

Part I: Assessment Plan

College of Health and Human Sciences

School of Interdisciplinary Health Professions

Rehabilitation Counseling

Master of Science

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Submitted to the University Assessment Panel by:

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Introduction

The Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling program is a 60-semester hour master's degree program fully accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Program. Students are eligible for national certification (Rehabilitation Counselor) and state licensure (Professional Counselor – IL) upon completion of the program. Alumni are employed as professional counselors in a variety of settings including state and national public sector organizations such as the Veterans Administration, private rehabilitation firms, not-for-profit agencies, colleges and universities, and high school transition programs.

Students have been enrolled in rehabilitation counseling at NIU since 1974 with the first cohort. The program was a specialization of the master's degree in communicative disorders until 2016 when rehabilitation counseling became its own major. In 2018, the program moved to the new School of Interdisciplinary Health Professions. The new school is challenged to secure steady chair leadership with three chairs within five years. The first chair was interim status until a permanent chair assumed the leadership role for only a single term. The current chair is also interim status.

The program experienced 66% of faculty members (4 of 6) leaving the institution within a short period of time beginning late 2018. The departure of three tenure-track assistant professors and a clinical coordinator had a negative but temporary impact on students. Fortunately, two new hires and the reassignment of a program director to faculty in the program have enhanced faculty diversity and this configuration of five faculty members remain in place today. The unfortunate drawback is that the dedicated 12-month clinical coordinator was not replaced and the responsibilities were reassigned to the 10-month program coordinator.

A persistent environmental influence on the program is the shortage of qualified rehabilitation counselors across the country including the state of Illinois. A total of 175 rehabilitation counselors work in Illinois state government (2020-2024 State of Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan – Modified, 2022). However, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) projects the need for 205 additional public sector rehabilitation counselors within the next four years. Furthermore, IWIB confirms that Illinois higher education institutions are graduating an insufficient number of students to fill this vacancy.

Multiple factors influenced the need for a new assessment plan including implementation of the new 60-semester hour program. Feedback on the assessment plan and status report from the University Assessment Panel was instrumental in the decision to update the program student learning outcomes (SLO). The SLOs were revised for (a) enhanced clarity to stakeholders, (b) divergence from the associated undergraduate program SLOs, and (c) alignment with the revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. In addition, the plan for assessment was changed based on recent faculty review and discussion from the 2022-2023 assessment period.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Graduates of the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling program will:

1. Implement clear communications as appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.
2. Integrate rehabilitation counseling concepts across foundational and specialized knowledge areas.
3. Design interventions to assist individuals with disabilities to meet their goals.
4. Construct solutions to problems in rehabilitation counseling environments.
5. Integrate multicultural competencies for effective clinical practice.

Curriculum Map

Required core courses are listed in alphabetical order in lieu of a preferred chronological order. The exceptions are REHB 690 and 694 which are clinical courses that students take in that order and at the end of the degree program.

Course	Program Student Learning Outcomes				
	1. Implement clear communications as appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context	2. Integrate rehabilitation counseling concepts across foundational and specialized knowledge areas	3. Design interventions to assist individuals with disabilities to meet their goals	4. Construct solutions to problems in rehabilitation counseling environments	5. Integrate multicultural competencies for effective clinical practice
COUN 510		B			B
COUN 540	B	B			B
COUN 565		B			B
HSCI 620	B	B		B	
REHB 605X	B	B	B		B
REHB 627		B		B	
REHB 628		B		B	
REHB 629		B		B	
REHB 640		B			B
REHB 660	B	B	B		
REHB 661		B	B	D	
REHB 662		B	B	D	
REHB 670		B	D	D	
REHB 682		B	D		D
REHB 683	D	B			
REHB 690	D	D	D	D	D
REHB 694	P	P	P	P	P

Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs Covered
Program embedded assessments	<p>A variety of assessment techniques are used to measure student performance across on eight foundational areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional counseling orientation and ethical practice • Social and cultural identities and experiences • Lifespan development • Career development • Counseling practice and relationships • Group counseling and group work • Assessment and diagnostic processes • Research and program evaluation <p>Students are assessed on a specialty area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation counseling 	A student will score in the highest performance category (e.g., <i>Exemplary</i>) or correctly score 80% or better for each foundational or specialty area.	90% of students will score in the highest performance category (e.g., <i>Exemplary</i>) or correctly score 80% or better for each foundational or specialty area according to performance criteria on each rubric.	Each semester and term (fall, spring, summer)	Course instructors	1 - 5

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs Covered
Site supervisor evaluations	Students perform clinical skills according to organizational needs for practicum or internship under site supervision. Supervisors complete Likert scale evaluations of student performance across all student learning outcomes.	A student will score in the highest performance category (e.g., <i>Exemplary</i>) or be rated at 80% or better for each student learning outcome.	90% of students will score in the highest performance category (e.g., <i>Exemplary</i>) or be rated at 80% or better for each student learning outcome according to performance criteria on each rubric.	During mid-semester and end of the semester for practicum (fall) and internship (spring).	Course instructors	1 - 5

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs Covered
Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination	<p>Students take a multiple-choice examination assessing knowledge of the eight foundational areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional counseling orientation and ethical practice • Social and cultural identities and experiences • Lifespan development • Career development • Counseling practice and relationships • Group counseling and group work • Assessment and diagnostic processes • Research and program evaluation 	A student will score within one standard deviation below the national average for the entire examination.	90% of students will score within one standard deviation below the national average for the entire examination.	During the fall semester that is prior to internship.	Program coordinator	2

<p>Certified Rehabilitation Counseling Examination</p>	<p>Students take a multiple-choice examination assessing knowledge of the 12 areas, each divided into two parts, that is, counseling as well as rehabilitation and disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional orientation and ethical practice • Counseling theories, techniques, and evidence-based practice • Group and family counseling • Crisis and trauma counseling and interventions • Medical and psychological aspects of chronic illness and disability • Assessment/evaluation, occupational analysis, and service implementation • Career development and job placement • Business engagement • Community resources and partnerships • Case management • Health care and disability management • Research, methodology, and performance management 	<p>A student will pass both parts of the exam as determined by the certification organization's conjunctive scoring model. Therefore, a student must meet or exceed the established performance standard for each test section.</p>	<p>90% of students will pass the examination.</p>	<p>During the spring semester that is concurrent with internship.</p>	<p>Program coordinator</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Exit Survey</p>	<p>Graduating students complete a survey to measure agreement in</p>	<p>A student will indicate they <i>Agree</i></p>	<p>90% of students exiting the program</p>	<p>During the spring semester that is</p>	<p>Program coordinator</p>	<p>1 - 5</p>

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs Covered
	their ability to demonstrate the student learning outcomes.	or <i>Strongly Agree</i> the program prepared them to effectively demonstrate each student learning outcome.	will indicate they <i>Agree</i> or <i>Strongly Agree</i> the program prepared them to effectively demonstrate each student learning outcome.	concurrent with internship.		
Alumni Survey	Program alumni complete a survey to measure agreement that the program prepared them for employment with the student learning outcomes.	An alum will indicate they <i>Agree</i> or <i>Strongly Agree</i> the program prepared them for employment with each student learning outcome.	90% of alumni will indicate they <i>Agree</i> or <i>Strongly Agree</i> the program prepared them for employment with each student learning outcome.	Late spring semester/early summer.	Program coordinator	1 - 5
Employer Survey	Employers of program alumni complete a survey to measure alumni readiness for employment across the student learning outcomes.	An employer will indicate they are <i>Somewhat Satisfied</i> or <i>Extremely Satisfied</i> the alum was ready for employment across each student learning outcome.	90% of employers will indicate they are <i>Somewhat Satisfied</i> or <i>Extremely Satisfied</i> alumni were ready for employment across the student learning outcomes.	During the spring semester.	Program coordinator	1 - 5
<p><i>Note.</i> ^a Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome. ^b Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.</p>						

Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcomes				
	1. Implement clear communications as appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context	2. Integrate rehabilitation counseling concepts across foundational and specialized knowledge areas	3. Design interventions to assist individuals with disabilities to meet their goals	4. Construct solutions to problems in rehabilitation counseling environments	5. Integrate multicultural competencies for effective clinical practice
Program embedded assessments	F, D	F, D	F, D	F, D	F, D
Site supervisor evaluations	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination		F, D			
Certified Rehabilitation Counseling Examination		S, D			
Exit Survey	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
Alumni Survey	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
Employer Survey	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
<i>Note.</i> F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment.					