2009 CACREP Standards: Student Development and Learning Outcomes

Assessment Plan for MSU Counseling Program
This plan addresses CACREP I.P. & I.A.A.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
COUNSELING PROGRAM

2016-2020
Overview

The assessment plan for Montana State University-Bozeman starts with the interview and proceeds through a series of benchmarks and portfolio assignments designed to meet specific learning outcomes in each specialty area. The final overall assessment of student learning culminates with the final benchmark - the comprehensive exam. The assessment process comprehensively addresses both knowledge and skills/practices outcomes for Mental Health, Marriage & Family, and School Counseling programs. Knowledge Areas in the 2009 Standards are demonstrated using portfolio assignments and Skills/Practices are demonstrated in benchmark dispositions. Students progress through a series of four benchmark dispositions in which Skills/Practice are evaluated, as well as Knowledge Areas reviewed.

Skills/Practices: is measured in a series of four benchmarks for MFC, MH and SC students. These benchmarks are outlined below:

- **Benchmark 1- Counseling Skills (December –mid- 1st year)**

Benchmark one is determined during HDCO 521: counseling skills in which students submit a final tape. This benchmark uses that tape, as well as the overall course grade and feedback to determine the benchmark disposition of the student. Any disposition of a “3”, on a 5 point likert scale, which represents the equivalent of a B- grade, will most likely result in a remediation plan to address areas of concern. While this is a passing grade, it suggests concern for counseling skill. However, it should be noted that at this point in a student’s training it can be difficult to determine if he or she lacks the skill or, perhaps, needs additional time to develop it, thus more leeway may be given regarding this benchmark, versus benchmarks at other points in the program. A remediation plan will be constructed in consultation with the student’s committee. A disposition of 4, the equivalent of a C+ or lower grade, will result in a student retaking the skills course. Passing this course demonstrates the potential of the student to meet future benchmarks and skills/practices in each specialty area. Please see Appendix A for an example of a remediation plan for a disposition of a 3 or 4.

- **Benchmark 2- Practicum (May – end of 1st year)**

Benchmark two is determined during practicum in the spring semester. This benchmark is measured using the practicum supervisor’s evaluation completed at the end of the semester. It is expected that feedback given throughout the semester has been integrated into the student’s work with clients. Any benchmark disposition of 4 will most likely result in a remediation plan. A disposition of 5 will result in a student re-taking the skills course. Passing this course demonstrates the potential of the student to meet future benchmarks and skills/practices in each specialty area. Please see Appendix A for an example of a remediation plan for a disposition of a 3 or 4.
be allowed to proceed to internship. In addition to the review of students’ skills, students’ portfolios are reviewed and tracking sheets collected at this meeting.

- **Benchmark 3- Internship (Qualitative Evaluation mid-fall semester & Benchmark meeting in December - 2nd year)**

Benchmark three is determined by the evaluation of the student by the internship site supervisor in combination with the observation of skills by the internship course instructor (usually the faculty program leader) as well as student performance in internship class, HDCO 598. Students will be given a disposition indicating what areas of improvement are needed, as well as areas that the student is doing well. In addition to the skill review, portfolios are reviewed and tracking sheets collected.

Also, students are required during their internship course (HDCO 598) to complete a qualitative evaluation mid-semester of the feedback they have received throughout their program of study (see Appendix C). This form is utilized to help students stay accountable for the feedback they have received throughout the program, as well as help them see areas that they have made improvements in.

- **Benchmark 4- Comprehensive Exam (March of 2nd year)**

Benchmark four is the comprehensive exam. Students must successfully pass this exam, which is a written paper demonstrating skill in theory based case conceptualization and treatment planning, in order to proceed to graduation. The exam is blindly graded by two faculty readers. If a student receives one pass and one fail then a third faculty member is asked to read the exam. If the third reader grades the exam as a pass, the student passes comprehensive exam. If the student receives two fails the student must re-take the exam after a 3 month period, which may be during the summer semester but is determined at the committee’s discretion. If the student fails the exam a second time, he or she will not be allowed to graduate from the counseling program. Graduation hinges on successful completion of the comprehensive exam.

- **Checkout- (April of Final Year)**

Students will complete a final checkout with their program leaders during the last week of internship class during their final year. During this checkout students’ portfolios will be given one final review. All tracking sheets will be collected and students will be given their final evaluations from their site supervisors.

**Knowledge Area Outcomes:** are measured by portfolio assignments. Each course in the program has at least one assignment designated as a portfolio assignment. The matrices for each program documents the standards, which courses those standards are being met in, and how the standards are being measured (portfolio assignments).

Knowledge areas in each program specialty are measured through carefully selected portfolio assignments that specifically meet those standards. Other course assignments may meet those
standards; however, the portfolio assignment is an agreed upon assignment by all core faculty. Each portfolio assignment is clearly marked on all syllabi.

Students will collect portfolio assignments in a binder and keep track of the grade and corresponding assessment value in a tracking sheet located in the front of the binder. An example of this tracking sheet is in Appendix D. If a student receives a score of 5 indicative of “does not meet standard”, the student will need to complete remediation. This may include repeating the assignment until he/she receives a score indicative of “meets standard.” If a student receives a 4 “Meets standard with concerns,” the student may have remediation. This determination is based upon student performance in previous courses and if this particular issue has been a pattern throughout the student’s program of study.

In addition, students will be asked to fill out an assessment of their progress during their meetings for Benchmarks two and three. Please see Appendix C for this student assessment form. During their meetings for benchmarks two and three and the final checkout, program faculty will review tracking sheets with students to ensure that students are keeping track of their progress. This data will be collected and used to determine how successful we are at meeting the knowledge area outcomes for SC, MH, and MFC.

The flowchart below provides a visual of the process throughout a student’s progression in the program.
Application:

- GPA
- GRE Score: prefer at least 50th percentile in both verbal and quantitative
- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statement

If students satisfactorily meet the above requirements, they are invited for an on-campus interview. Selections for each program are made after the interview.

Assessment Begins

Once a student is accepted into the program, the assessment of student learning outcomes begins. Each course has 1-2 designated portfolio assignments. In addition to courses meeting the eight core areas, each course has portfolio assignments designed to meet SLO's in each specialty area. These are clearly designated on the syllabi. Students are asked to keep these assignments in a binder and track their grades and designated scores.

What does the score mean?

A = 1, A - / B+ = 2, B = 3, B - = 4 (Remediation may be required), and C+ or Lower = 5 (Remediation is required)

Students with a score of 1, 2, or 3 are exceeding and meeting expectations of the assignments. However, students with scores of 4 or 5 pose concerns. If a portfolio assignment has a score of 4, it is at the course instructor's and program leader's discretion to determine if remediation is needed. If a 5 is received, remediation is required to ensure that the student meets the learning outcome.

What is a benchmark?

Benchmarks are designated review times of clinical skill. There are a series of 3 clinical benchmarks throughout the program. These reviews determine if the student is ready to proceed to the next level. In addition, these meetings are used as a time to review student portfolios and collect student assessments of their own areas of strength and growth from feedback received on their portfolio assignments. The fourth benchmark is the comprehensive exam.

Comprehensive Exam - Benchmark 4

During students' final semester in the program, they are given a comprehensive exam. This exam is the final marker of students' progress throughout the program. Theoretically, if students have progressed well through the series of portfolio assignments and benchmarks, they should pass their exam. However, if the student fails the exam they are given an opportunity to take it a second time.
How do we use this data?

The MSU Counseling Program will review the data collected to see what the average scores on portfolio assignments are. It gives the program an opportunity to see if there are areas of study that seem to be problematic for students as a whole (as indicated by lower scores). In addition, the qualitative review (during Benchmark 3) gives the faculty a chance to talk to students about their progress and give them an opportunity to evaluate themselves in terms of implementing feedback across their course of study. If students are not implementing feedback across the course of study, it provides an opportunity to discuss why this is not happening.
Appendix A: Benchmark Remediation

Student Name:

Date:

Benchmark Level: 1 2 3 4 5

Benchmark Disposition: ________ (Letter Grade and Corresponding Benchmark Score)

Disposition Narrative (summary of why the score was given):

Remediation Plan/Requirements:

Date the remediation must be completed and/or reviewed: ___________________

Student Signature: Date:
Program Leader Signature: Date:
Instructor Signature: Date:

Follow-Up: (What was the outcome of the remediation?):
Appendix B Portfolio Assignment Remediation

Student Name:

Date:

Portfolio Assignment:_________________ Course:________________________

Disposition:_________ (Letter Grade and Corresponding Score)

Disposition Narrative (summary of why the score was given):

Remediation Plan/Requirements:

Date the remediation must be completed and/or reviewed:__________________

Student Signature:        Date:

Program Leader Signature:        Date:

Instructor Signature:        Date:

Follow-up: (What was the outcome of the remediation?)
Appendix C Student Assessment of Feedback

Student Name:___________________________________

Please mark which semester you are conducting this assessment. It should be in what is the equivalent of mid-fall semester of the 2nd year.

Date:_________________

Please look through the portfolio assignments and benchmark dispositions you have collected up to this point in order to identify the themes within the feedback you have been given both on your portfolio assignments, as well as your benchmark dispositions. This feedback is divided into three areas: Academic, Clinical, and Professional Growth.

What are the primary themes in these three areas?

Academic: What has been your primary feedback with regard to your academic assignments?

Clinical: What have been the patterns or themes with your clinical feedback? For example, have you been told to increase feeling reflections since skills class?

Professional Growth: What feedback have you received with regard to professional growth. Perhaps, you have been given feedback regarding your level of participation in supervision and/or class.
What have you done to address the feedback given to you in these three areas? You must be specific when stating this i.e., if you have gone to the writing center to improve your writing then state specifics regarding when you started that, if you are still going, etc. If you have been given feedback that you are not attending to emotional reflection then what have you done to work on this skill? Perhaps, getting your own personal counseling to improve your own self awareness has been important. Please attach any artifacts that seem important. Perhaps, you want to include an assignment where you received feedback that your APA style of writing had improved.

**How have you addressed the feedback?**

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**Academic:**

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**Clinical:**

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**Professional:**

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What areas still need to be addressed and what has prevented you from addressing them?
What will you do to address them?

Academic:

Clinical:

Professional/Personal Growth:

Signatures

Students: Date:
Instructor/Program Leader: Date:
Appendix D – Example of Tracking Sheet

Marriage & Family Counseling Program Portfolio Assignment Tracking Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>SU</th>
<th>FA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome Scale</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Portfolio Assignment</td>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCO 502 Ethics</td>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCO 508 Theory I</td>
<td>Case Concept 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genogram</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDCO Career Counseling</td>
<td>Administration of Career assessment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCO 503 Professional Issues</td>
<td>Advocacy Project</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Identity Paper</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCO 521 Counseling Skills</td>
<td>Final Tape</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCO 522 Group Counseling</td>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDCO 510 Theory II</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Leader Signature: _____________________________