

Counseling Competencies Scale (CCS)©

Contributing Authors (2008)

The *Counseling Competencies Scale* (CCS) assesses counseling students' skills development and professional competencies. Additionally, the CCS provides counseling students with direct feedback regarding their counseling skills and professional dispositions (dominant qualities), offering the students practical areas for improvement to support their development as effective and ethical professional counselors.

Scales Evaluation Guidelines

- **Exceeds Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (8)** = the counseling student demonstrates **strong** (i.e., *exceeding* the expectations of a beginning professional counselor) knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s) and professional disposition(s).
- **Meets Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (6)** = the counseling student demonstrates **consistent** and **proficient** knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s) and professional disposition(s). A beginning professional counselor should be at this level at the conclusion of his or her practicum and/or internship.

Counseling students NOT scoring at level Six (6) or Above will NOT be eligible to progress to their next stage of clinical experience.

- **Near Expectations / Developing towards Competencies (4)** = the counseling student demonstrates **inconsistent** and **limited** knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s) and professional disposition(s). Students scoring at this level during their final practicum evaluation (be it practicum or internship) **have not demonstrated** the professional competencies needed to progress to the next level of clinical experience. Remediation may be necessary in these areas.
- **Below Expectations / Insufficient / Unacceptable (2)** = the counseling student demonstrates **limited** or **no evidence** of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s) and professional disposition(s). Students scoring at this level during their final evaluation (practicum or internship) **have not demonstrated** the professional competencies needed to progress to the next level of clinical experience. Remediation may be necessary in the areas identified as deficient by the clinical supervisor.

CACREP (2009) Standards – Section III: Professional Practice:

Professional practice, which includes practicum and internship, provides for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills under supervision. These experiences will provide opportunities for students to counsel clients who represent the ethnic and demographic diversity of their community.

CACREP (2009) Standards – Section III: Professional Practice: Standard F. Students must complete **supervised practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours** over a minimum 10-week academic term. Each student's practicum includes all of the following:

1. At least **40 clock hours of direct service with actual clients** that contributes to the development of counseling skills. ,
2. Weekly interaction that averages of **one (1) hour per week of individual** and/or triadic supervision throughout the practicum by a program faculty member, a student supervisor, or a site supervisor who is working in biweekly consultation with a program faculty member in accordance with the supervision contract.
3. An average of **1 ½ hours per week of group supervision** that is provided on a regular schedule throughout the practicum by a program faculty member or a student supervisor.
4. The development of program-appropriate audio/video recordings for use in supervision or live supervision of the student's interactions with clients.
5. Evaluation of the student's counseling performance throughout the practicum, including documentation of a formal evaluation after the student completes the practicum.

Part I (Primary Counseling Skills – CACREP Standards [2009] #2 [Social & Cultural Diversity], #5 [Helping Relationships] & #7 [Assessment])

#	Score	Primary Counseling Skill(s)	Specific Counseling Descriptors	Exceeds Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (8)	Meets Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (6)	Near Expectations / Developing towards Competencies (4)	Below Expectations / Insufficient / Unacceptable (2)
1.A		Nonverbal Skills	Includes Body Position, Eye Contact, Posture, Distance from Client, Voice Tone, Rate of Speech, etc.	Student demonstrates effective nonverbal communication skills, conveying connectiveness & empathy (85%).	Student demonstrates effective nonverbal communication skills for the majority of counseling sessions (70%)	Student demonstrates inconsistency in his/her nonverbal communication skills.	Student demonstrates limited nonverbal communication skills.
1.B		Encouragers	Includes Minimal Encouragers & Door Openers such as “Tell me more about...”	Student demonstrates appropriate use of encouragers, which supports the development of a therapeutic relationship (85%).	Student demonstrates appropriate use of encouragers for the majority of counseling sessions (70%)	Student demonstrates inconsistency in his/her use of appropriate encouragers.	Student demonstrates limited ability to use appropriate encouragers.
1.C		Questions	Use of Appropriate Open & Closed Questioning (e.g., avoidance of double questions)	Student demonstrates appropriate use of open & close-ended questions, with an emphasis on open-ended question (85%).	Student demonstrates appropriate use of open & close-ended questions for the majority of counseling sessions (70%).	Student demonstrates inconsistency in his/her use of open-ended questions & may use closed-ended questions for prolonged periods.	Student uses open-ended questions sparingly & with limited effectiveness.
1.D		Reflecting _a	Basic Reflection of Content – Paraphrasing, Summarizing, etc.	Student demonstrates appropriate use of paraphrasing & summarizing as the primary therapeutic approach (85%).	Student demonstrates appropriate use of paraphrasing & summarizing, appropriately & consistently (70%).	Student demonstrates paraphrasing, & summarizing inconsistently & inaccurately.	Student demonstrated limited proficiency in paraphrasing & summarizing
1.E		Reflecting _b	Reflection of Feelings	Student demonstrates appropriate use of reflection of feelings as the primary therapeutic approach (85%).	Student demonstrates appropriate use of reflection of feelings appropriately & consistently (70%).	Student demonstrates reflection of feelings inconsistently & inaccurately.	Student demonstrated limited proficiency in reflecting feelings
1.F		Advanced Reflection (“Depth”)	Advanced Reflection of Feelings, Reflection of Values, Meanings, Core Beliefs (takes counseling to a deeper level)	Student demonstrates consistent used advanced therapeutic skills & promotes discussions of greater depth in counseling sessions (85%).	Student demonstrates ability to appropriately use advanced counseling skills, supporting increased exploration in counseling session (70%).	Student demonstrates inconsistent & inaccurate ability to use advanced counseling skills: sessions appear sluggish.	Student demonstrates limited ability to use advanced counseling skills: sessions appear primarily superficial.
1.G		Confrontation	Counselor challenges client to recognize & evaluate inconsistencies.	Student demonstrates the ability to challenge clients through verbalizing inconsistencies & discrepancies in the client’s words or actions in a supportive & caring fashion. Good balance of challenge & support (85%).	Student demonstrates the ability to challenge clients through verbalizing inconsistencies & discrepancies in the client’s words or actions in a supportive & caring fashion (can confront, but appears hesitant) (70%).	Student demonstrates inconsistent ability to challenge clients through verbalizing inconsistencies & discrepancies in the client’s words or actions in a supportive & caring fashion. Confrontation is minimal.	Student demonstrates limited ability to challenge clients through verbalizing inconsistencies & discrepancies in the client’s words or actions in a supportive & caring fashion. Confrontation is lacking.
1.H		Goal Setting	Counselor collaborates with client to establish realistic, appropriate, & attainable therapeutic goals	Student demonstrates consistent ability to establish collaborative & appropriate therapeutic goals with client (85%).	Student demonstrates ability to establish collaborative & appropriate therapeutic goals with client (70%).	Student demonstrates inconsistent ability to establish collaborative & appropriate therapeutic goals with client.	Student demonstrates limited ability to establish collaborative & appropriate therapeutic goals with client.
1.I		Focus of Counseling	Counselor focuses (or refocuses) client on his/her therapeutic goals – i.e., purposeful counseling	Student demonstrates consistent ability to primarily focus (or refocus) counseling on client’s appropriate therapeutic goal attainment (85%).	Student demonstrates ability to primarily focus (or refocus) counseling on client’s appropriate therapeutic goal attainment (70%).	Student demonstrates inconsistent ability to primarily focus (or refocus) counseling on client’s appropriate therapeutic goal attainment.	Student demonstrates limited ability to primarily focus (or refocus) counseling on client’s appropriate therapeutic goal attainment.
1.J		Facilitate Therapeutic Environment _a	Counselor expresses appropriate empathy & care. Counselor is “present” and open to client.	Student demonstrates consistent ability to be empathic & uses appropriate responses (85%).	Student demonstrates ability to be empathic & uses appropriate responses (70%).	Student demonstrates inconsistent ability to be empathic & use appropriate responses.	Student demonstrates limited ability to be empathic & uses appropriate responses.
1.K		Facilitate Therapeutic Environment _b	Counselor expresses appropriate respect & unconditional positive regard	Student demonstrates consistent ability to be respectful, accepting, & caring with clients (85%).	Student demonstrates ability to be respectful, accepting, & caring with clients (70%).	Student demonstrates inconsistent ability to be respectful, accepting, & caring.	Student demonstrates limited ability to be respectful, accepting, & caring.

_____ : Total Score (out of a possible 88 points)

Part 2 (Professional Dispositions – CACREP Standards [2009] #1 [Professional Orientation & Ethical Practice] #2 [Social & Cultural Diversity], #3 [Human Growth & Development], & #5 [Helping Relationships])

#	Score	Primary Professional Dispositions	Specific Professional Disposition Descriptors	Exceeds Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (8)	Meets Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (6)	Near Expectations / Developing towards Competencies (4)	Below Expectations / Insufficient / Unacceptable (2)
2.A		Professional Ethics	The student adheres to the ethical guidelines of the ACA, ASCA, & IAMFC.	Student demonstrates consistent & advanced (i.e., exploration & deliberation) ethical behavior & judgments.	Student demonstrates consistent ethical behavior & judgments.	Student demonstrates ethical behavior & judgments, but on a concrete level with a basic decision-making process.	Student demonstrates limited ethical behavior & judgment, and a limited decision-making process.
2.B		Professionalism	Student behaves in a professional manner towards supervisors, peers, & clients (includes appropriates of dress & attitudes)	Student is consistently respectful, thoughtful, & appropriate within all professional interactions.	Student is respectful, thoughtful, & appropriate within all professional interactions.	Student is inconsistently respectful, thoughtful, & appropriate within professional interactions.	Student is limitedly respectful, thoughtful, & appropriate within professional interactions.
2.C		Self-awareness & Self-understanding	Student demonstrates an awareness of his/her own belief systems, values, needs & limitations (herein called “beliefs”) and the effect of “self” on his/her work with clients.	Student demonstrates significant & consistent awareness & appreciation of his/her belief system & the influence of his/her beliefs on the counseling process.	Student demonstrates awareness & appreciation of his/her belief system and the influence of his/her beliefs on the counseling process	Student demonstrates inconsistent awareness & appreciation of his/her belief system and the influence of his/her beliefs on the counseling process.	Student demonstrates limited awareness of his/her belief system and appears closed to increasing his/her insight.
2.D		Emotional stability & Self-control	Student demonstrates emotional stability (i.e., congruence between mood & affect) & self-control (i.e., impulse control) in relationships with supervisor, peers, & clients.	Student demonstrates consistent emotional resiliency & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.	Student demonstrates emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.	Student demonstrates inconsistent emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.	Student demonstrates limited emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions.
2.E		Motivated to Learn & Grow / Initiative	Student is engaged in the learning & development of his/her counseling competencies.	Student demonstrates consistent enthusiasm for his/her professional and personal growth & development.	Student demonstrates enthusiasm for his/her professional and personal growth & development.	Student demonstrates inconsistent enthusiasm for his/her professional and personal growth & development.	Student demonstrates limited enthusiasm for his/her professional and personal growth & development.
2.F		Multicultural Competencies	Student demonstrated awareness, appreciation, & respect of cultural difference (e.g., races, spirituality, sexual orientation, SES, etc.)	Student demonstrates consistent & advanced multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills).	Student demonstrates multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills).	Student demonstrates inconsistent multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills).	Student demonstrates limited multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills).
2.G		Openness to Feedback	Student responds non-defensively & alters behavior in accordance with supervisory feedback	Student demonstrates consistent openness to supervisory feedback & implements suggested changes.	Student demonstrates openness to supervisory feedback & implements suggested changes.	Student demonstrates openness to supervisory feedback, but does <u>not</u> implement suggested changes.	Student is not open to supervisory feedback & does not implement suggested changes.
2.H		Professional & Personal Boundaries	Student recognizes the boundaries of her/his competencies & maintains appropriate boundaries with supervisors, peers, & clients	Student demonstrates consistently strong & appropriate boundaries & appreciates his/her limitations.	Student demonstrates appropriate boundaries & appreciates his/her limitations.	Student demonstrates appropriate boundaries, but has limited appreciation of his/her limitations.	Student demonstrates inappropriate boundaries & has limited appreciation of his/her limitations.
2.I		Flexibility & Adaptability	Student demonstrates ability to flex to changing circumstance, unexpected events, & new situations	Student demonstrates consistently strong ability to adapt & “reads-&-flexes” appropriately.	Student demonstrates ability to adapt & “reads-&-flexes” appropriately.	Student demonstrated an inconsistent ability to adapt & flex to his/her clients.	Student demonstrates a limited ability to adapt & flex to his/her clients.
2.J		Congruence & Genuineness	Student demonstrates self-acceptance (“comfortable in one’s own skin”) & appropriate self-confidence.	Student demonstrates consistent ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others	Student demonstrates ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others	Student demonstrates inconsistent ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others.	Student demonstrates a limited ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others (incongruent).

_____ : Total Score (out of a possible 80 points)

Part 3 (Professional Behaviors – CACREP Standards [2009] #1 [Professional Orientation & Ethical Practice], #3 [Human Growth & Development], & #5 [Helping Relationships], #7 [Assessment], & #8 [Research & Program Evaluation])

#	Score	Primary Professional Behavior(s)	Specific Professional Behavior Descriptors	Exceeds Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (8)	Meets Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (6)	Near Expectations / Developing towards Competencies (4)	Below Expectations / Insufficient / Unacceptable (2)
3A		Attendance	Student attends all course meetings & clinical practice activities in their entirety (engaged & prompt).	Student attends all class meetings & supervision sessions in their entirety & is engaged in the learning process.	Student misses one class meeting &/or supervision session & is engaged in the learning process.	Student misses two class meetings &/or supervision sessions & is engaged in the learning process.	Student misses more than two class meetings &/or supervisions sessions & is not engaged in the learning process.
3.B		Knowledge & Adherence to Site Policies	Student demonstrates an understanding & appreciation for all counseling site policies & procedures	Student demonstrates consistent adherence to all counseling site policies & procedures.	Student demonstrates adherence to all counseling site policies & procedures.	Student demonstrates inconsistent adherence to all counseling site policies & procedures.	Student demonstrates limited adherence to all counseling site policies & procedures.
3.C		Record Keeping	Student completes all weekly record keeping activities correctly & promptly (e.g., case notes, psychological reports, TX plan).	Student completes all required record keeping & documentation in a thorough & comprehensive fashion.	Student completes all required record keeping & documentation in a competent fashion.	Student completes all required record keeping & documentation in an inconsistent & in a questionable fashion.	Student completes required record keeping & documentation inconsistently & in a poor fashion.
3.D		Knowledge of professional literature	Student researches therapeutic intervention strategies that have been supported in the literature & research.	Student demonstrates strong knowledge of supported therapeutic approaches grounded in the counseling literature & research.	Student demonstrates knowledge of supported therapeutic approaches grounded in the counseling literature & research.	Student demonstrates inconsistent knowledge of supported therapeutic approaches grounded in the counseling literature/research.	Student demonstrates limited knowledge of supported therapeutic approaches grounded in the counseling literature & research.
3.E		Application of Theory to Practice	Student demonstrates knowledge of counseling theory & its application in his/her practice.	Student demonstrates a strong understanding of the counseling theory(ies) that guides his/her therapeutic work with clients.	Student demonstrates an understanding of the counseling theory(ies) that guides his/her therapeutic work with clients.	Student demonstrates inconsistent understanding of the role of counseling theory in his/her therapeutic work.	Student demonstrates limited understanding of counseling theory & its role in his/her therapeutic work with clients.
3.F		Case Conceptualization	Student is able to effectively present & summarize client history & demonstrates an appreciation of the multiple influences on a client's level of functioning	Student demonstrates a strong & comprehensive case conceptualization; appreciating the multiple influences on a client's level of functioning.	Student demonstrates an comprehensive case conceptualization; appreciating the multiple influences on a client's level of functioning.	Student demonstrates basic case conceptualization; appreciating only the influences a client presents in session on his/her level of functioning.	Student demonstrates a limited case conceptualization & does not appreciate the influence of systemic factors on the client's level of functioning.
3.G		Seeks Consultation	Student seeks consultation & supervision in appropriate service delivery	Student consistently seeks appropriate consultation & supervision to support the delivery of counseling services.	Student seeks appropriate consultation & supervision to support the delivery of counseling services.	Student inconsistently seeks consultation & supervision to support the delivery of counseling services.	Student seeks limited consultation & supervision to support the delivery of counseling services.
3.H		Psychosocial & Treatment Planning	Student demonstrates ability to construct a comprehensive & appropriate psychosocial report & treatment plan.	Student demonstrates the ability to construct a comprehensive & appropriate psychosocial report & treatment plan (e.g., goals are relevant, attainable, & measureable)	Student demonstrates the ability to construct a comprehensive & appropriate psychosocial report & treatment plan.	Student demonstrates an inconsistent ability to construct a comprehensive & appropriate psychosocial report & treatment plan.	Student demonstrates a limited ability to construct a comprehensive & appropriate psychosocial report & treatment plan.
3.I		Appraisal	Student demonstrates ability to appropriately administer, score, & interpret clinical assessments	Student demonstrates a strong ability to appropriately administer, score, & interpret assessment instruments.	Student demonstrates the ability to appropriately administer, score, & interpret assessment instruments.	Student demonstrates an inconsistent ability to appropriate administer, score, & interpret assessment instruments.	Student demonstrates a limited ability to appropriately administer, score, & interpret assessment instruments.
3.J		Task Completion	Student completes all assigned tasks in an ethical & effective fashion (e.g., individual & group counseling, supervision, reports)	Student consistently completes all assigned tasks in a comprehensive & through fashion.	Student completes all assigned tasks in a comprehensive fashion.	Student completes assigned tasks in an inconsistent fashion.	Student does not complete all assigned tasks & those tasks that are completed are not done in a competent fashions.

_____ : Total Score (out of a possible 80 points)

Narrative Feedback from Supervising Instructor

Please note the counseling student's areas of strength, which you have observed:

Please note the counseling student's areas that warrant improvement, which you have observed:

Please comment on the counseling student's general performance during his/her clinical experience to this point:

Counseling Student's Name (print)

Date

Supervising Instructor's Name (print)

Date

Date CCS was reviewed with Counseling Student –

Counseling Student's Signature

Date

Supervising Instructor's Signature

Date