

Ph.D. in Mental Health Counseling PLV

Narrative

The Ph.D. in Mental Health Counseling began in Fall, 2013 and was the first doctorate in this discipline in the United States. Students entering this program have already completed a 60-credit Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling and typically have their NYS licensure. The overarching goal of this program is to train students in research methods and statistical analysis such that they will be able to contribute to the substantive scientific body of knowledge in the counseling field. To meet that end, 50% of first-year courses are devoted to methodological and statistical pedagogy and training.

The following research-oriented learning outcomes were assessed: (1) Demonstrate the ability to choose data analytic strategies appropriate to the evaluation of stated research hypotheses, (2) Demonstrate an understanding and ability to critique empirical articles with respect to measurement strategies, sampling, statistical analysis, and research design, (3) Demonstrate the ability to evaluate statistical analyses and graphical representations of data via IBM-SPSS, (4) Demonstrate the application of statistical procedures and research designs tailored to the needs of quasi-experimental and correlational research and (5) . Demonstrate the ability to write literature reviews appropriate to the doctoral level, including summarizing rather than listing research findings, choosing appropriate sources, and integrating conflicting findings. For 2018, Research Comprehensive exams from 2017 ($n = 4$) were evaluated by three faculty members teaching in the doctoral program. Each rater evaluated learning outcomes 1, 3, and 4 per exam using the following rating scale: 5 – Outstanding 4 – Exceeds Expectations 3 – Competent 2 – Needs Improvement 1 – Unacceptable. In addition, 2018 pre-dissertation proposals (prepared by students at the end of the second year of the program) were evaluated by two faculty members co-teaching MHC 832: Dissertation Seminar 2 for learning outcomes 1, 2, 4 and 5, utilizing the same rating scale. Additionally, a qualitative analysis of four completed doctoral dissertations was performed, utilizing the five learning outcomes as a guide. Finally, the program was reviewed this past Spring by accreditation site visitors from The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and their feedback on the doctoral program are presented here as well.

As background, based on the assessment evidence collected in 2017 (evaluating samples of 2014, 2015, and 2016 research comprehensive exams), the following changes in curriculum were implemented. In order to increase skills reflected in learning outcome 1, empirical articles incorporating statistical applications reviewed in both MHC 705: Statistics and Research Design 1 and MHC 706: Statistics and Research Design 2 will be emphasized more strongly. For learning outcome 2, measurement modules are being considered for both MHC 705 and MHC 706, emphasizing quantitative approaches, and in MHC 830: Research Design: Special Topics Seminar, emphasizing theoretical and applied measurement concepts. To improve skills reflected in learning outcome 3 increased usage of real-world databases and IBM-SPSS output interpretation were incorporated in MHC 705 and MHC 706. To increase skills reflected in learning outcome 4, more articles incorporating quasi-experiments and illustrating the importance of describing and interpreting partial statistical effects will be introduced in MHC 706 and MHC 832.

Given the primary focus of our program is on training outstanding researchers, we set the following goals for our students: (1) Overall ratings of 3.5 and above, (2) no students falling below Competent, and (3) 75% of students falling above Competent.

Results for comprehensive exams are presented first (student $n = 4$ for 2018). Table 1 contains the means and SD,s for each outcome as well as results from our 2016 and 2017 assessments as comparisons. Tables 3-5 contain frequency distributions for each comprehensive exam learning outcome. For Learning Outcome 1, a mean rating of 3.59 (relative to means of 3.25 and 2.93, for 2016 and 2017, respectively) was obtained. 100% of exams were at or above Competent. For Learning Outcome 3, a mean rating of 3.38 (relative to means of 3.12 and 3.17, for 2016 and 2017, respectively) was obtained. 85% of exams were at or above Competent. For Learning Outcome 3, a mean rating of 3.17 (relative to a mean of 3.12 from last year) was obtained. 85% of exams were at or above Competent. For Learning Outcome 4, a mean rating of 3.54 (relative to means of 3.17 and 3.08, for 2016 and 2017, respectively) was obtained. 100% of exams were at or above Competent.

For 2017 pre-dissertation proposals (student $n = 5$ for 2018), the results were as follows. Table 2 contains the means and SD,s for each learning outcome and results from 2017 for comparison. Tables 6-9 contain frequency distributions for each pre-dissertation proposal learning outcomes. For Learning Outcome 1, a mean rating of 3.70 was obtained compared to a mean of 2.87 for 2017. 90% of exams were at or above Competent. For Learning Outcome 2, a mean rating of 3.50 was obtained compared to 2.88 for 2017. 90% of exams were at or above Competent. For Learning Outcome 4, a mean rating of 3.30 was obtained compared to 2.69 for 2017. 90% of exams were at or above Competent. For Learning Outcome 5, a mean rating of 3.60 was obtained compared to 2.38 for 2017. 80% of exams were at or above Competent.

Four completed dissertations were qualitatively evaluated, using the five learning outcomes as a guide. For learning outcome one, choices of statistical analyses for each hypothesis were appropriate. Specific results were clearly tied to each stated prediction and reasonable conclusions were reached. For learning outcome 2, knowledge of extant literature was demonstrated. For learning outcome 3, results chapters reflected competency in using IBM-SPSS and understanding and interpretation of statistical results. For learning outcome four, all dissertations involved passive observational (correlational) research methods. Appropriate presentation of partial effects pertinent to these designs was indicated and helped contextualize statistical results. For learning outcome five, scientific writing style followed APA format and was of uniformly high quality. Theoretical and empirical source materials were integrative and demonstrated thoughtful critique. Each dissertation generated findings that were publication worthy, and in each case articles are currently being prepared for submission to peer-reviewed journals.

CACREP site visitors concurred that the quality of research training within the program was exemplary. Despite the laudable focus on quantitatively oriented training, pedagogy regarding qualitative research methods was lacking, which was not commensurate with one of the CACREP accreditation standards. Another concern raised by the site team was the lack of an additional professional practice training component in the curriculum.

For learning outcome 1, the mean rating was at or above our goal for both research comprehensives and pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal. For learning outcome 2, the mean rating was at or above our goal for pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal. For learning outcome 3, the mean rating was at or above our goal for research comprehensives and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal. For learning outcome 4, the mean rating was at or above our goal

for both research comprehensives and pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal. . For learning outcome 5, the mean rating was at or above our goal for pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal. Coupled with the qualitative analyses of our dissertations, curriculum changes implemented over the past two years have led to manifest improvement in student performance for each learning outcome.

We will continue to incorporate curriculum changes implemented last year as ratings have trended upward over the course of our assessment time frame. A summary of these changes are as follows. In order to increase skills reflected in learning outcome 1, empirical articles incorporating statistical applications reviewed in both MHC 705: Statistics and Research Design 1 and MHC 706: Statistics and Research Design 2 will be emphasized more strongly. For learning outcome 2, measurement modules should be included in both MHC 705 and MHC 706, emphasizing quantitative approaches, and in MHC 830: Research Design: Special Topics Seminar, emphasizing theoretical and applied measurement concepts. To improve skills reflected in learning outcome 3, increased usage of real-world databases and IBM-SPSS output interpretation will be incorporated in MHC 705 and MHC 706. To increase skills reflected in learning outcome 4, more articles incorporating quasi-experiments and illustrating the importance of describing and interpreting partial statistical effects will be introduced in MHC 706. In addition, as the number of students have increased, we will formalize, for next year, an assessment of our doctoral dissertations.

Our CACREP site team feedback necessitates a number of assessment changes; not only to our curriculum, but to our assessment process in general. We need to add two courses to our curriculum: Qualitative Methods & an advanced course in professional practice. Moreover, we need to expand the focus of our assessment initiatives to encompass more comprehensively CACREP doctoral program standards. So, in addition to our current focus on Standard 4: *Research and Scholarship*, we need to include specific assessment processes for the remaining five Standards: *1 – Counseling, 2 – Supervision, 3 – Teaching, and 5 – Leadership and Advocacy*.

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>Methodology used to assess learning outcome</i>	<i>Semester when assessment data were collected</i>	<i>Analysis of results</i>	<i>Evaluation of results</i>	<i>Action plans taken based on evaluation</i>
<p>1. Demonstrate the ability to choose data analytic strategies appropriate to the evaluation of stated research hypotheses.</p>	<p>For 2018, Research Comprehensive exams from 2016 ($n = 4$) were evaluated by three faculty members teaching in the doctoral program. Each rater evaluated three of four learning outcomes per exam using the following rating scale: 5 – Outstanding 4 – Exceeds Expectations 3 – Competent 2 – Needs Improvement 1 – Unacceptable. In addition, 2018 pre-dissertation proposals (prepared by students at the end of the second year of the program, $n = 5$) were evaluated by two faculty members co-teaching MHC 832: Dissertation Seminar 2 for learning outcomes 1, 2, 4 and 5, utilizing the same rating scale. In addition, qualitative analyses of a subset of our dissertations were performed. Finally,</p>	<p>Spring 2017 & Spring 2018</p>	<p>Research comprehensive exam:</p> <p>For Learning Outcome 1, a mean rating of 3.59 (relative to means of 3.25 and 2.93, for 2016 and 2017, respectively) was obtained. 100% of exams were at or above Competent. .</p> <p>Pre-dissertation proposals:</p> <p>For Learning Outcome 1, a mean rating of 3.70 was obtained compared to a mean of 2.87 for 2017. 90% of exams were at or above Competent.</p> <p>Qualitative Review of dissertations</p> <p>For learning outcome one, choices of statistical analyses for each hypothesis were appropriate. Specific results were clearly tied</p>	<p>We set the following goals for our students: (1) Overall ratings of 3.5 and above, (2) no students falling below Competent, and (3) 75% of students falling above Competent. For this learning outcome, the mean rating was at or above our goal for both research comprehensives and pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal.</p>	<p>We will continue to incorporate curriculum changes implemented last year as ratings have trended upward over the course of our assessment time frame. In addition, as the number of students have increased, we will formalize, for next year, an assessment of our doctoral dissertations. Finally, Our CACREP site team feedback necessitates a number of assessment changes; not only to our curriculum, but to our assessment process in general. We need to add two courses to our curriculum: Qualitative Methods & an advanced course in professional practice. Moreover, we need to expand the focus of our assessment initiatives to encompass more comprehensively CACREP doctoral program standards. So,</p>

	<p>feedback on our curriculum from our recent CACREP accreditation visit was incorporated into our evaluation.</p>		<p>to each stated prediction and reasonable conclusions were reached.</p>		<p>in addition to our current focus on Standard 4: <i>Research and Scholarship</i>, we need to include specific assessment processes for the remaining five Standards: 1 – <i>Counseling</i>, 2 – <i>Supervision</i>, 3 – <i>Teaching</i>, and 5 – <i>Leadership and Advocacy</i>.</p>
<p>2. Demonstrate an understanding and ability to critique empirical articles with respect to measurement strategies, sampling, statistical analysis, and research design.</p>	<p>For 2018, Research Comprehensive exams from 2016 ($n = 4$) were evaluated by three faculty members teaching in the doctoral program. Each rater evaluated three of four learning outcomes per exam using the following rating scale: 5 – Outstanding 4 – Exceeds Expectations 3 – Competent 2 – Needs Improvement 1 – Unacceptable. In addition, 2018 pre-dissertation proposals (prepared by students at the end of the second year of the program, $n = 5$) were evaluated by two faculty members co-teaching MHC 832: Dissertation Seminar 2 for learning outcomes 1, 2, 4 and 5, utilizing the same rating scale.</p>	<p>Spring 2017 & Spring 2018</p>	<p>Pre-dissertation proposals:</p> <p>For Learning Outcome 2, a mean rating of 3.50 was obtained compared to 2.88 for 2017. 90% of exams were at or above Competent.</p> <p>Qualitative Review of dissertations</p> <p>For learning outcome 2, knowledge of extant literature was demonstrated.</p>	<p>We set the following goals for our students: (1) Overall ratings of 3.5 and above, (2) no students falling below Competent, and (3) 75% of students falling above Competent. For this learning outcome, the mean rating was at or above our goal for pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal.</p>	<p>We will continue to incorporate curriculum changes implemented last year as ratings have trended upward over the course of our assessment time frame. In addition, as the number of students have increased, we will formalize, for next year, an assessment of our doctoral dissertations. Finally, Our CACREP site team feedback necessitates a number of assessment changes; not only to our curriculum, but to our assessment process in general. We need to add two courses to our curriculum: Qualitative Methods & an advanced course in professional practice. Moreover, we need to expand the focus of our assessment</p>

	<p>In addition, qualitative analyses of a subset of our dissertations were performed. Finally, feedback on our curriculum from our recent CACREP accreditation visit was incorporated into our evaluation</p>				<p>initiatives to encompass more comprehensively CACREP doctoral program standards. So, in addition to our current focus on Standard 4: <i>Research and Scholarship</i>, we need to include specific assessment processes for the remaining five Standards: 1 – <i>Counseling</i>, 2 – <i>Supervision</i>, 3 – <i>Teaching</i>, and 5 – <i>Leadership and Advocacy</i></p>
<p>3. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate statistical analyses and graphical representations of data via IBM-SPSS.</p>	<p>For 2018, Research Comprehensive exams from 2016 ($n = 4$) were evaluated by three faculty members teaching in the doctoral program. Each rater evaluated three of four learning outcomes per exam using the following rating scale: 5 – Outstanding 4 – Exceeds Expectations 3 – Competent 2 – Needs Improvement 1 – Unacceptable. In addition, 2018 pre-dissertation proposals (prepared by students at the end of the second year of the program, $n = 5$) were evaluated by two faculty members co-teaching MHC 832: Dissertation Seminar 2</p>	<p>Spring 2017 & Spring 2018</p>	<p>Research comprehensive exam:</p> <p>For Learning Outcome 3, a mean rating of 3.38 (relative to means of 3.12 and 3.17, for 2016 and 2017, respectively) was obtained. 85% of exams were at or above Competent.</p> <p>Qualitative Review of Dissertations:</p> <p>For learning outcome 3, results chapters reflected competency in using IBM-SPSS and understanding and interpretation of statistical results.</p>	<p>We set the following goals for our students: (1) Overall ratings of 3.5 and above, (2) no students falling below Competent, and (3) 75% of students falling above Competent. For this learning outcome, the mean rating was at or above our goal for research comprehensives and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal.</p>	<p>We will continue to incorporate curriculum changes implemented last year as ratings have trended upward over the course of our assessment time frame. In addition, as the number of students have increased, we will formalize, for next year, an assessment of our doctoral dissertations. Finally, Our CACREP site team feedback necessitates a number of assessment changes; not only to our curriculum, but to our assessment process in general. We need to add two courses to our curriculum: Qualitative Methods & an advanced course in professional</p>

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<p>4. Demonstrate the application of statistical procedures and research designs tailored to the needs of quasi-experimental and correlational research.</p>	<p>For 2018, Research Comprehensive exams from 2016 ($n = 4$) were evaluated by three faculty members teaching in the doctoral program. Each rater evaluated three of four learning outcomes per exam using the following rating scale: 5 – Outstanding 4 – Exceeds Expectations 3 – Competent 2 – Needs Improvement 1 – Unacceptable. In addition, 2018 pre-dissertation proposals (prepared by students at the end of the second year of the program, $n = 5$) were evaluated by</p>	<p>Spring 2017 & Spring 2018</p>	<p>Research comprehensive exam:</p> <p>For Learning Outcome 4, a mean rating of 3.54 (relative to means of 3.17 and 3.08, for 2016 and 2017, respectively) was obtained. 100% of exams were at or above Competent.</p> <p>Pre-dissertation proposal:</p> <p>For Learning Outcome 4, a mean rating of 3.30 was obtained compared to 2.69 for 2017. 90% of exams were at or above Competent.</p>	<p>We set the following goals for our students: (1) Overall ratings of 3.5 and above, (2) no students falling below Competent, and (3) 75% of students falling above Competent. For this learning outcome, the mean rating was at or above our goal for both research comprehensives and pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal.</p>	<p>We will continue to incorporate curriculum changes implemented last year as ratings have trended upward over the course of our assessment time frame. In addition, as the number of students have increased, we will formalize, for next year, an assessment of our doctoral dissertations. Finally, Our CACREP site team feedback necessitates a number of assessment changes; not only to our curriculum, but to our assessment process in general. We need to add two courses to our</p>

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<p>5. Demonstrate the ability to write literature reviews appropriate to the doctoral level, including summarizing research findings, choosing appropriate sources, and integrating conflicting findings</p>	<p>For 2018, Research Comprehensive exams from 2016 ($n = 4$) were evaluated by three faculty members teaching in the doctoral program. Each rater evaluated three of four learning outcomes per exam using the following rating scale: 5 – Outstanding 4 – Exceeds Expectations 3 – Competent 2 – Needs Improvement 1 – Unacceptable. In addition, 2018 pre-dissertation proposals (prepared by students at</p>	<p>Spring 2017 & Spring 2018</p>	<p>Pre-dissertation proposal:</p> <p>. For Learning Outcome 5, a mean rating of 3.60 was obtained compared to 2.38 for 2017. 80% of exams were at or above Competent.</p> <p>Qualitative Review of Dissertations:</p> <p>For learning outcome five, scientific writing style followed APA format and was of uniformly high quality.</p>	<p>We set the following goals for our students: (1) Overall ratings of 3.5 and above, (2) no students falling below Competent, and (3) 75% of students falling above Competent. For this learning outcome, the mean rating was at or above our goal for pre-dissertation proposals and the percentage of students at or above competent exceeded our goal.</p>	<p>We will continue to incorporate curriculum changes implemented last year as ratings have trended upward over the course of our assessment time frame. In addition, as the number of students have increased, we will formalize, for next year, an assessment of our doctoral dissertations. Finally, Our CACREP site team feedback necessitates a number of assessment changes; not only to our curriculum, but to our</p>

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Table 1

Means and SDs for learning outcomes by assessment year for 2017 Comprehensive Exam

Assessment Year		Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4
2016	Mean	3.25	3.33	3.12	3.17
	N	24	24	24	24
	Std. Deviation	.74	.76	1.12	.96
2017	Mean	2.93	3.14	3.17	3.08
	N	14	14	6	12
	Std. Deviation	.83	1.03	.98	.90
2018	Mean	3.69		3.38	3.54
	N	13		13	13
	Std. Deviation	.63		.87	.52
Total	Mean	3.27	3.26	3.21	3.24
	N	51	38	43	49
	Std. Deviation	.78	.86	1.01	.85

Table 2

Means and SDs for learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, and 5 by assessment year for pre-dissertation proposals

Assessment Year		Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 4	Learning Outcome 5
2017	Mean	2.87	2.88	2.69	2.38
	N	16	16	16	8
	Std. Deviation	1.09	.72	.87	.74
2018	Mean	3.70	3.50	3.30	3.60
	N	10	10	10	10
	Std. Deviation	1.06	.71	.67	1.17
Total	Mean	3.19	3.12	2.92	3.06
	N	26	26	26	18
	Std. Deviation	1.13	.77	.84	1.16

Table 3

2018 Assessment of Comprehensive Exam:

Learning_Outcome_1 Demonstrate the ability to choose data analytic strategies appropriate to the evaluation of stated research hypotheses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Competent	5	21.7	38.5	38.5
	Exceeds Expectations	7	30.4	53.8	92.3
	Outstanding	1	4.3	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	56.5	100.0	
Missing	System	10	43.5		
Total		23	100.0		

Table 4

2018 Assessment of Comprehensive Exam:

Learning_Outcome_3 Demonstrate the ability to evaluate statistical analyses and graphical representations of data via IBM-SPSS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs Improvement	2	8.7	15.4	15.4
	Competent	5	21.7	38.5	53.8
	Exceeds Expectations	5	21.7	38.5	92.3
	Outstanding	1	4.3	7.7	100.0
	Total	13	56.5	100.0	
Missing	System	10	43.5		
Total		23	100.0		

Table 5

2018 Assessment of Comprehensive Exam:

Learning_Outcome_4 Demonstrate the application of statistical procedures and research designs tailored to the needs of quasi-experimental and correlational research

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Competent	6	26.1	46.2	46.2
	Exceeds Expectations	7	30.4	53.8	100.0
	Total	13	56.5	100.0	
Missing	System	10	43.5		
Total		23	100.0		

Table 6

2018 Assessment of Pre-dissertation Proposals:

Learning outcome 1 - Proposals Demonstrate the ability to choose data analytic strategies appropriate to the evaluation of stated research hypotheses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs Improvement	1	4.3	10.0	10.0
	Competent	4	17.4	40.0	50.0
	Exceeds Expectations	2	8.7	20.0	70.0
	Outstanding	3	13.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	10	43.5	100.0	
Missing	System	13	56.5		
Total		23	100.0		

Table 7

2018 Assessment of Pre-dissertation Proposals:

Learning Outcome 2 - Proposals Demonstrate an understanding and ability to critique empirical articles with respect to measurement strategies, sampling, statistical analysis, and research design

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs Improvement	1	4.3	10.0	10.0
	Competent	3	13.0	30.0	40.0
	Exceeds Expectations	6	26.1	60.0	100.0
	Total	10	43.5	100.0	
Missing	System	13	56.5		
Total		23	100.0		

Table 8

2018 Assessment of Pre-dissertation Proposals:

Learning Outcome 4 - Proposals Demonstrate the application of statistical procedures and research designs tailored to the needs of quasi-experimental and correlational research

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs Improvement	1	4.3	10.0	10.0
	Competent	5	21.7	50.0	60.0
	Exceeds Expectations	4	17.4	40.0	100.0
	Total	10	43.5	100.0	
Missing	System	13	56.5		
Total		23	100.0		

Table 9

2018 Assessment of Pre-dissertation Proposals: Learning Outcome 5 - Demonstrate the ability to write literature reviews appropriate to the doctoral level, including summarizing rather than listing research findings, choosing appropriate sources, and integrating conflicting findings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs Improvement	2	8.7	20.0	20.0
	Competent	3	13.0	30.0	50.0
	Exceeds Expectations	2	8.7	20.0	70.0
	Outstanding	3	13.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	10	43.5	100.0	
Missing	System	13	56.5		
Total		23	100.0		