

Evidence

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a. Component RA1.1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

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The School Counseling Program (SCOU) ensures that students are proficient in applying their knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes in school counseling. Candidates show competency in data literacy and research and are skilled in analyzing data. Students assume leadership roles through a curriculum that prioritizes leadership development, team collaboration, and effective communication. Students receive training to work with educators, parents and community members to establish nurturing environments conducive to student achievement. The application of technology is a focus. Candidates use technological tools and resources to enhance their counseling practices, improve data collection and analysis, and facilitate more effective communication with students, families, and colleagues. This includes using educational software, digital communication platforms, and data management systems to deliver counseling services and program management.

Positive dispositions in SCOU means manifesting professional conduct that mirrors the principles and ethical standards of the counseling field. This encompasses displaying empathy, respect, and a dedication to diversity and equity. Candidates cultivate reflective practices, consistently assessing their own behaviors and attitudes to confirm their alignment with professional norms. Professional SCOU are required to adhere to the laws, policies, and ethical standards relevant to their profession. Candidates receive in-depth instruction on the legal and ethical structures, including confidentiality, informed consent, and the rights of minors within educational environments. They are trained to apply guidelines in their practice, guaranteeing their actions are both legally compliant and ethically sound.

Candidates undergo evaluations across all facets of RA1.1 throughout their educational journey. Detailed assessment milestones are outlined in the **#1.1.1A SCOU Data Framework & #1.1.2A SCOU Program Standards Benchmark Chart**. Evaluations occur at the program's inception within designated SCOU courses (SCOU 505 Theories of Counseling, SCOU 507 Ethical and Professional Issues School Counseling and Family Therapists, and SCOU 527 Counseling in the Elementary and Middle School), midway through their studies during the Practicum (SCOU 506 Practicum: Counseling and Therapy Techniques), during both their elementary and secondary internships (SCOU 590A Internship School Counseling Elementary and SCOU 590B Internship School Counseling Secondary), and finally, as they complete their program during SCOU 597 Capstone in School Counseling. All principal assessments conform to standards set by CAEP, ASCA, MSCA, PEPPS, and the Danielson Framework, ensuring a comprehensive and aligned evaluation process.

Evaluations are conducted by the SCOU faculty and staff, who understand relevant laws, policies, and ethical codes for school counseling. The alignment of CAEP, ASCA, MSCA, PEPPS, and Danielson Framework with each assessment is detailed in the **#1.1.2A SCOU Program Standards Benchmark Chart**. Candidates engage with program outcomes and assess their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions throughout all course components, including the SCOU Practicum, both SCOU Internships, and the concluding SCOU Capstone course. Information regarding program outcomes, assessment of knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions is available in the **#1.1.3A SCOU Internship Guidebook** and through all course-related tasks within the MSUB SCOU Tevera software program, ensuring a thorough understanding and adherence to assessment criteria and objectives.

The School Counseling Program also prepares candidates in attaining the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions through assessment. This includes six key assessments with corresponding outcomes: **#1.1.4A SCOU Evaluation Rubric** (used for SCOU Elementary Evaluation Rubric, SCOU Secondary Evaluation Rubric, SCOU Practicum Evaluation Rubric, SCOU Exit Evaluation Student Survey) and #1.1.5A SCOU Tevera Hour Logs, found in the **#1.1.3A SCOU Internship**

Guidebook for all clinical engagements. These assessments are designed to measure 19 professional competencies encompassing knowledge, skills, and dispositions at least three times throughout the program to monitor and encourage candidate growth from the beginning to the completion of their training.

Candidates are evaluated during their coursework through course evaluations. The course evaluation data aligns directly with the program outcomes, offering a comprehensive view of student performance and learning achievement. The evidence gathered from these evaluations, along with the six key assessments, demonstrates that candidates consistently perform at a competent or proficient level in the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions relevant to the school counseling profession. For a more detailed understanding, reference is made to the **#1.1.1A SCOU Data Framework** and **#1.1.2A SCOU Standards Benchmark Chart**. These documents list the key assessments and the courses where each is administered, ensuring CAEP alignment.

The **#1.1.5A SCOU Assessment Chart** represents the SCOU Program Assessment Milestones and the evaluation process at key junctures of the program. The tools used for assessment are the self-evaluation rubric, the SCOU evaluation rubric, the Praxis Exam, the Elementary Internship Tereva Hour Log, the Secondary Internship Log, and the Tereva hours log. (See **#1.1.3A SCOU Internship Guidebook** and **#1.1.4A, SCOU Evaluation Rubric**.) The positioning of these assessments at critical junctures throughout the candidate's program of study enables ongoing tracking of progress and the timely provision of support, enhancing the likelihood of successful program completion.

The **#1.1.7A SCOU Advisory Panel** played a pivotal role in developing these key assessments. Comprising faculty, staff, and key stakeholders from the school counseling profession, this panel employed a consensus-based approach (Lawshe method) to ensure assessments are in alignment with CAEP Advanced Standards, and the ASCA, MSCA, PEPPS, the Danielson Framework standards. This collaborative process ensures a high level of content validity, meaning they effectively measure what they are intended to assess within the context of professional school counseling standards.

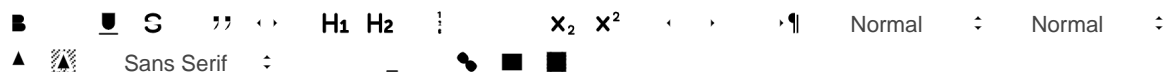
The SCOU program integrates and assesses the competencies essential for the SCOU profession. Knowledge, skills, and dispositions are included in course syllabi. To validate and continuously improve the curriculum and its outcomes, the program underwent a thorough review process involving state officials, content experts from other universities within Montana, and the Continuous Improvement Coalition (CIC) team. This collaborative review scrutinized syllabi, course sequencing, assignments, key assessments, and the structure of course exams, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness. The feedback is included in the evidence documents (**#1.1.8A SCOU Lawshe Panel CVR Table**). Assessment of candidate competencies includes several critical components: *Praxis Exam*: Candidates must pass the 5422 Professional Praxis Exam with a minimum score of 159 during their Capstone course; *GPA Requirement* Maintaining a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 is mandatory for graduation;

Clinical Hour Logs via Tereva Software: Candidates must complete and log their 100 hours during the SCOU Practicum course and 300 hours each during the Elementary and Secondary Internship courses. Faculty members review these logs monthly to verify that candidates meet the necessary hours in diverse school settings; *Course Exams*: Course exams evaluate candidates' understanding of course content and their ability to apply knowledge in practical scenarios. Exams align with the program's learning outcomes, offering another layer of competency assessment.

#1.1.9A Evaluation Plan of Improvement Form: If candidate concerns arise, support is provided through program faculty, University Supervisors, and academic advisors summative and formative feedback. Candidates' specific data is housed in Tereva software making it accessible immediately to candidates for their review upon completion of an assessment. The program is committed to continuous improvement, especially in areas where there has been limited data collection. The SCOU program faculty actively collects data to identify growth areas for individual candidates and the overall effectiveness of the program. This endeavor is particularly significant in the areas of diversity and inclusivity, where data collection efforts have been identified as needing strengthening. The program will be using site placement demographic data in our next cycle to ensure diverse placements. In addition, the program has added American School Counseling Diversity mindset assignments to all coursework including practicum and capstone.

At the conclusion of each semester, program faculty analyze assessment data to pinpoint areas for improvement for individual candidates and to evaluate and enhance the program's comprehensive effectiveness. When specific gaps are found, a structured plan for improvement is collaboratively developed between the candidate and faculty, ensuring targeted interventions are put in place. The program has intensified its efforts to gather and analyze data more comprehensively. This includes a renewed focus on the **#1.1.10A Diversity Report** where the advanced SCOU faculty use Tereva software for collection and examination of demographic data and profiles of internship placement schools. Demographic data are also gathered by the university's Institutional Research Office. This enhanced approach to data collection aims to deepen the program's understanding of diversity of candidates and their communities. The program addresses programmatic challenges identified through data analysis by engaging an advisory panel. This panel plays a pivotal role in identifying gaps.

b. Component RA1.2 Provider Responsibilities



The School Counseling program is committed to upholding the highest standards of education in the field of school counseling. It ensures that program completers are not only proficient in specialized content and discipline knowledge, adhering to approved state and/or national standards, but also demonstrates a proactive approach to progress monitoring. This approach is pivotal for maintaining the quality and efficacy of the educational experience provided to candidates.

The program employs a rigorous system of assessments, course assignments, and evaluation data to monitor the progress of its candidates. This system includes:

Regular Assessments and Course Assignments: These are designed to align with the specialized content and discipline knowledge as defined by standards from the Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs), individual state standards, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and accrediting bodies such as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Through these assessments and assignments, candidates' understanding, and application of critical knowledge and skills are evaluated, providing timely feedback for improvement.

Use of Evaluation Data for Progress Monitoring: The program systematically analyzes evaluation data from course assignments and assessments to track each candidate's progress throughout their study. This data-driven approach enables the identification of both strengths and areas for growth, ensuring that candidates receive the support and guidance needed to achieve their full potential.

Continuous Feedback Loop: Feedback from assessments and course assignments is integral to the program's progress monitoring efforts. This continuous feedback loop allows for the timely adjustment of teaching strategies, course content, and support services to better meet the needs of candidates. It also facilitates a personalized learning experience, where candidates' progress towards meeting the approved state and/or national discipline-specific standards is closely monitored and fostered.

Documentation and Improvement Plans: The program emphasizes the importance of documenting candidates' mastery of content knowledge and professional competencies. When gaps are identified through progress monitoring, personalized improvement plans are developed in collaboration with the candidate. These plans are designed to address specific areas of need, ensuring that all candidates achieve the level of proficiency required by their professional specialty.

The Advanced School Counseling Program uses standards from the Montana School Counseling Association (MSCA), the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), CAEP, the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS), and the Danielson Framework. This integration ensures a holistic development for candidates, equipping them with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for effective school counseling. Through its curriculum and assignments, the program embeds MSCA and ASCA standards to focus on core competencies such as advocacy and the development of comprehensive counseling programs, while CAEP standards emphasize evidence-based practices and data-informed decision-making. The incorporation of PEPPS ensures candidates are well-versed in Montana's specific educational expectations, including legal and ethical standards. Meanwhile, the Danielson Framework's adaptation to counseling highlights the importance of creating supportive environments and engaging teaching practices.

Assessment strategies within the program are varied and strategic, employing self-assessments, peer evaluations, and supervisor feedback aligned with these comprehensive standards. This approach facilitates detailed progress monitoring, allowing for the adjustment of program components to better meet candidate needs and uphold high standards of practice. The use of evaluation data is pivotal in tracking candidates' growth over time, ensuring they are prepared to support student achievement in diverse educational landscapes.

The program prepares school counselors capable of designing and implementing data-driven counseling programs that promote equity, access, and success for all students. By preparing candidates to work effectively across diverse settings and to be culturally competent, the program not only adheres to but exceeds the expectations of modern educational standards. This multifaceted approach ensures graduates are not only theoretically informed but also adept at fostering positive outcomes in various educational environments.

The School Counseling program employs a comprehensive approach to develop assessments and course content that meet the highest standards in the field. This approach involves collaboration with a **#1.1.7A SCOU Advisory Panel** and the use of a consensus based (Lawshe) **#1.1.8A SCOU Lawshe Panel Table** method to ensure that all assessments are in line with CAEP Advanced Standards, as well as standards set by ASCA, MSCA, PEPPS, and the Danielson Framework. This rigorous process

ensures the content validity of the program's assessments, aligning them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that candidates are expected to demonstrate through their coursework in the program.

To guarantee that the curriculum is both current and relevant, the program undergoes regular external reviews. This includes an examination of syllabi, course sequencing, assignments, and key assessments by state officials and content experts from other universities within the state of Montana, as well as members of the CIC team. Such reviews ensure that the program's content remains aligned with professional standards and the needs of today's educational landscape.

A crucial component of the program is the Praxis Exam (**See #1.1.6A 5 Years of Praxis Data**). Candidates must take this Professional Praxis Exam during their Capstone course, achieving a score of 159 or above to qualify for graduation. This requirement underscores the faculty's commitment to ensuring graduates meet the rigorous professional standards expected in the field. Furthermore, all course syllabi are aligned with the standards of ASCA, MSCA, PEPPS, and the Danielson Framework, with ongoing efforts to incorporate the final CAEP standards fully.

By the end of the program, candidates must demonstrate competency or proficiency in the knowledge and skills relevant to the school counseling profession, as outlined in the assessment plan. For detailed information on how the assessments and courses align with professional standards, please refer to the **#1.1.1A SCOU Data Framework** and **#1.1.2A SCOU Program Standards Benchmark Chart**. These documents provide a comprehensive overview of the assessments, the courses in which they are administered, and how each aligns with CAEP standards and components.

Beyond the structured coursework, the program emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and the application of knowledge in addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion within a K-12 student population. Candidates engage in self-reflection assessments and guidance lesson planning and are required to maintain a reflective journal during all clinical experiences. These journals are reviewed by University Supervisors and instructors during practicum, elementary internship, and secondary internship phases, ensuring continuous feedback and personal growth.

Additionally, candidates are required to log their clinical hours using Tevera software, meticulously documenting the specific activities undertaken. This log is an essential component of the program's commitment to providing transparent and accountable clinical training, as detailed in the **#1.2.1A Montana State University Billings School Counseling Tevera Manual**. This comprehensive approach to training and assessment ensures that graduates of the School Counseling program are well-prepared to contribute positively to the educational and personal development of students across diverse settings.

Evidence

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a. Component RA2.1 Partnerships for Clinical Preparation

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The ETP ensures that effective partnerships and high-quality clinical practices are central to preparation, so the school counseling candidates develop knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in the school counseling profession. Please, refer to **#1.2.1A MSU Billings Tevera Manual** which includes the site placement process.

The School Counseling program collaborates with partners to jointly create beneficial P-12 school and community arrangements for clinical preparation, sharing the responsibility for the ongoing enhancement of candidate preparation in school counseling. The program s field director and faculty utilize the Tevera software to forge high-quality partnerships, ensuring candidate site placements embody the essential knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions central to the school counseling profession.

For both elementary and secondary internship experiences, candidates are mandated to submit internship applications via Tevera software. These applications detail the candidate's site placement preferences, required credit hours, the expiration date of their background checks, and preferred placement locations, as outlined in the **#1.2.1A MSU Billings Tevera Manual**. Candidates have the option to select from a roster of preapproved sites within Tevera or propose an alternative site for consideration by the program s faculty and the Director of Field Experience and Licensure. Only after thorough review and approval by the faculty and field director is a site placement finalized. Furthermore, partner sites are required to complete site mentor and placement documentation within Tevera before a candidate s placement is sanctioned. This ensures a consistent and structured approach to internship placements, crucial for the professional development of candidates. Given the program s national scope, candidates have the flexibility to seek internship placements within their local geographic area, facilitating access to practical experience in settings most relevant to their future professional endeavors.

All school counseling program sites and their mentors must submit the same requisite paperwork, maintaining a standard of quality and consistency across all placements. Prior to the approval of any site placement, candidates, along with their site mentors and administrative staff, must review the **#1.1.3A SCOU Guidebook**, available in Tevera. This step is vital for setting clear expectations and fostering a productive learning environment during the internship. To support both candidates and site mentors, the program offers orientation videos through Tevera s online training dashboard, detailed in the **#1.2.1A MSU Billings Tevera Manual**. These resources are designed to prepare all parties for a successful clinical experience, ensuring candidates are well-equipped to apply their learning in real-world settings and contribute positively to the educational communities they serve.

The School Counseling program ensures the highest standards in candidate preparation, policy impact, and licensing. The program's faculty actively engage in partnerships with state officials, content experts from other universities within Montana, and members of the Continuous Improvement Coalition (CIC) team. Collaboration extends to the local advisory panel and the Montana Office of Public Instruction, facilitating a broad spectrum of stakeholder engagement critical to influencing policy, enhancing candidate preparation, and streamlining the licensing process (**#1.1.7A SCOU Advisory Panel**).



This cooperative framework is not limited to local and state levels. Faculty members also connect with counterparts at universities across the nation, fostering a dialogue with institutions that host similar advanced school counseling programs. National collaborations are vital for benchmarking the program's effectiveness, exchanging best practices, and identifying areas

for growth based on comprehensive feedback.

As an online program, the School Counseling program offers a unique opportunity for candidates to engage with a wide range of school systems, from local and regional to national and international settings. This exposure ensures that internship experiences are richly diverse, encompassing rural and urban schools characterized by varied socio-economic backgrounds and cultural compositions of student and staff populations (**#1.2.1A Montana State University School Counseling Tereva Manual**). This diversity in placement settings is crucial, as it prepares candidates to effectively address the needs of diverse P-12 student populations, equipping them with the experience and sensitivity to operate in any educational environment.

The program places a strong emphasis on ensuring that internship site placements are not only diverse but also of high quality, matching candidates with environments that foster the practical application of knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions key to the school counseling profession. Through these concerted efforts, the School Counseling program demonstrates its commitment to producing well-prepared graduates, capable of contributing positively to the field of school counseling and to the diverse educational landscapes students will serve.

b. Component RA2.2 Clinical Experiences

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The School Counseling program collaborates closely with partners to create a spectrum of clinical experiences that are both varied and developmental, enabling candidates to apply the school counseling content knowledge and skills emphasized throughout their coursework, practicum, and internships. These clinical experiences culminate in opportunities for candidates to highlight their proficiencies through problem-based tasks or research that reflects the real-world challenges of the school counseling field. Faculty and Director of Field Experiences and Licensure provide essential support to candidates throughout the application and internship placement process, ensuring a seamless transition from theoretical learning to practical application.

Clinical partners are equipped with resources including training videos, the **#1.2.1A SCOU Guidebook** and necessary site mentor paperwork, all accessible through the Tereva software. These materials are available for consultation throughout the clinical experience, ensuring that partners are well-informed about internship requirements and expectations. Regular meetings between University Supervisors, candidates, site mentors, and administration each semester facilitate a comprehensive assessment of candidate performance, offering expert feedback to guide candidates professional development.

The program s faculty and University Supervisors conduct semester reviews of evaluation data to identify if improvements are needed based on feedback from site mentors and administrators. Additionally, data from the **#1.1.4A SCOU Evaluation Rubric** completed by candidates in their Capstone course, is analyzed each semester to pinpoint potential areas for program enhancement.

The School Counseling program outlines activities for both direct and indirect clinical hours within Tereva software, requiring candidates to complete a minimum of 60 direct and 40 indirect clinical hours during their Practicum, and 150 direct and up to 150 indirect clinical hours during their elementary and secondary internships. Monthly reviews of candidate hour logs and activities by program faculty ensure alignment with program standards. Furthermore, candidates submit monthly reflective journals via their course platform, providing faculty with insights into their practice and experiences. Monthly online meetings with faculty, University Supervisors, and fellow candidates facilitate a supportive community, addressing internship requirements and providing ongoing support.

Candidates in the program serve a diverse K-12 student population across the nation, including both rural and urban districts, and engage with students from a wide range of backgrounds. The SCOU Tereva software houses data on candidate demographics and the demographics of the school populations they serve. Although the program has yet to disaggregate this data for trend analysis, plans are in place to incorporate demographic analysis in the next data cycle in the fall and spring of the 2024-2025 school year.

University Supervisors and site mentors engage in semester evaluations of candidate performance, offering constructive feedback. Annual employer surveys complement this feedback mechanism by assessing the programs and candidates effectiveness from the employers' perspective. A pilot employer conducted in spring 2023 (**#2.2.1A Employer Survey**) and completer survey (forthcoming in Fall 2024 Addendum) yielded positive feedback affirming the program s success in preparing

competent school counseling professionals. This comprehensive approach underscores the School Counseling program's commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in preparing candidates to meet the evolving needs of the school counseling profession.

Evidence

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a. Component RA3.1 Recruitment

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The School Counseling program is dedicated to attracting high-quality candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and diverse populations, aligning with the College of Education's mission to reflect and cater to the diverse needs of communities at the community, state, national, regional, and local levels. This commitment is particularly geared towards addressing the challenges faced by hard-to-staff schools and bridging the gap in the shortage of school counselors. Designed to mirror the demographic diversity of America's P-12 students, the program emphasizes the preparation of counselors capable of effectively serving a broad spectrum of student needs.

Leveraging its online format, the School Counseling program serves candidates not only within Montana but across the nation, providing them with the opportunity to engage with P-12 students from various demographic backgrounds based on their geographic location. Using Tevera software for data management, the program collects and intends to analyze demographic data related to its candidates and the students they work with during their internships. Initiated in Fall 2023, this data collection and subsequent analysis will adhere to the specified RA four data cycle, offering insights into the program's reach and effectiveness.

The state provides candidates nearing the completion of their degree the option to obtain a provisional license. This innovative approach enables candidates to undertake their elementary and secondary internships within school districts while receiving a professional salary, offering financial support, and ensuring that school s benefit from the emerging talents of school counseling professionals.

Through these comprehensive strategies, the School Counseling program highlights a robust approach to recruiting, preparing, and supporting future school counselors. By addressing the varied needs of P-12 students and responding proactively to the educational system's demands, the program plays a crucial role in advancing the field of school counseling and enhancing the educational experience of school communities across Montana and beyond.

The School Counseling programs implements a multifaceted approach to recruit candidates, blending traditional outreach with modern digital strategies to attract a diverse and qualified pool of future professionals. Virtual information sessions, webinars, and participation in online educational expos offer accessible ways for interested individuals to learn about the programs, application processes, and financial aid opportunities.

Collaborations with undergraduate institutions and educational organizations further broaden their reach, informing students and professionals about the career opportunities in school counseling and the pathways to entering the field. Such partnerships serve as powerful tools for program promotion, with alumni sharing their experiences and recommending the program to potential candidates.

Engaging online content, including podcasts, and infographics, alongside resources that ease the application process, help to highlight the role and importance of school counselors. Finally, optimizing program websites for search engines ensures higher visibility for these programs, making it easier for prospective students to discover them. Through testimonials, detailed program information, and success metrics, these websites offer a comprehensive view of what candidates can expect, thereby facilitating

an informed decision-making process.

By employing these diverse strategies, the School Counseling program effectively reaches a broad audience, assembling cohorts of future counselors poised to contribute positively to educational settings across the country.

b. Component RA3.2 Candidates Demonstrate Academic Achievement and Ability to Complete Preparation Successfully

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The School Counseling program sets forth admission criteria that align with the standards of CAEP, incorporating both the program's academic achievement requirements and the state's minimum criteria, alongside those of the graduate school. This comprehensive approach ensures the selection of candidates who are not only academically prepared but also committed to upholding the high standards of the counseling profession. To maintain this quality from admission to completion, the program systematically gathers and analyzes candidate data, ensuring continuous alignment with CAEP accreditation standards.

Admission Requirements for candidates include:

Undergraduate Academic Achievement: Candidates must present an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. For applicants falling below this threshold, provisional admission may be offered under the condition that they complete the GRE within their first semester of study. Expected scores for the GRE include a combined total of 290 for the verbal and quantitative sections and a minimum of 3.5 for the analytical writing section. However, applicants possessing a master's degree from an accredited institution are exempt from this GRE requirement.

Professional Documentation: A current resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV) is required, offering a comprehensive overview of the applicant's academic and professional experiences.

Statement of Purpose: Applicants must submit a concise narrative (maximum one page), articulating their professional aspirations and motivations for pursuing the degree. This personal statement should offer insight into the applicant's career goals and their commitment to the field of school counseling.

Letters of Recommendation: Four letters of recommendation are required, with an even split between academic and professional references. These recommendations should provide a well-rounded perspective on the applicant's capabilities and potential. It is important to note that recommendations from personal acquaintances, such as family members, are not considered valid.

Official Transcripts: Submission of official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended is mandatory, providing a detailed record of the applicant's academic history.

Criminal Background Report (CBR): An essential requirement for admission is the submission of a CBR to the College of Education Director of Field Experiences and Licensure, ensuring the candidate's suitability for working within educational settings.

Complete Application: Candidates must submit a full application to the Office of Graduate Studies, ensuring that all components of the application process are meticulously compiled and presented. Complete applications are then reviewed by the ETP Department Chair and School Counseling faculty for admission determination.

Graduation requirements include the successful completion of the Master of Education in School Counseling degree and passing the Graduate Endorsement PRAXIS exam in school counseling (#1.1.8APraxis 5422 School Counseling), ensuring that graduates meet both academic and professional standards required for effective practice in the field. Throughout the program, students' GPA is monitored to ensure academic success. If a student's GPA drops below 3.0 at any point in the program, they are placed on academic probation for one semester. If the student fails to raise their GPA above 3.0 during the probationary semester, they are unenrolled from the program. To return, the student must go through a petition process and may or may not be allowed to reenroll in the program. Additionally, if a student receives below a grade of "C" in any coursework, they are

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The School Counseling program at MSUB is committed to ensuring candidates are not only academically competent but also effectively equipped to positively influence diverse P-12 student learning and development. This commitment is actualized through a curriculum that emphasizes the application of content knowledge, data literacy, research-informed decision-making, collaborative skills, and the integration of technology within the school counseling domain. To validate and enhance candidate competencies, the program employs a comprehensive assessment strategy that incorporates multiple measures, with data analyzed and disaggregated based on race, ethnicity, and other pertinent demographics aligning with the programs mission.

Assessment frameworks within the School Counseling program are aligned with CAEP Advanced Standards, as well as the criteria set by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), the Montana School Counseling Association (MSCA), the Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS), and the Danielson Framework. These assessments and the corresponding course content are strategically designed to reflect the essential knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions candidates are expected to demonstrate throughout the program of study. At the program's conclusion, candidates are required to exhibit proficiency or competence in these areas, crucial for the school counseling profession.

Academic excellence is a cornerstone of candidate success within the program. Candidates must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA and achieve a score of 159 or above on the Professional School Counseling 5422 Praxis Exam. Additionally, fulfillment of all state licensure requirements is mandatory for candidates applying for graduation. The graduation application process is comprehensive, necessitating a meeting with the candidate's advisor to ensure all program and state licensure prerequisites are satisfactorily met. This process involves sequential approvals from the program's licensure officer, department chair, graduate studies chair, college dean, and the registration office, ensuring a thorough review and validation of each candidate's readiness for graduation and professional practice.

To provide transparency and insight into the program's effectiveness and outcomes, several key indicators are regularly monitored and reported through all program assessment, coursework, and supervisor feedback. These include:

#3.4.1A SCOU Retention Rates. Tracking the persistence of candidates within the program to identify patterns and implement retention strategies. This document includes the number of degrees awarded.

#3.4.2A SCOU 3-year and 6-year Graduation Rates: Monitoring the timeline to graduation to assess program efficiency and candidate support mechanisms.

#3.4.3A SCOU Employment Rates: Evaluating the success of program graduates in securing employment within the field of school counseling, reflecting the program's alignment with market needs.

#1.1.8A 5 Years of SCOU Praxis Scores: Analyzing the achievement levels of candidates on the Praxis exam to gauge preparedness for state licensure and professional practice.

#3.4.4A SCOU Enrollment Rates:

The enrollment rate documents have been reviewed to identify enrollment trends to understand the program's appeal and areas for recruitment enhancement. During this time, the School Counseling Program was at or above capacity given a single professor leading/teaching in the program. An additional faculty member has been added to address this issue and recruitment efforts have resumed at the end of the Spring 2024 semester.

SCOU Tevera Evaluation Rubrics and Completion Scores: Tevera software is used during each data cycle to systematically assess student progress and outcomes, providing a rich dataset for ongoing program evaluation and improvement.

Through this robust assessment and monitoring framework, the School Counseling program at MSUB ensures graduates are well-prepared to meet the challenges of the school counseling profession, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to make a meaningful impact on P-12 student learning and development across diverse educational settings.

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a. Component RA4.1 Satisfaction of Employers

The School Counseling program at MSUB is committed to evaluating and enhancing the quality of its preparation program through systematic feedback from completers and their employers. This evaluation focuses on the relevance and effectiveness of the training provided, ensuring that program graduates are well-equipped to meet the demands of their profession. To support continuous improvement, a statewide protocol, developed under the auspices of the Montana Educator Preparation Programs (MEPP) Continuous Improvement Collaborative (CIC), facilitates a regular cycle of data collection (**#4.1.1 Statewide MEPP CIC Protocol.**) This cycle is specifically designed to gather insights into employer satisfaction and completers' perceptions regarding the impact, performance, and relevance of their training. The protocol schedules the distribution of employer and completer surveys on a biennial basis, establishing a structured approach to collect critical feedback.

During the 2021 and 2022 academic years, the CIC team undertook the development of the Advanced School Counseling Program Employer/Completer Pilot Survey. Launched in the spring of 2022, this survey aimed to capture valuable feedback from both employers and program completers. The insights gained from this survey were meticulously analyzed by the program's faculty, who then addressed identified gaps in program performance by adjusting course content accordingly. This data will be reported in the Fall 2024 Addendum in order to report a full cycle of data.

This initiative aligns with a broader statewide effort coordinated through the MEPP CIC. This collaborative endeavor sought to meet the requirements of CAEP Standard 4 (now succeeded by CAEP Standard R4), emphasizing the importance of continuous program improvement based on stakeholder feedback. The Montana Council of Deans of Education (MCDE), in collaboration with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), approved this protocol in 2019, marking it as a proprietary assessment recognized and validated by both MCDE and OPI. This designation signifies the design, validation, and administration of the protocol are managed at the state level, offering a unique and credible source of evidence for program assessment.

In 2016, the MEPP CIC reached out to CAEP to confirm the appropriateness of the assessment process. CAEP's response, through a memo titled *When States Provide Limited Data: Using Standard 4 to Drive Program Improvement*, affirmed the protocol as a suitable proprietary assessment for addressing CAEP Standard 4. This memo, now part of the MCDE records, underscores the legitimacy and effectiveness of this approach to program evaluation. The comprehensive protocol comprises: (a) a statewide survey of completers, assessing their satisfaction with the preparation they received; (b) a statewide survey of employers, evaluating their satisfaction with the readiness and performance of the program's completers; and (c) a case study derived from survey data, aimed at exploring emergent questions and further examining the data collected (for initial programs only).

This structured feedback mechanism plays a pivotal role in the School Counseling program's ongoing efforts to refine its curriculum and support services, ensuring that graduates are fully prepared to contribute positively to the school counseling field.

Data Collection Cycle

The MEPP employs regular cycle of data collection designed to support MEPP Initial and Advanced programs continuous program improvement, and to meet ARM 10.58.314 and 10.58.608 through analyses of employer satisfaction and completer

perception of program impact, performance, and relevance (**See #4.1.1 Statewide MEPP CIC Protocol**). The rotation cycle will deploy the Employer and Completer surveys every other year for the School Counseling program.

The School Counseling program at MSUB has consistently demonstrated a high level of employer satisfaction with the preparation of its graduates for their professional responsibilities. This achievement is evidenced by the survey results from Spring 2023. These surveys align with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards for effective statewide assessment practices. Over the past three data cycles, feedback from employers has offered valuable insights into various aspects of graduate performance and competency.

The scope of these surveys is comprehensive, covering several critical areas of graduate capability in the school counseling field:

Knowledge and Skills: The surveys evaluate graduates' understanding and application of school counseling principles, especially their contribution to P-12 student learning and development.

Data Literacy and Research Application: Graduates' proficiency in employing data literacy, along with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research methodologies, is assessed to determine their effectiveness in fostering supportive, diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational communities.

Leadership and Collaboration: The surveys examine the ability of graduates to lead or participate effectively in collaborative endeavors within the school counseling arena.

Technology Use: Graduates' aptitude for appropriately integrating technology into their counseling practice is also evaluated.

Adherence to Standards: Additionally, the surveys gauge graduates' compliance with essential legal, policy, and ethical standards critical to the school counseling profession.

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy: Finally, employers provide feedback on graduates' content knowledge, their understanding of legal frameworks, and their application of pedagogical methodologies relevant to classroom settings.

This detailed feedback from employers paints a clear picture of the School Counseling program's success in preparing candidates to meet the diverse and complex demands of the school counseling profession. The consistently positive feedback across various competency areas underscores the program's commitment to producing skilled, knowledgeable, and well-prepared professionals. These professionals are not only aligned with the rigorous standards set by CAEP but are also highly valued and respected by the employers for their contributions to the educational and developmental needs of P-12 students.

The survey results from Spring 2024, along with data from the past three cycles, have been compiled and analyzed according to the statewide protocol established by the MCDE MEPP CIC. This structured approach to gathering and evaluating employer feedback ensures that the School Counseling program at MSUB continues to refine and enhance its curriculum and support services, thereby maintaining its standing as a leader in the field of school counseling education.

b. Component RA4.2 Satisfaction of Completers

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MSUB School Counseling program completer data demonstrates that program completers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job, and their preparation was effective.

The Fall 2024: The survey instrument is designed to request feedback on the experiences of the completers during their time in the program, focusing on a comprehensive array of aspects integral to the domain of school counseling.

The survey includes questions related to the advanced degree knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions deemed essential for fostering learning and developmental opportunities for K-12 students. It addresses a curriculum that encompasses thorough application of data literacy, research utilization, and a robust understanding of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research methodologies. The curriculum aims to equip candidates with the capacity to conduct data analysis and use

evidence-based approaches to cultivate supportive, diverse, equitable, and inclusive school communities, all of which are included in the survey.

The survey asks the candidates about their proficiency in leading or contributing to collaborative efforts within the school counseling field, demonstrating the effective use of technology in their practice, and adhering to appropriate school counseling dispositions. It also evaluates their understanding and application of professional school counseling laws, policies, and ethical guidelines. The curriculum is built on solid content knowledge, legal frameworks, and the ability to apply differentiated and pedagogical methodologies in classroom settings.

The survey report includes an analysis of results from the Spring 2024 data collection cycle, providing a comprehensive overview of the trends and insights gathered (forthcoming in the Fall 2024 Addendum). This approach enables stakeholders to monitor progress and identify areas for continuous improvement in preparing school counselors who are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the modern educational landscape.

Evidence

Please upload evidence and note for which component(s) of the Standard(s) it is applicable. Evidences tagged to components in multiple Standards will also show up in the Evidence module for those Standards.

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a. Component RA5.1 Quality Assurance System

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The School Counseling program at MSUB has established and continuously refines a dynamic Quality Assurance System (QAS) that underscores the program’s commitment to operational effectiveness and sustainable improvement processes. This comprehensive system tracks the flow of data from entry through analysis and utilization in decision-making, linking the outcomes of these decisions back into program enhancement efforts.

Central to the program’s approach to quality assurance, the QAS is supported by a foundation of reliable assessments, skilled personnel, streamlined policies, and the integration of Tevera software. This system is pivotal in fostering a candidate-centered educational environment, facilitating collaborations with state and local agencies, external stakeholders, and partners in P-12 education. At critical junctures of the program upon entry, at mid-term assessments, and upon completion the program rigorously collects and analyzes data on candidate performance and feedback. Utilizing the capabilities of Tevera software, this information is systematically examined by the faculty, University Supervisors, and the Director of Field Experiences and Licensure, ensuring comprehensive and expert analysis.

The QAS leverages Tevera s advanced features for data aggregation and disaggregation to refine strategies for admission, advisement, and retention, and to illuminate both individual and collective areas for program enhancement. Current initiatives aim to expand the data analysis efforts to include more detailed considerations, such as race/ethnicity and geographic location, further enriching the understanding and response to diverse candidate needs.

A key component of the assessment strategy is the collection of feedback from employers and program completers, utilizing tools like Qualtrics. This feedback plays a crucial role in assessing the effectiveness of the program and the preparedness of the graduates, informing continuous improvement efforts and strategic program adjustments. Faculty members actively use Tevera not only to document candidate performance but also to provide timely support, particularly in areas identified for improvement.

The Quality Assurance System also supports critical program activities, including annual assessment reporting and comprehensive program reviews. It facilitates reflective and constructive discussions at various organizational levels, engaging faculty with specialized expertise in regular training to ensure consistent evaluation standards across the board. Our faculty frequently review candidate performance data to identify areas for improvement, with quarterly data analysis meetings serving as a forum for data-driven dialogue and the development of action plans for ongoing program enhancement. These plans are periodically revisited and updated, highlighting the flexible and proactive nature of the QAS.

The #5.1.1A Quality Assurance System of the School Counseling Program at MSUB is a clear demonstration of our unwavering commitment to evidence-based decision-making and collective pursuit of excellence in preparing candidates for the complexities of the school counseling profession.

Entry Data Collection, Mid-term Assessments, and Completion Evaluation. These stages represent the critical junctures at which data on candidate performance and feedback is collected, marking the program’s dedication to monitoring candidate progression and outcomes.

Tevera Software Data Analysis: Utilizing Tevera software, the collected data is systematically analyzed, supporting the program's ability to make informed decisions based on comprehensive and expert analysis.

Feedback Collection (Employers, Completers): This stage is crucial for gathering insights into the program's effectiveness and the preparedness of its graduates, using tools like Qualtrics to collect feedback from key stakeholders. The flowchart illustrates how each component of the QAS is interconnected, creating a feedback loop that links outcomes back to program enhancement efforts. The flowchart also incorporates both the involvement of key stakeholders and the frequency at which each stage of the Quality Assurance System (QAS) occurs in the Advanced School Counseling Program at MSU Billings: Entry Data Collection, Mid-term Assessments, and Completion Evaluation all occur every semester, reflecting the program's commitment to ongoing evaluation and feedback throughout the academic year.

Strategic Adjustments & Support: Based on the analysis and feedback, the program makes strategic adjustments and provides targeted support, especially in areas identified for improvement.

Ongoing Enhancement Plans & Reviews: This final stage reflects the program's commitment to continuous enhancement, with plans and reviews that are periodically revisited and updated to ensure the QAS remains dynamic and responsive to emerging needs.

Tevera Software Data Analysis also takes place every semester, ensuring that data collected at various stages is analyzed systematically and timely to inform decision-making.

Feedback Collection from Employers and Completers happens annually, allowing the program to gather and integrate broader perspectives on its effectiveness and the preparedness of its graduates over a longer term.

Strategic Adjustments & Support, informed by the analysis and feedback collected throughout the year, are implemented annually. This stage encapsulates the program's dedication to making informed, strategic changes that enhance its quality and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

This comprehensive representation emphasizes the cyclical and iterative nature of the QAS, highlighting the program's dynamic approach to continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement. (See Also: **#5.1.2 Advisory Panel PowerPoint** and **#5.1.3 SCOU Data Dip.**)

b. Component RA5.2 Data Quality

MSUB School Counseling program's quality assurance system from RA 5.1 relies on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative, and actionable measures to ensure interpretations of data are valid and consistent.

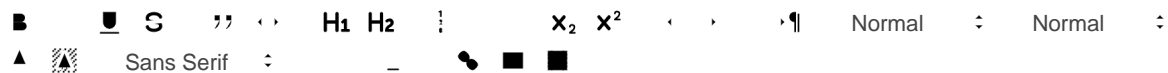
The Quality Assurance System (QAS) is an integral component, primarily serving the school counseling faculty in effectively monitoring and evaluating various program areas. Annually reviewed through a series of assessment activities, the QAS excels in tracking student progress over multiple semesters, employing diverse measurement instruments, and utilizing consistent data collection methods. This systematic approach enables the generation of real-time performance reports at both individual and specialization levels. While the Quality Assurance System (QAS) exhibits several strengths, currently a challenge that is being proactively addressed is the limitation of disaggregated data, especially in terms of demographic variables like race and ethnicity. The current system is unable to disaggregate at a micro-level, looking at individual components on each assessment; it is only able to look more globally at factors such as program completion. Active measures are being taken to augment this aspect of the Tevera software system, with a dedicated focus on improving the ability to provide detailed, demographic-specific insight. The QAS's data quality is upheld through several standards. Relevance is ensured by selecting appropriate measures that align with program goals and focus on key program competencies, reflected in assessments, clinical hours in both practicum and internships. These tools collectively demonstrate candidates' ability to apply their professional knowledge in real-world settings. Faculty engage in inter-rater reliability training.

Representativeness within the QAS is achieved by collecting data at various program stages, guided by comprehensive data collection software (Tevera). This ensures consistent and appropriate data gathering by all faculty members. The resultant

cumulative data provides a holistic view of both individual progress and overall program performance. Actionability is a key feature of the data, leading to informed decision-making and tangible changes within the School Counseling program. This is evident in the advisory panel meetings where data from the previous year will be analyzed to formulate improvement plans. Transparency and clarity are fundamental to the assessment processes. Candidates are thoroughly informed about the purpose and nature of each assessment through discipline-specific guidebooks and course syllabi. The School Counseling program created assessments, aligned with CAEP, ASCA, MSCA, PEPPS, and Danielson Framework standards. Faculty, supervisors, and site mentors are well-trained in collecting diverse data types at various program stages, ensuring reliable and actionable evaluations. This multi-faceted approach guarantees that students receive comprehensive feedback, reinforcing their performance and the overall quality of assessment within the School Counseling program (**#5.1.2A SCOU Advisory Panel Power Point**).

The School Counseling program's commitment to representativeness, actionability, and transparency in its Quality Assurance System (QAS) is ideal. By leveraging comprehensive data collection through Tevera and adhering to high standards set by CAEP, ASCA, MSCA, PEPPS, and the Danielson Framework, the program ensures that every aspect of student assessment is both rigorous and relevant. The systematic approach to collecting and analyzing data, combined with the engagement of faculty, supervisors, and site mentors in a cycle of continuous improvement, exemplifies best practices in educational assessment. These processes not only facilitate a deep understanding of individual progress but also foster a culture of excellence and accountability across the program. Through informed decision-making and targeted improvement plans, the program demonstrates a steadfast dedication to enhancing the educational experience and outcomes for its candidates, thereby setting a benchmark for quality and effectiveness in school counseling education.

c. Component RA5.3 Stakeholder Involvement

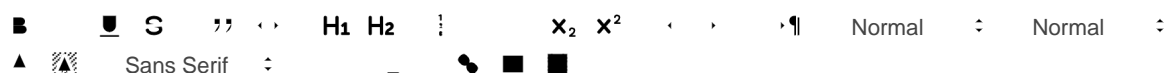


MSUB School Counseling program includes relevant internal (administrators, faculty, staff, candidates) and external (alumni, practitioners, school and community partners, employers) stakeholders in the program design, evaluation, and continuous improvement processes. Its internal and external stakeholders significantly influence the School Counseling program, each playing a vital role in shaping the graduate preparation process outlined in the Quality Assurance System. Internally, this group includes faculty, University Supervisors, advisors, the Dean of the College of Education and Graduate Studies (**#1.1.7A SCOU Lawshe Feedback: #5.1.2A SCOU Advisory Board Power Point** and the SCOU Strategic Adjustment and Support Feedback, forthcoming in Fall 2024 Addendum).

Internal stakeholders function as the primary point of engagement yet working alongside external entities like the Office of Public Instruction, the CIC, an advisory panel, employers, and individuals who have completed the programs is vital for generating new ideas and expanding viewpoints. This vibrant exchange frequently includes conversations with the Dean of the ETP, encouraging constructive debates and collaborative decision-making, essential for sustaining robust connections with P-12 and community partners. Receiving a wide range of input is crucial for addressing the evolving requirements of the graduate candidates.

The effectiveness of the School Counseling program relies heavily on strong, cooperative ties with partners and affiliated schools, with a focus on ongoing enhancement. The advisory panel provides an external perspective that is key to widening viewpoints and considering new program possibilities. The cooperative ties with partners, affiliated schools, and program completers are critical, especially since many of the graduate candidates are professionals already in the workforce, who understand the importance of these connections and collaborations.

d. Component RA5.4 Continuous Improvement



The School Counseling program at MSUB evaluates its performance against established goals and benchmarks, ensuring a continuous monitoring of outcomes over time and documenting the impact of any changes or innovations on program effectiveness. The faculty are committed to the progress of candidates from admission to program completion, emphasizing continuous improvement. This commitment is reflected in the diverse assessment strategies as detailed in the narrative for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Responding to recent updates in CAEP and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) standards, the faculty have actively adapted the curriculum and practices to align with these revised standards. Some areas have presented challenges, necessitating additional efforts to ensure full compliance and seamless integration into the program. A significant step in this adaptation process has been the adoption of the Tevera software system, which has markedly enhanced the ability to manage student learning outcomes, streamline the site placement process, and effectively track student progress.

This technological advancement has significantly improved the capacity for generating detailed reports and disaggregating data, enabling the faculty to conduct in-depth analyses across various demographic factors such as race, rural background, and the identification of first-generation students within specific assessment contexts. This enhancement reflects the dedication to achieving excellence and fostering continuous improvement in the field of school counseling.

The faculty's mastery of the Tevera system marks a major progression, allowing for better alignment with educational goals. Moreover, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation as well as Provost's office utilizes portions of the reports in the Academic Program Review, which is shared with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and Montana Board of Regents and incorporated into state-level reports, highlighting the importance of continuous program improvement and the commitment to meeting and surpassing national standards.

The structure within the School Counseling program supports the systematic collection of data across various aspects, employing tools such as Qualtrics Surveys and Tevera software for this purpose. Managed by the dedicated faculty, this process involves members from various disciplines in the crucial tasks of data analysis, interpretation, and application. This collaborative approach is aimed at enhancing the program and addressing the unique challenges it faces. Central to the strategy are Action Plans, which outline the future goals and the means to achieve them. These plans provide a clear framework for the faculty to adjust or refine the approach based on robust empirical evidence, promoting a culture of informed decision-making, and fostering innovations that drive meaningful improvements across the program. (**#2.2.1A Employer Survey**; Completer Survey data forthcoming in Fall 2024 Addendum.)