

Department of Criminology, Public Administration and Rehabilitation Counseling

Annual Program Assessment Report

2022-2023

Updated

Introduction

The Master's Program in Social Sciences in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling (MSSCRC) at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico (PCUPR) 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.

The Program in Rehabilitation Counseling returned to face-to-face interactions with students and faculty in March of 2022. The 2022- 2023 academic year was the first time students returned to campus since the pandemic. The program keeps the remote modality option in place in case of emergencies. However, all program courses returned to the face-to-face modality.

This report was completed using digitized available information from the PCUPR's Statistics Office, the department's director report, and the internship and practicum students' files and responses from their supervisors between August 2022 and June 2023. The results below reflect the achievements and challenges the program and its collaborators faced during the academic year.

Faculty Assessment

In December 2022, Professor Tania Morales Cruz left the MSSCRC program to complete her doctorate and pursue other professional opportunities. The current number of full-time faculty members decreased from four to three; however, it did not significantly impact the program's faculty-student ratio. During the 2022-2023 academic year, faculty members were assessed by students, the department's director, and peers. Table 1 describes the overall scores obtained by faculty members.

Table 1

Overall scores of faculty members in the PCUPR's assessment process.

Faculty Member	Students Evaluation	Department Director Evaluation	Faculty Assessment Committee	Peer evaluation
Morales Cruz, Tania	6.9	*	*	*
Oliveras Martínez, Kanyra	6.4	4.9	*	*
Serrano García, Ana Vanessa	**	7	**	**
Torres Rentas, Néstor	*	6.4	*	*

*Maximum score for all categories is 7.00. * Information not available; ** Assing courses were not assessed during the reporting period.*

Adjunct faculty: In June 2022, the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program invited Dr. Jessica Degró, Ph.D., LPC, the director of the Disabilities Services Office (OSPI by its acronym in Spanish), to join the program as an adjunct professor. She teaches two courses: Professional and Ethical Issues in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and the Applied Research Seminar in Rehabilitation. With the addition of Dr. Degró, the program now has four adjunct professors to support the full-time faculty.

Program Performance Data

Enrollment and Sociodemographic Information. For the academic year 2022-2023, the program enrolled nine (9) new students for 28 active students in full-time and part-time modalities. Of those, 20 identified as female and eight (8) as males. The program's retention rate for this academic year was 95.5 percent.

Graduates: This year, six (6) students completed their master's in rehabilitation counseling. In the last five years, the PCUPR has graduated a total of 77 new competent rehabilitation counselors committed to the disabled population of Puerto Rico.

Table 2

Number of students who completed the degree per academic year.

Academic Year	Graduates
2022 – 2023	6
2021 – 2022	7
2020 – 2021	7
2019 – 2020	48
2018 – 2019	9
Total	77

Status Report for the PCUPR

Like many other academic programs, the MSSCRC program faced challenges in recruiting and retaining students. Although the recruitment process is still challenging, the program has successfully retained its students. Several factors have contributed to the increase in the retention rate, the most significant being the return to the campus and face-to-face classes.

Recruitment. To address the recruitment challenges, faculty members have focused on 1- increasing the number of orientation activities within the PCUPR and other universities on the southern coast of the island, 2- setting up one-on-one orientation meetings with potential candidates, and 3- joining other colleagues' activities within the psychology and criminology departments to promote the program.

Also, the faculty recognizes the need to increase the program's visibility among professionals seeking to further their careers in rehabilitation. Thus, the program's faculty identifies areas for nontraditional students and seeks academic offerings during the evening.

State Licensing Exam. The latest report by the Examination Board of Rehabilitation Counselors of PR showed that in April 2023, 33% of the PCUPR graduates passed the exam. This percentage shows an increase from last year's passing rate (18%) but is still lower than previous years. Of the percentage of candidates for licensure that did not pass the exam, 66.7% had taken the exam between two and four times before April 2023. The faculty theorized that graduates who completed their coursework before 2019 experience the most difficulty passing the exam. The Examination Board does not provide a profile of candidates who sit for the exam; thus, any additional information that could shed some light on said performance decrease is limited.

Table 3

Program objectives, outcomes, challenges, and action plans for 2022-2023.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
Prospective Student Applications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The program will receive a minimum of 30 applications per year. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The program received 12 applications for the academic year 2022-2023. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The number of students seeking graduate degrees has decreased in the last few years. The current working conditions of rehabilitation counselors, mainly within the Vocational Rehabilitation administration in Puerto Rico, discourage some potential candidates from applying to the master's. A lack of knowledge of the rehabilitation counseling field continues to be a challenge. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement a consistent recruitment strategy by participating in graduate studies fairs, one-on-one orientation meetings, visiting other campuses, and targeting specific courses within related fields to promote the program. Support ongoing efforts in the professional field to promote better working conditions for rehabilitation counselors on the island. Promote the professional field among students from related fields and nontraditional students, increasing awareness of the scope of practice of rehabilitation counselors. Promote the new curriculum, which added the clinical component to the rehabilitation counseling competencies.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
New students' Admissions	1. To recruit a minimum of 14 students per year in 5 years.	1. Nine students were admitted to the Program, of those eight students enrolled during the academic year 2022-2023.	1. Economic restrictions and other social factors (such as family issues, lack of support, and housing concerns) may discourage students from seeking graduate degrees that take longer to complete.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide individual orientations (in-person and remotely) to prospective students and follow up on said prospects. 2. Emphasize the advantages of studying (at night) in a program within the geographical area of prospective students. 3. Advertise the availability of financial aid through the RSA scholarship for eligible students. 4. Provide information about the support (financial, counseling, and housing services) available at the PCUPR campus.
Student-to-Faculty Ratio	1. Maintain a faculty-student ratio 1:23 in regular specialty courses and 1:5 in practicum or internship seminars.	1. The student ratio during the academic year 2022-2023 was 1:7.	2. Maintain faculty-student ratio.	1. 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.	The program retained 95.5% of enrolled students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students face personal, economic, and family issues that impact their performance and ability to stay enrolled. 2. Lack of student self-knowledge about their skills and interest in rehabilitation counseling. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to provide support, technical assistance, and resources to help students cope with the challenges of graduate school. 2. Promote self-knowledge among active students through the Professional and Personal Disposition form.
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 2023, 33.3% completed the degree within the 3-year timeframe.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students continue to struggle to achieve a balance between being a full-time student and working full-time. 2. Some students have moved to the US and have difficulties identifying internship sites that can establish collaborative agreements with the university. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faculty used opportunities such as academic advisement to provide information and support to help students achieve a balance between their studies and workload. 2. Assess the current curriculum and identify areas of improvement within the 60-credit hour degree plan.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
Graduation Rate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sixty to 70% of enrolled students will graduate within the established timeframe of 3 to 3.5 years. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Six students graduated during the 2022-2023 academic year. Of those, 33.3% completed the degree within 3 to 3.5 years. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Some students had to enroll in fewer courses, which resulted in delays in completing the degree on time. Some students do not have the opportunity to take time off from their work to complete practicum or internship experiences, delaying the graduation date. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional support and information through advisement to help students balance their studies and workload. Identify practicum and internship sites with extended hours to help students complete their degrees within an established timeframe.
PR License Passing Rate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sixty to 70% of graduates will obtain a passing grade in the state license exam. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The passing rate for the PR Licensing Exam for April 2023 was 33%. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sixty-six percent of the graduates had taken the exam at least twice before. Results suggest they may have completed the coursework prior to 2019. Graduates may have used outdated materials to prepare for the licensing exam. Some graduates may be experiencing anxiety issues related to the test. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Motivate graduates to take a review course for the exam. Update the reference list of updated physical and online resources to prepare for the exam. Explore graduates' difficulties when taking the licensure exam.

Variable	Program Objectives	Outcome	Challenges	Action Plan
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 have taken the CRC exam.	1. In Puerto Rico, most employers do not require the CRC to practice in the field, only the local licenses. Thus, for many, there is little to no interest to invest in a certification they do not need.	1. Increase awareness of the advantages of having a CRC certification for rehabilitation counseling practitioners.
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. Salaries and working conditions within the field may deter graduates from seeking counseling jobs within traditional agencies for rehabilitation counselors.	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 is part of a multi-sector committee advocating for a new reclassification scale that reflects the level of education, scope of practice, and expertise of rehabilitation counselors in the public sector. Said scale impacts salaries in public and private sectors where rehabilitation counselors work.

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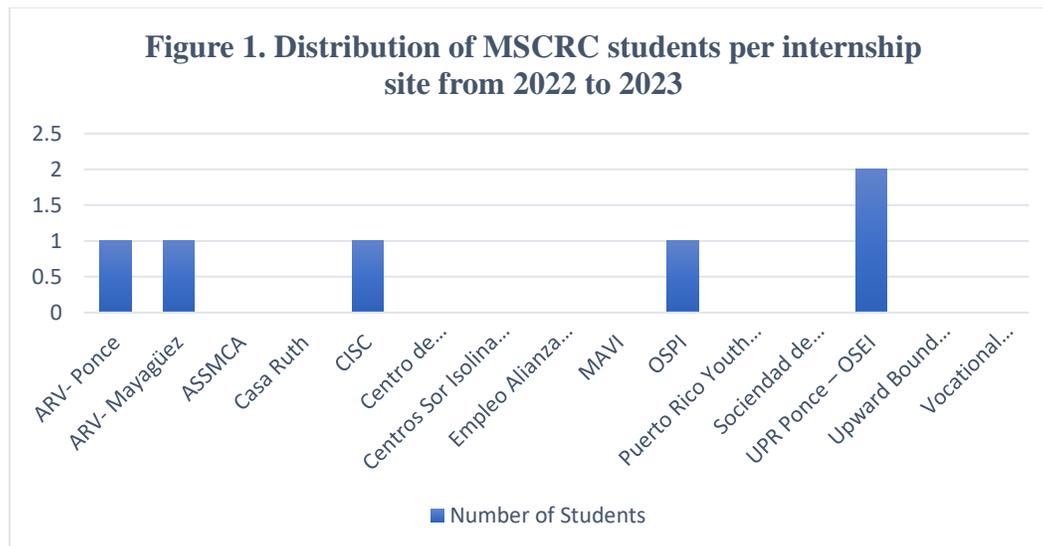
Advisory Board Input

The MSSCRC program reviewed the list of collaborators who agreed to be part of the Advisory board, identified the members whose terms had expired, and invited new members to join the board. The list of candidates included representatives of the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, community-based rehabilitation organizations, private practitioners, educators from public universities in the area, supervisors, and members of the community on the island's southern coast. The program could not coordinate a meeting with all the members of the Advisory Board during the academic year 2022-2023. However, faculty members did meet with members of the board individually and received support in areas such as:

1. Identifying new practicum and internship sites.
2. Provided input on student's performance.
3. Referred potential candidate for the graduate program.

Annual Program Evaluation - Student's Survey

All students enrolled in professional experiences must complete an Annual Program Evaluation Form, especially during their internship. Students enrolled in professional experiences during the 2022-2023 academic year completed digital forms developed to reflect the changes adopted in the new curriculum with the CACREP standards. Still, the survey's primary purpose is to assess students' perception of the acquired knowledge and experiences during their studies in the MSSCRC Program. The following results reflect the opinions and experiences of the students in surveys completed during said period. Figure 1 presents a distribution of students per internship site.



All surveyed students agreed 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 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 and program. To do so, we ask dichotomous questions, based on yes or no answers, on topics such as elective courses focused on rehabilitation counseling, number of credit hours within the curriculum, expectations of professional practices, and the supervision process. All the students reported knowing about the 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	100			
A graduate curriculum consisting of at least 48 semester or 72 quarter hours	100			
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 preparedness for the rehabilitation counseling practice. Results showed that most students perceived that they were highly or very highly prepared in the principles and practice of rehabilitation counseling, job development, job placement, and assessment. The areas of community resources and assessment showed a slight decrease in said perception, with students describing the level of readiness as "moderate" (see Table 6).

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				20	80
Apply appropriate legal principles				40	60
Utilize ethical decision-making skills in resolving ethical dilemmas.				20	80
Understand the impact of history, philosophy, and legislation on rehabilitation.				20	80
Understand the scope of services of various service delivery systems.				20	80
Conduct individual counseling.				40	60
Develop and maintain a counseling relationship.				20	80
Establish individual goals and objectives in counseling.				20	80
Assist individuals with crisis resolution.				40	60
Facilitate an individual's independent decision making.				20	80
Conduct group counseling sessions on adjustment and/or other vocational problems, when appropriate.		20		40	40
Involve the individual's family or significant others in the counseling sessions, when appropriate.		20		40	40
Recommend strategies to individuals to resolve identified problems that impede the rehabilitation process.				40	60
Determine adequacy of information and planning.				20	80
Integrate cultural and social factors in rehabilitation planning.			20	60	20
Integrate economic factors in rehabilitation planning.				60	40
Integrate disability-related factors in rehabilitation planning.				40	60
Integrate environmental concerns in rehabilitation planning.				60	40
Identify available resources.				20	80
Facilitate with the individual the development of a rehabilitation plan.			20	20	60
Facilitate with the individual the development of an independent living plan.			40	20	40

Community Resources	Missing	Little	Moderate	High	Very High
Communicate with other service providers involved with the individual and/or family.			20	20	60
Determine mutual responsibilities with other service providers involved with the individual and/or the family.			20	20	60
Refer individuals to community resources when appropriate.			20	20	60
Assist individuals in identifying potential fiscal resources.		20	20	20	40
Consult with agencies to promote the integration of individuals in the community.			20	40	40
Market services and availability of rehabilitation services.			40		60
Identify computer-related resources.				20	80
Job Development and Placement	Missing	Little	Moderate	High	Very High
Identify appropriate assistive technology.				20	80
Understand consumer vocational goals.				20	80
Understand consumer-related resources.				40	60
Utilize career and occupational information.			20	20	60
Obtain and utilize labor market information.			20	20	60
Explore occupational alternatives.			20	20	60
Develop career plans.		20	20		60
Understand career development theories.				40	60
Understand the importance of work to individuals.				40	60
Identify prerequisite experience and training for specific career goals.			20		80
Identify and resolve work adjustment problems.				40	60
Gather information concerning the existence, onset severity, progression, and expected duration of an individual's disability.				40	60
Determine an individual's eligibility for rehabilitation services and/or programs.				60	40
Evaluate the feasibility of an individual's rehabilitation or independent living objectives.				40	60
Identify and contact employers to develop job opportunities.		20		20	60
Perform job and task analysis.				40	60
Modify and restructure jobs.			20	20	60
Incorporate assistive devices into job modification when appropriate.				20	80
Educate prospective employers about hiring persons with disabilities.				40	60
Assist employers in identifying, modifying, or eliminating architectural, procedural, and attitudinal barriers to employment of persons with disabilities.				40	60
Determine potential job match (i.e., match of individuals with appropriate jobs).				40	60
Teach job-seeking and job retention skills.				60	40
Provide support services to facilitate job retention.			20	40	40

Assessment	Missing	Little	Moderate	High	Very High
Review assessment information to determine appropriate services.			20	20	60
Consult with professionals in other disciplines.				20	80
Assess the relevant vocational knowledge and experience of the individual.				20	80
Interpret assessment/evaluation results to individuals and/or family members.				60	40
Assess individual decision-making capabilities.				20	80
Determine the individual's vocational skills.				20	80
Determine an individual's vocational aptitudes.				20	80
Determine an individual's vocational interests.				20	80
Determine an individual's independent living skills.				20	80
Determine an individual's independent living aptitudes.				40	60
Determine an individual's need for independent living preferences.				60	40
Determine an individual's need for rehabilitation engineering/technology services.			20	20	60
Consult with experts to increase the functioning of individuals.			20	40	40
Establish follow-up and follow-along services as necessary.				60	40
Read and understand rehabilitation counseling research.				40	60
Obtain and apply information from published rehabilitation counseling research.			20	40	40
Determine the applicability of specific research results to my practice.			20	60	20
Understand the importance of participating in research that will benefit the profession.				40	60

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 2022-2023, the faculty updated the survey form in an electronic format and made it available to all (new and returning) site supervisors. However, technical issues prevented the data collection process. The faculty corrected the error, and the information will be gathered for the next academic year. The new evaluation form will deliver the data directly to faculty supervisors and the program coordinator/ CACREP liaison to facilitate the assessment process.