University of Alabama at Birmingham

School of Education and Human Sciences

Department of Human Studies

Counseling Program

2024-2025 State of the Program Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The UAB Counseling Program (CP) relies on data from various sources to inform programmatic decisions. Data are divided into two categories, including enrollment data and learning outcomes. Enrollment data are used to document trends in the characteristics of applicants, current students, and alumni. Learning outcomes are used to assess whether students are indeed acquiring and demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities targeted by the current curriculum. A detailed outline regarding the CP's assessment procedures is documented in the UAB Program Assessment and Evaluation Manual. The current report summarizes program data to guide decision making and program development and informs program stakeholders.

Enrollment Data

Enrollment data are collected via three sources: Admission/Application Data, Enrollment or Headcount Data, and Specialty Track Data. This total does not typically include certificate-only students, though those numbers are noted in the next table. Accreditation plays a significant role in admission numbers and thus enrollment data, as CACREP has a specific faculty-to-student ratio to which programs must adhere.

Overall, enrollment peaked in the 2020-2021 academic year due to admission decisions made in spring 2020 when there was a program-high count of six faculty members. While applications remained steady, enrollment deliberately decreased in the 2022-2023 AY due to faculty decreasing to 5 full-time core faculty members (from 6 in 2020), and a need to stay within CACREP ratios for students to faculty. Enrollment further decreased in AY 23-24 when the faculty decreased to four full-time faculty, necessitating another deliberate adjustment in overall numbers to accommodate the CACREP ratios. Application numbers increased in AY 23-24 and again in 24-25 from the previous academic year, resulting in a smaller admission rate.

Total Counseling Program Enrollment Data 2020-2024

Enrollment Data	
Academic	**Count**
Fall 2020	118
Spring 2021	136
Summer 2021	116
Fall 2021	125
Spring 2022	121
Summer 2022	95
Fall 2022	110
Spring 2023	112
Summer 2023	89
Fall 2023	86
Spring 2024	84
Summer 2024	70
Fall 2024	82

Spring 2025	85
Summer 2025	73

Each specialty also tracks student enrollment. (See Enrollment by Specialty Table following narrative.) Enrollment in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) steadily increased from fall 2019-2021, which also reflects increasing application numbers. Due to compliance with CACREP ratios and a smaller number of faculty, that number has slightly decreased since the 2020-2021 peak.

The Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling (MCFC) concentration, which began in fall 2016, continued to grow steadily, though the decrease in enrollment in this concentration for 2023-2024 echoes the deliberate decrease in the CMHC concentration as well due to compliance with CACREP ratios. This concentration's growth increased since the CMHC certificate was added in 2019 which allowed MCFC students to also take the CMHC courses as part of their program of study. The CMHC certificate was developed in response to feedback from students interested in the MCF concentration but who wanted coursework in both MCFC and CMHC.

Substantial declines in summer enrollment can be observed largely for three reasons: School Counseling (SC) students did not enroll in clinical coursework in the summers due to a lack of placement opportunities in schools, full time students often take an average of 6 credits in the summer instead of the average of 9 credits in fall and spring due to the more intensive 10-week summer course schedule (with the exception of clinical courses, which are 14 weeks), and the program offers fewer courses overall in the summer semester.

The CP does have some students (normally graduates of Counseling Programs, including UAB's) who are admitted just for completion of the MCFC and CMHC certificates, and those numbers are listed below. As the numbers illustrate, enrollment in these certificate-only options has fluctuated, but remains steady. Internal numbers for the certificates are not reported here, but it is important to note that many students complete a certificate while enrolled in the program to take the coursework from both concentrations.

* It is important to note that in the fall 2023 semester, an administrative decision was made to sunset the school counseling concentration and no longer admit school counseling students due to lower enrollment numbers. Therefore, the SC enrollment numbers continue to decrease until the last SC students graduated in Spring 2024. A data review indicates that enrollment in the School Counseling (SC) track noticeably decreased in the most recent academic years from 18 students in fall 2021 to 8 students in fall 2023. This was accompanied by a decrease in applications for the school counseling concentration, though CMHC and MCFC applications remain steady. Faculty also note the absence of a full-time school counseling faculty member from 2020-2022 as a factor affecting recruiting for that concentration.

Enrollment by Specialty 2020-2025

	CMHC	SC	MCFC	MCFC Cert.-Only	CMHC Cert.-only
Fall 2020	87	18	13	5	1
Spring 2021	96	19	21	7	1
Summer 2021	83	14	19	9	2
Fall 2021	81	18	26	5	1
Spring 2022	77	16	28	4	1
Summer 2022	63	11	21	8	1
Fall 2022	71	10	29	3	1
Spring 2023	74	9	29	4	1
Summer 2023	53	9	27	7	3
Fall 2023	53	8	25	6	2
Spring 2024	59	5	20	3	1
Summer 2024	52	2	16	7	2
Fall 2024	63	0	19	3	2
Spring 2025	68	0	17	2	1
Summer 2025	57	0	16	4	2

CMHC: Clinical Mental Health Counseling; SC: School Counseling; MCFC: Marriage Couples and Family Counseling; MCFC Cert.: Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling Certificate; CMHC Cert: Clinical Mental Health Counseling Certificate

NOTE: The MCFC and MCFC Cert programs began fall 2016. The CMHC Cert. program began in fall 2019 for internal students, and summer 2020 for external certificate-only students.

The School Counseling program stopped admitting students in fall 2023.

National Counselor Examination (NCE) Examination Results 2020-2025

Date of NCE	Number Tested	Number Passed	UAB Passage Rate	National Passage Rate
Fall 2020	10	9	90%	80.5% (4,235 test-takers)
Spring 2021	17	17	100%	80.7% (5,117 test-takers)
Fall 2021	10	10	100%	79.9% (9,969 test-takers)
Spring 2022	19	19	100%	63% (8,177 test-takers)
Fall 2022	7	7	100%	79% (3,151 test-takers)

Spring 2023	9	9	100%	80.7% (5,094) test-takers
Fall 2023	11	11	100%	91% (3523 test-takers)
Spring 2024	8	7	87.5%	92% (3960 test-takers)
Fall 2024	12	11	91.6%	84% (3,656 test-takers)
Spring 2025	11	10	91%	87% (4,759 test-takers)

Program pass rate for 2024-2025 was 91.3% with 23 students taking the exam during this academic year. As evidenced by this chart, UAB Counseling student pass rates remain consistently high for the NCE and are either near or above the national pass-rate.

NOTE: The NCE is typically offered in the fall and spring each year.

Key Program Indicator: CPCE Examination Results (Non-Exit)

*The following results reflect scores from fall 2024, spring 2025, and summer 2025 examinations. The CPCE is taken by each student the semester before beginning their clinicals which is generally during their last year of the program. The UAB scores and National scores represent those students who took the exam as a non-exit exam. The UAB internal Counseling

Program pass rate in 2024-2025 was 80% with 25 students taking the exam during this academic year. Each section of the CPCE has a maximum score of 17.

*CPCE Examination Results (Non-Exit) Fall 2024 & Spring 2025

Exam Section	UAB Results (Average Score) n= 13	National Results (Non-Exit) (Average Score)
Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice	12.5	12.3
Social & Cultural Diversity	11.4	10.7
Human Growth & Development	11.1	11.6
Career Development	11.7	11.5
Counseling & Helping Relationships	11.1	10.9
Group Counseling & Group Work	13.4	12.8
Assessment & Testing	11.2	10.5
Research & Program Evaluation	11.1	10.5
Total Score	93.3	90.6

*When viewing these scores, it is important to note that in fall 2024, there was one set of scores that was significantly lower than the others that were tested in this academic year. This resulted in the fall 2024/spring 2025 score averages skewing lower than those in previous semesters. When that outlier is removed, the averages are much more consistent with past semesters and those in the summer of 2025.

CPCE Examination Results (Non-Exit) Summer 2025

Exam Section	UAB Results (Average Score) n=12	National Results (Non-exit) (Average Score)
Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice	12.2	11.7
Social & Cultural Diversity	10.6	10.1
Human Growth & Development	10.5	11.4
Career Development	11.9	10.9
Counseling & Helping Relationships	11.2	10.7
Group Counseling & Group Work	12.7	12.5
Assessment & Testing	10.3	10.1
Research & Program Evaluation	10.3	9.8
Total Score	89.6	87.2

From these data, it appears that overall, UAB counseling students, on average, continue to score above the national average for total score on the CPCE. When examining the spring and summer scores, UAB Counseling students appear to demonstrate particularly strong performances in Social and Cultural Diversity, and Research & Program Evaluation (.5 point higher or more on average).

Conversely, UAB student mean scores fell below the national mean in Human Growth & Development in each test-taking period. As Human Growth & Development scores were stronger in the CPCE testing results in academic year 2023-2024, Counseling Program faculty will continue to monitor the scores for this area in the upcoming year.

Key Program Indicator: Counselor Competencies Scale (CCS)

Midterm and Final Evaluations for ECG 695, 696, and 697 AY 2023-2024

The Counselor Competencies Scale (CCS) is a Key Performance Indicator administered to all students in each semester of clinicals in ECG 695, ECG 696, and ECG 697. Clinical site supervisors complete the CCS for each student midway through the semester (the midterm evaluation), and at the end of the semester (the final evaluation). The CCS evaluates 32 clinical skills and professional dispositions through three sections (Primary Counseling Skills, Professional Dispositions, and Professional Behaviors). It has four categories: Unacceptable (score of 1), Near Expectations (score of 2), Meets Expectations (score of 3), and Exceeds Expectations (score of 4). Students are expected to have an average score of at least 3 on the CCS given as the final evaluation at the end of each clinical semester.

2024-2025 AY CCS Average Scores

Course	Midterm Evaluation (Range 1.0-4.0)	Final Evaluation (Range 1.0-4.0)
ECG 695: Practicum II	3.08	3.62
ECG 696: Counseling Internship A	3.36	3.46
ECG 697: Counseling Internship B	3.54	3.70

As evidenced by the above chart, for the academic year 2024-2025, Counseling Program students scored above the Meets Expectations/Demonstrates Competencies category (3.0) for both the midterm and final evaluations for all three clinical courses. On average, students also showed improvement on this assessment in each course from the midterm evaluation to the final evaluation.

Non-Academic Program Outcomes:

All students who graduated in the 2024-2025 academic year completed eight counseling sessions as a client before starting clinical courses. All students who graduated during this academic period completed 15 hours of approved counseling-related professional development training while enrolled in the UAB Counseling Program. At least half of these hours are completed through workshops and monthly seminars offered by the UAB Counseling Program's Zeta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, the international counseling honor society.

Changes to the clinical placement process

Major changes were made to the UAB CP's clinical placement process beginning for the summer 2025 semester. Where students were previously placed at a clinical site by the Clinical Placement Coordinator in the semester before students began Practicum II, students are now able to apply on their own to clinical sites. This new process allows students to have more autonomy in selecting their clinical site and also gives sites the opportunity to interview more than one candidate, if they choose. This new process was informed through surveying and soliciting input from clinical students, site supervisors, and program faculty.

The clinical placement process is now initiated approximately two semesters before the student is due to start their practicum and internship experiences. At that point, students will complete the Application for Clinical Placement form and will then attend an orientation that is led by the Clinical Placement Coordinator near the beginning of the semester. During this session, students will learn more about the clinical placement process and requirements for passing practicum and internship courses. Specifically, MCF and CMHC students will be introduced to university-contracted practicum and internship sites and provided with a list detailing information about each site related to their concentration area. Students may not contact potential sites until after the orientation session.

Upon receiving the current list of sites during orientation, students will proceed to contact the approved sites in which they are interested. If sites have availability, they may contact the student requesting that they provide the site with their resume and/or schedule a professional interview. Following the interview, if there is mutual interest in proceeding, the student will contact the CPC and both the students, and the site supervisor will sign the Written Supervision Agreement electronically and will submit it to the CPC to officially confirm their match with the site. Students will have two semesters to secure a site before beginning Practicum II.

2024-2025 Student Site/Site Supervisor Evaluation Results

The counseling program regularly conducts systematic follow-ups with students in clinical field experience. Every semester, students are surveyed on their clinical sites. New surveys were previously developed with faculty and administrator input to include questions about site supervision in addition to existing questions about their clinical sites. Student evaluations of their clinical fieldwork experiences revealed positive feedback overall about both the clinical sites and

the supervision they received. Overall, among 47 respondents, approximately 90% of students recommended their clinical sites as a placement for other students.

Clinical Site. Students consistently reported that their clinical sites offered valuable opportunities to apply their counseling skills in real-world settings. Some of the opportunities described included working with a range of presenting issues and a diverse clientele, experiencing a wide range of counseling techniques and clinical tasks, including individual and group counseling, assessment, intake roles, treatment planning, and case note documentation. Students reported that these experiences helped to increase their confidence, gave them the opportunity to gradually increase their independence, and allowed them to develop professionally in a variety of ways. Among all responses, about 92% of students found their clinical sites to be highly nurturing and supportive of their learning. Overall, students felt that they received effective orientation to their sites, and many emphasized the opportunity to learn from their peers and co-workers as a specific benefit.

Site Supervisor. Around 97% of students provided positive feedback regarding their site supervisors, with comments stating that their site supervisors were supportive, encouraging, and gave helpful feedback. Supervisors were often described as validating, accessible, helpful, and willing to invest in the students' success. Students highlighted the guidance and specific feedback they received from their supervisors, which they described as helpful for development of their skills and navigating clients' presenting issues and diagnoses. Students remarked on the personal investment their supervisors made in their development, with several students noting that their supervisor helped them to set appropriate expectations and goals for themselves throughout their clinical experience.

There were some areas of improvement that were specific to some sites that were indicated in these surveys. Some of these areas mentioned include the challenge of adjusting to larger caseloads, difficulties presented by the amount of turnover amongst staff or administrators at a few sites and spending longer periods of time in orientation observing sessions rather than leading them. Program faculty will consider this feedback and will continue to monitor this issue closely in future semesters, particularly at sites where these challenges occurred.

Stakeholder Surveys:

The counseling program regularly conducts systematic follow-up studies of graduates, site supervisors, and employers of program graduates. These surveys are distributed every two years and were sent in spring 2025 to each stakeholder group. All site supervisors and program alumni from the past year are sent the survey link via email, and faculty compile a list of known employers of program graduates and email the link to those individuals. The results are below.

2024-2025 Site Supervisor Survey Results

Q1 - As a site supervisor, your feedback is essential for the UAB Counselor Education Program. Please take a few moments to respond to the questions below based on your own experiences working with our students. Please rate the UAB practicum/internship students' abilities to do the following (Remember: you are responding based on your overall experience with UAB counselor education students, not one particular student in mind):

#	Field	0 = Extremely Poor	1 = Below Average	2 = Average	3 = Above Average	4 = Excellent	Total
1	Develop collaborative relationships with colleagues	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	33.33% 3.00	66.67% 6.00	9
2	Engage in evidence based practice	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	44.44% 4.00	55.56% 5.00	9
3	Documentation practices	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	11.11% 1.00	33.33% 3.00	55.56% 5.00	9
4	Tendency to adhere and uphold program policies and procedures	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	11.11% 1.00	11.11% 1.00	77.78% 7.00	9

Total Responses	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Average
9	2	4	3.58

Q2-"Please identify any gaps in knowledge or skill areas that you have noticed in practicum/internship students of the UAB Counseling Program."

6/9 respondents responded to this question. A summary of responses with identifying/specific information removed is below:

- Could benefit more from learning more about interdisciplinary teams and how they all can work together
- addiction/trauma
- Different formats of clinical notes (SOAP, DAP, etc.) as well as clinical wording, terms, etc.
- Complex treatment planning
- Direct DSM-5 knowledge and use

Q3-"Please identify any strengths that you have noticed in practicum/internship students of the UAB Counseling Program."

8/9 respondents responded to this question. A summary of responses with identifying/specific information removed is below:

- Students have experience with documentation and know of some interventions
- Professionalism, knowledge of counseling theory

- The quality of students we have had from UAB in the last year have been great.
- Foundational and attending skills are always above average.
- The UAB students we have at our site are especially interested in our population and mission and are eager to learn and improve their counseling skills and teamwork ability. Their counseling education is particularly excellent.
- Well-rounded students - not afraid of working with our population
- Thus far UAB students have been very eager to learn and engage.

2024-2025 Alumni Survey Results

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#	Field	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	This program has prepared me for managing legal, ethical, and professional issues associated with counseling	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
2	This program has prepared me to apply knowledge of human growth and development to work effectively with developmental issues of student/clients	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
3	This program has familiarized me with counseling theories and facilitated the development and application of a personal theoretical model to my counseling practice	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
4	This program has provided sufficient information for understanding the importance of test reliability and validity and how to select, administer, and interpret assessment instruments	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
5	This program has familiarized me with group theories and methods and prepared me to conduct group counseling	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
6	This program has prepared me for working effectively with diverse clientele (e.g., differences in race/ethnicity, abilities, socioeconomic class, culture, and gender)	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
7	This program has provided the necessary knowledge for me to conduct effective career counseling with clients	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	3
8	This program has prepared me to use interviewing and counseling skills to develop a therapeutic relationship and execute effective counseling interventions	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
9	This program has prepared me to develop collaborative relationships with colleagues	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3
10	In comparison to co-workers, I was just as prepared or more prepared to learn and adapt to the policies and procedures at my place of employment.	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3

Respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Average
3	2 (disagree)	5 (strongly agree)	4.53

Q2 - Please discuss areas of strength for the program:

1/3 respondents responded to this question.

A summary of responses with identifying/specific information removed is below:

- Strong focus on advocacy for clients

Q3 - Please discuss areas where you believe the program can show improvement

2/3 respondents responded to this question.

A summary of responses is below:

- Would like more trauma care education
- Giving students a heads up of what's to come- how to get licensed, etc.

2024-2025 Employer Survey Results

Q1 - As an employer, your feedback is essential for the UAB Counselor Education Program. Please take a few moments to respond to the questions below based on your own experiences working with our students. Please rate the UAB practicum/internship students' abilities to do the following:

#	Field	0 = Extremely Poor	1 = Below Average	2 = Average	3 = Above Average	4 = Excellent	Total
1	Develop collaborative relationships with colleagues	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	100.00% 2.00	2
2	Engage in evidence based practice	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	100.00% 2.00	2
3	Documentation practices	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	100.00% 2.00	0.00% 0.00	2
4	Tendency to adhere to and uphold program policies and procedures	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	100.00% 2.00	2

Total Responses	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Average
2	3	4	3.75

Q2- Please identify any gaps in knowledge or skill areas that you have noticed in employees who are graduates of the UAB Counseling Program.

* There were no responses to this question

Q3- Please identify any strengths that you have noticed in employees that are graduates of the UAB Counseling Program:

1 respondent replied to this question

- Students seem well-prepared and eager to start their career

Program Changes/Considerations as a Response to Stakeholder Surveys/Feedback:

1) Poor response rate
   Overall, the response rates to all three surveys were poor, with only the employer survey having more responses than the last time the surveys were distributed in 2023 (and there was only one additional response to that survey compared to the previous distribution). One challenge noted by faculty is that students eventually lose access to their UAB email address and/or may stop checking it after graduation. The exit survey includes a field where students can list their permanent email, and students who do so have the survey sent to that email address. But not all students complete the exit survey, so not all students receive the survey at their permanent email, increasing the chance that students may not view the survey request. The exit survey also includes questions concerning whether students have procured employment or are planning to apply to doctoral programs, which would assist with obtaining program data for Academic Quality Indicators (discussed in more detail in the next section). Currently, the program sends the exit survey to students at the end of their last semester. Faculty have discussed ways to increase student response to the exit survey to ensure that the program has their permanent email address and have solicited methods that other programs may use. One option includes requiring that students complete the exit survey as part of their Internship B requirements, which is usually completed in their last semester of the program. Faculty are continuing to consider the logistics of this possibility and continue to look into others. Options to increase site supervisor responses include having site supervisors complete this survey when completing students' final clinical evaluations, though faculty do not want site supervisors to complete it with a specific student in mind, which could be a challenge after they have just completed an in-depth evaluation of an individual student. Faculty plans to continue examining methods to increase response rate before the next survey distribution in 2027.

2) Licensure process information 600 and 680
   Licensure processes for the LPC and LMFT in Alabama are covered in ECG 612: Professional Orientation. This information is also covered in ECG 600 in the Clinical Mental Health concentration, and further information was recently added to ECG 680 for the Marriage, Couples, and Family concentration based on feedback from students and faculty. Faculty added curriculum around the licensure process in each semester of clinicals. Faculty will look at possible ways to further infuse this information into the program and will discuss the need to double-check that both licensure processes are reviewed in the group supervision course in each semester of clinicals.

3) Clinical Documentation

Clinical documentation is in the syllabi of the clinical courses, with specific readings concerning clinical documentation, treatment planning, and case notes in the clinical syllabi. Faculty will discuss ways to ensure that this material is reviewed, and can review the material used to ensure that a variety of documentation types are taught.

4) Knowledge and Use of Diagnosis

In the past two site supervisor surveys, knowledge and use of diagnosis has been noted as a potential gap for UAB clinical students when beginning clinicals. At the UAB CP's most recent annual data day normally held in the summer or fall, when core faculty, staff, and administrators review various program data from the past year, this specific feedback was discussed. Faculty noted that, as the diagnosis course is not an area I course and does not need to be taken before clinicals, it is often taken during clinicals/near the end of a student's program. Faculty discussed possible actions to take such as inserting more diagnostic curriculum into Practicum II, the first semester of clinicals, and reviewing the annual schedule to see if there are ways to move diagnosis further up in students' programs of study. Faculty plans to examine the logistics of these possibilities further in AY 2025-2026.

Academic Quality Indicator (AQI) Results for 2024-2025:

Per CACREP requirements, the UAB Counseling Program assesses several identified Academic Quality Indicators (AQIs) which assess the overall performance of the counseling program and its students. These include professional disposition evaluations, employment rates for students post-graduation, acceptance into counselor education PhD programs, and overall student performance on the program's Key Performance Indicator assessments. CACREP-accredited counseling programs must also set minimum thresholds for each AQI and regularly track the achievement of these thresholds. The UAB CP has set a minimum threshold of 80% for satisfactory dispositions for all students each year, as professional dispositions are assessed for all students annually using the CP Professional Dispositions Evaluation. A satisfactory rating for these assessment means that a student has a rating of at least two (out of three), which is a rating of "emergent" on every category. A rating of one in any category, which indicates that a student "does not meet" that criteria, means that a student will receive a dispositional letter and will develop a personal improvement plan with their advisor to address that area of deficiency. For AY 2024-2025, 95.5% of students had satisfactory professional dispositions.

The minimum threshold for employment rates (using CACREP's definition including those who are looking for a counseling job and secure one within three months of graduation), is 80%. Employment rate involves some estimation as, while this information is gathered in the clinical site evaluation for students in the last semester of clinicals, as well as in the exit survey that is

sent to all graduates, once students graduate it is difficult to track employment unless students report back to the program. For AY 2024-2025, of those students who were actively looking, approximately 93% of students were known to have found employment in the counseling field.

For the AQI of acceptance rate of program graduates into counselor education Ph.D. programs, the UAB CP set a minimum threshold of 50%. This assessment also involves some estimation while, as many graduates do ask for recommendations from faculty when applying, there is not a uniform way to track this. For AY 2024-2025, 100% of students known to have applied to doctoral programs in counselor education were accepted.

Regarding the overall student performance on program KPI assessments, of which there are nine in core classes and one in each concentration, the minimum threshold was set at 80% for student grades/performance on these identified assessments. For AY 2024-2025, the average percentage of students for all KPI assessments was 96.89%.

Academic Quality Indicator	UAB CP Minimum Threshold	UAB CP 2024-2025 Result
Professional Dispositions Assessment	80% of students will have a satisfactory rating or a rating of at least a two (out of three) in every category	95.5% of UAB CP students had a satisfactory rating
Graduate Employment Rates	80% of students who are looking for a job in the counseling field upon graduation, will secure employment within three months	93% of graduates who were known to have pursued a counseling job found employment within three months
Counselor Education Doctoral Program Acceptance Rate	50% of UAB CP graduates will be accepted	100% of graduates who were known to have applied to a Counselor Education PhD program were accepted
Overall Student Performance on KPI Assessments	All UAB CP students will average 80% on KPI assessments	UAB CP students had an average of 96.89% on program KPI assessments

Faculty and Staff Changes in 2024-2025 academic year:

Due to changes in the 2024 CACREP standards, staff members with counseling master's degrees are now eligible to coordinate clinical placement in counseling programs. This program administrative role previously had to be filled by a core faculty member. In spring 2025, the UAB Counseling Program welcomed Cara Blakes as their new Clinical Placement Coordinator. Ms. Blakes is a UAB CP alum and LPC-S in Alabama with extensive clinical and administrative experience in counseling settings within higher education and private practice.

The UAB Counseling Program welcomed Dr. Andrea Whitten as a visiting assistant professor starting in August 2024. Dr. Whitten has a PhD in counselor education from University of Alabama, is an LPC-S in Alabama, and has been a longtime adjunct instructor for the UAB counseling program.

The other full-time program faculty in academic year 2024-2025 consisted of Dr. Shannon McCarthy, Associate Professor, CACREP Liaison; Dr. Dayna Watson, Associate Professor, Program Director; and Dr. Yusen Zhai, Assistant Professor, Director of the UAB Community Counseling Center. In summer 2025, Dr. Zhai announced that he would be leaving UAB before the start of the Fall 25 semester.

Throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, the counseling program conducted two faculty searches for clinical assistant professors. Dr. Andrea Whitten was offered and accepted one of those positions to be a permanent member of the UAB CP, which began in August 2025. Dr. Lisa Hedden was also hired as a result of that search and was welcomed to the program in August 2025. Dr. Hedden has a PhD in Counselor Education/School Counseling and Guidance Services from the University of Georgia, has previously held positions as an assistant professor and lecturer, and holds an LPC from Georgia. She is joining Drs. McCarthy, Watson, and Whitten as the faculty for 2025-2026.

CACREP Updates:

A decision was made in AY 23-24 to sunset the school counseling program and close any future admissions due to diminishing enrollment numbers and the lack of a school counseling faculty member. CACREP formally approved the teach-out plan for the program, and the last school counseling students graduated in spring, 2025.

The UAB CP's current CACREP accreditation expires in March 2026 (a full accreditation cycle is 8 years). Since 2024 CACREP accreditation standards were released in summer 2023 (effective July 2024) the program has worked to align to the new CACREP standards and prepare their comprehensive self-study in anticipation of applying for reaccreditation. The counseling program's self-study for reaccreditation was submitted in January 2025, and the initial review was received in summer 2025. The initial review indicated that the program was approved to move on to planning the virtual site visit, which will take place in February 2026.

As part of this effort all course syllabi were reviewed to ensure coverage and evaluation of the new CACREP content standards. By fall 2024, all course syllabi and course content had been revised to align with the 2024 CACREP standards.

Other Program Changes (based on student and faculty feedback, program outcome data, etc.):

Shortly before the beginning of AY 2024-2025, the UAB CP instituted group advising for new admits as their initial advising appointment and development of their program of study. After soliciting feedback from advisors and students, Dr. Watson, the CP program director, began holding initial group advising meeting with students shortly after admission as a way to develop programs of study in a more timely manner so that newly admitted students were better positioned to register for classes in a timely manner. In the past, faculty advisors would meet individually with students for their initial meeting to develop their program of study but scheduling these could draw out this process and could result in students taking longer to register. Now, after the group advises, students' programs of study are sent to their advisor whom they can meet with and have as a point of contact going forward. While the UAB CP does not have a cohort model, and students can opt to go through the program full time or part time, the program has developed more standardized programs of study to facilitate a simpler process when developing programs of study and to allow for more stability for the annual schedule. Students can, however, modify this program of study at any point in coordination with their advisor, as needed. Thus far, students have reported satisfaction with this process, and this meeting is normally followed up with orientation a few weeks later, which allows the students to get a more in-depth introduction to the program while already having their program of study completed. Program faculty will continue to monitor the efficacy of this process.

Update on the removal of the GRE as an admission requirement

As discussed in the 2023-2024 annual report, after reviewing applications and admissions data for the program, as well as research regarding the GRE, and considering the number of counseling programs and UAB graduate programs that have waived the GRE as an admissions requirement, the UAB CP decided to permanently remove the GRE requirement as part of the application for the UAB counseling program. This requirement was officially removed for the fall 2024 application cycle. Since the removal of the GRE, the UAB CP has seen a significant increase in applications. As the number of applicants that the program cannot accept has not significantly changed due to CACREP ratios, the program's acceptance rate has decreased. Program faculty began instituting a wait list for both interviews and admissions following the on-site interviews to potentially accommodate other highly qualified applicants should others decline an interview or admission. This change was based on data regarding trends in admissions and acceptances. Program faculty have also discussed options for having other data points or information to help evaluate candidates in the absence of the GRE and will continue to assess the impact of the removal of this requirement.

Update on the use of portfolios as a remediation for the CPCE

As reported in the 2023-2024 annual report, after reviewing several years' worth of data regarding UAB CP students' performance on the CPCE, which are used for the program's comprehensive exam, and reviewing other counseling programs' practices, program faculty elected to institute an optional portfolio for students that do not pass the CPCE. This was also due in part to the data showing that, while a small number of students did not pass the CPCE each year, those students often did well in their classes. Therefore, the portfolio, which functions as a remediation practice, and not as an alternative to the CPCE, allows students to opt to continue into clinicals without disruption to their program of study while completing a portfolio that demonstrates understanding and rigor in each core CACREP academic area. Program faculty piloted the use of the portfolio in spring 2024, and it was used throughout the 2024-2025 academic year. This meant that students who did not pass the CPCE that semester were given the option to complete a written portfolio, where they write a response to a prompt for each of the eight CACREP core areas and submit a written artifact from a corresponding class, or delay their clinicals by one semester and re-take the CPCE (all students thus far have opted to create the portfolio). The portfolio requires students to write a reflection or prompt for each of the eight CACREP core areas and submit a written artifact from a corresponding class. Program faculty then separately grade each element of the portfolio. If the student does not pass each element with an average of "meets expectations" then the student is asked to re-write and re-submit the subject(s) that they did not pass. If the student passes the portfolio by the end of the Practicum II semester, they can move forward into clinicals. In AY 2024-2025, all students who submitted the portfolio passed before the beginning of Internship A, which allowed them to continue on to Internship. Program faculty have continuously reviewed the portfolio prompts and scoring rubrics and have made some changes, particularly to the wording of the prompts to make them clearer. Program faculty will continue to evaluate the portfolio efficacy and specific aspects of the portfolio but see this as an effective method of remediation for students who do not initially pass the CPCE, while preventing disruptions in students' progress towards graduation.