

Western Carolina University Counseling Program 2015-2016 Data Report

Programs

Western Carolina University's Counseling Program includes two separate but related and integrated degree programs:

M.A.Ed. in School Counseling (SC), and

M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)

Both programs are CACREP accredited (through October 2017) and lead graduates toward the post-Master's Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) licensure, and for SC only, K-12 School Counseling licensure through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Enrollment

In 2015-2016, we had an average of 60 total (full-time and part-time) students enrolled in our program:

Fall 2015 – 66 (45 CMHC, 21 SC)

Spring 2016 – 54 (37 CMHC, 17 SC)

This represents an average ratio of (FTE*) faculty to (FTE*) students of better than 1:10. (*FTE = Full-time equivalent)

Scholarship awards

3 WCU Counseling program scholarships

1 WCU Graduate School summer research grant

2 North Carolina Invest in Our Teachers scholarship

2 WCU Graduate School in-state tuition awards

1 WCU Graduate School out-of-state tuition awards

1 external private scholarship

Graduation

In 2015-2016, WCU Counseling graduated 29 students:

August 2015 – 2 CMHC, 3 SC

December 2015 – 5 CMHC, 5 SC

May 2016 – 9 CMHC, 5 SC

This represents a 93% completion rate. 100% of the students leaving the program without completion did so of their own initiative (e.g., changes in personal life and/or career goals).

Licensure Exams

National Counselor Exam (NCE) – Among 20 test takers in October 2015-April 2016, WCU yielded a 95% pass rate.

Praxis II: Professional School Counseling – Among 4 test takers in November 2015-April 2016, WCU yielded a 100% pass rate.

Job Placement

Within 3 months of graduation, job placement into a counseling professional role for 2015-2016 graduates was 83% overall (88% CMHC; 77% SC). Among the percentage not employed as counselors, 3% were at home by choice; 3% were employed in related occupations; and 10% were actively seeking desired counselor positions.

Program Modifications Based on Data Findings

Data from: (1) WCU Counseling Program graduation exit survey; (2) 3-Year program evaluation survey of alumni; and (3) WCU Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI) feedback on specific courses, revealed satisfaction overall but some concerns about “capstone” courses (CMHC 624: CMHC Grant Writing and Program Management and COUN 665: Implementing SC Programs) being redundant with internship. The faculty reviewed and beginning Fall 2015, capstone courses were dropped from the required (and offered) course list and the 3-credits from these were moved to COUN 687: Internship, now at 6-hours.

Anecdotal feedback from students, applicants, and admitted students who declined to attend WCU revealed a felt burden in the program’s longtime practice of offering courses and program events at a mix of WCU’s main campus in Cullowhee and in Asheville. To respond to this feedback and current students’ residential status (overwhelmingly Asheville-based), the WCU Counseling program moved to WCU-Biltmore Park in Asheville full-time beginning Summer 2015.