

IBHE Review Summary

- 1. Reporting Institution:** Eastern Illinois University
- 2. Program Reviewed:** M.S. in Counseling
- 3. Date:** December 11th, 2019
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5. Overview

The M.S. in Counseling provides dynamic graduate level curricula for students interested in obtaining licensure as School Counselors or as Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors (LCPC). Students choose a concentration either in Clinical Mental Health or School Counseling, both fully accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). These concentrations lead to a terminal degree and prepare students for employment either as School Counselors within K-12 school systems or as Clinical Counselors within mental health agencies, health care facilities, employee assistance programs (EAP), or human service agencies. Students who complete the program are eligible to pursue a Ph.D./Ed.D studies in Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology and other related fields or to pursue specialized training in Marriage and Family Counseling, Play Therapy, or Private Practice.

Like other CACREP accredited counseling programs throughout the nation, we have increased our M.S. in Counseling from a 48 hour master's degree to a 60 hour master's degree with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling. This change is a mandated requirement by CACREP to maintain accreditation.

The Counseling program utilizes CACREP guidelines, the Department's learning goals, and the Eastern Illinois University Graduate School Student Learning requirements to guide its curriculum.

The department has seen significant changes to the program since the last IBHE review. We have updated our department's mission statement, adjusted recruitment strategies to increase enrollment, changed our department's name to Counseling and Higher Education and continue to update courses in accordance with standards set in place by CACREP. In addition to these changes, we have secured First Choice Status from EIU's Graduate School through 2021 and intend on securing renewed status. In order to receive this honor, "Graduate programs... appl[y] for and [are] subjected to rigorous review from EIU's Council on Graduate Studies – with oversight from the Graduate School to ensure they meet the highest standards of scholarly excellence as evidenced through sustained achievement of criteria developed and adopted by the council in 2006" (2011-2013 Graduate Catalog).

6. Major Findings and Recommendations

a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program

The field of counseling continues to evolve, reflecting changes in managed care, statutory law, school policy, and ethical guidelines. Although the department has been graduating students from its program since the 1950's, it too has been evolving to meet the current demands of clients/students. The goal of the Department of Counseling and Higher Education is to provide a dynamic curriculum for students interested in obtaining licensure as a School Counselor or Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC). To that end, in 1996 the department (formally the Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance) began the formal process to become CACREP accredited and was conferred in 1998. Since that time, we have moved from a 32 hour non-accredited program to a 60 hour CACREP accredited program. When we raised our program to a 60 hour program, our clinical counseling program received a name change in the form of Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Students continue to receive training in counseling skills and competencies commensurate with this accreditation. Depending on the concentration, the curriculum prepares students for either work as a school counselor within the K-12 school system or work in mental health agencies. Some students also decide to pursue additional studies in Ph. D. programs.

Since our last IBHE report, the program has achieved enormous progress toward our mission resulting in a name change, new mission statement, goals and objectives, enhanced admission and retention policies, and a greater focus on achieving high standards for the program and its students. This commitment to excellence resulted in our being selected yet again for First choice status by EIU's Graduate School (through 2021) and requires sustaining excellence to ensure that future counseling students are highly prepared for professional practice. We are fully accredited by CACREP through 2021. We are preparing for reaccreditation by CACREP by updating our course objectives and syllabi so as to ensure we are always up-to-date on the latest standards and policies.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, our mission statement for counseling was changed. Our new mission statement is as follows: The Master of Science in Counseling at Eastern Illinois University has been recognized as a First Choice program which ensures the highest standards of scholarly excellence are met as evidenced through sustained achievement of criteria developed and adopted by the Graduate School. The program utilizes a cohort model with a low faculty-to-student ratio. The M.S. in Counseling prepares Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling students for Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and School Counseling students for Professional Educator License (PEL) in the State of Illinois. The program is nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) ensuring that students are trained in research-based clinical practice. The purpose of our training, which includes 1000 hours of supervised practical experience in a variety of settings, is to equip students to become qualified, ethical and culturally competent counselors.

The counseling field continues to be growth-oriented. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), "employment of school and career counselors is projected to grow 8 percent

from 2018 to 2028, faster than the average for all occupations.” In addition, the BLS also states that “job prospects are expected to be good for those with counseling degrees [in general]... because of the need to replace the workers who leave the occupation each year.” In regard to mental health counselors, BLS states “employment of substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors is projected to grow 22 percent from 2018 to 2028...in addition, there will be a continued need for counselors to work with military veterans to provide them the appropriate mental health or substance abuse counseling care.” Specifically, “job prospects are also expected to be very good...particularly in rural areas or other communities that are underserved by mental health practitioners.” Median salaries in 2018 for Mental Health Counselors was \$44,630 and \$56,310 for School Counselors according to BLS.

Our department works very hard to maintain a productive and efficient program. In reviewing data comparing similar programs in the state of Illinois, our department was the lowest in cost per credit hour at \$306.50 compared to the highest at \$1,575. Enrolment decline was addressed during the 2015-2016 academic year by utilizing the Paul Ward Scholarship as part of the admission process. In 2015 alone, the Paul Ward Scholarship granted \$160,000 in Counseling Scholarships. From 2014-2018 spring admission for the School counseling track has consistently increased. Admission for spring of 2018 was maintained into spring of 2019. Admission for the Clinical Mental Health track has shown more variability than the admission rates for the School counseling track. Admission for the Clinical Mental Health track dropped between 2014 and 2016 but increased from 2016-2018.

b. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement

The Counseling program utilizes CACREP guidelines, the Department’s learning goals and the Eastern Illinois University Graduate School Student Learning requirements to guide its curriculum. Specifically, the program measures its success using the following six objectives: 1) Candidates will display the required academic preparation and professional dispositions necessary to succeed in the graduate program in Counseling and Higher Education Leadership; 2) Candidates will display evidence of depth of content knowledge; 3) Candidates will display evidence of maintaining professional disposition; 4) Candidates will display evidence of critical thinking and problem solving skills; 5) Candidates will display evidence of effective oral and written communication skills; 6) Candidates will display evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity.

Learning objective one is focused on **recruiting and training the very best graduate students**. As mentioned earlier, our admission process follows a comprehensive program that exemplifies best practices. As a result, the quality and diversity of our student population has increased. Over the last five years (2014-2019), the data indicate an average of 73 applicants a year applied with 39 being accepted or a 53% acceptance rate. Based on the data, our admission process is working well. Using admission rubrics and an extensive, three-phase interview process, we are able to select candidates that meet our objectives and ensure our learning community thrives. Both programs have maintained strong admission yields.

Our second learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of depth of content knowledge.** We measure this goal using a variety of input measures including GPA; assessment rubrics; a comprehensive exam; a passing score on the National Counselor Exam (NCE) and/or School Certification Exam, and overall performance in meeting the course objectives for the following courses: CHE 5500 – Research Methods, 5510 – Professional Orientation, 5520 – Theories of Counseling, 5530 – Basic Counseling Skills, 5600 – Cross-Cultural Counseling, 5620 – Group Counseling, 5630 – Practicum, 5640 – Play Therapy, 5900 - Appraisal, 5920 – Career Counseling, 5930 – Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling, 5940 – Foundations of School Counseling, 5942 – Collaboration, Consultation and Intervention, 5960 – Family Counseling, 5970 – Addictions Counseling, 5980 – Diagnosing and Treatment Planning, 6900 – Supervised Clinical Experience, and 6920 – Supervised Experience. See attachment “A” for a summary of our students’ exit interviews and internship supervisor surveys in which we are able to see how our students and colleagues view our efforts to meet learning objectives. Students are reviewed by faculty twice a year/once a semester to ensure each student is meeting departmental expectations.

A review of the latest comparative test data from the NCE which is used for state licensure shows our students had a 100% pass rate for our Clinical Mental Health Counseling students and had mean scores higher than the national mean scores in three categories (Human Growth & Development, Social & Cultural Diversity, and Group Work). Our overall mean score was 104.82 and the national mean was 104.87 (a difference of .05). The national pass rate was 86.70% (a difference of 13.3% lower than our university pass rate)

Clinical Mental Health Counseling NCE Exam Results (Fall 2018) – Mean Scores

CACREP Areas	University	National
Human Growth & Development	8.36	8.12
Social & Cultural Diversity	7.73	7.25
Helping Relationships	23.00	23.25
Group Work	11.73	11.34
Career Development	12.91	12.96
Assessment	12.09	12.22
Research & Program Evaluation	8.18	8.74
Professional Orientation & Ethical Practice	20.82	20.95
Total	104.82	104.87

In addition, the latest comparative test data from the NCE yielded an 80% pass rate for our School Counseling students that elected to take the exam for dual certification. The national pass rate was 86.70% (a difference of 6.7% higher than our university pass rate). Our university mean score for School Counseling students was 99.60 while the national mean score was 104.87.

School Counseling NCE Exam Results (Fall 2018) – Mean Scores

CACREP Areas	University	National
Human Growth & Development	7.80	8.12
Social & Cultural Diversity	7.60	7.25
Helping Relationships	22.00	23.25
Group Work	11.00	11.34
Career Development	12.60	12.96
Assessment	11.40	12.22
Research & Program Evaluation	8.00	8.74
Professional Orientation & Ethical Practice	19.20	20.95
Total	99.60	104.87

Clinical students obtained a 100% pass rate on the comprehensive exam in addition to the NCE exam. School students obtained a 100% pass rate on the comprehensive exam, 80% on the NCE, and 71% School Professional Licensing Exam (PEL). Two students failed the PEL exam over the course of this past academic year (2018-2019). This topic will be discussed at the fall faculty retreat. One solution we will discuss is having the school counseling students take the PEL in the second year of study so they are better prepared for the exam.

As attachment “A” indicates, our students and internship supervisors are mostly satisfied with the program. We are happy with the trend in our curriculum development and overall direction of the program. In reviewing the data from our last IBHE report, it became apparent that we have done a better job of meeting our learning objectives and therefore have increased our scores in the areas of Social and Cultural Diversity and Appraisal. For example, in our last review 90% of students and internship supervisors agreed that the Social and Cultural Diversity objective of our Cross Cultural course had been met. Over the last five years, we now find that 93% of students and internship supervisors agree we have met our objectives for this course. In addition, our last review showed that 82% of students and internship supervisors agreed we met our course objectives for Appraisal. Over the last five years, we have increased this score to 84%. In the future we aim to continue to raise our scores from previous years so we are better able to meet our objectives and even exceed them. In addition, we hope to evaluate courses in which our scores have lowered since the last review to determine how we can better meet the objectives for said courses.

Since the 2014-2015 academic year, a minimum 3.0 GPA was maintained by all but one student. The student that did not maintain the minimum 3.0 GPA was asked to leave the program. Based on our 10th day Enrollment report, 70 out of 73 total students enrolled are in good academic standing.

Our third learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of maintaining professional disposition**. The CHE faculty meets once in the fall and once in the spring to review each

student in the program so as to determine if the students have maintained departmental expectations. Topics discussed at each Student Review Conference include: the Student Review Rubric (Motivational Appropriateness, Personal Maturity, Flexibility, Emotional Stability, Engagement in the Learning Process, Academic Rigor, and Legal and Ethical Behavior). Faculty rate their advisees based on personal observation and feedback from instructors and supervisors. Students who fall below expectations for the first time receive a warning and participate in an informal discussion with their advisor. Students identified a second time enter a formalized retention process to target needed change. The data indicate that over the last five years, a total of 14 students were put on a formal remedial plan. Of those 14 students, only one student was suspended; that student was asked to reapply the following year.

Our fourth learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of critical thinking and problem solving skills**. We measure this goal in the student's second semester during CHE 5630 (Practicum). The data indicate that from 2014-2016, 100% of our students have met this expectation in critical thinking. Over the last three academic years, 80% of our students have met this expectation in critical thinking. Our extended practicum supervision has most likely led to high achievement in this area. This goal is also measured throughout various courses including CHE 5510 – Professional Orientation, 5530 – Basic Counseling Skills, 5610 – Human Development for Counselors, 5620 – Group Counseling, 5630 – Practicum, 6900 – Supervised Clinical Experience and 6920 – Supervised Experience. We will discuss areas that fell below the 80% threshold during those years at the upcoming Fall Faculty retreat.

Our fifth learning goal is that **Candidates will display evidence of effective oral and written communication skills**. We measure this goal throughout the program, based on student performance in various courses including: CHE 5500 – Research Methods, 5510 – Professional Orientation, 5600 – Cross-Cultural Counseling, 5630 - Practicum, 5640 – Play Therapy, 5900 - Appraisal, 5920 – Career Counseling, 5960 – Family Counseling, 5980 – Diagnosing and Treatment Planning, 6900 – Supervised Clinical Experience, and 6920 – Supervised Experience. The data indicate that from 2014-2019 100% of students have met this expectation by rating each objective at an average of 4 out of 6. Starting in 2016, new rubrics were utilized and 95% of students surveyed in the Fall semester and 94% of the students surveyed in the Spring indicated they were satisfied with their efforts to meet oral and written communication objectives. With few exceptions oral and written communication objectives were met over the last two academic years. We will discuss areas that fell below the 80% threshold during those years at the upcoming Fall Faculty retreat.

Our sixth learning goal is that **candidates will display evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity**. We measure this goal in the students' first semester during CHE 5500 (Research). The data indicate that over the last 5 years 100% have met this expectation in advanced scholarship. Taking a sample from between 2017 and 2019, students were involved in 35 presentations at professional conferences. Students were awarded 61 travel grants between 2014 and 2019 to present their research. Between 2012 and 2015, seven students were awarded the COE (College of Education) Grant and six students were awarded the Graduate School Research/Creative Activity grant.

c. Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes

Since our last IBHE review, the department has increased efforts to strengthen the quality, diversity, and internalization of the department's student body by attracting candidates who have the potential for academic and professional achievement and who complete degrees and succeed as alumni. The department utilizes a well-focused series of annual recruitment tools that include web based video, and print material distributed via multiple platforms. As a result, the department attracts a broad range of students characterized by diversity and quality. For example, over the last three years, the program has received an average of 72 applications from prospective students. Based on the same data, an average of 64 of those prospective students were invited to interview. Throughout that same three year period, an average of 39 prospective students were accepted for admission.

Based on the current semester's enrollment, we hold a diversity rate of 30%. This rate has grown since our last IBHE review. In 2011 our diversity rate was at 10% so we have seen a steady climb in minority enrollment.

Due to the excellence of our recruitment class, assistants/scholarships/awards have increased since the last IBHE report. During the 2018-2019 academic year, we awarded 8 internal graduate assistantships and 21 assistantships have been issued to our students from other departments including several off-campus (external assistantships). The external graduate assistant account has increased from \$18,974 in 2014 to \$26,413 in 2018.

In addition to our department's name change, now known as the Department of Counseling and Higher Education, the course prefixes will change from CSD to CHE as of January 2020. During the 2012-2013 academic year, two course names were changed and two new courses were added. Course 5970 was given the name Addictions Counseling and course 5930 was given the name Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling. The two new courses included 5941 – Emerging Issues in School Counseling and 5942 – School Counseling: Consultation, Collaboration, and Intervention. In addition to these changes during the 2012-2013 academic year, courses EDF 5510 and SPE 2000 were removed as required coursework for certification for those students who did not have a teaching certificate. These changes, along with existing coursework covered content required by Section 25.225 of the Illinois Statute. Also during 2012-2013, new rubrics were utilized in the assessment cycle.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, an online assessment process was established and tested. As such, a new exit exam was created and used to assess all counseling students. See attachment "A" for a summary of the data.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, our course on Foundations of School Counseling and 5945 on Management of School Counseling Programs were combined into one course (5943 – Foundations and Management of School Counseling Programs). This change was based on feedback from faculty and students.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, an adjustment was made to our assessment reports. The change consisted of adopting student evaluations of course objectives to ascertain how effectively our classes are meeting syllabi objectives.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, the following courses were modified so as to remain in line with CACREP standards: 5500 – Research Methods, 5510 – Professional Orientation, 5520 – Theories of Counseling, 5530 – Basic Counseling Skills, 5600 – Cross-Cultural Counseling, 5610 – Human Development for Counselors, 5620 – Group Counseling, 5630 - Practicum, 5900 - Appraisal, 5920 – Career Counseling, 5930 – Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling, 5940 – Foundations of School Counseling, 5941 – Emerging Issues in School Counseling, 5942 – Collaboration, Consultation, and Intervention, 5943 – Foundations and Management of School Counseling Programs, 5980 – Diagnosing and Treatment Planning, 6900 – Supervised Clinical Experience, and 6920 – Supervised Experience. We are currently in the process of renewing our CACREP accreditation status as we were given full accreditation through 2021. As such, we have been reviewing all of our course materials including course objectives and learning assessments.

Over the past three years, the graduation rate averages 23 students per year with most completing the degree in the scheduled two year time. Using that same data, the graduate rates break down to an average of 11 Clinical Mental Health Counseling students and 12 School Counseling students per year. As of the Fall 2019 Tenth Day report, out of our total cohort of 73 students, only 7 are part-time. The program attempts to track graduate placements and has documented evidence of placements in multiple states and several doctoral programs.

d. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular changes

Course prefixes will be changed from CSD to CHE as of January 2020. Faculty will discuss the possibility of postponing the PEL exam until the second year of study for the school counseling students. With few exceptions critical thinking objectives were met. Faculty will discuss areas that fell below the 80% threshold our annual Fall Faculty retreat. Faculty will also discuss availability of class times to better accommodate students' schedules as well as address how we can improve collaboration and consistency between our faculty members. Starting in the fall of 2020, the department hopes to begin an annual Play Therapy Conference. This conference is in conjunction with our desire to create a Center for Play Therapy.

7. Responses to Institution-Assigned Issues

8. Outcome

8.1 Decision

X _____ Program in Good Standing

_____ Program flagged for Priority Review

_____ Program Enrollment Suspended

8.2 Explanation – PROVOST FEEDBACK

The program exceeds IBHE benchmarks and meets the definition of a program in good standing. With respect to program assessment, the department's framework evidences ongoing academic excellence and high quality student outcomes. The faculty and department's contribution to graduate education at EIU are much appreciated.

Attachment A

Average Percentage of Student Exit Interviews and Supervisor Surveys 2014-2019

Program Objectives	Required Courses	% Objective Was Met
1. Professional Identity	CSD 5510	96%
2. Social and Cultural Diversity	CSD 5600	93%
3. Human Growth and Development	CSD 5610	92%
4. Career Development	CSD 5920	83%
5. Helping Relationships	CSD 5530	96%
6. Group Counseling	CSD 5620	95%
7. Appraisal	CSD 5900	84%
8. Research	CSD 5500	80%
9. Overall Knowledge and Skills		98%
10. Faculty Assistance		90%
11. Overall Evaluation of the Program		95%