School Counseling Program
Assessment Plan

The School Counseling program has developed a sequence of structured assessment measures in order to ensure that program quality and student progress are regularly monitored, and that appropriate interventions and modifications are implemented. Student progress is evaluated in a variety of contexts, using a variety of performance measures, at various times throughout the training experience.

I. Admissions to the Program:

During the admission process, candidates are evaluated on their performance in previous academic course work, admission exams, and prerequisite courses. Applicants are also evaluated for their skills in writing and using English (e.g., Writing Skills Test and Test of English as a Foreign Language). Selection criteria further require evidence of interpersonal effectiveness, cultural competence, clinical aptitudes, personal authenticity, and commitment to the profession. In order to assess for these qualities, a team of faculty conducts a personal interview with each applicant being considered. Letters of recommendation, as well as a written “Personal Statement” submitted by each applicant, provide additional information.

II. Formative Assessments:

After being admitted to the program, students are assessed at frequent intervals, both formally and informally. Assessment of academic progress is closely monitored on the basis of faculty evaluations and grades in program coursework. Because performance-based learning activities are emphasized in virtually every course, students are encouraged to design projects that link theory to practice. In addition, weekly meetings of program faculty are conducted to monitor student progress in acquiring knowledge and developing clinical aptitudes and professional disposition. On-site fieldwork supervisors provide quarterly ratings of student progress, as observed in context of the school setting. At the end of the first and the second years of the program, an Individual Advisory Interview is conducted by a team of faculty. The purpose of this interview is two-fold: (1) to verify the student’s satisfactory progress toward completion of program requirements, and (2) to support the student in self-evaluation and determination of personal goals. At the end of the first year, students who qualify are advanced to candidacy and advanced fieldwork status.

Two examples of entry-level courses provide opportunities for initial assessment of student learning. EPSY 6770 allows faculty to assess clinical aptitudes and EPSY 6620 gives early evidence of students’ ability to apply school guidance program models to actual practice. The Pupil Personnel Services Professional Dispositions and Clinical Aptitudes (see attached list) provide significant content for ongoing candidate evaluation. For example, EPSY 6770, 6671, and 6672; and EPSY 6770 support first-, and second-year students, respectively, in learning the importance of Professional Dispositions (integrity, empathy, commitment to social justice, flexibility, and tolerance for ambiguity) and Clinical Aptitudes (acceptance of constructive feedback, awareness of impact upon others, appropriate regulation of ego needs, support and leadership, risk taking, and cultural insight). In preparation for annual review interviews,
students are asked to rate themselves in each area and to select specific areas in which growth is needed. University faculty assists in this process by providing opportunities for practice and constructive feedback.

III. Exit Assessments:

Interviews and Culminating Experiences: Exit interviews, conducted at the end of the final quarter of study, elicit self-report information regarding candidates’ knowledge and skills, as measured by current CTC and ASCA standards for the specialization in school psychology. These self-report are compared with district supervisors’ evaluations and University supervisors’ assessment of dispositions and aptitudes. Again, prior to the granting of a clear Credential in School Counseling, the candidate must demonstrate the requisite “readiness, professional maturity, and personal commitment” for entrance into the field of school counseling.

Students are required to pass the National Certification in School Counseling Examination, the Praxis II, as a culminating experience, before program recommendation for the Credential. A passing score on this comprehensive examination evidences national standards of excellence in training and content knowledge. Students prepare for this examination in EPSY6205, Advance Pupil Personnel Services.

Students’ impact within their school-based field placements is assessed in three ways. First, University supervisors review final field supervisor evaluation areas (e.g., assessment, consultation, intervention, and communication effectiveness). Second, the School Counseling portfolio provides documentation of students’ specific contributions. Students are responsible for selecting a range of guidance curriculum activity summaries, SPARC reports based on their activities at their fieldwork school sites, group counseling proposals, and in-service projects, consultation summaries, and samples of creative activities. Third, students prepare professional development plans early in their second year. Students review their plans throughout their second year fieldwork experience. During the exit interview they discuss how progress toward their goals has influenced their work in schools.

IV. Program Assessment Process:

Admissions: CCSP faculty meet weekly during the admissions period to discuss application forms, applicant interview strategies (e.g., adding a scenario and professional questions this year), and applicant standards, and applicant standards (e.g., course prerequisites, standardized test results, and letters of recommendation). Upon completion of the admissions process, applicants’ grade point averages, standardized testing scores, and interview ratings are compared for candidate selection. Profiles of related strengths and weaknesses are noted at the point of program entry and are reviewed each year (e.g., the annual student review interview).

Course Evaluations & Student Feedback: In addition to regularly scheduled course evaluations, in which students provide feedback to faculty regarding teaching approaches, course organization, etc., students in the program are given many opportunities to offer ideas
regarding program development and revision. Elected class representatives meet regularly
with faculty to discuss program issues, air concerns, and collaborate in problem-solving. At
the end of each year, students are interviewed individually and asked for suggestions to
improve the program. On the basis of recent student recommendations, for example, our course
in Group Counseling (EPSY 6762) is now being offered earlier in the program.

**Follow-up Assessments:** College of Education and Allied Studies Alumni Surveys of
program graduates and local employers provide important data on graduates’ evaluations of
their training and employers’ ratings of the professional appropriateness of graduates’ training
for the field. After two years in the field, graduates are eligible to become school counseling
supervisors for our candidates in training. Telephone communication and feedback from these
graduates provide overview of professional progress and supervisory readiness two years after
completion of the program.

Our most reliable source of performance assessment and feedback information has been the
program’s network of fieldwork supervisors, and our Fieldwork Coordinating Committee.
These supervisors and coordinators of school counseling services are employers of graduates
and our first and second-year candidates. The Fieldwork Coordinating Committee will review
alumni survey data, feedback from graduate supervisors, and candidate exit interview
summaries during our Advisory and Coordinating meetings. Further, this group will help to
connect the data to the changing needs of local school districts.

The School Counseling program utilizes state (CCTC) and national (NCATE and ASCA)
guidelines to evaluate the program’s curriculum, training practices, and supervision. After
submitting program documents to the appropriate review committees, the School Counseling
program relies on detailed committee evaluation to improve all aspects of training, develop
CEAS strategic plans for continued improvement, and identify necessary resources to
document in CAPR reviews. The School Counseling program evaluates our assessment plan,
program philosophies, and student outcomes throughout the state and national review
processes. We ask program and EPSY Department faculty members for their suggestions in
improving course content, training practices, and program assessment. One ongoing source of
support for proactive change is our EPSY Department Curriculum Committee, which
 collaborates in developing proposals for program and course changes.

The assessment plan is modified periodically as local, regional, and national requirements and
demands change. The School Counseling Coordinator records programmatic decisions as well
as modifications to the program assessment plan and summarize records for the Fieldwork
Coordinating Committee members.