

William Paterson University
2023 CACREP Mid-Cycle Accreditation Report Summary

Introduction

The William Paterson University of New Jersey (WPUNJ) Professional Counseling Program is part of the Department of Special Education, Professional Counseling, and Disability Studies in the College of Education. The program offers Master's of Education in two 60 credit concentrations: Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling. Both of these program concentrations are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The program follows all policies, procedures, and guidelines required, identified, and outlined in the 2016 CACREP standards for each concentration. Our last CACREP re-accreditation was in 2018, and this summary is specific to the Mid-Cycle Report in 2023.

Current Accreditation Information

The WPUNJ currently has two CACREP accredited specialty areas in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling. Both specialty areas are accredited under the 2016 CACREP standards. They are each 60 credit programs. All of the curriculum in both specialty areas is offered on site at William Paterson University, 1600 Valley Road in Wayne NJ.

Changes in Program Operations

The WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program has undergone minor changes since our last accreditation cycle. First, the department in which the program resides has added an additional program, which has led to a new department name. At the time of our most recent site visit and reaccreditation the department name was Special Education and Professional Counseling. This has been renamed the Department of Special Education, Professional Counseling, and Disability Studies. Beyond the name change there has been no organizational change to the department. The department continues to be part of the WPUNJ College of Education. This change has had no impact on the Professional Counseling Program.

Second, we have moved from having a single program director for the Professional Counseling Program to having two co-directors of the program. Though the co-directors work closely together to direct the program as a whole, they each lead their respective specialty area.

The chart below illustrates the current organizational structure of the program.

WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program Structure

Housed within the

Department of Special Education, Professional Counseling, and Disability Studies (SEPD)

College of Education (COE)

Professional Counseling Co-Directors	Dr. Meredith Drew, Full Professor, Director of School Counseling Dr. Michelle Hinkle, Full Professor, Director of Clinical Mental Health Counseling
Professional Counseling Faculty	Dr. Paula Danzinger, Full Professor Dr. Karen Decker, Associate Professor Dr. Tim VanderGast, Full Professor

There have been no significant changes to the levels of budget or funding to the WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program in recent years. Further, admissions to the program have remained steady and there has not been a significant (+/- 15%) change in enrollment to either of our speciality areas since our re-accreditation.

Since our most recent site visit, our program developed two certification programs for New Jersey Public Schools PK-12. These certifications are post-Master's and connected to specific roles in the public school system in New Jersey. The first program is the Student Assistant Coordinator (SAC) certificate program. This program requires 21 credits in areas of human development, addiction, school counseling, clinical mental health counseling, and school law. It is approved by the New Jersey Department of Education and leads to a certificate of advanced standing in the state. The second program is the Director of School Counseling certificate program. This program is also for post-Master's students. The certificate requires 9 credits, with only 3 credits coming from the Professional Counseling Program. The course from the Professional Counseling Program is in the area of school law. The remaining 6 credits are housed in a separate department within the WPUNJ's College of Education.

These additional certificate programs do not impact our accredited programs and have no bearing on our resource needs. We are able to manage the enrollment in all courses and adhere to the required faculty:student ratio.

Faculty

At the time of our last site visit, the WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program had six (6) full time core faculty members: Dr. Paula Danzinger, Dr. Karen Decker, Dr. Meredith Drew,

Dr. Michelle Hinkle, and Dr. Tim VanderGast. Upon completion of the Spring 2020 semester, Dr. LaShauna Dean resigned from the program and university. The remaining five (5) faculty members are still with the Program as full time core faculty members. At the time of Dr. Dean’s resignation we calculated our student to faculty ratios, and they remained compliant with CACREP standards. Since then our enrollment has remained steady without large fluctuations. Therefore, no additional core faculty members have been hired and we do not currently have an open search for faculty members.

Faculty Resource Standards

Core/Noncore Faculty Credit Hour Delivery

In the last 12 month period (September 2022 - August 2023), we have had five (5) core faculty teaching a total of 46 classes, totalling 138 credit hours and four (4) noncore faculty, or adjunct instructors, teaching a total of 9 classes, totalling 27 credits. The table below depicts the breakdown of credits per semester by core faculty and noncore faculty for the 2022-2024 academic year. Table 3 in the Appendix shows the specific course, and credit loads, by faculty members (core and noncore) for the 2022-2023 academic year.

2022-2023 Academic Year Aggregate Credit Hour Ratios

Semester	Total Credit Hours	Core Faculty Credit Hours and Percentage	Noncore Faculty Hours and Percentage
Summer 2022	33	33 (100%)	0 (0%)
Fall 2022	57	48 (84%)	9 (16%)
Spring 2023	69	54 (78%)	15 (22%)
Summer 2023	39	36 (92%)	3 (8%)

Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Student to FTE Faculty Ratios

FTE calculations are based on the requirements set forth and followed by William Paterson University. Our full-time equivalent students to FTE faculty was determined by calculating the number of credits taught, FTE, and the number of credits students earned SCH (student credit hours), which varies if a student is full-time (9 credits) or part-time (3-6 credits) for the semester. After calculating the number of faculty and the required William Paterson University teaching load of 12 credits, we then calculated the students' credits by 3, 6, or 9. Students are able to take credits each semester between 3-9. Finally, we then divided the total SCH by FTE to determine the ratio. If a faculty member is teaching less than 12 credits, then their FTE is reduced accordingly. Noncore faculty members are listed at either .5 or less, as they are limited to teaching no more than 6 credits per semester.

2022-2023 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Student to FTE Faculty Ratios

Semester	FTE Student	FTE Faculty	Ratio
Summer 2022	369	33	11.2:1
Fall 2022	693	57	12.15:1
Spring 2023	633	66	9.59:1
Summer 2023	435	36	12.08:1

Curriculum

There have been no courses added to, or removed from, required curriculum since our program's last site visit. Though courses are continually reviewed during our assessment meetings each year, no substantial changes have been made to the overall curricula of each course.

Clinical Instruction: Entry-level Practicum and Internship

There have been no changes to the clinical instruction in our practicum and internship courses. Students take 1 semester of practicum and 2 semesters of internship. Students are required to have at least 1 hour of clinical supervision per week on site with their site supervisor in both practicum and internship. In addition, practicum and internship students take the accompanying respective 3 credit hour practicum or internship course, during which they meet for weekly group supervision with a faculty instructor. Our program runs multiple sections of practicum and internship so as to stay within a 12:1 student to faculty ratio in practicum and 6:1 student-to-faculty ratio in practicum. There have been no significant changes to the structure of our practicum or internship requirements or courses. Internship requirements and supervision structure remain the same since our re-accreditation.

2022-2023 Practicum Enrollment

Practicum Sections	Number of Students Enrolled
<i>CSP 6300 Advanced Skills and Practicum in School Counseling (Summer 2022)</i>	Section 1: 10
<i>CSP 6320 Advanced Skills and Practicum in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (Spring 2023)</i>	Section 1: 12
<i>CSP 6320 Advanced Skills and Practicum in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (Summer 2023)</i>	Section 1: 6 Section 2: 7

2022-2023 Internship Enrollment

Internship Sections	Number of Students Enrolled
CSP 6860 Internship in Counseling I (Fall 2022)	Section 1: 6 Section 2: 5 Section 3: 4 Section 4: 6
CSP 6870 Internship in Counseling II (Spring 2023)	Section 1: 6 Section 2: 5 Section 3: 5 Section 4: 6

Program Evaluation and Student Assessment

Assessment Review Activity: Program Assessment Annual Meeting

Each June the WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program faculty have an annual assessment meeting during which faculty review data from the previous academic year and make recommendations for the following academic year. During the meeting faculty reviews data collected in Anthology (formerly Chalk & Wire) that summarizes each semester's KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and critical assessments as indicated in the Comprehensive Assessment Plan. Related discussion includes areas of strength and areas for improvement throughout the year. Faculty compare data to years past to determine if data are idiosyncratic to the year or trends that need to be examined further.

Our most recent assessment meeting took place in June 2023, during which we discussed data from the previous year (Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023). Data from summer 2023 is not available as sessions run May 2023 to August 2023. This data will be reviewed at the June 2024 assessment meeting.

During the most recent meeting in June 2023, data revealed that scores were consistent with years past and student averages were at the competent level for KPIs and critical assessments. Discussion took place regarding data on the Pre-internship benchmark exam (critical assessment), for which faculty decided to return to a previous exam and administration protocol (further discussed below under critical assessments). Data remained consistent, across classes and years past, for professional dispositions (critical assessment), and the program co-directors made note to continue to train noncore/adjunct instructors in this area of data scoring for their classes in the next academic year to ensure continued consistency.

Assessment Review Activity: Vital Statistics & Annual Assessment Report

CACREP requires the submission of vital statistics each year that reports the previous academic year key statistics. The report is published on the website along with a summary of demographics of students, graduation rates, NCE passing scores, and job placement rates. Submission of this report is due to CACREP by December of each year. These documents can be found via the link below. The statistics are included on both the clinical mental health counseling and school counseling concentration pages.

The Annual Assessment Report, also required by CACREP, serves to summarize evaluative data from annual stakeholder surveys, student critical assessments, and other program information. The annual report is posted on our website each fall and updates are communicated to constituents.

[2022-2023 Vital Statistics \(CMHC\)](#)

[2022-2023 Vital Statistics \(School\)](#)

[2022-2023 CACREP Annual Assessment Report](#)

Assessment Review Activity: Graduate, Supervisor, and Employer Surveys

Upon the end of each spring semester, the WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program disseminates surveys via Qualtrics to our graduates, site supervisors, and program graduates' employers to obtain feedback regarding our program and preparation of our students. These surveys ask respondents to indicate students/graduates preparation in all 8 CACREP domains, as well as counseling skills exhibited on site at internship and/or employment. Program evaluations questions are also included, such as knowledge of, and advising, from program faculty and curriculum. There are also survey questions seeking recommendations for curriculum and areas of focus. All data is reviewed at a designated program meeting and results of the surveys are evaluated to determine areas of strength and improvement. Program modifications may be addressed as needs arise and trends in the surveys are noticed.

Though response rates vary each year, this past academic year (2022-2023) yielded a higher number of responses than years past. We attribute this to modifications in the recent year related to how and when the surveys are disseminated, which was the results of the year's past assessment review meeting. Though employer feedback remains typically low, program faculty are seeking to obtain employer contact information more readily than in the past in new ways in the coming year. Overall, the results from 2022-2023 provided positive feedback from respondents. The graduate survey indicated that respondents felt prepared in the 8 CACREP domains, prepared in their role as an intern based on knowledge and skills from the CACREP domains, and overall prepared to be a counselor. Supervisor/Employer respondents indicated that students were well prepared as an intern/employee and noted various areas of strengths in their preparation, as well as ideas for future consideration.

Assessment Review Activity: KPI Assessments/Course Assessments

The Professional Counseling Program has identified 27 rubrics as Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for both the Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling Concentrations. These KPIs are listed by core courses, clinical mental health counseling courses, and school counseling courses. For each course in each semester, students upload the assignment connected to the KPI into *Anthology* (formerly *Chalk & Wire*), which then triggers the faculty member to rate students' performance in that area on the following scale: (1) = Needs work, (2) = Progressing, (3) = Competent, or (4) = Advanced. In addition to entering a rating on the scale above, faculty can also enter comments into a description box for additional feedback. This

qualitative and quantitative data allows faculty to obtain aggregate data on student knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. Further, it provides a way to track data on the assignments, linked to CACREP standards, and track student learning outcomes across the course over time.

This data is reviewed during the Annual Assessment Meeting that faculty hold in June. Data is by program and then by assessment. As faculty review the data and the student results, discussions take place to determine areas of concern or review. Based on the review of KPIs from this past academic year, the faculty determined no changes were necessary and will continue to use the assessments as structured.

Assessment Review Activity: Critical Assessments

The WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program has identified critical assessments, which include assessment of students' clinical skills (i.e., assessed in a foundational skills course, practicum, and internship), program development (i.e., assessed in professional foundations course), comprehensive understanding of CACREP domains (i.e., assessed by student portfolio, pre-internship benchmark exam), and professional dispositions. There are six critical assessments and each is described below.

Skills: Techniques Evaluation (CSP 6010)

During CSP 6010 (fall and spring semester) students are assessed on their basic clinical skills through an evaluation of their techniques. These are rated on a 4-point scale and feedback is provided to the student on areas of strength and areas for improvement. Students complete this during their course to at the start of their academic program. Students must successfully complete this course with a B or better to continue in the program, as these are core counseling skills. The evaluations are housed in *Anthology* and reviewed by faculty at the Annual Assessment Meeting in June.

Scores review in June 2023 from the 2022-2023 academic year, indicated the majority of students scoring at developmentally appropriate levels of progressing and competent for foundational skills; therefore indicating no significant modifications are required.

Skills: Practicum and Internship Evaluations, including Site Supervisor Evaluations (CSP 6300, CSP 6320, CSP 6860, and CSP 6870)

Upon completion of Practicum (CSP 6300, School Counseling or CSP 6320 Clinical Mental Health Counseling), Internship I (CSP 6860), and Internship II (CSP 6870), students are evaluated by their site supervisor and their course instructor. Students complete CSP 6300 in the spring semester and CSP 6320 in the summer semester. Students completed CSP 6860 in the fall semester and CSP 6870 in the spring semester. These summative evaluations are housed on a 4-point scale and reviewed with students. The evaluations are stored in *Anthology* to be reviewed by program faculty at the Annual Assessment Meeting in June.

Scores review in June 2023 from the 2022-2023 academic year, indicated the majority of students scoring at developmentally appropriate levels of progressing (for practicum) and competent (for internship); therefore indicating no significant modifications are required.

Comprehensive Program Development Project (CSP 6200 and CSP 6220)

The Comprehensive Program Development Project is an assignment completed by School Counseling students in CSP 6200: Foundations of School Counseling (fall semester) and CMHC students in their respective CSP 6220: Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling course (summer semester). This project is scored on a rubric in *Anthology* and is scored on a variety of competencies related to program development and evaluation. Scores are examined and reviewed by program faculty at the Annual Assessment Meeting in June.

Scores review in June 2023 from the 2022-2023 academic year, indicated the majority of students scoring at competence; therefore indicating no significant modifications are required.

Student Portfolio

Prior to beginning practicum (during the spring semester), students complete a program portfolio in which they define, synthesize, and describe the importance of each CACREP domain. They are asked to provide meaning to each domain and identify how its competency is important for professional counselors. Students also reflect on their coursework and identify hallmark assignments that reflect their knowledge of each respective domain. Students are also directed to include a statement of their professional identity, as well as their philosophy and theory of counseling, in their portfolios. Students are evaluated on their CACREP knowledge and communication of domain competency, as well as their understanding of professional identity and theory. Rubric Scores for the portfolio are kept in *Anthology* and reviewed by program faculty at the Annual Assessment Meeting in June.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, scores were on par from years past with a strong majority of students exhibiting competency. As in each year, some students were provided the opportunity to resubmit their portfolio if they did not pass per program policy and if any students do not pass the second iteration they are given a remediation plan. Results from this previous year are consistent with years past, and no modifications were deemed necessary for this process.

Pre-Internship Benchmark (PIB) Exam

Pre-Internship Benchmark Exam (PIB) is the comprehensive exam that students take at the end of their spring semester prior to internship. This exam measures the eight CACREP domains in a multiple choice format. This past 2022-2023 year the program used the CECE (Counselor Education Comprehensive Exam). This is the second year the program used this exam. It was initially used due to the free cost and the ability to use the Blackboard course shell and exam features, including Respondus to ensure test monitoring. The use of this exam was discussed extensively at our most recent Annual Assessment Meeting. After review of the data over the past two years, faculty determined that the program would return to the CPCE (Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination) that was used previously. The CPCE is aligned more closely with our program format and course syllabi.

Disposition Assessments

Faculty evaluates and assesses each student's professional dispositions in Anthology (formerly *Chalk & Wire*) for their associated course. Students' professional dispositions are assessed in all core courses. This allows for all student assessment data to be entered, stored, and aggregated for each course and for each student. *Anthology* generates reports relevant to each students' dispositional data across courses.

These data were reviewed at our June Assessment Meeting. Discussion surrounded students of concern and students that need to be reviewed in mentor meetings. Faculty also discussed ensuring that the professional dispositions are rated the same by all instructors. As such, Program Directors have conducted training with adjunct instructors and reviewed guidelines with faculty. Although students are rated on a 4-point scale, we strive for our students to earn a score of 3, which reflects competence in the skill. For both our Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling Programs, our students have met or exceeded the score of 3, on average.

Assessment Review Activity: Systematic Review of Students and Remediation

Systematic Review of Students via Mentor Review Meetings

Students are assigned to a faculty mentor as they enter the program (this mentor is in addition to the program advisor, who is the program director). This faculty mentor monitors students' progress throughout the program. Specifically, students have a face-to-face meeting with two faculty members to discuss progress in the program. These meetings occur after credits are earned (first semester, 18 credits, 36 credits, and prior to Internship I enrollment). Program faculty decided credits earned as a monitor because it allows for sufficient time in the program for students to obtain their course feedback and implement it and then have additional program feedback as to their progress. Students are provided with verbal feedback on the strengths and areas to grow in the program. This feedback is given verbally to allow for clarification and questions. Students are provided with a letter including the same feedback. Students sign letters to verify meetings and discussions. Mentor meetings are reviewed at monthly program faculty meetings.

This student review process continues to be successful and faculty has decided no modifications are required.

Systematic Review of Students via Student Remediation

Faculty hold monthly program meetings that address a variety of program information. Specifically, faculty review any student of concerns and/or remediation plans. This allows for faculty to share concerns regarding students, as well as, discuss next steps and determine ways to support students. In the event students are under remediation they are provided with necessary information and documentation so that they know what is required for them to pass remediation to continue on course with their program. This process of remediation review provides students with concrete strategies to complete the program successfully. The faculty have found these monthly discussions to be valuable and will continue to use this procedure.

Assessment Review Activity: Admissions

The WPUNJ Professional Counseling Program has rolling admissions, and therefore, accepts qualified applicants to start in both fall or spring semesters throughout the year. All program faculty review applicants based on the following criteria: GPA, letters of recommendation, a personal essay, and a writing sample and interview. In the recent past, and for various reasons, we removed the requirement of the Miller Analogies Test from our admissions criteria. First, we felt that the bias inherent in the exam was not predictive of students' success in graduate school. Second, the cost of the exam may have prevented qualified applicants from submitting applications. Finally, the test is soon to be discontinued.

Assessment Review Activity: Teaching Evaluations

All program faculty, including adjunct instructors, are evaluated during the fall and spring semester. Evaluations are conducted by the university. Results are provided to the instructor the month after the semester has ended. These reports are also disseminated directly to the Department Chair. Program Directors are able to access adjunct faculty reviews. Faculty evaluations are not accessible to Program Directors. Teaching evaluations are not conducted during the summer semester, as per university guidelines. All instructors review the results of their teaching evaluations and make adjustments as appropriate.

Assessment Review Activity: Dissemination of Annual Reports

Notice of the annual reports are included in our Supervision Newsletter that is sent during both Fall and Spring semesters. The newsletter informs all parties that the summary evaluation is available on the program website and a link, for where it can be accessed, is provided. The newsletter is sent to all faculty, site supervisors, past supervisors, current students, and university administrators. In each edition of the newsletter, the last page contains the link to our most current annual report at the time of publication. This process of communication has been working well. Our next step is to begin archiving past newsletter editions onto the website.