



Clinical Counseling Program
Program Assessment Report

Master of Arts in Counseling
Assessment Cycle Year #1
2018–2019

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Systematic Program Assessment in CIU's Clinical Counseling Program

The mission of CIU's Clinical Counseling Program is *to offer professional training in clinical mental health counseling within a biblical worldview in order to provide Christ-like therapeutic relationships for healing and growth*. The overall educational philosophy at CIU is conceptualized as three educational components that provide a wholistic model of education. The first component is academic excellence with a focus on content and may be characterized by educating one's "head." The second component focuses on character and may be characterized by educating one's "heart," the component by which students grow in personal and spiritual maturity. The third component is skill development in which students systematically practice skills related to professional and vocational goals. This component focuses on competence and may be characterized by educating one's "hands."

In accordance with university policy and accreditation standards, CIU's Clinical Counseling Program engages in systematic program assessment of the programs it offers. Over the course of a three-year cycle, we review the Master of Arts in Counseling program from three perspectives: Professional Identity, Professional Competence and Program Area, and Overall Program Balance.

- Assessment Cycle Year #1: Professional Identity reviews the common core domains set out in CACREP Standard II.G.1-8 (professional identity).
- Assessment Cycle Year #2: Professional Competence and Program Area reviews the domains set out in CACREP Standard III.F-G (professional practice) and CACREP Standard IV.A-L (program area: Clinical Mental Health Counseling).
- Assessment Cycle Year #3: Overall Program Balance reviews the overall program from the perspectives of Academic Excellence ("Head"), Spiritual Life Formation/Religious Development ("Heart"), and Professional Skills Development ("Hands"). These perspectives reflect our corporate educational triad as well as our commitment to developing the whole person.

We have correlated each domain (outcome) in the CACREP Standards under Professional Identity, Professional Competence, and Program Area (Clinical Mental Health Counseling) with a data source (e.g., II.G.1 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice is correlated with CNS 5330). Each time we offer a course, we collect a signature assignment (data) and store it in an electronic databank. At the appropriate time in the assessment cycle, we draw a random sample of 5-8 assignments for each course from the databank and evaluate them against the pertinent rubric. At least one faculty member who is not responsible for teaching the course reviews and evaluates the sample assignments.

The primary means we use in the process is direct assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) based on course work collected each year and evaluated using rubrics designed according to a four-level scale: Unsatisfactory (0), Marginal (1), Satisfactory (2), and Exceptional (3). We consider an outcome to be met successfully when the student work evaluated achieves an average score of 2.25 or better. In reviewing Overall Program Balance, we supplement direct assessment of student assignments by other sources of data such as the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE), the Supervisor Survey, the Spiritual Transformation Inventory (STI), the Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS), and the Professional Performance Review (PPR).

In addition to direct assessment of student learning outcomes, we conduct indirect assessment of the program. We administer our graduating student and field supervisor surveys annually. We administer our alumni and employer surveys on a regular basis and add the information collected through these indirect means to the results of our direct assessment as we conduct our analysis during a two-day workshop in May or early June.

At the workshop, the entire resident faculty team serves as the assessment committee to review the area designated for that year of the assessment cycle. In addition to reviewing sample assignments and other data identified above, we also consider other input (e.g., information from our graduating student and field supervisor surveys). We analyze the information we have collected, make specific recommendations based on that analysis, and develop plans for implementation and/or remediation. We then draft and distribute an annual report that documents the finding of that year’s assessment and describes any modifications to the program. As part of the report, we assign follow-up steps to specific program faculty members for implementation. These faculty members are responsible to document any changes made and report on them to the faculty. Their follow-up reports close the loop on the assessment cycle year.

Assessment Cycle Year #1

The first year of the three-year assessment cycle focuses on direct assessment of student work in connection with the area of Professional Identity and addresses the common core domains set out in CACREP Standard II.G.1-8. The following table sets out the outcomes we measured and the corresponding data we analyzed during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Outcome		Data Source	Data
II.G.1	<u>Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice</u> : Students will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of how to function as a professional counselor.	CNS 5330 Professional Ethics	Position paper
II.G.2	<u>Social and Cultural Diversity</u> : Students will demonstrate an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society.	CNS 5075 Multicultural Counseling	Select culture project
II.G.3	<u>Human Growth and Development</u> : Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts.	CNS 6310 Human Development	Research paper
II.G.4	<u>Career Development</u> : Students will demonstrate an understanding of career development and related life factors.	CNS 6810 Career Counseling	Case study
II.G.5	<u>Helping Relationships</u> : Students will demonstrate an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society.	CNS 5310 Counseling Theory	Paradigm paper
II.G.6	<u>Group Work</u> : Students will demonstrate theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society.	CNS 6440 Group Counseling	Group design proposal

II.G.7	<u>Assessment</u> : Students will demonstrate an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society.	CNS 6430 Assessment	Personality assessment report
II.G.8	<u>Research and Program Evaluation</u> : Students will demonstrate an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation.	CNS 5410 Research and Statistics	Final paper

The results of our analysis are set out in the next section. The rubrics used in the process are included in an appendix.

Assessment Findings

Outcome II.G.1 – Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice: Students will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of how to function as a professional counselor.

The assignments reviewed were very weak in articulating ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling (2.00). They were also very weak in demonstrating an understanding of an ethical decision-making process or even identifying the steps (1.77). They were especially weak on demonstrating understanding of necessary documentation for ethical practice. Only one sample mentioned informed consent (0.68).

Outcome II.G.2 – Social and Cultural Diversity: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society.

The assignments reviewed demonstrated students' outstanding ability to research a cultural group and describe a cultural group's beliefs, values, and experiences (3.00). Students also were able to offer a reasonable approach to therapy based on research on a specific cultural people group (2.53). Students also were able to explain some of the strengths and limitations of their chosen strategies for working with diverse populations (2.70). The discussion of advocacy, however, was less clear in the samples.

Outcome II.G.3 – Human Growth and Development: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts.

The assessments reviewed demonstrated overall acceptable outcome results (2.45). In this sample of student work the target was met (2.36) in the student's ability to articulate a multicultural understanding of individuals across the lifespan, and they demonstrated the clear ability (2.54) to research the causes, prevention models, and best practices for treatment of a specific developmental problem. Since the work samples provided only addressed these two criteria, however, and not the criterion of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels, apart from one submitted chart. Consequently, this third criterion was insufficiently assessed.

Outcome II.G.4 – Career Development: Students will demonstrate an understanding of career development and related life factors.

All the criteria fell in the satisfactory range. Students demonstrate strong understanding of demographics, presenting issues, relevant client history, and interview data (2.79). Students demonstrate the ability to interpret assessment instruments (2.71). Students are a bit weaker in providing feedback and recommendations for vocational guidance (2.36), but the results are still above the threshold of 2.25.

Outcome II.G.5 – Helping Relationships: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society.

The assignments reviewed were good at applying the selected model to counseling conceptualization and intervention (2.50). They were also good at describing the counselor's role of therapist and client (2.50). They were good at evaluating the model strengths and limitations in light of a Christian worldview and multicultural factors (2.50).

Outcome II.G.6 – Group Work: Students will demonstrate theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society.

The assignments reviewed demonstrated students' strong understanding of how to identify populations who would benefit from psycho-educational groups and articulate the need for a group and the benefits of the group (2.75). Students also demonstrated a good understanding of how to set goals for each session (2.50) and how to design a psychoeducational group, complete with lesson outlines for each session, leaders' qualifications, potential challenges, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of the group (2.67). Overall the samples were great.

Outcome II.G.7 – Assessment: Students will demonstrate an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society.

All the criteria fell in the satisfactory range. Students were particularly strong in their understanding of ethical strategies (2.88) and their ability to interpret test data (2.88). They also demonstrated good understanding of factors that can influence assessment validity and reliability (2.63).

Outcome II.G.8 – Research and Program Evaluation: Students will demonstrate an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation.

The assessments reviewed demonstrated an acceptable understanding of research methods and statistical analysis (2.62). Student work indicated a clear ability to examine existing research (2.57). They were able to select appropriate research methods and employ statistical analysis to usefully evaluate original research topics (2.57). They also demonstrated clear ability to use APA formatting (2.71). Although not specifically assessed through the rubric, students also demonstrated critical thinking in the discussion and strengths/limitation sections of the papers.

Recommendations and Implementation

Recommendation #1

The instructor of CNS 5330 Professional Ethics and Orientation should give attention to refining the presentation of the steps for ethical decision-making and necessary documentation for ethical practice. Students should be encouraged to consult the course textbook and ACA code of ethics when engaging in the ethical decision-making process. Glenda Nanna, who teaches the course, will be responsible to implement these actions and will report back at next year's workshop.

Recommendation #2

The instructor of CNS 5075 Multicultural Counseling should add an advocacy component that requires students to demonstrate their understanding of how to advocate for diverse populations. Students should be encouraged to include an advocacy component that could be as simple as attending an awareness event or a social event for minority members and reporting on ways to address mental health needs for that group. Roni Pruitt, who teaches the course, will be responsible to implement these actions and will report back at the end of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Recommendation #3

The instructor of CNS 6310 Human Growth and Development should collect two separate samples of student work, one for the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels, and a second for the research paper that addresses the causes, prevention models, and best practices for treatment of a specific developmental problem. Students should be encouraged to emphasize their multicultural understanding as they address the specific developmental problem that is the focus of their research. Seth Scott, who will teach the course during 2019-2020, will be responsible to implement these actions and will report back at next year's workshop.

Recommendation #4

The instructor of CNS 5310 Counseling Theory could give some additional attention to how well the student's chosen theory fits their personality, and especially the counselor/client roles need more definition and clarity. Also, giving more attention to how well the theory aligns with multicultural factors. Students should be encouraged to expand further the summary section explaining why they selected the model. Glenda Nanna, who teaches the course, will be responsible to implement these actions and will report back at next year's workshop.

**Appendix
Assessment Rubrics**

Master of Arts in Counseling					
Outcome II.G.1 Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice: Students will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of how to function as a professional counselor.					
Artifact: Position papers from CNS 5330 Professional Ethics and Orientation					
Criterion	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Demonstrates an understanding of an ethical decision-making process (steps in ethical decision-making).	Major errors in ethical decision-making. Lack of a coherent decision-making process.	Some errors in ethical decision-making, but a general ability to think through a situation professionally.	Accurate use of an ethical decision-making process with minor errors or omissions appropriate for first-year students.	Accurate, coherent articulation of an ethical decision-making process, complete with steps in ethical decision-making.	
Articulates ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling (dealing with value conflict #3, ethical dilemma/duty to warn/protect/confidentiality #5)	Lack of understanding of basic ethical and legal professional behaviors. Disregard for basic ethical practice.	Some knowledge of ethical and legal guidelines, but limited ability to articulate a clearly ethical and legal way to deal with an ethical dilemma.	Good knowledge of the ethical and legal issues common in counseling, but lacking in either some clarity or depth	Articulates a clear and insightful process of managing legal and ethical issues in counseling.	
Demonstrates understanding of necessary documentation for ethical practice (addendum: informed consent)	Lack of understanding of professional documentation and importance of informed consent	Minimally useful documentation. Lacking some key legal and ethical items that need to be included in informed consent.	Sufficient documentation that addresses the key elements necessary for ethical practice.	Ability to produce clear, comprehensive documentation that addresses legal and ethical issues in counseling, including clients' rights.	

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Outcome II.G2: Social and Cultural Diversity: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society.

Artifact #1: Select culture project from CNS 5075 Multicultural Counseling

Criterion	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Articulates an understanding of attitudes, beliefs, values, and acculturation experiences of culturally diverse client (Step I, Step II)	Not addressed or multiple major errors with the stated criterial.	There are major inaccuracies or major gaps in completeness in understanding of attitudes, beliefs, values, and acculturation experiences of culturally diverse client.	There is some lack of clarity of completeness in the understanding of attitudes, beliefs, values, and acculturation experiences of culturally diverse client.	Provides a clear and complete understanding of attitudes, beliefs, values, and acculturation experiences of culturally diverse client.	
Demonstrates an ability to apply knowledge and information gained from research and interviews to any one specific people group within a counseling context. (Step II)	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major gaps in completeness in explaining why they selected their model of therapy as it applies to research and interviews to any one specific people group within a counseling context.	There is a lack of clarity or comeliness in explaining why they selected their model of therapy as it applies to research and interviews to any one specific people group within a counseling context.	Offer a clear explanation of why they selected their approach based on research and interviews to any one specific people group within a counseling context.	
Demonstrates an ability to apply strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations (Step I b; Step III-Future Orientation)	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations in describing the relative strengths and limitations of the strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations.	There are some limitations in describing the relative strengths and limitations of the strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations.	Clearly describes the relative strengths and limitations of the chosen strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations.	

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Outcome II.G3: Human Growth and Development: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts.

Artifact: Research paper from CNS 6310 Human Growth and Development

Criterion	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Demonstrates an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels. (refer to chart)	Lack of an appropriate understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels.	Some rudimentary understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels.	Evidence of an adequate understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels.	Evidence of a comprehensive, description of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels.	
Articulates a multicultural understanding of individuals across the lifespan. (part III, Bronfenbrenner)	Lack of discussion of any factors related to multicultural issues in development and their importance for understanding individuals' development.	Some mention of multicultural factors and their influence on development. (Lack of an integrated discussion)	An adequate discussion of the possible multicultural factors to consider in persons' development and the importance of understanding culture when assessing development.	Excellent discussion of multicultural issues related to normal and abnormal development of persons. Integrated discussion of how the environmental and cultural factors play a role in development.	
Researches the causes, prevention models, and best practices for treatment of a specific developmental problem. (part III)	Lack of research into causes, prevention, and best practices of a specific developmental problem. Neglected to use current professional literature in research (outdated articles, dependence on textbook or google-type sources)	Some initial research regarding causes, prevention, and best practices, but lack of solid research methods and findings (no more than one source for information)	Evidence of acceptable research into the causes, prevention, and best practices for a specific problem. (at least 2 sources)	Excellent discussion of current professional literature on the causes, prevention, and best practices of a specific developmental problem. (3 or more sources)	

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Outcome II.G.4: Career Development: Students will demonstrate an understanding of career development and related life factors.

Artifact: Case study from CNS 6810 Career Counseling

Criterion	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Demonstrates an understanding of factors that can influence a valid and ethical career assessment process to include multicultural issues. (demographics, presenting issue, relevant history, interview data)	Not addressed or multiple major errors with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations in the presentation of client details, such as missing elements of one's history, or irrelevancy to career-related issues. There is a failure to address issues that could influence the validity and usefulness of the assessment process, (i.e. multicultural issues or rapport are not addressed or are improperly addressed)	Some limitations are present in the presentation of client details, such as limited depth, or a lack of relevancy to career-related issues. There is limited evidence of understanding or address of factors that would influence the validity and usefulness of the assessment process, (i.e. multicultural issues or rapport is insufficiently addressed)	Client details are clear, thorough, and relevant to the assessment of career-related issues (i.e. presenting problem). There is evidence of understanding the factors that would influence the validity and usefulness of the assessment process, such as multicultural issues or rapport.	
Demonstrates an ability to interpret assessment instruments for career planning, evaluation, and decision making. (test data)	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations or errors to the description of the purpose, detailed assessment findings, and application to career planning, evaluation, and decision making, such as inaccurate findings, ill-suited applications, or incompleteness in addressing key assessment results.	There are some limitations to the description of the purpose, detailed assessment findings, and application to career planning, evaluation, and decision making, such as a lack of balance in noting strengths and vulnerabilities or unclear or a lack of clarity in the application.	Each assessment contains a clear description of its purpose, detailed findings that include likely strengths and vulnerabilities, and clear application to career planning, evaluation and decision making.	
Provides feedback for vocational guidance. (summary and recommendation)	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations in the clear address of the presenting issue or major limitations in the tailoring to the needs of the client. Limitations or concerns relating to the assessment process are not noted if they are indicated. Action steps are marginally present or lack relevancy to the assessments.	There are some limitations in the clear address of the presenting issue or limitations in the tailoring to the needs of the client. Limitations or concerns relating to the assessment process are marginally noted where indicated. Action steps are present but are few or lack flow from the findings of the assessments.	The summary and Recommendations clearly address the presenting issue and are tailored to the needs of the client. Limitations of the assessment process are noted where indicated. Specific action steps are provided that flow from the findings of the assessments.	

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Outcome II.G.5: Helping Relationships: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society.

Artifact: Paradigm paper from CNS 5310 Counseling Theory

Criterion	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Selects a model from which to conceptualize and apply a counseling intervention. (overall)	Not addressed or multiple major errors with the stated criterial.	There are major gaps in completeness in explaining why they selected their model of therapy as it applies to their personal factors, such as personality, time frame orientation, practicality of use with an intended client population if known, and unique experience of the change process.	There is a lack of clarity or completeness in explaining why they selected their model of therapy as it applies to their personal factors, such as personality, time frame orientation, practicality of use with an intended client population if known, and unique experience of the change process.	Offer a clear explanation of why they selected their model of therapy as it applies to their personal factors, such as personality, time frame orientation, practicality of use with an intended client population if known, and unique experience of the change process.	
Describes the counselor's role, characteristics, and behaviors that influence helping relationships. (role of therapist and client)	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major inaccuracies or major gaps in completeness in the description of the counselor's role, characteristics and behaviors for their selected model and relate these to the helping process.	There is some lack of clarity or completeness in the description of the counselor's role, characteristics and behaviors for their selected model and relate these to the helping process.	Provides a clear and complete description of the counselor's role, characteristics and behaviors for their selected model and relate these to the helping process.	
Evaluates the relative strengths and limitations of the chosen model in light of how well it aligns with a Christian worldview, target client populations, and other multicultural factors.	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations in describing the relative strengths and limitations of the chosen as it aligns with a Christian worldview, target client population if known, and other multicultural factors, such as inaccurate details of multicultural relevancy.	There are some limitations in describing the relative strengths and limitations of the chosen as it aligns with a Christian worldview, target client population if known, and other multicultural factors, such as few details of multicultural relevancy.	Clearly describes the relative strengths and limitations of the chosen model in light of how well it aligns with a Christian worldview, target client population if known, and other multicultural factors.	

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Outcome II.G.6: Group Work: Students will demonstrate theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society.

Artifact: Group proposal from CNS 6440 Group Counseling

Rating scale:	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Conducts a needs assessment for an underserved population in a multicultural society. (rationale)	No rationale given for why this group should be offered.	Minimal explanation for why the group is being offered.	Some understanding of why the group is being offered, an understand-ing of the identified population.	Thorough explanation of why group is needed, specific at-risk population identified, concise statement of what the group offers.	
Articulates a theoretical understanding of group purpose and development. (and goals)	Did not establish any benefits for those participating in this group.	Identified minimal benefit.	Identified specific goals for what participants would receive.	Specific goals established for a range of benefits, and goals provided for each session.	
Demonstrates an understanding of group methods, skills and dynamics. (practical considerations procedures and evaluation)	No mention of what will be needed to implement the specific session, no reference to stages of the group, no mention of length or frequency, and no evaluation.	Some explanation of weekly session, minimal information about logistics, duration, frequency, stages, and evaluation.	Adequate examples of sessions, general overview of logistics, leaders' qualifications, screening, and stages.	Thorough explanation of each session, the stage of the group, materials used, focus of each session, leaders' qualifications, potential challenges, and thorough evaluation.	

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Outcome II.G.7: Assessment: Students will demonstrate an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society.

Artifact: Personality assessment report from CNS 6430 Assessment

Criterion	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Demonstrates ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting psychological assessments. (overall)	Not addressed or multiple major errors with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations to a complete and accurate understanding of the appropriate purpose of each assessment, of factors that can influence the valid administration of these assessments, and of the interpretation process for the selected assessments.	There are some limitations to a complete and accurate understanding of the appropriate purpose of each assessment, of factors that can influence the valid administration of these assessments, and of the interpretation process for the selected assessments.	Demonstrates an accurate understanding of the appropriate purpose of each assessment, of factors that can influence the valid administration of these assessments, and of the interpretation process for the selected assessments.	
Demonstrates an understanding of factors that can influence assessment validity and reliability in personality assessment processes include multicultural issues. (identifying information; test behavior)	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations to a clear and complete description of the counselor's role, characteristics and behaviors for their selected model and relate these to the helping process.	There are some limitations to a clear and complete description of the counselor's role, characteristics and behaviors for their selected model and relate these to the helping process.	Provides a clear and complete description of the counselor's role, characteristics and behaviors for their selected model and relate these to the helping process.	
Demonstrates an ability to interpret assessment instruments for personality evaluation and personal or professional development. (test data)	Not addressed or multiple major errors or omissions with the stated criterial.	There are major limitations to the accurate and clear interpretations of the assessment results, such as incomplete detail, inaccurate descriptions of strengths and vulnerabilities, or major errors/omissions in the interpretation process.	There are some limitations to the accurate and clear interpretations of the assessment results, such as limited depth of detail, a lack of balance in strengths and vulnerabilities, or minor error/omission in the interpretation process.	The findings from each assessment are accurately interpreted with clear descriptions of the client's relative strengths and vulnerabilities as related to one's personal and/or professional development.	

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Outcome II.G.8: Research and Program Evaluation: Students will demonstrate an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs, assessment, and program evaluation.

Artifact: Final paper from CNS 5410 Research and Statistics

Criterion	Unacceptable (0)	Marginal (1)	Acceptable (2)	Exceptional (3)	Scores
Examines existing research to inform evidence-based practice.	Lack of a good literature review and lack of attention to existing counseling research	Some inclusion of research literature, but only a cursory review of pertinent literature or the use of outdated literature	Evidence of an adequate literature review of seminal works and the current literature (past 5 years) on the research topic.	Evidence of a comprehensive, detailed literature review of seminal works and current peer-reviewed journal articles.	
Chooses research and statistical methods appropriate to a research topic.	Lack of alignment in research construct. Lack of clear approach to research design.	Some alignment in research design, but errors in best choice of design and/or logical next step in addressing the gap in the research.	Solid research proposal with good alignment and research design, including statistical methods that fit the research design.	Excellent research approach based on thorough literature review, good alignment in the research process, appropriate statistical methods to analyze data.	
Demonstrates an ability to write using APA format.	Writing does not meet APA guidelines. Multiple errors.	Some major APA errors, such as no title page, abstract, or reference page. Lack of a coherent, clear research writing style.	Good APA writing with only minor APA formatting errors.	Excellent APA formatting and clear, coherent writing style. Very few formatting errors.	