

Arcadia University's Graduate Program in Counseling Annual Survey of Training Sites for the 2023-24 Academic Year

Description of Assessment

Each year, the Graduate Program in Counseling (GPC) surveys all direct supervisors of current practicum and internship students. This survey is intended to assess the GPC's effectiveness in meeting its programmatic mission and objectives and preparing students for their external clinical training and later employment in the counseling field. This survey was developed by the GPC's core faculty and reviewed by the Master of Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) during the program's most recent reaccreditation cycle.

Summary of Findings

In total, eight site supervisors completed this survey during the Spring 2024 semester. Overall, the results indicate that external training sites had a positive experience working with the GPC and that the GPC was generally effective in meeting its programmatic mission and objectives and preparing students for their external clinical training and later employment in the counseling field. Site supervisors appreciated our program's strong clinical training, faculty accessibility and responsiveness, the amount of time dedicated to the site, and openness of students. Several areas for improvement were also suggested for our curriculum, including training in play therapy for child and family track students, having practicum lead directly into internship, and expanding flexibility around direct hours requirements.

Planning & Modifications

Based on the results of this evaluation:

1. When the core faculty reconvene for the Fall 2024 semester, they will discuss whether to and how to add more information about play therapy into the curriculum. In career guidance mentoring, we can also make more emphasis on using professional development funds for play therapy workshops for our students in the child and family concentration.
2. We have gradually transitioned students' course plans so that practicum leads directly into internship. All newly admitted students have their practicum in the summer before internship.
3. The core faculty will also discuss the criteria for direct hours and ensure we are aligned with the PA State Board requirements for educational training as well as our accrediting body (MPCAC). Additionally, during site visits, internship instructors can emphasize the reasoning behind our direct hours requirements and troubleshoot site specific ways to adhere to the requirements.

Detailed Findings

Please rate your overall experience working with Arcadia's Counseling program.

- 100% of respondents reported a "very positive" experience.

Please describe the strengths of our Counseling program.

- Strong clinical curriculum and expectations for students and preparation for counseling experience, dedicated and easily accessible staff (site visits are great, easy to get answers via email, responsive and supportive Director)
- The amount of time students give to the site, because it enriches their experience in learning

- Students are well prepared to start clinical work
- Students' openness to learning and also open to asking for help
- Students are well prepared for internship and staff has always been very responsive to communication.
- Arcadia's Counseling program has a strong clinical foundation, emphasis on self awareness and growth, and multicultural component. As a result, interns enter the internship position prepared for direct contact and eager to expand their experiential learning. In addition, Arcadia's staff and faculty are responsive, supportive, and collaborative. This makes for a smooth and successful experience for all.

Please share areas for improvement or additional training in our Counseling program.

- Modifying program so that practicum always lead right into the internship
- Add a play therapy course/workshop to enhance the clinical foundation for the Child and Family Track
- Direct hours should be able to expand a bit

To what extent does this mission statement and four objectives fit with the current needs of Counseling students and the Counseling field?

- 87.5% reported "very much" to "extremely" (1 person did not respond to this question)

Please share any suggestions you have for modifying our program's mission and major objectives.

- Only positive feedback about the strength of our clinical training program was received in response to this question.

Please share any suggestions you have for improving the evaluation form that supervisors to complete to assess students' performance on internship.

- Request for PDF copy of completed evaluation

Has your site hired a graduate of Arcadia's Counseling program as an employee within the last five years?

- 5 of 7 respondents who answered this item (71%) responded yes

Please rate your overall satisfaction with Arcadia graduates you've hired as employees over the past five years.

- All 5 respondents reported "very much satisfied"

Please share any suggestions for how we can better prepare our graduates for employment in the field.

- Our practice has hired 100% of Arcadia interns (3 in total so far) and those therapists continue to thrive and provide high quality mental health services to the community. Due to being a NJ practice and having to follow NJ licensure requirements, we do hope Arcadia will reconsider adding the NCE as an option to take while in school, as NJ requires newly graduated therapists who are employed at a for profit organization to be a Licensed Associate Counselor (a license that requires the NCE). The process for taking the NCE after graduation, through NJ, can delay licensure (LAC) for up to 5 months.