



Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Doctoral students enrolled in the Ph.D. Counseling program will demonstrate their content knowledge by successfully passing the Department of Counselor Education, Doctoral Program Comprehensive Exams. Examinees are expected to demonstrate, through the Comprehensive Exam, their content knowledge by their ability to: (1) Analyze and synthesize information from across their graduate coursework and research; (2) Apply this information to effectively assess complex issues in counseling practice, supervision and training, and related professional issues; and (3) Appropriately apply research methodology to important, practical issues impacting counseling practice.

Doctoral students enrolled in the Ph.D. Counseling program will demonstrate their communication skills by successfully defending their dissertations proposals (Qualifying exams). Students will be expected to demonstrate in this oral examination a sound understanding of research methodology as well as to present a well-developed dissertation proposal including appropriate research design and data analysis components.

Following completion of the first 27 credits in the doctoral program, including the required research coursework, students may begin scheduling the Qualifying Exams. This is done in collaboration with the Committee Chair and all committee members to obtain approval for the dissertation proposal. The proposal shall consist of a working draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation. The proposal should include a detailed research plan for the dissertation including the specific idea, a rationale, a review of the related literature and the intended research methodology and data analysis.

Doctoral candidates enrolled in the Ph.D. Counseling program will demonstrate their critical thinking by successfully defending their dissertations. The dissertation is the final phase of the candidate's readiness for the degree. The dissertation requires the candidates employ their critical thinking skills to go beyond demonstration of content mastery in the field and to also make a contribution to the knowledge base. Therefore, in close consultation with the Doctoral Committee, the students will develop a research study as approved in the Dissertation Proposal. A doctoral dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent, original, and creative research, and must make a unique contribution to knowledge in the field of counseling. Under the direct supervision of the Dissertation Committee Chairs, students are encouraged to consult regularly with their Dissertation Committee members during the planning, conducting, and writing of the dissertation.

Outcome 1:

Doctoral students enrolled in the Ph.D. Counseling program will demonstrate their content knowledge by successfully passing the Department of Counselor Education, Doctoral Program Comprehensive Exams.

Implementing Strategy:

Candidates will normally sit for the Comprehensive Exams during the final semester of coursework related to their doctoral program of study. It is expected that candidates will have completed, or be in the process of completing, 33-36 semester hours of doctoral course credit by the semester in which they sit for their comprehensive exams. Students can select three options for taking the exam: 1) a weekend format where they respond to six questions related to counseling theory, practice, research, and ethics; 2) an oral exam where they answer three general questions related to counseling theory, practice, research, or ethics and submit a specialty paper for journal submission; or 3) a two-day on campus 9 am to 5 pm written exam where the student answers six questions related to counseling theory, practice, research and ethics. For formats one and three, the faculty and doctoral committee agree upon the six questions. Format two will use three general questions that have agreed on by the faculty for the oral exam.

The requirement for passing comprehensive exams and procedures is outlined in the Department of Counselor Education Doctoral Student handbook. All candidates must pass the comprehensive exams in order to be cleared for graduation.

Assessment Method:

Examinees are expected to demonstrate, through the Comprehensive Exam, their content knowledge by their ability to: (1) Analyze and synthesize information from across their graduate coursework and research; (2) Apply this information to effectively assess complex issues in counseling practice, supervision, and training, and related professional issues; and (3) Appropriately apply research methodology to important, practical issues impacting counseling practice.

For the 2018-2019 year, the Doctoral committee faculty members will prepare and approve new questions for the scheduled Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 comprehensive exams. Faculty members will assess the comprehensive exams using an electronic assessment rubric embedded in Livetext. Exams are given during the fall and spring semester only. Information about individual pass rates per question can be used to determine how the content knowledge is introduced and reinforced in the doctoral program curriculum. Finally, results on the Certification of Comprehensive Exam Results will be uploaded to Livetext.

Faculty will have a minimum of three weeks in which to review the student's answers grading each question as being High Pass, Pass, Low Pass or Fail. Grading will be done following the Department's evaluation scoring rubric for comprehensive examinations and submitted to the committee Chair.

Students who receive overall grades of Pass or higher on at least five of the six questions from at least three committee members and no failing grade will be notified by their committee Chair within four weeks of the exam date that they have passed their Comprehensive Exam. Students receiving less than four Passes or High Pass grades on the exams will be required to retake the exam during a subsequent semester or, the doctoral committee may recommend retaking parts of the exam or to retake the entire oral examination at a later time, or any other reasonable steps agreed upon by the doctoral committee. Attached is a sample of the Certification of Comprehensive Exam Results form.

Criterion for Success:

Seventy-five (75%) of the Ph.D. Counseling students will earn a passing grade on all sections of their day two (specialty questions) comprehensive exams.

Fifty (50%) of the Ph.D. counseling students will earn a "pass" for the "content" and "comprehensive" indicators of the comprehensive exam rubric for at least three exam questions from either day 1 or day 2 (three out of the total six questions) from at least two of their doctoral committee members.

Data Summary: Analysis & Evaluation:

Five (5) students completed COMP exams during the 2019-2020 academic year. 100% of students, passed all sections.

The goal was met.

Program Improvement:

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the faculty in the Department of Counselor Education created an electronic rubric to use when evaluating the doctoral students' comprehensive exams. The rubric includes a three-point scale ranging from disapproved, approved with modification, and approved. The rubric includes indicators ranging from (a) Content, (b) Comprehensiveness, (c) Expression, (d) Literature, and (e) Analysis & Synthesis. The rubric will be used in future assessments and results using the rubric will be used to inform future program improvements.

Outcome 2 Description and Methodology Outcome Description:

Doctoral candidates enrolled in the Ph.D. Counseling program will demonstrate their critical thinking by successfully defending their dissertations.

Implementing Strategy:

The dissertation is the final phase of the candidate's readiness for the degree. The dissertation requires the candidates employ their critical thinking skills to go beyond demonstration of content mastery in the field and to also make a contribution to the knowledge base. Therefore, in close consultation with the Doctoral Committee, the students will develop a research study as approved in the Dissertation Proposal. A doctoral dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent, original, and creative research, and must make a unique contribution to knowledge in the field of counseling. Under the direct supervision of the Dissertation Committee Chairs, students are encouraged to consult regularly with their Dissertation Committee members during the planning, conducting, and writing of the dissertation.

All candidates must successfully defend their dissertation in order to be cleared for graduation.

Assessment Method:

Subject to review by the Dean of the College of Education and the Dean of the Graduate School, the students' Doctoral Committee has final recommending authority. The outcome of the dissertation defense may be (a) approved, (b) approved with modifications, (c) deferred pending another dissertation defense, or (d) disapproved.

If the dissertation is approved or approved with modifications, the candidate submits the Dissertation Defense form with all committee members' signatures to the Doctoral Program Coordinator. The Dissertation Committee at the defense meeting typically signs this form and the dissertation signature page if all members are satisfied. The dissertation chair and the department chair will sign off on the dissertation signature page once all corrections or requested modifications have been completed. For the 2018-2019 year, the Doctoral committee faculty members will complete the dissertation assessments online using the standardized rubric embedded in Livetext.

Each candidate must pass a final oral examination regarding the completed dissertation. Sometimes called the "dissertation defense" or the "dissertation oral," this meeting is open to members of the University community. Students are not permitted to take the final examination more than twice. The Graduate School must be informed of the date and place of the defense at least two weeks in advance.

Dissertation defenses are only scheduled during the fall and spring semesters.

Criterion for Success:

50% of the Ph.D. Counseling students will successfully defend their oral and written dissertation defense (Final Examination) and earn a rating of "approved" on the "Discussion", "Grammar, clarity, and organization", and "Quality of oral communication" indicators on the dissertation defense rubric embedded in LiveText.

Data Summary: Analysis & Evaluation:

During the 2019-2020 academic year, four (4) students, 100%, successfully defended their oral and written dissertation defenses. This outcome goal was met.

Program Improvement:

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the faculty in the Department of Counselor Education created an electronic rubric to use when evaluating the doctoral students' dissertation defense. The rubric includes a three-point scale ranging from disapproved, approved with modification, and approved. The rubric includes indicators ranging from (a) Overview and rationale for research, (b) Justification for research questions and hypotheses, (c) Supporting evidence, (d) Review of relevant research, (e) Maintains purpose/focus, (f) Methodology: sample, procedures, measures, data analysis, (g) Results, (h) Discussion, (i) Grammar, clarity, and organization, (j) References and citations, (k) Response to prior feedback, (l) Quality of Oral communication and (m) publication. The rubric will be used in future assessments and results using the rubric will be used to inform future program improvements.

Outcome 3 Description and Methodology Outcome Description

Doctoral students enrolled in the Ph.D. Counseling program will demonstrate their communication skills by successfully defending their dissertations proposals (Qualifying exams). Students will be expected to demonstrate in this oral examination a sound understanding of research methodology as well as to present a well developed dissertation proposal including appropriate research design and data analysis components.

Implementing Strategy:

Following completion of the first 27 credits in the doctoral program, including the required research coursework, students may begin scheduling the Qualifying Exams. This is done in collaboration with the Committee Chair and all committee members so as to obtain approval for the dissertation proposal. The proposal shall consist of a working draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation. The proposal should include a detailed research plan for the dissertation including the specific idea, a rationale, a review of the related literature and the intended research methodology and data analysis. All candidates must successfully defend their dissertation proposals in order to be admitted into Doctoral Candidacy.

Assessment Method:

The proposal presentation will last about one and one half hours. Standard format should include introductions, introductory remarks by the students regarding his/her interest areas, and an explanation of the proposed study. Faculty present may ask for clarifications and/or offer suggestions regarding the proposed study. After the student has concluded the presentation, the student and any other student observers leave the room and the Committee Chair allows faculty members a time for additional comments. The student then returns to the session and is informed of the Doctoral Committee's recommendation(s) regarding the proposed study.

Dissertation proposal defenses are only scheduled during the fall and spring semesters. Results of the Dissertation Proposal will be uploaded to Livetext. Students will submit an electronic copy of their dissertation results to the department secretary and Ph.D. program coordinator. Results must be submitted prior to the student submitting their approved dissertation to the graduate college. The faculty will develop and approve a Post-defense Survey in order to gather student data on the types of resources (on and off campus) they used to prepare their dissertation and their perceptions of the support they received from their dissertation chair, dissertation committee, and other faculty members during their doctoral program.

All the Counseling program faculty, Department Chair, the Dissertation Committee members and the Graduate School representative are invited to the presentation of the proposal. The candidates and their Committee Chair together may give permission to allow other doctoral candidates to attend the presentation as observers. The assessment of the dissertation proposals will now be completed with the electronic rubric embedded in Livetext.

All candidates must successfully defend their dissertation proposals in order to be admitted into Doctoral Candidacy. Attached is a sample of the Dissertation Proposal form.

Criterion for Success:

50% of the Ph.D. Counseling students will earn a rating of "approved" on "Grammar, clarity, and organization, and "oral communication and presentation" indicators on the Dissertation Proposal Defense Rubric embedded in LiveText.

Data Summary: Analysis & Evaluation:

See attached report. During the 2019-2020 academic year, four (4) students completed their Dissertation Proposal Defense. That students all successfully passed; the goal was met.

Program Improvement:

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the faculty in the Department of Counselor Education created an electronic rubric to use when evaluating the doctoral students' dissertation proposal defense. The rubric includes a three-point scale ranging from disapproved, approved with modification, and approved. The rubric includes indicators ranging from (a) Overview and rationale for research, (b) Justification for research questions and hypotheses, (c) Supporting evidence, (d) Review of relevant research, (e) Maintains purpose/focus, (f) Methodology: sample, procedures, measures, data analysis, (g) Grammar, clarity, and organization, (h) References and citations, and (i) Oral communication and presentation. The rubric will be used in future assessments and results using the rubric will be used to inform future program improvements.