



Office of the Provost &  
Vice-President (Academic)

4401 University Drive  
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada  
T1K 3M4

Phone (403) 329 2202  
Fax (403) 329 2097

TO: Digvir Jayas  
President and Vice Chancellor

DATE: January 2, 2025

FROM: Lynn Kennedy  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

RE: Master of Counselling Program Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Master of Counselling Program at its November 19, 2024, meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review was comprised of: Elaine Greidanus (Program Review Coordinator), Beth Cormier, and Charlotte Brenner.

The review produced 4 documents:

1. Self Study Report. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received April 1, 2024.
2. External Review Report. Written by Asa-Sophia Maglio (Adler University) and Jeff Chang (Athabasca University) based on a site visit July 24 to 25, 2024. Received September 16, 2024.
3. Program Response. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received October 21, 2024.
4. Dean's Response. Written by Lisa Starr, Dean of the Faculty of Education. Received November 4, 2024.

## Self Study Report

The Self Study Report asked for External Reviewer feedback on several areas:

- Given the regulatory context, is the MC program better advised to expand to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements for Registration as a Psychologist in Alberta, or to refocus on training students to meet the requirements of Certification as a Canadian Clinical Counsellor?
- Are the coordinator position descriptions sufficient to make it clear how the program needs will be met and how student concerns will be addressed?
- What additional administrative structure might improve the clarity and transparency of the process of addressing students' concerns?
  - How might the offices of the Dean of Education and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies best address student concerns?
- How should the advertisement of the program be changed to ensure better alignment between student expectations and program experiences?
- What resources could be provided to students to best support them when applying to practicum sites?
- Should the practicum requirements (hours, supervisor qualifications) be revised? If so, to align with what criteria?
- What might be revised about the admissions process to ensure that students are best situated for success in the program?
- How might recruitment and retention of faculty members and sessional instructors be improved to ensure quality and consistency of instruction?
- Should the MC program pursue accreditation with the CCPA?

The body of the report noted several strengths of the Master of Counselling:

- The MC program currently prepares students to become a Registered psychologist in Alberta or Certified Canadian Counsellors.
- The cohort model facilitates supportive learning and the establishment of professional communities in counselling and professional psychology.
- Almost all graduates report being employed in the field of counselling upon graduation.
- The reputation of the program attracts a wide range of new students.
- The reputation of the program with supervisors is an advantage in the competitive process of establishing student practicums.

The following weaknesses and challenges were mentioned in the body of the report:

- The program is currently described as "structured to accommodate working professionals" Feedback from students suggests the workload is difficult to manage for working professionals.
- The program has Insufficient faculty to teach the majority of courses in the MC program.
- The current processes for addressing student concerns are ineffective.

- The current admission processes do not systematically reflect program goals.

Recommendations from the body of the report:

- According to faculty and instructors, the admissions process may be strengthened by critically looking at the ways in which admissions processes could be more closely aligned with the program goals and particularly in regard to the emphasis placed on counselling related experience and writing skills. The admissions process may also be strengthened by reducing the number of applicants and allowing more time for the admissions committee to evaluate the applicants. Faculty members also valued the real-time interviews as a dynamic opportunity to get to know applicants.
- Faculty members and instructors should also intentionally consider processes for ongoing workflow and course content streamlining to enhance student experiences. Increasing use of sessional instructors teaching courses may be contributing to some student feedback that not all instructors appear to have sufficient skill with online and blended instructional design. Indeed, faculty and instructors agree that more support with online and blended instructional design and delivery would be helpful, and compensation and retention of experienced and skilled instructors is paramount.
- Program decisions such as prioritizing faculty who are Registered psychologists to teach in the Master of Education in Counselling Psychology program should be made in consultation with and reflect the feedback from counselling faculty members. The decision regarding whether the MC program will continue to meet the requirements for both CCC and registered psychologist should be informed by considerations of vision, sustainability, and the ability of the program to meet students' needs and expectations.

## External Review Report

The External Review Report contained nine (9) recommendations for improving the program:

- Adopting program learning outcomes based on entry-to-practice competency profiles developed by major credentialing bodies such as BCACC and/or CRPO, aligning courses with particular clusters of competencies, and tracking particular competencies across students' journeys through the program, purposefully repeating the coverage of competencies in multiple courses, could mitigate some instructional and curriculum issues.
- Documentation of practices in the area of equity, diversity, & inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentering practices was largely absent in the materials provided. It may well be in individual courses, but an overall program focus was not evident.
  - We recommend that the program review its own materials around equity, diversity, & inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentering practices including public-facing material and course outlines around to evaluate the robustness of curriculum and practices in this area and make necessary changes.
- Investments of faculty time and expertise are required whether the MC program continues as a CAP-approved program or seeks CACEP (CCPA) accreditation. Before making these investments, we recommend that the program engage in a consultation and reflection process to decide if the MC should be a "psychology" program or a "counselling/psychotherapy program."

- While it may not be possible due to human resources policies for information to flow from the Faculty of Education's leadership to the program's faculty, it may be possible:
  - For the program's faculty to participate in providing feedback on the performance of sessional instructors.
  - For faculty members to mentor sessional instructors, particularly newer ones.
  - For the program's faculty to make recommendations about the hiring and retention of sessional instructors.
  - Faculty of Education leadership to share information (with the consent of the sessional instructor) about their needs for mentoring and development.
- Student concerns arose from three main sources: discrepancy between their perception of entering expectations and the actual workload; instructional quality related to instructor supply, quality, and retention issues; and support to obtain a practicum.
  - We recommend implementing a robust orientation that includes discussion about workload and time management, connections to University of Lethbridge resources such as library support, writing support, accessibility and inclusion services, the professions of counselling/psychotherapy and psychology, etc.
  - We also recommend continuing the practice of regular virtual town halls.
  - Public-facing materials should be reviewed and aligned with actual practices in the program.
  - The adoption of program learning outcomes based on a recognized competency profile can both orient faculty to essential content, support them to develop assignments that actually assess it, and make transparent to students the rationale of assignments and the competencies they are designed to assess.
- Outreach to remote practicum sites and potential supervisors could be done via:
  - Regular personal contact from the Clinical Coordinator
  - Clearer specification of practicum instructor duties (e.g., prescribed number of check-ins)
  - Possibly offering brief professional development sessions by faculty free of charge to University of Lethbridge practicum supervisors, past and present. This would not necessitate faculty members developing new content, but simply to do a brief (one to two-hour) professional development presentation based on their already ample expertise, and for the program to certify continuing education units.
- It may be worth considering the value of adopting a field placement management system that could be used faculty-wide for both counselling programs and the teacher preparation program(s). The adoption of an on-line clinical placement management would potentially automate the maintenance of an accurate list.
- In addition to the program's communication with practicum sites as described above, coaching about treating a practicum search as similar to an application for employment, orienting students to the competitive nature of practicum search, informing them that their unpaid

practicum time is not a “gift” to the practicum organization, could be embedded in a series of practicum orientation and support meetings.

- Other practice-oriented programs have created faculty positions that include teaching and service, with little or no expectations of scholarly output. Such practitioner-academic or “clinical professor” positions can be appealing to seasoned practitioners with a great deal to offer students, particularly in a practitioner-centred program, but do not have the inclination or career “runway” to develop a program of research and publication. This appears to be a current trend in practice-oriented programs.
  - Current and former practicum supervisors, who already have a mutually helpful and trusting relationship with the program, may provide a pool of sessional instructor recruits. Given that most instruction is not place-based, this could also deepen relationships with communities and expand the pool of practicum placements.
  - An intermediate step might be to develop a sessional Instructor pool with the potential to invite some sessional instructors to do contracted project work in the program, such as developing a series of orientation workshops or developing a student mentorship program or other projects that ranked faculty might not be able to prioritize. This kind of project work, if executed well, could benefit students and forge a connection with one or more sessional instructors. Some of these could be interested in and qualified for ranked faculty positions, while others might be eligible for “practitioner-academic” roles.

The following, taken from the report, note the challenges discussed in the body of the report:

- There are some important areas deserving attention.
  - Program identity
  - Skills training trajectory across the program
  - Content and program trajectories related to Professional Development
  - Workload challenges placed on the Coordinators, both Program and Clinical
  - Tension in the quantity of faculty, and the quality of sessional instructors
  - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentring practices evidenced throughout students’ preparation and training
  - Communication:
    - *Dean to faculty* (e.g., instructor evaluations to hiring practices) *Instructors to the students* (e.g., basic communication, transparency of assignments to course objectives/professional application)
    - *Dean to students* (e.g., responses to student complaints)
    - *Program to students* (e.g., program expectations, Student Handbook, Program Orientation)
    - *Socialization of students to graduate school* (e.g., meaningful program orientation to start the students in a community of learners [e.g., 2019 Cohort, pre-program 1 month orientation])

- *Socialization of students to the profession* (e.g., Professional Development, supervisor to learner relationship)
  - *Student to program* (e.g., program learning outcomes or student learning outcomes)
  - *Student to instructors* (e.g., course learning evaluations)
- Given the obligations of Canadian universities to respond to the findings of Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the distinctive positioning of the University of Lethbridge, we did not see this well documented and are curious as to where this work manifests in the MC program's curriculum and training. Furthermore, we are interested in how decoloniality or de-centring practices more generally are evidenced in the MC students' experience and professional development.
  - Second, we are interested in how MC students are being prepared to meet the following Commitment from the Expanding Horizons of Possibility: "We inspire future and current ... counsellors to meet the unique needs of diverse individuals living in a changing world". Diversity, equity and inclusion considerations or expectations are clearly outlined at the University, Faculty, and program levels (e.g., CAAP 6607). Beyond stated course objectives, how this is being actualized in MC students' experience, training, or professional development was not well documented.

The following, taken from the report, note the opportunities discussed in the body of the report:

- This leads to the third point of reflection, student learning outcomes. Although the MC program's strong enrolment numbers and graduation rates reflect the effectiveness of student learning, student learning outcomes (and/or program learning outcomes) or not compiled in one document; course outlines did not explicitly link program learning outcomes and course objectives. Doing so would help the program to ensure that the aspirational statements or objectives are manifesting in intended ways in students' educational experiences.
- Both BCACC and CRPO have developed entry-to-practice competency profiles that the knowledge and skills to be manifested by entry-level practitioners. One or both could be used to develop a set of student learning outcomes for the program, which could be adopted by the program on a consensus basis. While major content areas are largely covered in one course (i.e., ethics, counselling theories), it is often necessary to revisit these areas across more than one course. Using an entry-to-practice competency could facilitate tracking the acquisition of competencies as students and cohorts progress through the program, without impinging on academic freedom.
- [C]onsistent use of course evaluations would be useful in gaining the MC students' perspective on teaching and course experience, although the reviewers acknowledge course evaluations can perpetuate bias. Student learning outcomes would be useful in understanding the student's acquired competencies across the MC program.
- Considering indirect metrics of student satisfaction, retention and graduation, we note that students remain in the program to completion. As mentioned above, student input through course evaluations and tracing program learning outcomes would provide additional direct metrics of student satisfaction.

## Program Response

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee addressed the recommendations from the External Review Report:

---

<p>1. <i>Adopting program learning outcomes based on entry-to-practice competency profiles developed by major credentialing bodies such as BCACC and/or CRPO, aligning courses with particular clusters of competencies, and tracking particular competencies across students' journeys through the program, purposefully repeating the coverage of competencies in multiple courses, could mitigate some instructional and curriculum issues.</i></p>	<p>The program area agrees and notes that this undertaking will require dedicated time to assemble, analyze, and implement the material. The program also thanks the reviewers for providing details on two competency profiles: <a href="#"><u>The competency profile for counselling therapists</u></a> as per BCACC and the profile from CRPO.</p>
<p>2. <i>Documentation of practices in the area of equity, diversity, &amp; inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentering practices was largely absent in the materials provided to us. It may well be in individual courses, but an overall program focus was not evident.</i></p> <p>a. <i>We recommend that the program review its own materials around equity, diversity, &amp; inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentering practices including public-facing material and course outlines around to evaluate the robustness of curriculum and practices in this area and make necessary changes.</i></p>	<p>The program area agrees, and notes that including a heading/section on each course syllabus could address how a specific course and the program as a whole address this area of practice.</p>
<p>3. <i>Investments of faculty time and expertise are required whether the MC program continues as a CAP-approved program or seeks CACEP (CCPA) accreditation. Before making these investments, we recommend that the program engage in a consultation and reflection process to decide if the MC should be a "psychology" program or a "counselling/psychotherapy program."</i></p>	<p>The program area agrees.</p>
<p>4. <i>While it may not be possible due to human resources policies for information to flow from the Faculty of Education's leadership to the program's faculty, it may be possible:</i></p> <p>a. <i>For the program's faculty to participate in providing feedback on the performance of sessional instructors.</i></p> <p>b. <i>For faculty members to mentor sessional instructors, particularly newer ones.</i></p> <p>c. <i>For the program's faculty to make recommendations about the hiring and retention of sessional instructors.</i></p> <p>d. <i>Faculty of Education leadership to share information (with the consent of the sessional instructor) about their needs for mentoring and development.</i></p>	<p>The program area agrees, and specifically notes the need for a strong mentoring program and a relational, collective approach to working with sessional instructors.</p>

---

<p>5. <i>Student concerns arose from three main sources: discrepancy between their perception of entering expectations and the actual workload; instructional quality related to instructor supply, quality, and retention issues; and support to obtain a practicum.</i></p> <p>a. <i>We recommend implementing a robust orientation that includes discussion about workload and time management, connections to University of Lethbridge resources such as library support, writing support, accessibility and inclusion services, the professions of counselling/psychotherapy and psychology, etc.</i></p> <p>b. <i>We also recommend continuing the practice of regular virtual town halls.</i></p> <p>c. <i>Public-facing materials should be reviewed and aligned with actual practices in the program.</i></p> <p>d. <i>The adoption of program learning outcomes based on a recognized competency profile can both orient faculty to essential content, support them to develop assignments that actually assess it, and make transparent to students the rationale of assignments and the competencies they are designed to assess.</i></p>	<p>The program area agrees, and envisions a student-centered, positive, engaging student orientation that involves study tips, mentoring, support, and guidance.</p>
<p>6. <i>Outreach to remote practicum sites and potential supervisors could be done via:</i></p> <p>a. <i>Regular personal contact from the Clinical Coordinator</i></p> <p>b. <i>Clearer specification of practicum instructor duties (e.g., prescribed number of check-ins)</i></p> <p>c. <i>Possibly offering brief professional development sessions by faculty free of charge to University of Lethbridge practicum supervisors, past and present. This would not necessitate faculty members developing new content, but simply to do a brief (one to two-hour) professional development presentation based on their already ample expertise, and for the program to certify continuing education units.</i></p>	<p>The program strongly agrees and notes the value of being visible/out in the community. The program supports recognizing and honouring practicum supervisors in meaningful ways.</p>
<p>7. <i>It may be worth considering the value of adopting a field placement management system that could be used faculty-wide for both counselling programs and the teacher preparation program(s). The adoption of an on-line clinical placement management would potentially automate the maintenance of an accurate list.</i></p>	<p>The program area agrees with the need to maintain an accurate placement list but questions whether exploring an automated field placement management system should be prioritized. The teacher preparation program recently invested heavily in piloting some placement software that ultimately did not meet their needs.</p>
<p>8. <i>In addition to the program's communication with practicum sites as described above, coaching about treating a practicum search as similar to an application for employment, orienting students to the competitive nature of practicum search, informing</i></p>	<p>The program area agrees, and notes that specific orientations and ample optional meetings are essential to ensuring everyone has the necessary information and feels valued.</p>



---

*them that their unpaid practicum time is not a “gift” to the practicum organization, could be embedded in a series of practicum orientation and support meetings.*

---

9. *Other practice-oriented programs have created faculty positions that include teaching and service, with little or no expectations of scholarly output. Such practitioner-academic or “clinical professor” positions can be appealing to seasoned practitioners with a great deal to offer students, particularly in a practitioner-centred program, but do not have the inclination or career “runway” to develop a program of research and publication. This appears to be a current trend in practice-oriented programs.*
- The program area agrees.
- a. *Current and former practicum supervisors, who already have a mutually helpful and trusting relationship with the program, may provide a pool of sessional instructor recruits. Given that most instruction is not place-based, this could also deepen relationships with communities and expand the pool of practicum placements.*
- b. *An intermediate step might be to develop a sessional Instructor pool with the potential to invite some sessional instructors to do contracted project work in the program, such as developing a series of orientation workshops or developing a student mentorship program or other projects that ranked faculty might not be able to prioritize. This kind of project work, if executed well, could benefit students and forge a connection with one or more sessional instructors. Some of these could be interested in and qualified for ranked faculty positions, while others might be eligible for “practitioner-academic” roles.*
-

## Dean's Response

The Dean of the Faculty of Education responded to the nine (9) recommendations from the External Review Report:

---

<p>1. <i>Adopting program learning outcomes based on entry-to-practice competency profiles developed by major credentialing bodies such as BCACC and/or CRPO, aligning courses with particular clusters of competencies, and tracking particular competencies across students' journeys through the program, purposefully repeating the coverage of competencies in multiple courses, could mitigate some instructional and curriculum issues.</i></p>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees. To address this recommendation, counselling specific faculty engagement will be needed to complete the task. Administrative support from the Faculty of Education Graduate Studies team can be provided. In upcoming faculty retreats (May 2025 &amp; August 2025) and regular meetings of counselling faculty, members (monthly) will focus on developing learning outcomes based on entry-to-practice competency profiles. A draft of learning outcomes could be reasonably expected by December 2025 for implementation in May 2026.</p>
<p>2. Documentation of practices in the area of equity, diversity, &amp; inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentering practices was largely absent in the materials provided to us. It may well be in individual courses, but an overall program focus was not evident.</p> <p>a. We recommend that the program review its own materials around equity, diversity, &amp; inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentering practices including public-facing material and course outlines around to evaluate the robustness of curriculum and practices in this area and make necessary changes.</p>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees. The Graduate Studies and Research team and counselling faculty members will work this into the program redesign process as part of our curriculum update. The timing of this will depend on CAP's decisions regarding the registration requirements for certified counsellors. Once the CAP decision is received, plans will include a matrix that links program goals, course learning objectives, and shared norms for faculty and instructors. Such a matrix can be realistically finalized by May 2026. Training for faculty instructors on incorporating EDID into their teaching is being prioritized across the faculty. Initial expectations for embedding EDID into courses and programs will be initiated in November 2024. These efforts will be included in discussions at Committee of the Whole (6 times per year) and Faculty Retreats (May 2025 &amp; August 2025 and May 2026 &amp; August 2026). Course outlines including pedagogical and assessment practices should reflect explicit and authentic principles of EDID by May 2027.</p>
<p>3. Investments of faculty time and expertise are required whether the MC program continues as a CAP-approved program or seeks CACEP (CCPA) accreditation. Before making these investments, we recommend that the program engage in a consultation and reflection process to decide if the MC should be a "psychology" program or a "counselling/psychotherapy program."</p>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees. We anticipate that the Master of Counselling program will focus on a certified counsellor accreditation with either (or both) the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) and the College of Alberta Psychologists while the MEd Clinical and Counselling Psychology will focus on the Registered Psychologist accreditation. Developing the specific structure and curriculum for this focus will need to wait until CAP has released its registration requirements for certified counsellors in Alberta.</p>
<p>4. While it may not be possible due to human resources policies for information to flow from the</p>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees in principle. A mentorship program will need to be judiciously developed to ensure positive, healthy mentorship focused on</p>

---

<p>Faculty of Education's leadership to the program's faculty, it may be possible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the program's faculty to participate in providing feedback on the performance of sessional instructors.</li> <li>For faculty members to mentor sessional instructors, particularly newer ones.</li> <li>For the program's faculty to make recommendations about the hiring and retention of sessional instructors.</li> <li>Faculty of Education leadership to share information (with the consent of the sessional instructor) about their needs for mentoring and development.</li> </ol>	<p>institutional, faculty, and program norms, goals, and vision. Given we anticipate 3 new tenure stream faculty appointments beginning in July 2025, this will be our target to have mentorship pairings and defined roles in place. The University of Lethbridge Faculty Association allows for peer review as evidence of teaching effectiveness, this is at the request of the ULFA member and cannot be required. Sessional instructors as ULFA members may have concerns about faculty providing feedback on the performance of sessional instructors if that mechanism falls outside of the articles of the collective agreement.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student concerns arose from three main sources: discrepancy between their perception of entering expectations and the actual workload; instructional quality related to instructor supply, quality, and retention issues; and support to obtain a practicum.       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recommend implementing a robust orientation that includes discussion about workload and time management, connections to University of Lethbridge resources such as library support, writing support, accessibility and inclusion services, the professions of counselling/psychotherapy and psychology, etc.</li> <li>We also recommend continuing the practice of regular virtual town halls.</li> <li>Public-facing materials should be reviewed and aligned with actual practices in the program.</li> <li>The adoption of program learning outcomes based on a recognized competency profile can both orient faculty to essential content, support them to develop assignments that actually assess it, and make transparent to students the rationale of assignments and the competencies they are designed to assess.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees in principle. As observed within the report, there is a culture of intentional orientation for students entering and moving through program. We are always open to improving our processes. Following the start of the Summer 2025 cohort, the Graduate Studies and Research team will initiate a survey across our grad programs focused on the orientation experience: what works, what did not, what students wished their experience would have been, what else students wished they had been told. Feedback from current students will inform revisions to orientations that best meet the needs of incoming cohorts across all graduate programs.</p> <p>With respect to discrepancies between what students are told the workload is and what they experience in program, the feedback the Graduate Studies and Research team has received from students is that the expectations across instructors and courses is highly varied. Some of the issues related to the discrepancy students have identified are tied to variability in instructor expectations.</p> <p>Faculty training regarding course development and assessment practices, combined with a process of developing shared programmatic expectations and norms that faculty and instructors can agree to is an important part of addressing this concern.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach to remote practicum sites and potential supervisors could be done via:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular personal contact from the Clinical Coordinator</li> <li>Clearer specification of practicum instructor duties (e.g., prescribed number of check-ins)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees. The recent success of an enrollment funding request has resulted in funding for two administrative positions dedicated to this work. Those positions will be filled by July 2025. Of note, these positions are based on the terms of the funding request from the Alberta government.</p>

<p>c. Possibly offering brief professional development sessions by faculty free of charge to University of Lethbridge practicum supervisors, past and present. This would not necessitate faculty members developing new content, but simply to do a brief (one to two-hour) professional development presentation based on their already ample expertise, and for the program to certify continuing education units.</p>	
<p>7. It may be worth considering the value of adopting a field placement management system that could be used faculty-wide for both counselling programs and the teacher preparation program(s). The adoption of an on-line clinical placement management would potentially automate the maintenance of an accurate list.</p>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees in principle. We recognize that the absence of a field placement management system is an issue. We are always searching for a new, better tool for this process. To date we have not been able to identify one as those available are cost-prohibitive in the current budget climate. We are hopeful that the addition of two administrative positions that we will fill by July 2025 will help us to identify cost effective tools that can address this challenge.</p>
<p>8. In addition to the program's communication with practicum sites as described above, coaching about treating a practicum search as similar to an application for employment, orienting students to the competitive nature of practicum search, informing them that their unpaid practicum time is not a "gift" to the practicum organization, could be embedded in a series of practicum orientation and support meetings.</p>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees. In the past year, the Dean's Office in coordination with the Graduate Studies and Research leadership has shifted workload assignments so that the Clinical and Program coordinators are also responsible for teaching the practicum courses in our counselling programs. We anticipate that this change in staffing approach will contribute to greater consistency in messaging to students, and better communication between the program and our field partners. The two new administrative positions that will be filled by July 2025 will also focus on helping us address this issue. Through consultations with our field partners and students they will identify gaps both in terms of information provided and in terms of skills (Recommendation 1) that students are bringing into their placements.</p>
<p>9. Other practice-oriented programs have created faculty positions that include teaching and service, with little or no expectations of scholarly output. Such practitioner-academic or "clinical professor" positions can be appealing to seasoned practitioners with a great deal to offer students, particularly in a practitioner-centred program, but do not have the inclination or career "runway" to develop a program of research and publication. This appears to be a current trend in practice-oriented programs.</p> <p>a. Current and former practicum supervisors, who already have a mutually helpful and trusting relationship with the program, may provide a pool of sessional instructor recruits. Given that most instruction is not place-based, this could also</p>	<p>The Dean's Office agrees in principle. During this past staffing cycle, we identified and hired three new sessionals who fit the profile described above; they have been hired to teach the more practically oriented courses in the MEd Clinical and Counselling programs. We will begin to use them in the Master of Counselling program as well beginning in the Summer 2025 term. Additionally, we are anticipating hiring three new tenure-stream faculty into our counselling programs and having them in place by July 2025. We are confident that this expansion of our faculty complement will go a long way to addressing these staffing issues. Currently, we are unable to offer positions as Clinical Professors as these positions are not included in the ULFA collective agreement. Discussion about the merits of Clinical professor</p>

---

deepen relationships with communities and expand the pool of practicum placements.

positions may be considered in future discussion with ULFA and subsequent collective bargaining.

- b. An intermediate step might be to develop a sessional Instructor pool with the potential to invite some sessional instructors to do contracted project work in the program, such as developing a series of orientation workshops or developing a student mentorship program or other projects that ranked faculty might not be able to prioritize. This kind of project work, if executed well, could benefit students and forge a connection with one or more sessional instructors. Some of these could be interested in and qualified for ranked faculty positions, while others might be eligible for “practitioner-academic” roles.
- 

Consulting the External Reviewer Recommendations, the Program Response, and Dean Starr, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee made the following 7 (seven) recommendations for action which the Program must report on in 1 and 3 years:

1. The Master of Counselling program, in consultation with the Faculty of Education, will engage in an analysis of whether to continue accreditation as a CAP-approved program or whether to seek CACEP (CCPA) accreditation.
2. The Master of Counselling program will develop and track clear learning outcomes based on entry-to-practice competency profiles developed by major credentialing bodies such as BCACC and/or CRPO.
3. The Master of Counselling program will review its own materials around equity, diversity, & inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation and/or decentering practices including public-facing material and course outlines to evaluate the robustness of curriculum and practices in this area and make necessary changes.
4. The Master of Counselling Program will work to improve communication with students about the program requirements and learning outcomes. This should include:
  - a. Offering a robust orientation for students.
  - b. Holding regular virtual town halls.
  - c. The review of public-facing materials.
  - d. Professional development in preparation for practicums.
5. The Master of Counselling program will work with the Faculty of Education Dean’s Office to discuss developing a mentorship program for faculty and instructors.
6. The Master of Counselling program in consultation with the Faculty of Education Dean’s Office will consider ways to best maintain the practicum component of the program, including:
  - a. Outreach to remote practicum sites and potential supervisors.
  - b. Clearer specification of practicum instructor duties (e.g., prescribed number of check-ins).

- c. Offering brief professional development sessions by faculty free of charge to University of Lethbridge practicum supervisors, past and present.
  - d. The value of adopting a field placement management system, including assessing the resource implications (both human and financial) of adopting (or not) such a system.
7. The Master of Counselling program will consult regularly (at least twice annually) with related programs in the Faculties of Arts and Science and Health Sciences to ensure collaboration and coordination and limit duplication and competition between University of Lethbridge programming.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Master of Counselling Program academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lynn Kennedy  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee  
Chair and Associate Professor, Department of History and Religion

cc Michelle Helstein, PhD.  
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)