (Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner, Master Addiction Counselor, LCSW). In the areas of preparedness, the alumni reported the following:

Question:	Mean Score
The program prepared me well in the area of Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice.	4.17
The program prepared me well in the area of Social and Cultural Diversity.	3.83
The program prepared me well in the area of Human Growth and Development.	4.28
The program prepared me well in the area of Career Development.	4.14
The program prepared me well in the area of Counseling and Helping Relationships.	4.34
The program prepared me well in the area of Group Counseling and Group Work.	4.07
The program prepared me well in the area of Assessment and Testing.	3.62
The program prepared me well in the area of Research and Program Evaluation.	3.90

The commented areas of growth for the program included:

- *Advocating for rehabilitation Counseling field. The industry has very low pay not enough support for fellow counselors. Burnout is very high.*
- *More education on diversity and multicultural issues*
- *Prep classes for the NCE*
- *Better internships and more focus on taking the NCE.*
- *Course or workshops on case management would be beneficial.*
- *The program and its faculty are not diverse or culturally aware. The program didn't provide opportunities for self-development within the field of counseling.*
- *Individual and group counseling therapeutic skills.*
- *I do not feel that I received current and practical information, at the time, that I have been able to use consistently in my current position as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in a private practice.*
- *The program has changed a ton in the 5 years since I left, but I felt uneasy doing groups even after the course. I also still do not want to do assessments because of the class and confusion surrounding what we are allowed to do as LPCs without additional credentials.*
- *More support and empathy from the faculty toward the students— especially in practicum/internship*
- *Diversity in settings, cultural competency and employment*

The commented areas of strengths for the program included:

- *Professors were more than happy to help and networking was beneficial.*
- *Program assisted in understanding disabilities and the responsibilities of a rehabilitation counselor.*
- *Small group settings*
- *Great faculty and small cohort.*
- *Great faculty to student ratio, immersive learning, great professors*
- *Please prepare the students for the NCE*
- *Loved the in-person techniques.*
- *The professors*
- *Experienced faculty; great internships sites*
- *The program prepared well for the CRC and it was a small program.*
- *Encourages diversity and advocacy.*
- *During my time in the program, I felt there was a focus on counseling skills that I still find useful.*
- *The professors allow you to make the program what you want. I had excellent opportunities I don't think I could have had elsewhere. My life wouldn't be what it is without the program.*
- *Structure of courses, collaborative projects, availability of elective courses (but only if you advocate for ones specific to your interest)*
- *Wonderful professors*
- *Advising, small group*
- *Diverse elective coursework*

Feedback from Site Supervisors

For the 2020-2021 academic year, site supervisors who oversaw students in a clinical setting for the student’s practicum or internship were requested to provide feedback. Sixteen site supervisors were sent a survey using a five-point Likert scale via email twice and had a two-week period to respond to the survey during June 2021; after the close of the spring semester. The response rate for the survey was 62.5% (12 completed). Site supervisors were asked to rate their experience with faculty and students within the LSUHSC-New Orleans Practicum and Internship Program based on a Likert scale from Completely Dissatisfied (1) to Completely Satisfied (5) and to indicate areas of growth and strengths of the program. Ten supervisors responded to the 2020-2021 survey. In the areas of satisfaction, the supervisors rated the following:

Questions:	Mean Score
I was satisfied with the initial interview with the Practicum/Internship Coordinator.	4.38
I was satisfied with the Site Supervisor Orientation.	4.38
I was satisfied with the quality of the collaboration with the Practicum and Internship Coordinator.	4.20
I was satisfied with the quality of the collaboration with the faculty supervisor(s).	4.25
I am satisfied with my supervisee’s on site availability based on their school schedule.	3.33
I am satisfied with how the program supports, evaluates, remediates, and promotes (SERP process) practicum/internship students.	4.22
I am satisfied with the program’s integrated program management/electronic records system, Tevera.	3.60
I am satisfied with the program’s Practicum/Internship Handbook.	4.44
I am satisfied with the support the program offers myself as a site supervisor.	4.50
I am satisfied with the quality of practicum/internship counseling student interns from the Clinical Rehabilitation and Counseling program.	4.30
I am satisfied with the quality of practicum and internship evaluations (<i>Counselor Competencies Scale- Revised</i>).	4.33

The commented areas of growth for the program included:

- *I don’t like Tevera*

- *An increase focus on Play therapy techniques mixed with DBT and trauma base interventions.*
- *Students are still taking classes, so they're limited to the days/ times they're available for internship.*

The commented areas of strengths for the program included:

- *Great students and teachers*
- *Faculty was easily accessible and readily available to support when needed.*
- *LSU students always come to us well-prepared to begin working with clients and demonstrate professionalism and willingness to learn more.*
- *Current timely communication and support resources for site supervisors.*
- *Quality evaluations and record keeping through the EHR system.*
- *Students are well trained in developmental assessment.*
- *The preparedness of the student*

Employer Surveys

Employers are identified through various ways, including exit surveys of graduating students, alumni surveys, and professional networking opportunities. While several individuals were asked to complete the employer survey which utilizes a five-point Likert scale, only 5 employers responded who had a graduate of the program employed in their agency over the past 12 months. All respondents described their business as a mental health setting, as opposed to rehabilitation, school, or marriage and family setting. The employers noted their perception of the graduate's level of preparedness as follows:

Question	Mean Score
The program prepared the employee to ethically practice as a professional counselor.	4.80
The program prepared the employee to practice in the domain of Social and Cultural Diversity.	4.60
The program prepared the employee to practice in the domain of Human Growth and Development.	4.40
The program prepared the employee to practice in the domain of Career Development.	4.00
The program prepared the employee to practice in the domain of Counseling and Helping Relationships.	5.00
The program prepared the employee to practice in the domain of Group Counseling and Group Work.	4.80
The program prepared the employee to practice in the domain of Assessment and Testing.	4.00
The program prepared the employee to practice in the domain of Research and Program Evaluation.	4.60

The commented areas of growth for the program included:

- *I graduated in 2011 and worked in the non-profit and state vocational rehabilitation sectors before switching to the forensic (private sector) in 2018. It was well known that internships in private rehab were difficult due to contact hours; however, we had an elective course in private rehab that was very beneficial. Now that I work in private rehab, I have noticed a huge age gap in the industry and not many peers younger than myself. Long story short, we need students to know about private rehab and what we do even if it doesn't meet grant requirements, or they can't do an internship. I'd really love the opportunity to present to students about our industry. {removed identifying information}.*
- *I think graduates should have some basic understanding of what it is like to have a job in the counseling field. Not clinically, but the dynamics of employment in the field.*

The commented areas of strengths for the program included:

- *The program was comprehensive and did a great job of preparing graduates to enter the field of rehabilitation in any sector. The instructors were accommodating and genuinely cared for the students and cultivated their professional growth.*
- *My employee appears fairly confident in her abilities. Clients have had no complaints regarding her abilities. I am thankful LSUHSC allowed her to seek extra opportunities.*

Student Course Evaluations

In accordance with the policy of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC), students are asked to complete course evaluation forms at the end of each semester, rating the quality of the course and the instructor on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). These results are based on the available responses from the students enrolled in our department during this reporting year. In the Fall of 2020 nine courses (REHAB 5601, 5603, 5614, 5618, 5650, 6611, 6632, 6641, and 6643) were taught by five faculty members. The Spring 2021 semester had 9 courses (REHAB 5607, 5614, 5654, 5661, 6612, 6630, 6634, 6643, and 6645) taught by five faculty members. The Summer 2021 semester had four courses (REHAB 5614, 6614, 6640, 6641) taught by four faculty members. In 2020 and 2021, courses were transferred from in person to primarily remote learning across the LSUHSC campus, producing both challenges and solutions, which were explored and implemented. As such, most courses received ratings above the mean of 3.0 with the following exceptions in the subcategories listed:

Fall 2020

REHAB 6611- Counseling Theories and Practices	Mean Score
The course materials were well prepared and clear.	2.3
The workload of the course was appropriate to the number of credit hours.	2.7
The evaluation methods were fair/appropriate	2.3
The instructor was well-prepared for class.	2.7

The instructor communicated effectively and presented materials clearly in class	2.7
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SEP

Spring 2021

REHAB 5654 Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment Planning	Mean Score
The assignments (i.e. readings, online tutorials, papers, case studies, etc.) added to my mastery of the course content.	2.7
The instructor was enthusiastic about teaching.	2.7
The instructor communicated effectively and presented materials clearly in class.	2.7

REHAB 6612 Counseling Techniques and Process	Mean Score
The course materials were well prepared and clear.	2.0

REHAB 6630 Vocational Counseling/ Career Development	Mean Score
The assignments (i.e. readings, online tutorials, papers, case studies, etc.) added to my mastery of the course content.	2.0
The workload of the course was appropriate to the number of credit hours.	2.0
The evaluation methods were fair/appropriate.	2.0

Samples of recommendations on how the course can be improved included:

- *Having sessions observed more often would improve the course. It would be a lot more valuable to get feedback from a faculty member or a guest LPC than for us to be left alone to provide feedback to each other.*
- *Fewer chapters could be covered so that the instructor could cover the most important material more thoroughly.*
- *I do think that there could be a bit more support from faculty in transitioning to jobs after this course, and maybe even have that and the NCE components, and PLPC licensure, as a bigger part of this in the last semester.*

Samples of recommendations on course strengths included:

- *The current events and documentaries that we watched were incredibly meaningful and educational and I learned so much from them and the class discussions.*
- *Class discussions, videos, and current events are helpful in learning about multicultural topics. In every class we have resources to learn more about a topic or population, which*

I enjoy. I can research further outside of class or if it pertains to a client or situation. Uploading assignments on Moodle is fast and easy.

- *Having a book and lesson plan gave us a much needed roadmap for this course that we didn't have last semester.*
- *Having sessions observed by {identifying information removed} was the strength of the course.*
- *Strengths- organization, knowledge of subject matter, professionalism, flexibility, availability, fairness, willingness to discuss ideas, appropriateness of assignments for material taught, stays on task, great communicator, respectful,*
- *The entire department was very willing to work with us and remain adaptive in lieu of COVID and worked hard to help us ensure we were able to meet all requirements in creative ways if necessary.*

Student Departmental Evaluation Survey

A department head survey was sent to the students in the program for the Spring 2021. Students were given the opportunity to provide feedback and encouraged to do so. The 12-item survey utilizes a five-point Likert scale and asks about the student's perception of preparedness in foundational areas, strengths, and areas of growth for the department. Response options ranged from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Three students noted their perception of preparedness as follows:

Questions:	Mean Score
The program prepared me well in the area of Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice.	4.33
The program prepared me well in the area of Social and Cultural Diversity.	3.33
The program prepared me well in the area of Human Growth and Development.	4.33
The program prepared me well in the area of Career Development.	4.33
The program prepared me well in the area of Counseling and Helping Relationships.	4.00
The program prepared me well in the area of Group Counseling and Group Work.	4.33
The program prepared me well in the area of Assessment and Testing.	4.50
The program prepared me well in the area of Research and Program Evaluation.	4.33
The program offers support through faculty advising.	3.67
The program provided me support through the P/I process.	3.33
The program provided me with opportunities for professional involvement as a student.	4.00

The commented areas of growth for the program included:

- *Covid-19 made learning difficult.*
- *Sometimes I wonder if a larger faculty would be beneficial. Each professor carries a large load I think some things fall through the cracks. P&I for example. Whenever I speak with students from other schools or supervisors I've interviewed, they give me strange looks when I talk about some of our processes, such as the whole sink or swim gotta figure it out for yourself P&I we have as well as the lack of flexibility in the paperwork deadlines. Some school deadlines are much earlier than ours and many places were filled up in the middle of May. It feels like we are at a distinct disadvantage compared with other schools. Our program is short compared with the rest of the area. It makes our program stand out, but with such a small faculty, not many course offerings, and courses offered during certain semesters, it seems like we fall short.*
- *Organization, preparation work, diversity*

The commented areas of strengths for the program included:

- *Excellent professors*
- *Professors availability for questions*
- *There is a strong faculty. But it sometimes seems they may have too much in their plates.*

Response to Recommendations for Program Improvement for the 2020-2021 Academic Year:

Recommendation 1: To transition the fieldwork application and fieldwork documents, such as time sheets and evaluations, to an electronic platform.

Response: All fieldwork documents were incorporated into an electronic platform-Tevera.

Recommendation 2: For the Practicum and Internship Coordinator, as well as the Faculty Supervisors, to increase number of interactions with Site Supervisors by developing better working relationships with Site Supervisors through Site Visits, Zoom Conferences, and other forms of communication.

Response: This goal was difficult to measure as sites had differing COVID procedures for site visits—some disallowing onsite guest. The Practicum and Internship Coordinator resigned in the Summer semester and the Acting Department Head assumed all Practicum and Internship Coordinator responsibilities.

Recommendation 3: Nine courses had response rates below 50%. Faculty members are being asked to remind students to complete these course ratings during the next academic year to best inform the department.

Response: This continues to be an ongoing goal for the CRC department.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the primary faculty member charged to teach the respective sections of Introduction to School Counseling, Vocational Counseling/Career Development, and Research Design and Methodology carefully examine the rating components from this last reporting cycle and to consult with other faculty members to ascertain how the course might be improved as indicated in the ratings for the next reporting cycle so that the grand mean ratings rise above 3.0.

Response: The Acting Department Head held monthly meetings with faculty offering support for transitioning traditional in person courses to remote learning.

Recommendations for Program Improvement for the 2021-2022 Academic Year:

Recommendation 1: All courses taught in the program will be evaluated by faculty to identify areas of improvement—including ways to incorporate technology and new pedagogy.

Recommendation 2: Revised site surveys will be sent to site supervisors seeking feedback on ways that the department may improve the practicum and internship experiences.

Recommendation 3: For courses that had response rates below 50%, faculty members will remind students to complete these course ratings during the next academic year to best inform the department.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the primary faculty member charged to teach the respective sections of courses that have ratings below 3.0 examine the rating components from this last reporting cycle and consult with other faculty members to ascertain how the course might be improved as indicated in the ratings for the next reporting cycle so that the grand mean ratings rise above 3.0.