

Arcadia University's Graduate Program in Counseling Annual Alum Survey for the 2024-25 Academic Year

Description of Assessment

Each year, the Graduate Program in Counseling (GPC) surveys “recent” alums to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting its programmatic mission and objectives and in preparing graduates for the counseling field. This survey also collects information regarding alums’ progress obtaining licensure and other relevant credentials, as well as their employment experiences. Notably, the GPC does not survey all program alums every year. Rather, to minimize burden on alums, they are surveyed until they report earning their license or other relevant credentials. Alums are also provided the option to opt out of future surveys. This survey was developed by the GPC’s core faculty and reviewed by the Master of Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) during the program’s most recent reaccreditation cycle.

Summary of Findings

In total, 24 alums completed this 2025 survey and reported graduation dates ranging from 2010 to 2024. Results reflect the inclusion of these 24 alums for a total of 139 alums having completed the survey as of January 2025. Results indicate that a reasonable portion of our recent graduates (78%) have obtained licensure, primarily in Pennsylvania, and a majority of recent unlicensed graduates are preparing to attain licensure within the next three years. Additionally, our graduates continue to find employment across a wide range of counseling settings and specialty areas. Overall, alums reported receiving strong training in four general areas: evidence-based practice, multicultural practice, self-care and social justice and advocacy. However, 8% of the alums reported room for improvement in the area of career development. Most alums also agreed that our program’s mission and objectives are well suited to meet the needs of the counseling field. Alums also provided valuable open-ended feedback. For instance, they reported strengths in our instructors, multicultural training, role-play opportunities, and the program’s culture of feedback. Alums also reported some room for growth in terms of career guidance, shifts in course content and assignments. Specifically, a few alums suggested more conversations about the pre-license years, NCE preparation, and improving the trauma courses.

Planning & Modifications

Based on the results of this evaluation:

1. When the core faculty reconvene for the Fall 2025 semester, they will discuss ways to strengthen our career development curriculum. Modifications could be made to courses, orientation for new students, and internship seminar presentations.
2. A Licensure workshop was added in Fall 2023, but will continue to be enhanced as well as more discussion in the PY570 Professional Issues course.
3. The director and associate direct will update the orientation to include mention of possibly being triggered by professors.
4. Individual course feedback will be provided to course instructors regarding trauma courses and limiting course cancellations.
5. Feedback is collected on the NCE workshop and provided to the instructor.

Detailed Results for all 139 alumni who completed the survey

Degree/Certification Completed

- 95% of alums reported completing an MA in Counseling. Six alums (4%) reported graduating with a MA in School Counseling. Of note, the GPC's School Counseling program was discontinued, and the GPC is not planning to reinstate it. One survey (1%) respondent indicated that they completed additional credits for licensure through the GPC.

Licensure Rates

- 63% of alums currently hold a position that requires a professional license or certification.
- 65% of alums (graduated 1999-2021) reported being licensed to practice professional counseling.
- 90% of licensed alums are licensed in the state of Pennsylvania.
- Two alums reported being licensed solely in New Jersey. Other states where alums are licensed include: Delaware, New York, Michigan, and Colorado.
- 78% of unlicensed respondents plan to seek licensure within the next 3 years.

Certification Rates

- Eleven alums reported receiving certification as a School Counselor and 9 of them are certified in Pennsylvania and 3 plan to become certified School Counselors in the next 3 years.
- Two alums reported having certification as a BCBA in Pennsylvania, and 5 alums reported planning to obtain a BCBA in the next 3 years.

Places of Employment

- Alums reported working in a variety of settings, including residential treatment centers, substance use disorder facility, community behavioral health clinics, private practice, and interdisciplinary practice, and education settings.

Training in Integrated Curricula

- 92% of alums rated their training in *evidence-based practice* as excellent or good.
- 95% of alums rated their training in *multicultural practice* as excellent or good.
- 82% of alums rated their training in *self-care* as excellent or good.
- 66% of alums rated their training in *career development* as excellent or good.
- 87% of alums rated their training in *social justice & advocacy* as excellent or good.

Program Mission & Objectives

- 92% of alums reported that the program's mission statement and objectives fit with the needs of the counseling field very much or extremely well.

Most Positive Aspects of the GPC (From 2025 respondents)

- Internship connections
- The most valuable aspect of my education in Arcadia's Counseling Program was the emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism in every class as well as the various opportunities and assignments related to self-reflection and development as a therapist and overall human being.
- The most valuable aspect of the program was when practicing skills in classes IE, group therapy course, or practicing therapy behind the two-way mirror. Practicing rather than studying prepared me for the reality of working in the field.

- The multicultural training and introspection was next-level. I feel so incredibly grounded in building and organizing as a community thanks to the training Arcadia provided.
- The space to think critically about oneself and their place in systems
- Learning case conceptualization skills and how to apply evidence-based practices through a lens of cultural humility.
- The multicultural integration in each course as well as the labs
- The community, everyone was so helpful and Arcadia fostered a great environment to learn in
- I think the most valuable aspect was how the feedback process was taught. I feel very comfortable and confident in both giving and receiving feedback.
- The most valuable aspect of the program was how thorough and intense role-plays were. There are very few ways to truly understand what it is like to administer therapy in real time, but the work done within the role-play was essential.
- The multicultural labs! So many in the field are just not aware!
- The emphasis placed on respecting the diversity of experience. I now work with college students exploring their career paths, and while not traditional counseling, I use my counseling skills constantly in my work - actively listening to the experience of the student, their concerns, their goals, sitting with them through stress and anxiety, and providing resources and strategies for success moving forward.
- My core counseling courses, particularly Advanced Techniques, provided me with a deep understanding of the diverse theoretical orientations and perspectives on mental health.
- Many of the modalities and interventions taught in those courses continue to inform my practice. Additionally, the intensive self-reflection integrated into each class was crucial for both my personal growth and professional development. I also enjoyed the professor's feedback from each class that you get to review with your advisor at the end of the year.
- Support from my professors! Being placed on a support plan pushed me outside of my comfort zone and forced me to be more engaged with my peers and professors. This allowed for a much more meaningful experience in graduate school.
- Professors who cared and went the extra mile for students.
- Population-focused courses (child/family, trauma)

Suggestions for Modifying Program Mission and Objectives (From 2025 respondents)

- The first objective has a typo or is worded poorly
- I absolutely loved the Arcadia program. I am now applying for my doctorate internship for the 2025-2026 year and I am constantly referring back to the skills I learned at Arcadia. I think my Arcadia training was better than my current doctorate program in the areas of self-reflection, multiculturalism and professionalism. I would love to come back in some way in the future.
- More information about the pre-licensure process that occurs for most students after graduation. The rules around it are constantly evolving. Maybe a workshop would be helpful.
- Graduates will display skills needed to pursue their specific careers in counseling --> I feel that this could include something with the goal of understanding the realities of the field in terms of both opportunities and challenges/barriers like insurance boards and credentialing. It might sound something more like: "Graduates will demonstrate the skills necessary to pursue and excel in their specific careers in counseling, with a strong understanding of the opportunities and challenges within the field."

Least Valuable Aspects of the GPC (From 2025 respondents)

- I graduated in May 2020 so I feel as though my program was never fully "wrapped up". I also had a slightly atypical schedule where I was between cohorts and did not graduate with the same people I started with
- Research/stats (still valuable but probably the aspect I use the least)
- I do not believe anything was "least valuable" of my education in Arcadia's Counseling Program. I believe I noted in the past that I did wish there was a longer psychotropic medication course offered, but I would not say that not having one negatively influenced my experiences and knowledge for the field that I am in though.
- The one weak spot in the Arcadia curriculum was the training around trauma. At no point was I taught the triphasic model for treating trauma, which is incredibly foundational. Thankfully, I started working at a place that offered top-notch supervision, so I learned it there. But I really think the trauma class should be built around this triphasic model, helping us understand why it exists and the types of interventions involved in each phase.
- The lack of breadth and depth of counseling skills/approaches outside of CBT
- There was a class or two that I can remember that were very focused on academic writing skills and to me it felt that I wasn't able to meet the standards laid out. It set me back in my self-confidence. I found it difficult to find my written voice and wasn't able to receive constructive feedback that helped me grow.
- None. However, I wish I had learned more about the entire chronological process of working with a new client, i.e. first meeting/intake, treatment and intervention planning, through to discharge. I also think it would have been helpful to talk about responding to clients with poor boundaries. Although classmate role plays are helpful, they often don't include exposure to some of the more challenging client behaviors.
- Limited information on licensing and life after graduate school. Would have benefited from a free course for NCE prep and having the exam paid for.
- Unfortunately, my group counseling course was pretty disorganized and unhelpful (professors). When I entered the field and started facilitating D&A groups I really had to model what I remembered from our multicultural labs to start and take trainings and additional readings to really feel like I had basics.
- Learning about EBP felt very CBT and manualized treatment heavy, I wish more philosophical components of psychology and therapy were discussed to help students align more with whatever theoretical orientation makes the most sense for them
- I can't really think of anything in particular but I would say I think it would be beneficial to have more classes on substance use treatment.
- There was a workshop I attended to prepare for the NCE that I didn't find very helpful
- I wish we had more preparation for the realities of working in the field, such as working with insurance, extortion in private group practices, and the 302 processes for suicidality and homocidality.
- Classes where professors canceled multiple classes, especially in the summer semester when there were fewer weeks to fit everything in.
- Family counseling class due to the instructor's absences and lack of teaching which hindered my learning and knowledge in this area. Subsequently, I don't feel comfortable or competent in family counseling/therapy in my current work.

Please share any additional comments that you would like to offer Arcadia's Counseling Program.
(From 2025 respondents)

- I'd love to come back to share experiences regarding getting licensed, telehealth, EMDR, etc
- Keep being great! :) I am always proud to share what I have learned at Arcadia with my peers and faculty now in my doctoral program at Chestnut Hill as Arcadia's program and faculty really shaped me into who I am today as a therapist and overall person.
- I also think it would help if during orientation or an early class, expectations were set that people WILL be triggered by the professors...and that doesn't mean anyone is bad, it's just part of the learning process. That way, when people get worked up and go to administration, they can reference back to that and help people reach acceptance more quickly.
- It's in good hands.
- I loved the program. I have two masters' from Arcadia's counseling program, school counseling and mental health counseling. I felt that the program was very warm and safe to explore and learn.
- Amazing program!
- Maybe looking to offer more courses in substance use treatment
- Stay close with peers and folks within your cohort. I'm very thankful for the connections I made at Arcadia and they have been essential within my professional career.
- I continue to appreciate the training I received, despite not entering a traditional mental health counseling field. I feel that I excel in my current role due to the training I received through this program and am grateful for it!
- I always encourage people who are thinking about entering the counseling field to apply to Arcadia. I loved my time here and found the money worth it not only for my career trajectory but my development as a human being.