

Saybrook University, PhD Counselor Education and Supervision Annual Assessment Report

Aligned with 2024 CACREP Standards

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Introduction

This report includes a summary of the program assessment data for the Academic Year 2024-2025. AY 2024-2025 begins with the semester, Summer 2024, and includes Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. The program assessment report includes the following data.

- **Aggregate Assessment of Student Success:** incorporates Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI). PLO and KPI Data are collected through signature assignments embedded in courses. Personal and Professional Competencies (PPC) data is collected in conjunction with student attendance at the Residential Learning Experience from each student.
- **Community Partner Engagement:** including data from our student advisory committee and community partners.
- **Graduate Outcomes:** inclusive of surveys of our graduates and employers of program graduates.

During AY 2024-2025, the program went through a redevelopment process for alignment with the 2024 CACREP Standards. Summer 2024 was assessed under the 2016 standards and subsequently is not included in this report. The new data collection process for the KPI and PLO to measure the assessment of student success embedded in course assignments was piloted in Fall 2024. Due to incomplete data collection and inconsistency in faculty understanding and interpretation of the assessment process and criteria, the data from Fall 2024 was not reliable and thus is not included in the report. The report includes data from Spring 2025 on all Spring assessment points for KPIs and PLOs. Additionally, the process of assessing student PPCs was redeveloped during this time. Data will be collected using the new rubric in Fall 2025.

Unified Assessment Continuum

We have established a unified structure for assessing KPI, PLO, and Personal and Professional Competencies (PPC) to ensure equal measures and consistency across the data. Each assessment process establishes multiple assessment points across the program. Each criterion for a benchmark measurement is assessed on the following continuum:

- Demonstrates personal and professional competencies necessary to **MEET** benchmark criteria. Students who meet the benchmark criteria are determined to be on track developmentally.
- Demonstrates personal and professional competencies necessary for **APPROACHING** benchmark criteria. Students who are approaching the benchmark criteria are typically those who need extra support but show potential for developing the required skills and

knowledge without significant intervention. These students may receive additional support from an instructor and/or faculty advisor to aid their development.

- Demonstrates **LIMITED** evidence of personal and professional competencies for the benchmark criteria. Students who receive an assessment of limited evidence of personal and professional competencies for the benchmark criteria demonstrate more significant challenges or deficits in the necessary skills and may be referred for remediation planning.

Data Collection of Aggregate Student Success

The Counseling Department has adopted a set of knowledge areas, skills, and professional and personal qualities to be demonstrated by all students. The Program Learning Outcomes (PLO), Key Performance Indicators (KPI), and Personal and Professional Competencies (PPC) are used to track individual student development, and aggregate data is used to inform program review and revision. These PLOs are informed by the mission and core values of Saybrook University, while the KPIs are selected from the five CACREP core areas. Additionally, the PPCs reflect the values of the counseling and counselor education and supervision professions, the ACA Code of Ethics, and the CACREP Accreditation Standards.

PLO and KPI are measured at two points in the program: an initial assessment in the first half and a final assessment in the second half. A developmental benchmark criterion or Course Learning Outcome (CLO) describes each assessment point, and the assessment is embedded in a signature assignment in a required course. Faculty assess student performance on each PLO or KPI while using the rubric to grade the signature assignment. As a program, we have determined that the academic quality of a course is reflected in 80% or more of students receiving a “meets benchmark” assessment for the embedded PLO or KPI.

Student PPC is assessed in a dual assessment process that includes student self-assessment and a review and assessment by faculty at three benchmarks corresponding to key developmental periods: the first semester in the program, the semester before taking their comprehensive exam, and their final internship semester. Students are assessed on the following developmental benchmark progression:

Foundational Benchmark: The foundational benchmark is measured during the student’s first semester in the program. This benchmark measures initial awareness of the values and skills to assess a student’s personal and professional compatibility with the counselor education and supervision profession.

Practice Benchmark: The practice benchmark is measured in the semester before taking their comprehensive exam and is part of assessing readiness to progress towards doctoral candidacy.

This benchmark measures a student's more nuanced conceptualization of the counselor education and supervision profession and ability to practice personal and professional competencies through coursework and practical application in co-teaching and co-supervision within the department.

Culminating Benchmark: The completion benchmark is measured in the student's final internship semester. This benchmark measures a student's ability to put all personal and professional competencies into practice through more independent application of skills in their selected internship domains and their dissertation work.

Analysis of Aggregate Assessment of Student Success

The data from PLO, KPI, and PPC assessments is aggregated using Power BI reporting through Canvas. Use of Power BI for program assessment began in Spring 2025. The reporting tool allows for the review of the data for each assessment criterion of the PLO, KPI, and PPC through multiple reporting outputs. Programmatic review includes review of individual courses year over year, individual assessment criteria year over year, and individual student progression through the program.

Aggregate PLO, KPI, and PPC data are reviewed annually for program evaluation. A meeting with all core faculty is held once a year, at the end of the academic year, to review the current year's data and the year under review. If a course is below the threshold for academic quality, the signature assignment and related course curriculum are scheduled for revision to better address student skill and knowledge acquisition. Additional data from the graduate outcomes and the community partner engagement process is also taken into consideration during programmatic reviews. Individual courses and the entire curriculum sequence are also evaluated during this meeting for the suitability of PLO and KPI assessment placements across the curriculum and for the need for more global curriculum development. Revisions for academic quality may include changing textbooks, revising or replacing supplemental course resources, reordering curriculum delivery structure, reordering course sequence in the curriculum, revising assignments, and changing PLO or KPI assessment placement to ensure more accurate assessment of student skill and knowledge acquisition.

Aggregate Academic Quality Data

Program Learning Outcomes

The Counseling Department has identified five program learning outcomes connected to the five core CACREP areas for Counselor Education and Supervision. Upon completing the PhD

program, students will demonstrate the program learning outcome, representing essential professional identity development.

Program Learning Outcomes are phrased to speak to what students will be able to demonstrate upon completion of the program. Each PLO has two developmental benchmarks (Course Learning Outcomes) that match the developmental level of the students at the first and last assessment points. This structure permits us to align signature assignments with the objectives to allow for clear and measurable activities through which we can assess students' progression toward the PLO.

The following table reports the Summer 2024, Fall 2024, and Spring 2025 PLO assessment data.

Program Learning Outcome 1 (PLO 1)				
Demonstrate an advanced level of counseling skills, including an effective therapeutic alliance and the integration of a counseling theory (or theories) into a counseling practice.				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES7000 Advanced Theories & Practice	N/A	N/A	N=9 67% meet benchmark
Final Course Assessed	CES7074 Counseling Internship	N/A	N/A	N/A
Program Learning Outcome 2 (PLO 2)				
Examine and demonstrate an advanced understanding of advocacy and leadership within and on behalf of communities. This includes demonstrating an understanding of diverse experiences and how privilege, marginalization, and aspects of power impact community experiences.				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES7020 Leadership, Advocacy, & Ethics	N/A	N/A	N/A
Final Course Assessed	CES7027 Community Leadership & Engagement	N/A	N/A	N=10 90% meet benchmark
Program Learning Outcome 3 (PLO 3)				
Demonstrate an advanced ability to apply, critique, and synthesize theory into models of teaching and learning.				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES7025 Instructional Theory & Practice	N/A	N/A	N=10 100% meet benchmark
Final Course Assessed	CES7075/7080 Adv Internship I or II	N/A	N/A	N=4

				100% meet benchmark
Program Learning Outcome 4 (PLO 4) Demonstrate an advanced ability to apply, critique, and synthesize theory into models of supervision.				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES7010 Supervision & Consultation	N/A	N/A	N=13 69% meet benchmark
Final Course Assessed	CES7075/7080 Adv Internship I or II	N/A	N/A	N/A
Program Learning Outcome 5 (PLO 5) Utilize professional literature, research design and methodology, and best practices to generate original research to support counselor development and preparation.				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES7050 Quantitative Research Methodologies	N/A	N/A	Not offered due to resequencing
Final Course Assessed	CES7045 Research and Publication Seminar	N/A	N/A	N=3 100% meet benchmark

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The program has assigned one KPI for each curricular area of the CACREP Standards. Each KPI is assessed at two points: once, approximately in the program's first half, and once in the second half. Each KPI is assessed in a signature assignment embedded in a course. The assessment requirements are detailed in a Course Learning Outcome that matches the student's developmental level in the program.

The following table reports the Summer 2024, Fall 2024, and Spring 2025 KPI assessment data.

B.1 COUNSELING				
KPI 1: 6.B.1.b. integration of theories relevant to counseling				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES 7000 Advanced Theories and Practice	N/A	N/A	N=19 68% meet benchmark
Secondary Course Assessed	CES 7074 Counseling Internship	N/A	N/A	N/A

B.2. SUPERVISION				
KPI 2: 6.B.2.d. skills of counseling supervision across multiple settings and across service delivery modalities				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES 7010 Supervision and Consultation	N/A	N/A	Missing Data
Secondary Course Assessed	CES 7011 Advanced Supervision Principles and Process	N/A	1st offering in Fall 25	N/A
B.3. TEACHING				
KPI 3: 6.B.3.c. teaching methods relevant to counselor education				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES 7025 Instructional Theory and Practice	N/A	N/A	N=10 90% meet benchmark
Secondary Course Assessed	CES 7026 Advanced Teaching Principles & Process	N/A	N/A	1st offering in Sp 26
B.4. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP				
KPI 4: 6.B.4.g. research questions or hypotheses appropriate for professional research and publication				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES 7055 Qualitative Research Methodology	N/A	N/A	N/A
Secondary Course Assessed	CES 7045 Research and Publication Seminar	N/A	N/A	N=3 100% meet benchmark
B.5. LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY				
KPI 5: 6.B.5.h. current sociopolitical and social justice issues and how those issues affect the counseling profession				
	Assessment In	Results		
		Sum 24	Fall 24	Spring 25
Initial Course Assessed	CES 7035 Introduction to Counselor Education	N/A	N/A	N/A
Secondary Course Assessed	CES 7027 Community Leadership and Engagement	N/A	N/A	N=10 90% meet benchmark

Key PLO and KPI Findings

The data from Spring 2025 demonstrates that additional faculty training and continued review of the assessment process are necessary. The results yielded missing data in CES7000 Advanced Theories and Practice, where the PLO was not assessed in one section. Additionally, the KPI was missing from the rubric in CES7010 Supervision and Consultation and thus was not assessed in this course. The CES7000 Advanced Theories and Practice (KPI 1 =68% and PLO =67%) and CES7010 Supervision and Consultation (PLO 4=69%) courses scored below the 80% threshold. The Advanced Theories course will be reviewed for signature assignment alignment with the KPI and PLO. The Supervision course is part of a newly redeveloped sequence to add CES 7011 Advanced Supervision Principles and Process. These two courses will be reviewed in conjunction with each other to determine developmentally appropriate curriculum sequencing to better align the signature assignments and CLOs with the two courses.

Personal and Professional Competencies

The Counseling Department's personal and professional competencies reflect the values of the counseling and counselor education and supervision professions, the ACA Code of Ethics, and the CACREP Accreditation Standards. Students in the PhD CES program must abide by and demonstrate competency in relevant ethical codes and must be able to demonstrate professional knowledge, technical and interpersonal skills, professional attitudes, and professional character beyond the master's level. These factors are evaluated based on, among other factors, academic performance and the ability to convey warmth, genuineness, respect, and empathy in interactions with classmates, staff, faculty, clients, site supervisors, and co-workers. Students should be cognizant of their impact on others. They should demonstrate the ability to accept and integrate feedback, accept personal responsibility, express feelings appropriately, and exercise professional judgment in decision-making regarding issues and situations encountered in the program.

The following areas are measured in the PhD Counselor Education and Supervision PPC:

- Openness to growth and learning
- Engages multiple perspectives
- Self-assess areas for growth
- Takes responsibility for learning
- Awareness of one's own impact on others
- Collaborative relationships
- Reflexivity and integration of feedback
- Cultural humility and responsiveness
- Cognitive flexibility and acceptance of ambiguity
- Critical thinking and use of professional literature

- Emotional regulation and self-expression
- Attention to professional, ethical, and legal considerations
- Academic Performance
- Development of a theory-based COUNSELING professional identity
- Development of a theory-based TEACHING professional identity
- Development of a theory-based SUPERVISION professional identity
- Development of a theory-based LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY professional identity
- Development of a theory-based RESEARCH professional identity

Key PPC Findings

The PPCs for the 2024 CACREP standards were not assessed during the AY 2024-2025. The first data collection using the new PPC assessment rubric will occur in conjunction with the fall 2025 Residential Learning Experience. Data for AY 2025-2026 will be reported in August 2026.

Community Partner Engagement Data Collection and Analysis

The community advisory committee is convened annually each June. Prior to the focus group meeting, members of the community advisory committee are sent program handbooks, syllabi for any courses scheduled for revision, and other materials for review.

The community advisor committee members are asked for recommendations on the program's mission, program learning outcomes, course curriculum scheduled for revision, and other relevant program modifications. The advisory committee is asked for input on topics such as current trends in the profession, themes in commonly observed areas for improvement in new graduates, and a vision for the future of counseling and counselor education.

The community committee includes stakeholders from the following representative groups:

- MA Counseling Student
- PhD Counselor Education and Supervision Student
- Program Alumni
- Counselor Educator and Supervisor (not employed by Saybrook)
- Professional Association Representative
- Clinical Supervisor

Key Community Advisory Committee Findings

The 2025 Community Advisory Committee was composed of two current students representing the Student Advisory Committee, two MA Counseling program alumni, one Counselor Educator and Supervisor external to the department, and one professional association executive director. Several current site supervisors from our MA Counseling clinical experience sites were invited to join, but none were able to commit time.

The focus group discussions yielded several critical areas of strength, challenge, and recommended curriculum changes, which are summarized below:

- **Departmental Strengths and Responsiveness:** A major strength is the supportive community environment and the high caliber of students and compassionate professors. The department is lauded for being extremely responsive to feedback, often incorporating changes (like rebuilding/changing classes) based on prior cohorts' input, within CACREP constraints.
- **RLE Financial Communication:** There is a significant need for better pre-admission communication regarding the costs relating to the Residential Learning Experiences (RLEs) (including travel, food, and lodging). Furthermore, financial aid allocated for this required "credit" sometimes arrives as late as the day of arrival.
- **Addressing Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI is a key trend that must be addressed "100 percent without question". The curriculum needs to encourage conversations about how to work with AI, its implications, and ethical boundaries, as the counseling profession is perceived as already being behind on this trend. To combat AI usage in written assignments, the department should increase the number of optional synchronous meetings (such as interactive case discussions) to provide alternative methods for learning, engagement, and assessing student skills and benchmarks.
- **Mission as Change Agency:** The program's mission should be revised to emphasize that graduates are prepared to be advocates and change agents in their communities, as a focus on competence alone is deemed insufficient.

Graduate Outcomes Data and Analysis

The survey of program graduates is conducted through the Saybrook Office of Institutional Research (OIR). The Department Chair and Associate Department Chair work with the OIR to ensure surveys are distributed regularly and data is included in the annual reporting. OIR distributes the surveys to all recently graduated students. The OIR then provides the aggregate responses to the Counseling Department for inclusion in the annual report. We did

not receive any responses from our 2024-2025 graduates and thus have not included any survey results in this report.

Overall Findings

The data from the AY 2024-2025 indicate a need for both faculty training and a continued review of the assessment process due to missing data and scores below the 80% threshold in key courses, particularly CES7000 and CES7010. Consequently, the curriculum for these courses, including a newly added advanced course, will be revised for better alignment of assignments and learning outcomes. Furthermore, feedback gathered from a Community Advisory Committee and focus groups highlighted several areas, including the program's supportive environment as a strength and the critical need for improved communication regarding the financial costs of Residential Learning Experiences (RLEs). The program must also integrate discussions about Artificial Intelligence (AI), addressing its ethical implications and uses in the counseling field. The recommendation to revise the department and program missions will be reviewed in the coming academic year to better emphasize the program's mission for graduates' roles as advocates and change agents.