



## **New Mexico Highlands University Counseling Department Annual Fall Report on Academic Year 2024-2025**

New Mexico Highlands University's Counseling Department Annual Report is completed yearly to ensure that the program is frequently evaluated, enhanced, and maintained. CACREP, the NMHU Counseling Program accrediting body, section 4, requires that accrediting programs evaluate and disseminate information related to evaluation to all its constituents. This evaluation process consists of institutional data, data from current and former students, supervisors and employers. Additionally, the report outlines some of the program modifications which followed the evaluation of all graduate programs.

The annual report utilizes research and assessments to evaluate the skills, theories, and comprehensive counseling knowledge that the students gain to embody in their practice as counselors. This report contains data which includes number and demographics of current students, number of graduates during the past academic year, pass rates on licensure/credential exams, program completion rates, and job placement rates.

Data for this report has been compiled from different sources over the academic year. Information in this report will include:

- Program Overview
- 2024- 2025 CACREP Vital Statistics
- Program Accreditation + Demographics
- Current Demographics
- Annual Fall Surveys
- National & State Data
- Program Modifications

The counseling department utilizes all the data gathered through this report to improve the counseling program as suggested by feedback and research.

### **Program Overview**

The main campus of New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) is in Las Vegas, NM. In addition to the main campus, there are four centers. The four centers are located in Farmington, NM, Santa Fe, NM, Albuquerque, NM, and Rio Rancho, NM. The counseling program at New Mexico Highlands University offers several concentrations for the Master of Arts Counseling degrees. The program offers three concentrations that require 60 credit hours: clinical mental health counseling, clinical rehabilitation counseling, and school counseling. The counseling program utilizes CACREP and state licensing guidelines as the foundation of the program. The counseling program also offers certifications for those who already possess a master's in counseling. Offered certifications include Professional Counseling Certificate (LMHC), Rehabilitation Counseling Certificate (CRC, PED K-12) a School Counseling Certificate Program (PED K-12), and a Substance Abuse Certificate.

The counseling program is a distance program, per HLC guidelines, with courses offered either asynchronously or synchronously through zoom, or blended.

## **Program Objectives**

The Highlands Counselor Education Program is designed to prepare students to be effective, proactive professionals who can develop, organize, and implement outstanding and comprehensive counseling services and programs. The program prepares students who:

1. demonstrate the ethical practice of counseling aligned with a professional counseling orientation in accordance with the standards and credentials of the counseling profession;
2. understand multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally while developing strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination;
3. demonstrate knowledge of factors associated with human growth and development across the lifespan;
4. understand career development theories and strategies for personal growth and vocational opportunities in a global economy;
5. utilize theoretical foundations of individual counseling, and skills in essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization to promote client understanding of and access to a variety of community-based resources;
6. utilize theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work to plan ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups;
7. utilize methods of effective assessment relevant to academic, educational, career, personal, and social development;
8. understand the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession, including how to critique research to inform counseling practice; and,
9. exhibit a capacity for self-reflection and an openness to feedback to
10. evaluate and improve personal and organizational practices.”

## **Program Mission and Vision Statements**

Vision: “To be a premier counselor education program that prepares counselors as agents of social change who transform the lives of individuals and communities they serve.”

Mission: “The mission of the Highlands’ Counselor Education Program is to train entry-level counselors who are prepared for positions in the community service agencies as mental health counselors, in school systems as school counselors, and in rehabilitation settings as rehabilitation counselors. We are committed to continuous improvement of quality and excellence that fosters critical reflection, integrates theory and practice, and promotes advocacy through a culturally responsive and inclusive approach.”

## **Graduate Faculty and Staff**

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## **CACREP Vital Statistics**

The number of graduates in the academic year 2024- 2025 increased for clinical mental health and school counseling students but decreased across clinical rehabilitation and rehabilitation concentrations. The rehabilitation concentration is no longer an offered concentration, but there is one student completing their classes. The completion of program rates has remained steady for most of the concentrations. Pass rates of clinical licensure exam and certifications have decreased since prior years for all concentrations. Job placement rates have remained steady across all four concentrations.

**Clinical Mental Health 60 hours**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fall Enrollment</b>	<b># Of Graduates</b>	<b>Completion Rate</b>	<b>Pass Rate (NCE)</b>	<b>Job Placement Rate</b>
2020- 2021	110	27	65%	69%	78%
2021- 2022	121	20	80%	80%	90%
2022- 2023	129	20	60%	79%	91%
2023- 2024	145	22	78%	86%	90%
2024- 2025	162	33	80%	60%	90%

**Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling 60 hours**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fall Enrollment</b>	<b># Of Graduates</b>	<b>Completion Rate</b>	<b>Pass Rate (CRC/NCE)</b>	<b>Job Placement Rate</b>
2020- 2021	10	4	80%	79%	85%
2021- 2022	12	0	80%	80%	91%
2022- 2023	8	5	80%	80%	80%
2023- 2024	8	2	50%	80%	85%
2024- 2025	7	3	70%	67%	85%

**Rehabilitation Counseling 48 hours**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fall Enrollment</b>	<b># Of Graduates</b>	<b>Completion Rate</b>	<b>Pass Rate (CRC)</b>	<b>Job Placement Rate</b>
2020- 2021	17	5	78%	75%	85%
2021- 2022	14	5	75%	85%	90%
2022- 2023	18	14	50%	80%	90%
2023- 2024	3	2	73%	60%	90%
2024- 2025	1	1	100%	0 %	-

**School Counseling 60 hours**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fall Enrollment</b>	<b># Of Graduates</b>	<b>Completion Rate</b>	<b>Pass Rate (PRAXIS)</b>	<b>Job Placement Rate</b>
2020-2021	54	9	76%	85%	90%
2021-2022	55	7	75%	87%	95%
2022- 2023	40	22	64%	86%	95%
2023- 2024	21	8	83%	90%	95%
2024- 2025	26	10	80%	80%	95%

# Counseling Program Accreditation, Demographic, Academic, and Outcome Measures Summary

## Counseling Program Accreditation

The NMHU Counseling Program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CACREP has granted accreditation to the following programs in the Department of Counseling at New Mexico Highland University through March 31, 2029: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MA), 60 hours; School Counseling (MA), 60 hours; Rehabilitation Counseling (MA), 48 hours; and Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling (MA), 60 hours.

## Counseling Program Enrollment and Demographic Data

When comparing academic years, new student enrollment for the 2024- 2025 academic year of 71 students decreased when compared to the 2023- 2024 academic year of 92 students. In the 2024- 2025 academic year, the clinical mental health counseling concentration had a decrease in enrollment from 62 students in 2023-2024, to 53 in 2024-2025. Other concentrations had a decrease in new enrollment: Clin Rehab (- 3), Rehabilitation (- 2), and School (-9). The certificate programs had a decrease in enrollment from 11 students in 2023-2024 to 7 students in 2024-2025.

## Applications Counseling Department 2024-2025

FA 24- SU 25	Applicants	Accepted	Provisionally Accepted	Denied	Withdrew Application	Accepted and Started Program
CMHC	68	67	14	1	14	53
Clin Rehab	4	4	1	0	3	1
Rehab	1	1	0	0	0	1
School	12	12	0	0	3	9
Certificate	10	10	3	0	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>71</b>

## Current Student Enrollment and Demographics-Fall 2025

### Fall 2025 Enrollment

The current student enrollment in the NMHU Counseling Program for the Fall 25 semester is 206 students across all concentrations and certificate students- CMHC (162), CIRC (7), RC (1), SC (26), and Certificates (9). Fall 25 enrollment increase for CMHC and School Counseling compared to Fall 2024 enrollment- CMHC (145), CIRC (-1), RC (-2), SC (21), and Certificates (-2).

The mean age of students enrolled in the Fall 25 semester is 38. This includes 169 students who identified as female and 37 who identified as male. The reported ethnicity/race of current students is as follows: American Indian (12), Hispanic (62), Non-Resident Alien (9), Two or More (6), Unknown (86), White (29).

<b>Clinical Mental Health Counseling</b> Total: 162 students	<b>Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling</b> Total: 7 students	<b>Rehabilitation Counseling</b> Total: 1 student	<b>School Counseling</b> Total: 26 students
Female: 131 (81%) Male: 31 (19%)	Female: 5 (71%) Male: 2 (29%)	Female: 1 (100%) Male: 0 (0%)	Female: 23 (88%) Male: 3 (12%)
<b>Ethnicity:</b> American Indian: 5 (6.2%) Hispanic: 45 (28%) White: 19 (12%) Non-Resident Alien: 6 (4%) Asian: 0 Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 83 (51%) Two or More: 3 (2%) African American: 1 (1%)	<b>Ethnicity:</b> American Indian: 1 (14%) Hispanic: 2 (29%) White: 2 (29%) Non-Resident Alien: 1 (14%) Asian: 0 Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 1 (14%) Two or More: 0 African American: 0	<b>Ethnicity:</b> American Indian: 0 Hispanic: 0 White: 1 (100%) Non-Resident Alien: 0 Asian: 0 Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 0 Two or More: 0 African American: 0	<b>Ethnicity:</b> American Indian: 5 (19%) Hispanic: 10 (38%) White: 4 (15%) Non-Resident Alien: 2 (8%) Asian: 0 Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 2 (8%) Two or More: 3 (12%) African American: 0

**Certificate Program Enrollment and Demographics-Fall 2025  
(Total Enrollment- 9 Students)**

<b>Professional Counseling</b> Total: 4	<b>School Counseling</b> Total: 5
Female: 4 (100%)	Female: 4 (75%) Male: 1 (25%)
<b>Ethnicity:</b> Hispanic: 1 (25%) White: 2 (50%) Unknown: 1 (25%)	<b>Ethnicity:</b> Hispanic: 3 (60%) White: 1 (20%) American Indian: 1 (20%)

## Current Student Enrollment and Demographics-Comparing Fall 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

Demographics	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Female	174 (87%)	181(88%)	167 (85%)	170 (86%)	169 (82%)
Male	26 (13%)	25 (12%)	29 (15%)	28 (14%)	37 (18%)
American Indian or Native Alaskan	13%	12%	13%	9%	6 %
Asian	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	-
African American	3%	1%	1.5%	1%	-
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	-	-	-
Hispanic	37%	36%	40%	37%	30%
Two or More –	4%	3%	1%	2%	3%
Unknown/Other	5%	9%	13%	33%	42%
White	36%	37%	27%	15%	14%
International	1%	1%	3.5%	3%	4%

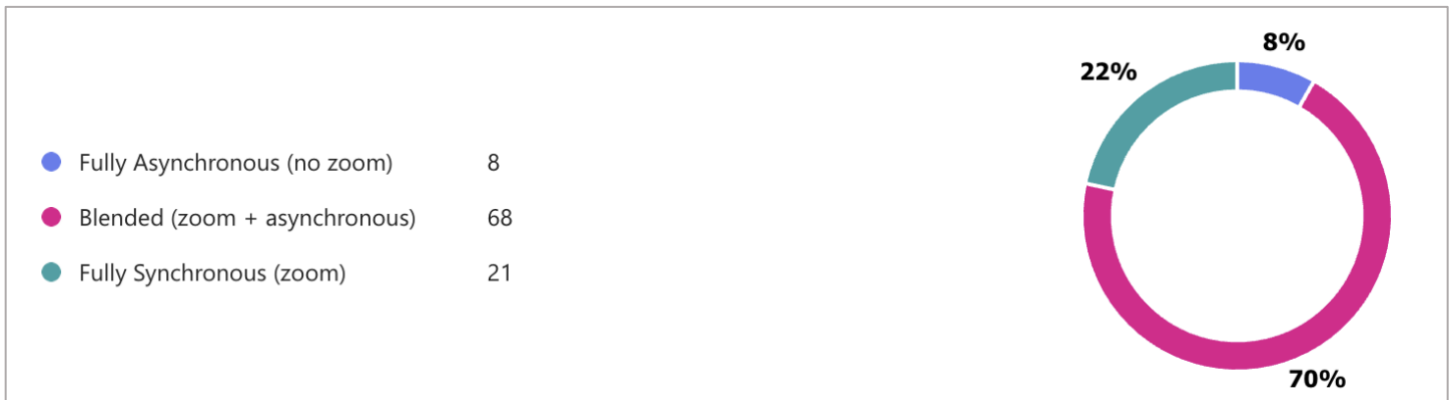
### Annual Fall Surveys

Each fall semester, surveys are sent to current students, recent graduates, alumni, and employers. These surveys provide the counseling program valuable insights that are used to inform programmatic changes, as well as reinforce current practices. The results of these surveys are part of regular discussions during faculty meetings regarding program and curriculum developments and needs. The current student survey responses provide feedback on key elements of the counseling curriculum (ex. class modalities and course content, offerings, and scheduling). The Graduate Survey responses provide information on graduate employment preparation, strengths/needs of curriculum and instruction, and advisement. The Alumni Survey results provide similar content as the Recent Graduate Survey, but from the seasoned perspective of those practicing in the field for a longer period. The Employer Survey gives employers an opportunity to share their perspectives on the level of preparedness of graduates entering the profession. The Employer Survey questions focus on curriculum content areas and counselor dispositions.

## Current Student Survey

The Current Student Survey for Fall 2025 received a 47% response rate with 97 out of 206 currently enrolled students having responded. Below are some of the questions/responses.

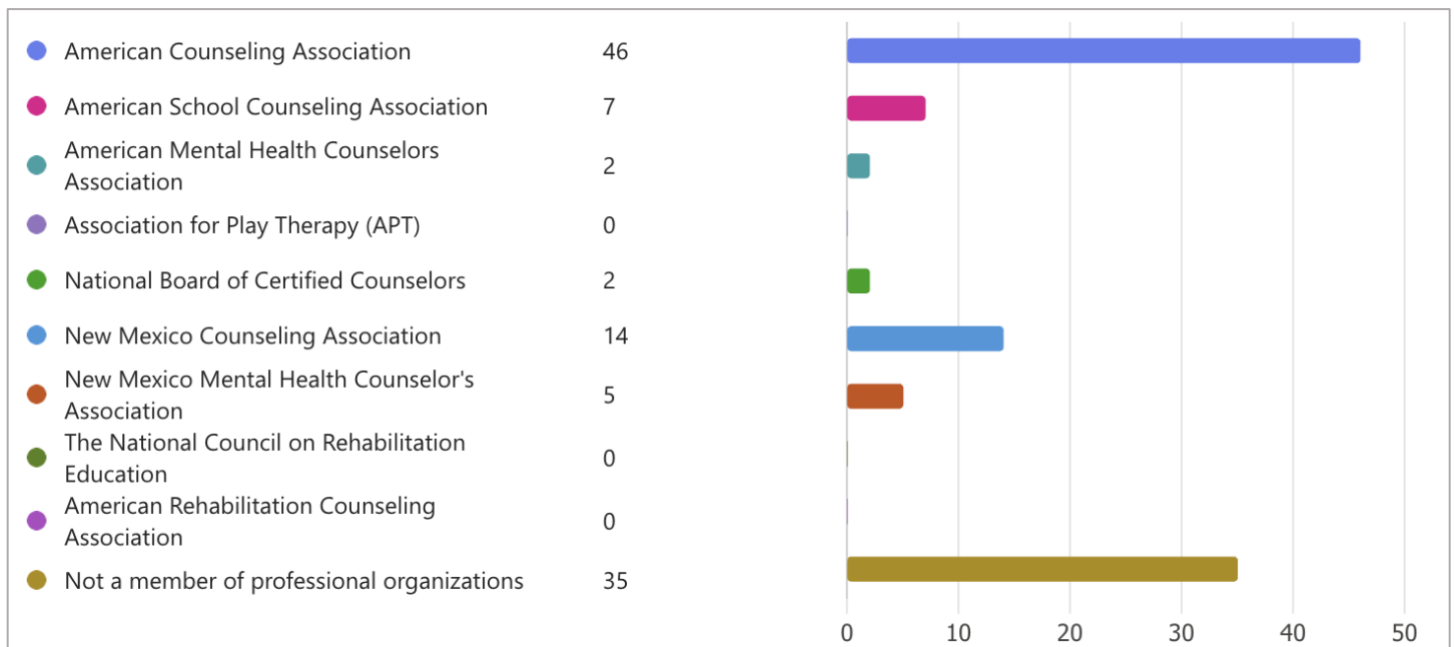
- Are you an International Student? Yes- 4% , No 96%
- Are you active-duty military? Yes-0, No 100%
- Did you find your academic advisor to be easily accessible? Yes-86% , No-14%
- Has a professor or instructor discussed the importance of professional development and/or provided information on professional development opportunities in your classes? Yes 75% , No 25%
- Do you think your classes adequately address the topic of self-care for counselors? Yes 78% , No 21%
- What is your preferred modality of instruction?



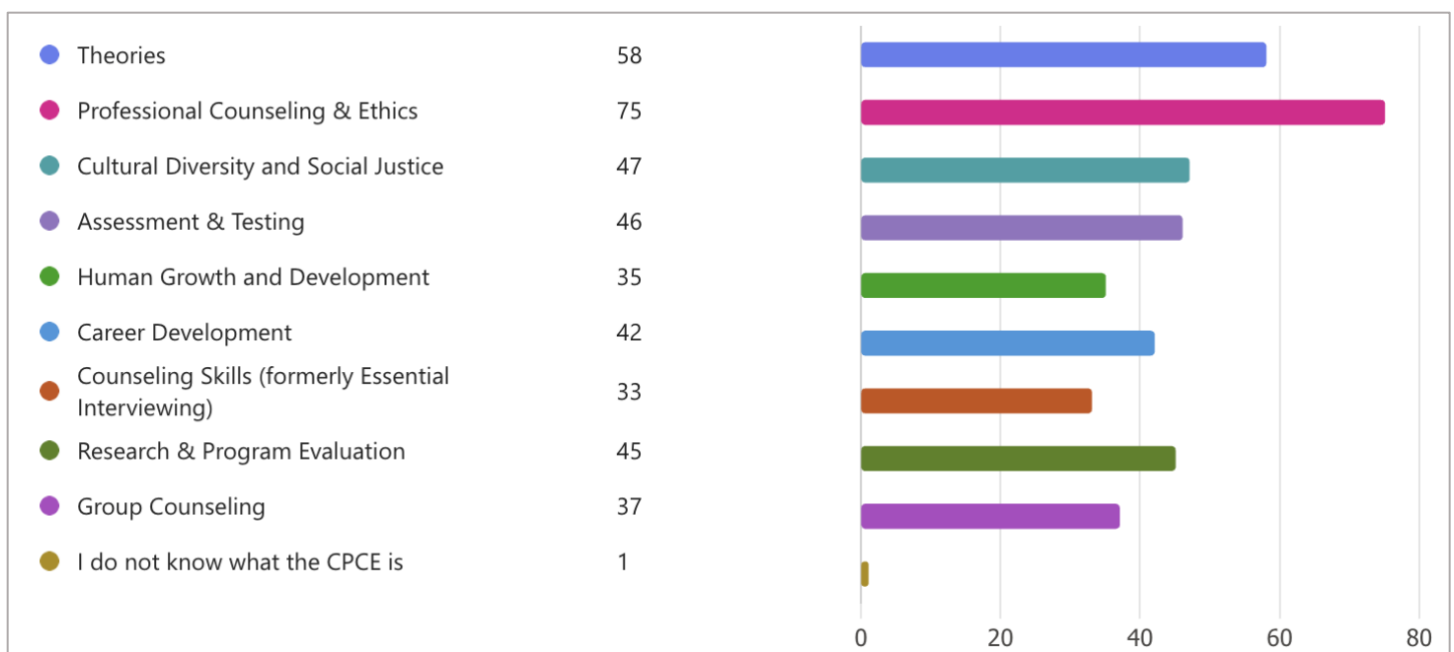
- What is your opinion on 8-week courses?



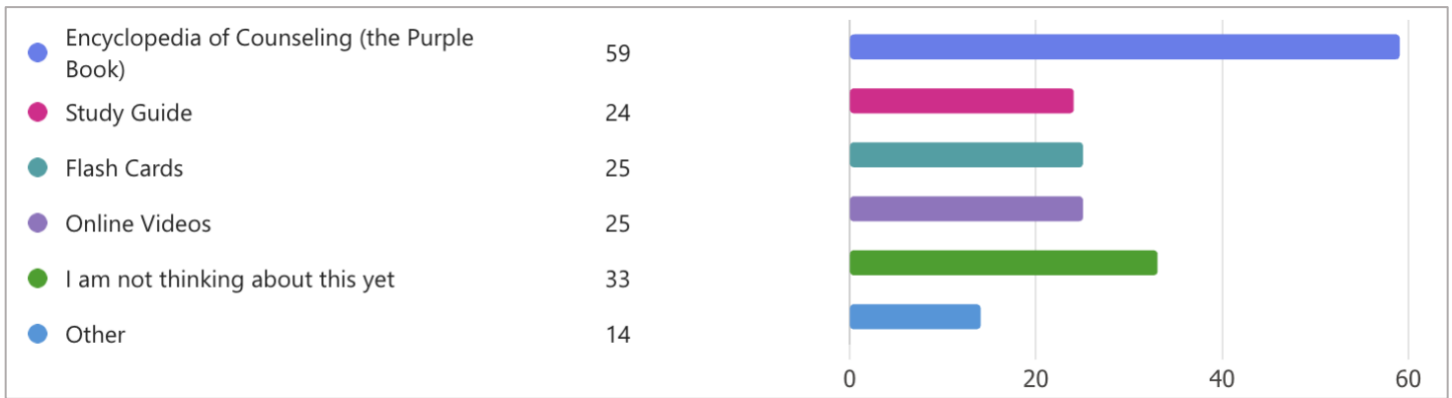
Are you currently a member of any of the listed professional organizations?



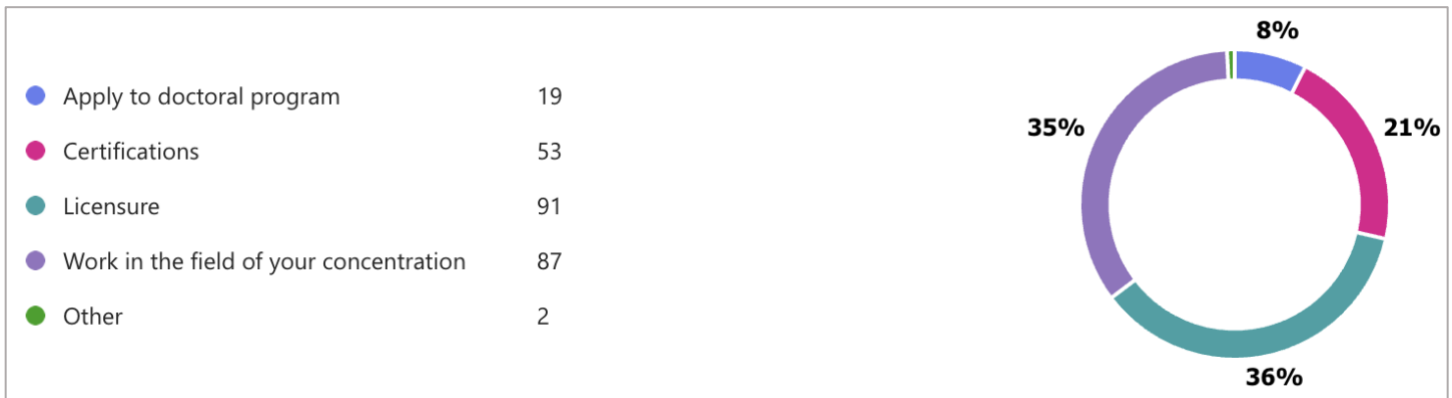
In which classes did faculty mention or discuss the importance of studying for the comprehensive exam (CPCE)?



☐ What are you using to prepare for the comprehensive exam (CPCE)?



☐ What are your future plans?



**Recent Graduate Survey**

The survey was sent to Fall 2024- Summer 2025 Counseling program graduates. The scale for this survey is as follows: (1-poor, 2-weak, 3-good, 4-very good, 5- excellent)

	Min	Max	Mean	<i>n</i>
How helpful was your academic advisor?	1	5	4.33	18
Preparation you received for your position or intended position within your field.	1	5	4.27	18
Preparation you received for your comprehensive exam (CPCE or CRCE)	1	5	3.77	18
The coverage of counseling theories	3	5	4.38	18
The clarity of course objectives	2	5	4.27	18
The comprehensiveness of courses	2	5	4.22	18
The integration of multicultural perspectives throughout the curriculum	3	5	4.38	18
Learned effective strategies for application in the field	2	5	4.16	18
Ease of communication with the main campus office (ex. financial aid, registrar's office)	1	5	4.11	18

## Alumni Survey

Alumni provide a valuable resource for counseling program development by sharing their perspectives on the quality of the education they received and how well it prepared them to enter their chosen profession.

Of the 32 alumni respondents, 90% reported obtaining their first job within their field of study in 0-4 months.

### Alumni Survey Responses

Alumni were asked to use the following scale to rate their level of satisfaction regarding elements of the counseling program and coursework: 1-very poor, 2-poor, 3-adequate, 4-good, 5-excellent. The following table summarizes the scores on the Alumni Survey.

	Min	Max	Mean	<i>n</i>
Professionalism (i.e. Ethics, Laws, Practice Standards)	3	5	4.65	32
Research Foundations	2	5	4.21	32
Counseling Individuals	2	5	4.40	32
Counseling Groups	1	5	4.12	32
Knowledge of Vocation and Career Development	2	5	4.15	32
Planning, Case Conceptualization and Case Management	3	5	4.21	32
Job Development, Placement, and Retention (Rehab and Clin Rehab only)	1	5	3.65	32
History, Philosophy and Structure of Counseling	3	6	5.18	32
Knowledge about Utilization of ASCA (School Counseling students only)	1	6	4.37	32
Program Development and Consultation Skills	3	6	4.75	32
Identification and Utilization of Assessment Information	2	6	4.71	32
Counseling Families	2	6	4.40	32
Trauma work	2	6	4.40	32
Practicum/Internship	1	6	5.09	32
University Services	1	6	4.62	32
Info provided about the specific steps in obtain license(s) and/or certification(s)	1	6	4.34	32
Adequacy of academic advisement provided by NMHU Counseling faculty	1	6	4.75	32
Availability of NMHU Counseling faculty	2	6	5.09	32
Overall quality of teaching by NMHU Counseling faculty	2	6	5.15	32
Relevance of the counseling courses in your specific concentration	2	6	5.03	32

## Employer Survey

Employer feedback is critical for our continuing efforts to improve the Counseling Program at NMHU.

Employers were sent a 12-question survey in Fall 2025. Employers were asked to rate the preparation of our graduates in their employment setting. The following scale was used for Questions 1-8:

- 1 star-beginner
- 2 stars-advanced beginner
- 3 stars-competent
- 4 stars-advanced
- 5 stars-expert

Of the 4 employer respondents, 100% reported that the NMHU program adequately prepare the individual to be an entry-level counselor.

The following table summarizes the scores on the Employer Survey for Questions 1-8.

## Employer Survey Responses

	Min	Max	Mean	n
Applies ethical principles and standards in counseling	3	5	4.25	4
Applies counseling theories	3	4	3.5	4
Follows administrative policies and procedures	4	5	4.5	4
Practices cultural humility in counseling	3	5	4	4
Uses multiple methods of assessment	4	5	4.5	4
Implements interpersonal relationships with colleagues and clients	4	5	4.5	4
Aware of community resources	3	4	3.5	4
Advocates for others	4	5	4.75	4

What else can the NMHU program do to prepare its counseling graduates for the profession?

## Employer Feedback

- Structured Diagnostic procedures, practice, practice, practice, and introduction to psychotropic medications including MAT.
- As a state with high levels of poverty and exclusion, counseling students need to have a deep understanding of the Social Drivers of Health and the systemic barriers that many New Mexicans face when trying to access behavioral health services.
- Focusing on clinical documentation and understanding assessment of symptomology in diagnosing. Being able to apply quantitative and qualitative measures to treatment planning and understanding the full circle process of counseling (intake, treatment, discharge). More understanding given to pacing of the counseling process (it goes much slower than expected), how to build therapeutic rapport, and less discussion of personal experiences and traumas within the NMHU classes, review of personal self v clinical self. More in-depth knowledge of foundational counseling modalities and how to engage basic interventions in a counseling space.
- Continue to educate students on the ASCA model but understand that school districts may not "look" like an ideal ASCA environment and how to balance the expectations and responsibilities of a "real" school versus the ideal school counseling model.

Graduate Degree of employee (choose all that apply) (4 responses)

Degree	Responses
CMHC	3
School Counseling	1
SC, CMHC, RC, and Clinical Rehab Counseling	0

## National & State Counselor Employment Data

The demand for licensed counselors continues to grow in the U.S. According to O\*NET Online, there is a “Bright Outlook” for Mental Health Counselors and School Counselors. This designation, according to the website means “occupations are expected to grow rapidly in the next several years, will have large numbers of job openings, or are new and emerging occupations”.

## Wage Statistics for Counseling Fields

Location	Mental Health Counselors	Rehabilitation Counselors	School Counselors
U. S. Average	\$59,190/year	\$46,110/year*	\$65,140/year
Albuquerque, NM Average	\$71,480/year	\$49,130/year*	\$77,910/year
New Mexico Average	\$70,770/year	\$51,540/year*	\$76,490/year

## NMHU Counseling Program Modifications

With the continued steady enrollment of the NMHU Counseling Program, along with data collection and monitoring requirements of being CACREP accredited, the Counseling Program continues to implement ELC (formerly Tevera).

The program piloted the CECE, students resumed taking the CPCE/CRCE as the comprehensive exam. The Counseling Department is no longer proctoring the exam. The student is responsible for registering for the exam and taking it at a Pearson VUE testing center or opt for the online proctored version, OnVUE. Individual exam results are reported to the Counseling Department.

Other modifications include course registration and communications. Course title changes and changes in course prerequisites were made to address repetitive issues in student registration. Faculty have implemented a change from student feedback regarding communication within the program. The department communicates with all students via newsletters to inform them of any departmental changes or other pertinent information.

## References

National Center for O\*NET Development. *O\*NET OnLine*. Retrieved December 8, 2025 from <https://www.onetonline.org/>