

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
Graduate School in Social Sciences
Master's in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling

Annual Program Assessment Report

2021-2022

Updated

Introduction

The Master Program in Social Sciences in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling (MSSCRC) Program of the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico (PUCPR) conducts program assessment through various methods and data. It includes surveys (alumni and site supervisors), feedback from the Advisory Board, and faculty meetings. This report presents data gathered from the annual student and internship site supervisor's survey and data collected from institutional information such as retention rates and graduation rates, among others.

This report was completed using digitized available information from internship and practicum students' files and responses from their supervisors in May 2022. The results presented below only reflect the opinions of students and supervisors active during the said academic year. In June 2021, the Program started with a new curriculum and changed its name to Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, adding courses to reinforce the clinical practice within the rehabilitation counseling field. The students' opinions and experiences in the current report reflect the academic offer available before implementing the new curriculum (coded VORH). *The first group of students enrolled in the new curriculum (coded CLRC) will start their practicum experience in August 2022.* Implementing the new curriculum implied that students transitioning to the new CLRC coursework had additional courses that delayed the one-semester graduation date.

Faculty Assessment

During the academic year 2021-2022, faculty members were assessed by students, the department's director, and peers. The program has four full-time faculty members and three adjunct professors. Table 1 describes the overall scores obtained by faculty members.

Table 1

Overall scores of faculty members in the evaluation process.

Faculty Member	Students Evaluation	Department Director Evaluation	Faculty Assessment Committee	Peer evaluation
Morales Cruz, Tania	6.9	6.6	6.5	6.9
Oliveras Martínez, Kanyra	6.5	5.8	6.4	7
Serrano García, Ana Vanessa*	--	6.1	--	--
Torres Rentas, Néstor	6.7	**	6.8	6.9

*The maximum score for all categories is 7.00; *Dr. Serrano García had administrative tasks; thus, no evaluations are available for academic tasks. ** Assessment reports are not available for the reporting period.*

In July 2021, Dr. Héctor J. Velázquez González, left his position at the PUCPR to pursue other opportunities. As a full-time professor, Prof. Tania Morales Cruz joined the faculty in August 2021. Professor Morales Cruz has a master's in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRCC), has a Juris Doctor, and a second master's in law from the UPR. She is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in education.

Adjunct faculty: In July 2021, the MSSCRC program invited Dr. Catherine Oliver Franco, director of the Department of Social Work, and Dr. Wandy San Miguel, a licensed professional counselor, to teach Addiction counseling and the Seminar on emergent approaches in clinical rehabilitation counseling courses respectively. In August, Dra. Brenda Yanira Robles Fred, also an LPC, joined the faculty and teaches the Counseling and Spirituality course. All said courses are electives within the new curriculum.

Program Performance Data

Enrollment and Sociodemographic Information. In August 2021, the Program admitted seven (7) new students for 29 active students in full-time and part-time modalities. Of those, 20 identified as female, and nine as males. One of the students reported receiving services from the Disability Services Office. The retention rate for the program was 69 % for the academic year.

In May 2022, 12 students graduated from the program; eight students completed their degree in December 2021, and four additional in May 2022. All students completed their degrees under the previous curriculum.

Several socioeconomic factors impact the recruitment of new students and the program's retention rate. Puerto Rico is experiencing a constant decrease in demography due to a drop in births and a constant migration of individuals seeking better economic opportunities in the US. Said migration pattern has impacted the number of students seeking college degrees in Puerto Rico. Although the shortage of new students has impacted all campuses across the island, the

online approach to learning also discouraged some students from returning or engaging in graduate studies. Even though a percentage of students preferred online courses, a significant number of students decided not to enroll in the program at the PCUPR because they preferred face-to-face learning. The Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Program at the PCUPR returned to in-person teaching modality in March 2022. The campus is still facing challenges related to infrastructure damage after the January 2020 earthquakes, which limited the availability of services and space for in-person learning. Nonetheless, the institution has taken steps to provide a safe environment for in-person learning and simultaneously prevent the spread of COVID-19 among staff and students.

Table 2

Number of students who completed the degree per academic year.

Academic Year	Graduates
2021 – 2022	12
2020 – 2021	7
2019 – 2020	48
2018 – 2019	9
Total	76

Status Report for the PCUPR

Since 2019, the program made changes to address students' concerns and update the academic offer. For example, the program eliminated the thesis or research project requirement to complete the degree and created a research seminar course. The availability of the research seminar course allowed students who struggled to complete the research requirements to re-enroll in the program and complete their counseling degree. In June 2021, the program started with a new curriculum reflecting the 2016 Council of Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards for counseling specialties in the USA. The faculty is currently working on collecting data from stakeholders, including active students, for its ongoing assessment process. At the same time, the program continues to work on the re-accreditation process with the CACREP. The new CACREP standards will be published in 2023.

State Licensing Exam. The Rehabilitation Counselor Examination Board of Puerto Rico administers the last licensing exam in March 2022. A total of 11 graduates from the PCUPR sat down for the exam, and 18% of the alums obtained a passing grade. The decrease in the passing rate may be related to several factors. Results showed that 77.8% of the alums who did not pass the exam were in their second and third attempt. There are two main factors impacting the passing rate of former students. First, the alums taking the exam may have graduated between 2020-2022 but completed the coursework before 2017.

Consequently, former students may not be as exposed to the terms and concepts as newly graduated students who just finished their coursework. Second, graduates may use outdated resources or materials to prepare for the exam. The faculty identified several references and resources disseminated among former students to help students prepare for the exam. The list was distributed with a copy of the exam announcement among former students twice a year and is available upon request.

Time to degree. In terms of time to degree, the percentage was calculated based on the three years it should take students to complete the degree. The completion rate for students admitted during the academic year 2019-2020 was 22.2 %; in other words, two out of nine students admitted during that academic year completed the degree in three years. Under the former curriculum, most complete all requirements between 3 to 4 years; with the updated curriculum and eliminating the thesis requirement, students should complete the 60-credit hour degree in 3.5 years.

Program Objectives, Outcomes, Challenges, and Action Plans for 2021-2022

The table below summarizes the program objectives, the expected results, the challenges faced, and the action plan (if applicable) to obtain better results in the near future.

Table 3

Program Objectives, Outcomes, Challenges, and Action Plans for 2022-2023

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
Prospective Student Applications	1. The program will receive a minimum of 30 applications per year.	1. The program received 16 applications in 2021-2022.	1. Demographic changes on the island – like migration- resulted in a decrease in the number of individuals seeking college degrees. Thus, the number of applications for new candidates decreases. 2. Due to increased COVID-19 cases, the PCUPR decided to delay returning to in-person classes. Not all students were interested in a remote learning environment. 3. A lack of knowledge of the rehabilitation counseling field continues to be a challenge.	1. Implement a continuous recruitment strategy throughout the year, participating in graduate studies fairs, orientation meetings in other universities, social media announcements, and newspapers. 2. Promote the new curriculum with the clinical component and the rehabilitation counseling competencies. 3. Promote the rehabilitation counseling field among other behavioral professionals.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
New students' Admissions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To recruit a minimum of 14 students per year in 5 years. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ten students were admitted for the academic year 2021-2022; seven students decided to enroll. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The PCUPR decided to delay the return to in-person classes; the program stayed on remote learning modality until March 2022. The current socioeconomic environment on the island, especially on the southern coast, impacted the number of students seeking graduate degrees. Individuals focus on finding employment on the island or in the USA. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide individual orientations in-person and remotely with prospective students—follow up on potential candidates through phone calls and emails. Identify nontraditional students seeking to further their careers through counseling. Emphasize the advantages of studying in our program and within the geographical area of prospective students. Advertise financial aid available, such as student loans and the RSA scholarship for eligible students.
Student-to-Faculty Ratio	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a faculty-student ratio 1:23 in regular specialty courses and 1:5 in practicum or internship seminars. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The student ratio during the academic year 2020-2021 was 1:6. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain faculty-student ratio. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the faculty-student ratio for the full-time faculty within the 1:12 ratio.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
Dropout Rate	1. To retain 100% of enrolled students each academic year.	1. The program retained 69% of enrolled students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are experiencing fatigue (due to the time spent in distance learning) and socioeconomic challenges (issues with housing, personal and family problems) impacting academic performance. 2. Lack of student self-knowledge about their skills and interest in rehabilitation counseling. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide support, technical assistance, and resources to cope with personal and academic challenges. 2. Promote self-knowledge among active students through the Professional and Personal Disposition form. 3. Provide referrals to mental health services as needed (inside and outside the PCUPR).
Time to Degree	1. Sixty to 70% of enrolled students will complete the program requirements within 3 to 3.5 years.	1. Of the number of students who graduated in 2021, 22.2% completed the degree within the 3-year timeframe.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students struggle to balance being a full-time student and working full-time. 2. Students deal with personal and family issues that impact their ability to follow the degree plan. 3. The program still has students transitioning from a VORH to a CLRC curriculum have additional courses that delayed their graduation date (1 more semester). 4. Changes in the 2023 CACREP standards will require an assessment of the impact on the time to complete the degree for current students. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The program will provide additional information through advisement to help students balance their studies and workload. 2. Assess the feasibility of the suggested 60 credit hour degree plan.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
Graduation Rate	1. Sixty to 70% of enrolled students will graduate within 3 to 3.5 years.	1. From 2021 to 2022, 12 students graduated from the program. Of those, 16.7% completed the degree within 3 to 3.5 years.	1. Some students struggle to balance their roles as full-time students and being (in many instances) full-time employees. 2. Students are not always able to follow the degree plan as suggested.	1. The program will provide additional information through advisement to help students balance their studies and workload. 2. Assess the courseload per semester, number of courses, and credit hour distribution.
PR License Passing Rate	1. Sixty to 70% of graduates will obtain a passing grade in the state license exam.	1. The passing rate in PR Licensing in March 2022 was 18%.	1. One factor may be inadequate preparation strategies for the licensing exam. 2. Some resources used by students may be outdated.	1. Motivate students to take a review course for the exam. 2. Continue to provide updated physical and online resources to prepare for the exam.
CRC exam approval	1. Sixty to 70% of students who seek the CRC exam will obtain a passing grade.	1. The program does not have updated information regarding graduates who had taken the CRC exam for the 2021-2022 academic year.	1. We are identifying the aggregated value of taking the CRC Exam in Puerto Rico and the USA.	1. Within the actual context, out-of-state certifications and licenses are not required to practice in PR. For said licenses, we are still evaluating the impact of accreditation changes in the field. 2. The Program developed a form to survey former students and update the database.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
Employment Rate	1. Sixty to 70% of students who graduate from the program will obtain competitive employment in the Rehabilitation Counseling field within two years after graduation.	1. The program does not have updated employment information rated among alums.	1. The availability of opportunities in the rehabilitation counseling field fluctuated in the last few months with the retirement or migration of professionals. 2. The licensing exam was postponed; thus, many students could not apply for jobs as rehabilitation counselors for almost a year.	1. The program collaborates with the College of Rehabilitation Counseling Professionals of PR to promote and advocate for career development and opportunities within the rehabilitation counseling field (public and private sectors). 2. The program advocates for approving a law (P. of S. 609) allowing students to apply for provisional licensure, among other things.

The faculty identified several socioeconomic factors, such as the need for financial aid and support for students dealing with personal and family issues, economic limitations, and problems identifying appropriate housing accommodations impacted student's academic performance. The program's faculty also identified several resources within the campus to address said issues and provide additional support.

Advisory Board Input

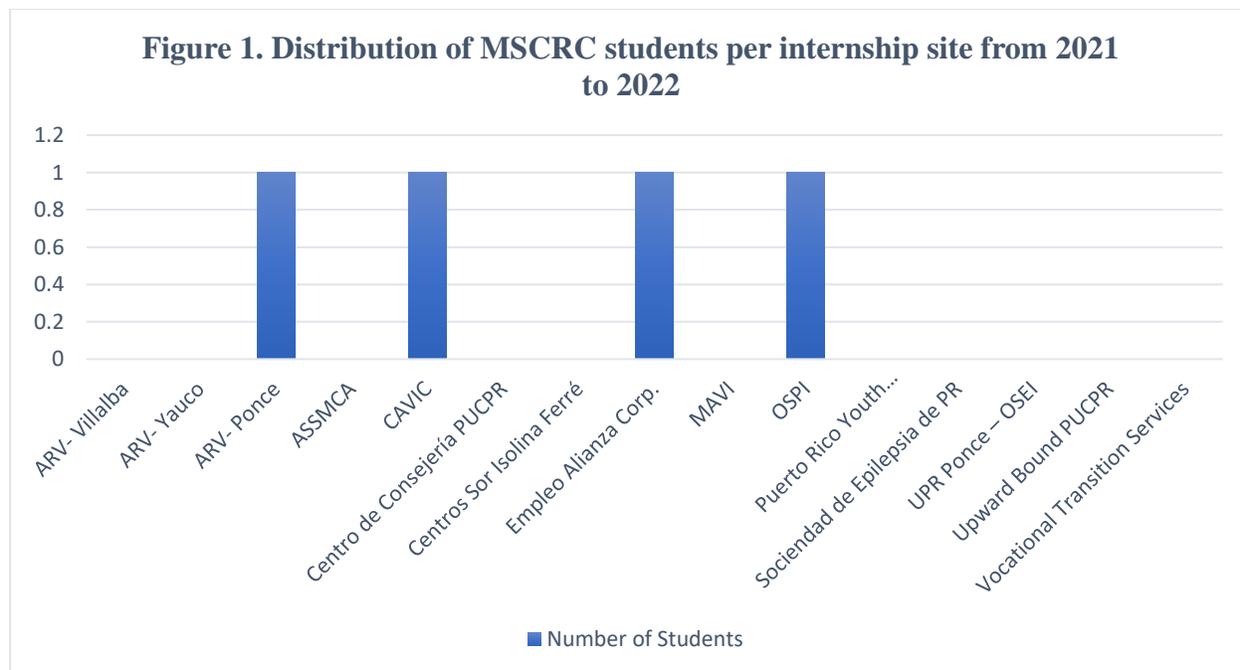
The MSSCRC program hold one meeting with the Advisory Board in October 2021. The meeting focused on three main objectives: 1) invite once again the acting members of the Advisory board whose term was interrupted by the pandemic, 2) recruit new members for the Board, 3) inform the new curriculum changes, the status of the accreditation process and the new configuration of the faculty. During the meeting, we discussed the program's outcomes, the accreditation process, and the celebration of the program's 15th anniversary. Some results of the meeting are:

1. The program is identifying new resources for practicum and internship experiences.
2. We seek suggestions for the 15th Anniversary celebration, including the Program's participation in the Rehabilitation Counseling Week in March 2022.
3. Support for the accreditation process.

Annual Program Evaluation - Student's Survey

During the 2021-2022 academic year, students enrolled in the professional practice completed their internship experiences on various sites. All students were required to complete an Annual Evaluation Form. The survey's primary purpose was to assess students' perception of the

acquired knowledge during their studies in the MSSCRC Program. The following results represent the opinions and experiences of the students who completed their experiences during said period. Figure 1 presents a distribution of students per internship site.



All our students agree that the program has available information on the program's mission and vision, course objectives, course content, required text, evaluation criteria, and syllabi (see Table 4).

*Table 4
 Summary of descriptive statistics on the MSSCRC program's information.*

Program Area	Percentage		
	Yes	No	Not sure
Information detailing the program's mission and objectives	100		
Course objectives	100		
Course content areas	100		
Required text and readings	100		
Evaluation criteria	100		
Syllabus is available at the beginning of each period	100		

We ask students to describe their general knowledge about the structure of the curriculum. To do so, we ask dichotomous questions, based on yes or no answers, on the opportunity of elective courses, focus on rehabilitation counseling, a minimum of at least a 48 semester to 72 quarter hours curriculum, 100 hours of practicum, written expectations for practicum, one hour of

individual practicum supervision; 600 hours of internship, written expectations for internship, and 1 ½ of internship supervision. Responses showed that most of the students knew about the overall structure and content of the program (see Table 5).

Table 5
Summary of students' knowledge of the program's structure.

Program Area	Percentage			
	Yes	No	Not sure	Missing
Written information detailing the programs mission and objectives.	100			
Course syllabi that include course/unit objectives.	100			
Course syllabi that include content areas to be covered.	100			
Course syllabi that include specification of required texts and readings.	100			
Course syllabi that include student evaluation (grading) criteria.	100			
Course syllabi to students at the beginning of each enrollment period.	100			
Opportunity for elective coursework	75		25	
A graduate curriculum consisting of at least 48 semester or 72 quarter hours	75		25	
At least 600 hours of internship experience in a rehabilitation setting.	100			
Written expectations and procedures for internship experience.	100			
At least one hour per week of individual supervision for practicum, which is provided by a program faculty member or a qualified individual working under the supervision of the program faculty member.	100			
At least one hour per week of individual supervision for internship, which is provided by a program faculty member or a qualified individual working under the supervision of a program faculty member.	100			

The survey also assesses the student's perception of their level of preparedness for the rehabilitation counseling areas. When comparing the results with previous years, there is a slight increase in the number of responses students felt "little" or "moderately" prepared in the section on *principles and practice of rehabilitation counseling* and *community resources* (including topics such as crisis resolution, integrate cultural, social, and economic factors in rehabilitation planning, modify and restructure jobs, identify available resources and integrate environmental concerns, to name a few). Still, most responses fluctuated between "high" and "very high" (see Table 6).

As previously stated, the new curriculum (CLRC) started in June 2021. The faculty believes the updated program addresses areas where students felt less prepared for professional practice. It is worth mentioning that all students who completed the survey started their degrees under the previous curriculum (VORH).

Table 6

Students' perception of their degree of knowledge acquired during the MSSCRC program.

Knowledge Area	Percentage				
	Missing	Little	Moderate	High	Very High
Principles and practice of rehabilitation counseling					
Apply ethical principles in practice				75	25
Apply appropriate legal principles			50	50	
Utilize ethical decision-making skills in resolving ethical dilemmas.			25	75	
Understand the impact of history, philosophy, and legislation on rehabilitation.			25	50	25
Understand the scope of services of various service delivery systems.			25	50	25
Conduct individual counseling.				75	25
Develop and maintain a counseling relationship.				75	25
Establish individual goals and objectives in counseling.			25	50	25
Assist individuals with crisis resolution.		25	25	50	
Facilitate an individual's independent decision making.			25	50	25
Conduct group counseling sessions on adjustment and/or other vocational problems, when appropriate.			50	25	25
Involve the individual's family or significant others in the counseling sessions, when appropriate.		25	50	25	
Recommend strategies to individuals to resolve identified problems that impede the rehabilitation process.			75	25	
Determine adequacy of information and planning.			50	50	
Integrate cultural and social factors in rehabilitation planning.		25	25	50	
Integrate economic factors in rehabilitation planning.		50		50	
Integrate disability-related factors in rehabilitation planning.			50	25	25
Integrate environmental concerns in rehabilitation planning.		25	25	25	25
Identify available resources.		50	25	25	
Facilitate with the individual the development of a rehabilitation plan.			25	25	
Facilitate with the individual the development of an independent living plan.		25	50	25	
Community Resources					
Communicate with other service providers involved with the individual and/or family.		25	50	25	
Determine mutual responsibilities with other service providers involved with the individual and/or the family.		25	25	25	25
Refer individuals to community resources when appropriate.		25	25	25	25
Assist individuals in identifying potential fiscal resources.		25	25	25	25
Consult with agencies to promote the integration of individuals in the community.		25	50	25	
Market services and availability of rehabilitation services.			50	50	
Identify computer-related resources.			50	50	

Community Resources	Missing	Little	Moderate	High	Very High
Identify appropriate assistive technology.			50	25	25
Understand consumer vocational goals.			25	50	25
Understand consumer-related resources.			50	25	25
Utilize career and occupational information.				75	25
Obtain and utilize labor market information.			25	50	25
Explore occupational alternatives.				75	25
Develop career plans.			25	75	
Understand career development theories.			25	50	25
Understand the importance of work to individuals.				75	25
Identify prerequisite experience and training for specific career goals.			25	50	25
Identify and resolve work adjustment problems.				100	
Gather information concerning the existence, onset severity, progression, and expected duration of an individual's disability.				75	25
Determine an individual's eligibility for rehabilitation services and/or programs.			50	25	25
Evaluate the feasibility of an individual's rehabilitation or independent living objectives.		25	25	25	25
Identify and contact employers to develop job opportunities.		25	50	25	
Perform job and task analysis.			50	25	25
Modify and restructure jobs.		50		50	
Incorporate assistive devices into job modification when appropriate.		25	25	25	25
Educate prospective employers about hiring persons with disabilities.		25	25	25	25
Assist employers in identifying, modifying, or eliminating architectural, procedural, and attitudinal barriers to employment of persons with disabilities.		25	25	25	25
Determine potential job match (i.e., match of individuals with appropriate jobs).		25	25	25	25
Teach job-seeking and job retention skills.			25	50	25
Provide support services to facilitate job retention.			25	50	25
Assessment					
Review assessment information to determine appropriate services.			50	25	25
Consult with professionals in other disciplines.			25	50	25
Assess the relevant vocational knowledge and experience of the individual.			50	25	25
Interpret assessment/evaluation results to individuals and/or family members.			50	25	25
Assess individual decision-making capabilities.			50	25	25
Determine the individual's vocational skills.			50	25	25
Determine an individual's vocational aptitudes.			50	25	25
Determine an individual's vocational interests.			50	25	25
Determine an individual's independent living skills.			50	25	25
Determine an individual's independent living aptitudes.			50	25	25
Determine an individual's need for independent living preferences.			50	25	25

Assessment	Missing	Little	Moderate	High	Very High
Determine an individual's need for rehabilitation engineering/technology services.			50	25	25
Consult with experts to increase the functioning of individuals.			50	25	25
Establish follow-up and follow-along services as necessary.			50	25	25
Read and understand rehabilitation counseling research.			50	25	25
Obtain and apply information from published rehabilitation counseling research.		25	25	25	25
Determine the applicability of specific research results to my practice.		25	25	25	25

Annual Program Evaluation - Site Supervisor Survey

The program and faculty supervisors administered the Annual Program Evaluation survey to site supervisors once a year. For the academic year 2021-2022, all site supervisors completed the assessment before the reporting period began.