

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026
Program Evaluation Summary
REHABILITATION COUNSELING PROGRAM

2025-2026 Program Objectives (Standard Section 2.B)

Objective 1: Ensuring graduate competence in the latest knowledge skills, and dispositional standards.

Objective 2: Excellence through program evaluation and self-study.

Objective 3: Critical evaluation of current syllabi and program for emerging knowledge areas and diversity and multicultural counseling competencies.

I. Summary of Program Evaluation Results (Standard Section 4.E.)

Current Vital Statistics:

- Number of graduates for the 2024-2025 academic year was 25.
- Degree completion rate was 68% completed within the expected time frame of 2 years for full-time and 3 years for part-time (*note*: 2025 annual study of students over the past three years).
- Certification examination pass rate for the Commission on Rehabilitation Certification (CRC) exam for the 2024-2025 academic year was 78.3%.
- 97% of graduates reported being employed and 87.5% reported being employed in rehabilitation counseling or a related field (*note*: results of our 2025 survey study of graduates from 2021-2025 [$n = 33$]).
- 100% of employers and supervisors reported that our counselor training was “excellent” or “good” compared to other rehabilitation counseling programs.

Disability Rate Study:

2025-2026 anonymous disability study

- A voluntary, anonymous survey of current students in the program revealed a self-disclosed rate of disability of approximately 4x the national average (57.9% of respondents identified as having a disability; $n = 20$; 1 did not answer) when compared with 2020 American Community Survey statistics (13%). (Objective 2; standard Section 4.B.2)
- Our current rates of disability over the past 2 years is higher than the previous 3 years.

Applicant and Current Student Demographics Comparisons: (Demographics study updated in December 2025)

2024-2025 Academic Year Demographics Students (Alignment with CACREP Vital Statistics)

- 3% Native American/Alaskan Native, 12% Asian, 21% Black, 3% Hispanic/LatinX, 59% White, 2% other.

2023 to 2024 Academic Year Demographics Students (Alignment with CACREP Vital Statistics)

- 52% White, 26% Black/African American, 6% Hispanic/Latinx, 13% Asian, 1% American Indian/Native Alaskan; 2% unknown. The group self-identified as 78% female, 22% male. ($N = 86$)

Academic Success Indicators (CACREP Section 2.E):

- **Degree completion rate:** A 2025-2026 study of student who entered the program from 2020-2025 revealed that 68% of students had successfully completed their degree. This is equivalent to our 2022 study and 7% lower than our 2024-2025 study (Objective 3; standard Section 4.E.3).
 - 75% of in-person students ($n = 32$) finished in the expected 2-year program; 66% of distance students ($n = 116$) finished in the expected 3-year program
- **Internship disposition evaluations:** The 2025-2026 study of internship evaluations found 94.7% to 98.7% of student evaluations in internship for the 2024-2025 academic year were meeting expectations across the *3 key professional dispositions* (KPDS) based on site supervisor, internship evaluations. Students must meet expectations by their final evaluation for successful graduation (0% scored below expectations) (Objective 1; standard Section 4.B.1)
- **Internship performance evaluations:** The 2025-2026 study of internship evaluations found 86.6% to 98.7% of student evaluations in internship for the 2024-2025 academic year were meeting expectations across all *11 key performance indicators* (KPIs) based on site supervisor, internship evaluations (0.0% scored below expectations by their final evaluation). (Objective 1; standard Section 4.B.1).
- **CRC Examination pass rates over time:** The 2025-2026 study of CRC examination pass rates for dates for the 2024-2025 academic term = 78.3% (higher than national rate of 52%-70% in 2024-2025); For the 2023-2024 academic term = 64% (comparable to national rate); For the 2022-2023 academic year = 56% (comparable to national pass rates); For 2021-2022 academic year, 70% of students passed the CRCC exam (above national pass rates). In the 2020 to 2021 academic year, 75% passed the CRCC exam (above the national average). The pass rates for the 2019 to 2020 academic year were 85.7% which is much higher than national average (Objective 1; standard Section 4.E.2).
- **Comprehensive examination pass rates:** 100% of students either passed the CRCC examination or the UB Rehabilitation Counseling Program comprehensive exam for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Fieldwork Annual Program Evaluation Results (Standard 2.E.4):

Program target threshold: At least 95% of eligible students intending to enroll in practicum or internship will have an approved fieldwork placement by the start of the semester.

2025-2026 study results: **The program met fieldwork targets for the 2024-2025 practicum and internship (study occurring in Spring 2026). 2025-2026 study results will again be reported in the 2026-2027 Annual Program Evaluation report.

- **2024-2025 Internship:** 27 students sought placement; 27 secured approved sites by the start of the semester = **100% placement rate**
- **2024-2025 Practicum:** 26 students sought placement; 26 secured approved sites by the start of the semester = **100% placement rate**
- **2025-2026 Internship:** 23 students sought placement; 23 secured approved sites by the start of the semester = **100% placement rate**
- **2025-2026 Practicum:** 11 students sought placement; 11 secured approved sites by the start of the semester = **100% placement rate**

Survey of Program Graduates (2025-2026 study results):

Program Graduates Employment Rates

- **2025-2026 Study of Graduate Employment Rates:** Follow up survey of program graduates from 2020-2025, conducted in October, 2025 revealed (n = 33): 97% reported being employed, and 87.5% reported being employed in rehabilitation counseling or a related field. (Objective 3; standard Section 4.B.3)
- **Employer Examples:** Examples of employers were ACCES-VR, ECMC (community hospital), private insurance, Goodwill, Children's Hospital, NYS Commission for the Blind, Rochester Regional Health Pros Program, Rehabilitation Experts, Addiction Center, mental health centers, University at Buffalo, Horizon Health, Outpatient Clinic, Community Options New York.

2025 Emerging Issues Identified by Graduates

- October 2025 study results:
- Young adults with substance use disorders; more emphasis on mental health and substance use
- Pre-ETS service understanding (x2)
- Fiscal responsibilities of counselors in VRC roles.
- AI use in the field. (x2)
- Case management
- Knowledge of community resources (e.g., housing, shelter, transportation, etc.) for advocacy and peer advocacy.
- Rehabilitation Technology (AT awareness of resources and related services)

Survey of Current Students (2025-2026 results):

2025-2026 Student Needs for Additional Support:(the following reflects themes within the responses from October 2025 student survey results)

- Brightspace LMS Clarity
 - These results emphasized in previous year as well
 - Consistency in where assignments are submitted, course materials are found, use of announcements, weekly materials, readings, syllabi
 - Improvements in ease of finding materials and assignments
- Program Flexibility
 - These results emphasized in previous year as well
 - Taking some courses remote for scheduling or other issues.
 - Reduce the length of online classes (either due to disability and attention challenges in distance formats)
 - More flexibility in the synchronous classes for online students.
 - Additional flexibility in tests/quizzes and “big assignments”
 - Working with students unique circumstances that impact their ability to complete work
- Advisement
 - Additional feedback related to program progression. (see new feedback form and portal built in UBbox)
 - Additional discussion of broad options for employment outside of state VR.
- Additional Support for Internship Placements
 - Options for Internship could be explored
 - Additional support in internship placements
 - Larger discussions/assistance with internship options that meet unique student needs
- Supports for self-care, well-being, mental health of students
 - Emphasized in previous year results as well
 - Support for work life balance
 - Greater focus on general wellbeing
 - Faculty have done “an exemplary job at supporting their student’s well-being, learning, and success!”, though the program is demanding.
 - Additional time-management assistance
- Content addition suggestions
 - Full course on mental health disorders

Systematic Survey of Supervisors and Employers (2024-2025 survey results):

- **2024-2025 Survey of Supervisors and Employers** (total n = 17 employed graduates; n = 25 supervised interns);
 - **Student Competence:** 92% of the respondents had reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with our rehabilitation counselor interns and graduates’ professional competence (1 neutral; 1 dissatisfied)
 - **Student Performance:** 92% of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the overall performance of our rehabilitation counselor interns and graduates (1 neutral; 1 dissatisfied).
 - **Training Ratings:** 100% of respondents stated that our counselor training was “good” or “excellent” compared to other rehabilitation counseling programs (of those who had other programs to compare against).
 - **Strengths of the Program and Students**
 - Professionalism (x5)
 - Overall competency, foundational skills, educated, capable (x5)
 - Core competencies related to counseling (x5)
 - Great communication; asking questions when needed (x2)
 - Good documentation and note writing skills (x3)
 - Students focused on rehab, not social work or other specialties (x2)
 - Good knowledge of vocational rehabilitation (x3)
 - Attention to detail (x3)
 - Dedicated to clients, dedicated to work, and committed to care (x3)
 - Interns willingness and ability to learn.
 - Forming working relationships with clients
 - Program is very thorough and comprehensive
 - Excellent training and ready to start
 - Program does good job of vetting counselors
 - Interns supported by the program
 - Good service coordination and organization
 - **Counselor Needs**
 - More training/practice in how to work with challenging clients and counseling skills related to deescalating (x3)
 - Plan development: critical thinking skills in developing appropriate goals based on needs and abilities, creativity and innovation in helping clients reach goals and independence; counseling skills in helping clients with goal development and appropriate plans. (x3)
 - Experience and knowledge working with all disability types and multiple disabilities (x2)
 - Case management, case notes writing and structure (x2)
 - Some interns have struggled significantly; competency of a few recently accepted students is lower than past expectations. Care in screening of those accepted and readiness of those going into internships.
 - Individual differences in quality of interns

- Additional training on State VR processes/services (e.g. Pre-ETS, core rehabilitation services)
- Rehabilitation technology training
- Justifying case conclusions in written and verbal form.
- Our interns may need greater interpersonal awareness (tone, non-verbal cues) with supervisors and others working with them. They do show other skills.
 - Importance of collaborating with experienced counselors
- Introduction to life care planning and services as case managers or workers comp.
- Supports for group work
- **Emerging Needs in the Field**
 - Youth services (x2) (transition services)
 - Partnering with agencies to help reduce counselor recruitment problems (x2)
 - Justice/criminal background involved clients, VR counseling for those with justice backgrounds (x2)
 - Understanding eligibility and service provision for immigrants/residence/citizenship statuses (x2)
 - Counseling techniques: motivational interviewing, person-centered care, empathy. Access to online resources for accommodations (x2)
 - Mental health clients: working with personality disorders, co-occurring disorders, several mental illness, substance use issues (x5)
 - Neurodivergent clients: working with ASD, ID, TBI (x4)
 - Culture and identity: cultural competency, LGBTQIA+ clients,
 - Language: Spanish speaking; ASL communication counselors
 - Reducing mental health stigma and seeking services
 - Transportation options and supports
 - Outreach for VR as a field
 - Counselor's willingness to aim higher and pursue work beyond the typical entry level work.
- "Other" Feedback
 - Request for pre-approval for supervision as CRC credits (investigate if this is allowed under CRC rules; faculty believe this is not available)

Advisory Board Feedback

- Advisory Board Meeting held May 7, 2026
- Course mapping discussion based on 2024 CACREP Standards effective July 2026.
- **Emerging Content Areas input from advisory board included:**
 - Case management/case notes writing; including delegation of duties, time management, and managing large caseloads.
 - Peer advocate/mentoring credentialing and skills being broadly emphasized across programs in the field (e.g., Centers for Independent Living; OASIS)

- Certified Peer Advocate
- Youth Peer Advocate
- Specialized VR programming and Pre-ETS for ID (intellectual disability) or DD (developmental disability)
- Engaging families in the counseling process. Including families in student planning (under 18).
- Practical integration of state VR process in the UB curriculum
- Early engagement strategies (i.e., rapid engagement); to engage for continued participation and more timely service delivery.
- Supervision and leadership development (this content is currently contained within the CEP 600 Internship course).
- Ability to work within teams.

II. Subsequent Program Modifications; and Proposed Modifications

(Standard Section 4.C; Standard Section 4.D.2)

- **CACREP Credit Requirements Program Modifications** [Objective 2]
 - Mapping of the updated 2024 CACREP standards; self-study related to 2024 standards and policy documents
 - Mapping completed in Spring 2026; in effect for Summer 2026 and subsequent semesters (Objective 3)
 - New Student Evaluation feedback forms developed to provide structured feedback to students on KPIs and KPDs based on new standards.
 - New live evaluation, feedback, and group discussion developed for Field Work (i.e., adherence to Policy A.2.e).
- **CRCC Exam Preparation Changes:**
 - From 2023-2025, the program has initiated a number of strategies to assist in the earlier preparation of students for the CRCC exam. The new Case Management course will include a study plan assignment and the initiation of study groups (4 weeks; 1 hour sessions). Additionally, online materials have been updated within our new Brightspace platform, that include study guides, study content, recommendations for study materials/resources, and links to additional study materials.
 - Study guides provided as source materials have been reviewed and will be implemented starting in the Fall 2026 semester.
 - The CRC is undergoing their period role and function study and associated updates to the CRC exam. The program faculty will stay apprised of these changes and will incorporate new content into the curriculum.
 - Dr. Scott Sabella is serving on the CRC Exam item writing committee in the Summer 2026. This is expected to facilitate improved information on the CRC exam updates and preparation

- **Curriculum and Course Content Changes/Prospective Changes:** *Content areas are being assessed based on the new 2024 program evaluation data and advisory board feedback.[Objective 1]*
- **Special Topics in Rehabilitation Course Development**
 - To Be Developed in Fall 2026
 - Course would allow for special topics course that could be flexible to accommodate emergent needs and deficit areas identified by faculty and program evaluation.
 - Need for advanced training in transition and Pre-ETS (based on feedback from surveys and advisory board);
 - Training on engagement strategies and rapid engagement and improved engagement (e.g., Motivational Interview practical skills)
- **Transitions/Youth Services:** Supported by our evaluation data showing increased emphasis on youth in transition in field agencies and the new case management course, has incorporated a section related to transition services, IEPs, and pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). Additional options for increasing transition-age content are being planned in case management.
- **Family Counseling:** noted as a need area within Advisory Board feedback. Course content improvements are being considered and will be implemented for CEP 653. Recommendations for family counseling coursework will be considered for the elective.

III. Other Substantial Program Changes and Initiatives (Standard Section 4.D.3)

Faculty and Staff Changes:

- No substantial program faculty changes expected 2025-2026
- Dr. Scott Sabella continued the Program Director role starting in the Fall 2021 (typical 3-year term).
- Dr. Omayra Munoz-Lorenzo and Dr. Rebecca Jacob both active on the RSA Scholarship grant.

New Grant and Scholarship Opportunities:

- **Scholarship Awards:** The Rehabilitation Counseling Program received a Rehabilitation Long-Term Training grant from the U.S. Department of Education to provide scholarships for master's level rehabilitation counseling students. In the 2025-2030 academic year years.
- **In the 2025-2026 Program Year,** we funded 11 scholars for full tuition and fees from the RSA Scholarships.
- **In the 2026-2027 academic year,** we anticipating adding 9 new scholars and the continued funding of 5 scholars, for a total of 14 scholars.

- **We continue to work collaboratively with New York State ACCES-VR** to meet the grant requirements of internships at a state VR agency and employment at a state VR agency or related partner agency after graduation.

Additional Program Policy and Practice Changes:

- **Practicum and Internship Forms and Process Revisions:** Revisions have been made to the Practicum/Internship Placement Guidelines and forms for 2025-2026. Evaluation feedback from students has led to changes to the forms and process that are used within the practicum and internship courses (based on the Clinical Coordinator systems evaluation, student feedback, supervisor feedback).
 - Modifications include changes to our site supervisor agreements, increasing the efficiency of the supervisor evaluations of students (electronic format), moving to electronic timesheets and signatures, and reducing the number of required forms.
- **New Live, Supervisor Orientation Process.** Targeted for implementation in Spring 2027 in practicum course.

Proposed 2026-2027 Program Objectives

Objective 1: Ensuring graduate competence in the latest knowledge skills, and dispositional standards.

Objective 2: Excellence through program evaluation and self-study.

Objective 3: Critical evaluation of current syllabi and program for emerging knowledge areas, and multicultural counseling competencies as defined in the CRCC code of ethics.