

### What are the strengths of the USU School Counselor training program?

Excellent reputation with the local districts

No one has ever doubted the validity of my credentials

Use of practicing counselors as instructors is extremely important. They bring such a valuable perspective to the book work. Instructors are knowledgeable and inspiring.

The faculty and colleagues. Relationships are key. I always felt heard and like my professors wanted me to succeed. Especially Sandy Ameal.

It allows professionals to do coursework in the evening. It evolves based on current needs. I was adequately prepared for state review process and Utah model (at least with what it was at the point I graduated).

The professors were great. They were all very knowledgeable and helpful.

Very thorough.

I loved the program and the instructors.

Most instructors were knowledgeable, supportive and available for feedback. There was a wide variety of courses and information that was helpful in preparing me to understand the Utah Model, how to support students, understanding data and how to design a great secondary school counseling program. It was great having instructors currently working in School Counseling to provide hands on experience and information. The schedule was great for a working professional to complete course work. Another advantage is the in-person and digital options for classes. The program is affordable. The program helps with resources like joining USCA, attending conferences, etc.

Experience in the schools (internships etc). Qualified professors. Up to date curriculum.

Connections to students, instructor experience, tailoring the program to Utah needs and following ASCA National Model.

Professors were amazing. The program was well organized. Most aspects of the job were covered.

Live broadcast. Professors are experienced and in the are working as counselors at the moment. So they are relevant.

Training, prestige, accessibility. I enjoyed it and am proud to be associated with it.

I loved how it felt like a community even though we were all across the state. The teachers did an amazing job keeping us connected, and helped me learn the concepts I needed to be an effective school counselor!

USU School Counseling program has many strengths. One of the biggest strengths is that all of the professors in the program are highly qualified and provides great instructions that prepares students for real world experience.

The USU School Counseling program has high expectations for all students, but provides the means to help students achieve such high goals.

I thought the face-to-face program was excellent. The professors were the very best and had valuable personal and practical experiences that they shared with students. They were knowledgeable and very effective teachers.

Most of the professors.

Cost, instruction, flexibility

I loved the flexibility of the program. I loved that it was one night a week and was broadcasted in a town near me! I loved my cohort as well!

The instructors and their willingness to mentor students during and after their time in the program is phenomenal. I have been able to mentor students who have come after me as a TA and have learned so much under the guidance of the fantastic humans who run this program and teach the courses. The years and years of life experience and school counseling experience is an invaluable resource to a student working towards a school counseling career.

Offered a variety of classes covering the range of school counselor responsibilities.

Statewide format is great. Great practicum experience.

The face-to-face format fostered a great cohort experience.

Training on assessments, the mock CCR review binder where you have a pretend school that has to go through the evaluations, and practicing/intern experiences. I also loved the broadcast option!

The broad training helped with learning about different aspect of school counseling.

Comprehensive training program that is specific and relevant to counseling in Utah. Classes taught by working professionals and experts in their field.

I loved the ability to take classes one night per week. I also loved learning from experienced school counselors, especially during practicum.

Really great at prepping for secondary school counseling and data collection.

Camille's leadership and example. All of the guest presenters we had in our classes. Teachers are who are working in the field.

Schedule pairs nicely with working professional. Quality curriculum and engagement with professors. Cohort model and schedule worked well for supporting success as grad student.
College and Career training, Child Development, Collaboration with classmates
The professors were excellent.
With the face-to-face program, it was nice to get to know professors. Also, Camille is a huge support to all the students in the program and truly cares that the program delivers and we are able to grow as counselors.
Very thorough classes. Instructors that were kind and really knew what they were talking about.
The program prepared me well to provide evidence-based approaches for data projects. It helped with listening skills, group counseling and empathizing with students and their families.
Instructors, education matches the job.
Good coverage of the wide scope of content I need to master. Good preparation for the Praxis. Good management of the practicum internship experiences.
Mentoring and networking with School Counselors to review Practicum experiences with.
The professors were fantastic!
Set schedule with great teachers that prepare you for Praxis test and job as school counselor.
I felt like my teachers and advisors knew who I was and were available as needed.
Lower cost for the program overall and smaller class sizes for in-person. Several professionals from around the state are brought in to teach and train.
The program was very comprehensive. It helped me prepare to be a counselor in all facets of my job.
Caring advisors and instructors
Camille is very helpful, hands-on, and kind. So is Beverly. I always felt that they were quick to respond and helpful and never felt too busy for us. I loved many of the professors and their teaching styles. I think the cost of the program is fair. I liked the practicum and internship experiences, and the ability to discuss with actual counselors in the valley. I loved my time in the program and feel very grateful for my experience and education. I would recommend the program in a heartbeat.
The availability of courses for working individuals makes it very convenient to participate. Also, the instructors were very helpful and knowledgeable.
The teachers, program director, and advising.
The instructors, practicum and internship experiences, cohort collaboration.
Being prepared to get a job!
I loved the face to face program. I got to know my cohort well from the entire state and I was strongly supported by teachers.
Access to other counselors.
Preparing for state review!!
Flexibility with work schedules, good preparation for the day to day work of a school counselor.
Provides a strong foundation that students can build upon once they enter the school counseling field.
loved meeting with my cohort in Kaysville. Lots of support from fellow students. Great teachers. Taught us how to use the data.
It is offered in the evenings one day a week statewide so it is very inclusive for parents and working students.
It aligns well with ASCA and USCA standards, it prepares you for the Praxis almost perfectly, Camille is so passionate and makes it a priority to prepare all of us with the vast tools that we will need.
The adjunct faculty who were working in schools were the most informative and gave a real sense of what life in the trenches was like. The instructors who had not been in schools for many years has less of an impact on my learning.
The availability was a really nice factor of this program. It's very accessible for working adults and allowed me to work while going to school so I graduated debt free.
kind professors who are willing to work with their students. Camille and staff were always available to chat and work through problems. Camille and staff helped set up my practicum with a mentor which was so beneficial!
Convenience of program, through training, variety of teachers.
Small classrooms, instructor availability, accessibility and personability
Career Literacy and College education

The fact that the program was distance ed allowed me to continue working in a career while I was working towards my degree. The cost of the program was attractive because it wasn't prohibitive for me to attend.

I feel that it prepared me very well for the Praxis, has strong tie in and correlation with both the ASCA and the Utah model. I especially liked having classes from school counselors who are still in schools who gave real world examples of working with students.

The practicum and internship experiences were extremely helpful. The program's professors, leadership and staff were very kind and helpful.

I appreciate the care and concern, the professionalism and awareness of the director, Camille Odell. Amy Kleiner's class in theory was also a phenomenal strength as well as her outstanding delivery. Another invaluable class was Vernetta's (the behavioral class). For my cohort, it was a 7-week class. I strongly feel that this needs to be a regular 15 week class. The Ethics class with Elizabeth was also amazing and helpful to work through scenarios. Sandra Ameal's Career Readiness class was also amazingly detailed in assignments and feedback provided. Tom Wilson's class was also a strength to the program.

The variety of information was helpful.

It's availability to students all over the state.

I have worked with other individuals who have trained under other programs, and they did not seem as prepared or knowledgeable as those of us who trained at USU. Thank you so much for our great training!

I loved the format of the training, with two classes each semester. I enjoyed the teachers the most that were also professional school counselors. I felt their contributions were the most needed.

The mentorship of counselors in the practicum program. The classes that teach psychology interventions and practices. Teaching us how to use resources to support students and parents and having guest speakers come speak to us about these resources.

Accessibility via statewide broadcast program. Applicable coursework that prepared me for everyday counseling.

The program did a great job with diversity and inclusion. The professors and director were amazing!

The coursework gave me an excellent foundation for my career, which helped me feel well prepared. Professors were knowledgeable and did well engaging us even through the distance learning format.

The director of the program, the instructors.

The diversity class was excellent. I remember and use the information I learned in that class daily. Going through the whole program with the same cohort was a great way to learn and become comfortable with each other as we practiced counseling skills.

The professors and curriculum helped prepare me for a career in school counseling.

USU truly provides a comprehensive education to assist those into our profession. Comparatively, the training I received is the best in regards to how a counselor operates in a school system, professional and ethical boundaries, and skills to truly support students in a variety of ways. Counselors are tasked with a broad amount of responsibilities and USU adequately prepares us to face those responsibilities to support our students.

Comprehensive curriculum, good instructors

I loved having a cohort to work with.

The program is well thought out, accommodating the employed. It builds upon itself, and the advising is outstanding. I have enjoyed seeing the changes and improvements in the past 5 years. The practicum and internships not only prepare the student, but also expand their network in order to solidify a career in this field. I learned and grew so much when I went through this program.

I've found that I have a better understanding of the Utah Model in comparison to counselors who graduated from the University of Phoenix program.

Great training on the Utah model, great ethics training, very helpful mental health counseling practice, teachers were amazing

Knowledgeable professors and getting experience then feedback from local professionals.

Excellent instructors, great scheduling.

The USU School Counselor program is a high-quality academic experience, especially with training future counselors on the Federal and State School Counseling standards & practices, ethics, multicultural awareness, and practical experience in the schools.

USU training program is very flexible and I was, and still am, impressed with how much they are willing to grow with students and the overall state needs as they teach in the classroom. I think the preparation I had when learning and understanding the Standards required of me as a counselor was very helpful for me as I joined a team to help all students!

The Broadcast program was so great because I was able to be a mom and still handle the classwork and night classes once a week. Most of the teachers were school counselors so they would be able to relate the information they were teaching to real world scenarios. The USU program also picked up the College and Career Readiness certificate before other programs did so when I graduated I only had to do one more section of the CCR certificate. (I have a colleague that graduate this year from the U of U and they did not do any of the CCR certifications). I truly enjoyed the program offered at USU and believe that all leaders and stakeholders are very invested in educating and producing successful school counselors.

The instructors were very knowledgeable and created a good environment for learning. Questions and discussions were always welcome.

The professors are highly qualified and very knowledgeable, they care about every individual and are more than willing to go the extra mile to help their students feel confident and be successful as school counselors.

The content in every class is applicable and up to date based on changes in laws, policies and best practices.

The head of the department (Camille Odell) is passionate about giving students the best possible experience to prepare them to work in the field of school counseling! It is obvious that the professors and students are carefully selected in order to bring about the best results.

Access to the instructors.

I really appreciate that the instructors are current counselors. This helps in a sense that they can share real experiences in the schools.

I really appreciated the evening course schedule; this made beginning my graduate education way less intimidating and much more doable. Of all things, this is what I appreciate the most - making education accessible to working professionals.

Being able to go to school and work full time.

The availability of the program was a huge strength. It was great to complete the program in St. George via video conferences. I felt I was well supported throughout the program from the staff at USU.

Instructors

Reputation

It is an in depth training and gives students what is needed to enter the work force

Ability to attend from anywhere!

It really helped prepare me for the job. It had a strong emphasis on learning the counseling program model which has helped me implement successful programs.

Evening classes, very organized matriculation, cost.

College and Career Readiness, Utah state model, data, diversity

1. Loved the satellite program and being able to connect with people across the state.

2. The program is well organized and it was easy to communicate with teachers.

3. I felt prepared to be a school counselor when I graduated.

Location availability, lower cost than others, loved how all the classes were held on Tuesday evenings; this made it doable with a family.

Prepares you to be a school counselor and follow the Utah model. I work with a few counselors in our district that didn't graduate from the USU program and did theirs out-of-state and they are lost all of the time in preparing for the program review.

Face to Face cohorts and staff that are current in the field. The cohort still communicates and supports each other 5 years out of school.

Camille Odell is a good person and an asset to the program.

Amy Kliner was a good teacher. and there were a few others.

I don't have anything bad to say about the program...

My grievances are with the after

The professors are very personable and approachable.

Experiences and advise from current and past school counselors. Teachers are kind and readily available for advise and help.

This program prepared me very well to jump into the K-12 setting prepared as a school counselor. When I did my practicum and internship the transition into the job was much easier than expected. I now work at the university level and still use skills I learned in this program.

Teachers who are in the job and have the experience to teach the material.

Excellent Faculty. My instructors and advisors were always available and cared about my concerns. They were interested in my success.

Timely responses to questions and concerns and the quality of instructors. (One exception: I can't remember her name but her entire focus was on the USBE formal review process. Program review is important but she required every student to do a complete review of a program.)

The program and it's education provided me with the skills to work with students at any grade level. For that, I am grateful.

Preparation for the review process in the state of Utah.

Excellent program director and program management

Good curriculum, good teachers, easily accessible to students.

The strengths are that there is a strong focus on secondary education.

The broadcast program is critical to reach the rural parts of the state, so that we have trained school counselors in all of our buildings.

personalization and connection with colleagues

### How could the program improve?

More information on classroom management and teaching. Im at the elementary level and was a bit overwhelmed when I first realized that I needed to teach 40% of my time.

I wish I had been given more help on dealing with student crisis situations.

More training on academic and behavior interventions. More mental health training.

Helping to place paid internships

More focus on elementary. If I didn't choose to do an internship at the elementary level I would have been completely unprepared.

Focus some courses for all levels of education (not just secondary). I work with elementary students and I wish I would have had some classroom management and how to counsel at the elementary level.

The program focuses on secondary positions and lacks information for elementary counseling. It would be helpful if there was information on classroom instruction & management. As a secondary counselor I was in the classroom monthly with career exploration and now as an elementary counselor I'm in classrooms 2x a month with counselor instruction. There was an instructor who spent class time talking about herself, pausing class to answer their cell phone and provided little instruction. (I put information on instructor reviews at the time.) I didn't feel like the department was approachable to ask questions - feedback was typically negative or personal attacks rather than solution focused.

Groups, add a clinical component (optional).

More mental health training. More training for other at risk groups

A section (or more classes) for elementary counselors. Like, where to find curriculum for teaching and groups and what kinds of groups they should run.

Sounds like it changed since I graduated with the option of more SEL rather than grant learning.

I would love more training on mental health and college.

My recommendation would be for the program to include more training on elementary school counseling. However, I do believe USU's program has started to implement elementary school counseling into their curriculum.

Less focus on testing, greater time spent on classroom instruction experience

Not giving homework just to give homework, make it all applicable. I also think that it should be faster, do 3 courses a semester during the school year (2 in person and 1 online) and 4 during the summer (2 in person, 2 online).

The only improvement I have ever wanted to see from the USU program is more school counselors on staff as instructors. I understand the benefits of having clinical psychologists, school psychologists, and clinical counselors as resources, but ultimately the humans I learned the most from and the ones who had the most practical, hands-on advice, the most important things I needed to learn and have implemented on a daily basis in my work as a school counselor are the school counselors ... Sandy, Kathy, Tom, etc. Amy is one of my favorite humans on earth and Chris was phenomenal as well but as far as what I actually do with students, the instructors who were school counselors are the ones who gave me the tools and the confidence to do what I do every single day. Some of the instructors who were not school counselors taught things that are more applicable in a clinical setting and do not make sense within the context of the hierarchal structure of a school. Other than that, the USU program is fantastic.

More instructors with school counseling experience.

Review curriculum so there is less repetitiveness between courses. The program would be improved by actually taking feedback about teachers who don't do a good job teaching.

Teach more about what it's actually like to be a counselor - not what we're "supposed" to be able to do as a counselor. Focus way more on mental health and crisis response. Teach us how to re-license and all of that logistical stuff.

Increased efforts on how to help advocate for student needs and collaborate with and refer to outside supports. Also, ensuring familiarity with school classes to support underperforming students so they have options for success once they are out of school.

A stronger focus on elementary counseling would be useful for counselors planning on working with younger children. Emotional education and regulation would be useful for the younger levels.

I would appreciate more/additional practical counseling skills to help complement and compete with social workers entering the field.

More emphasis on elementary counseling and responsive services that come with that.

Provide a heavier emphasis on effective counseling methods for addressing mental health and addictive behaviors (e.g. vaping, video-gaming, cellphone/ technology addiction). Provide resources or suggestions for how to collaborate with school psychologists, social workers, etc.

Sounds more time behavior plans and identifying and referring for mental health issues

How to handle traumatic situations, the process, reentry back into school, abuse, cutting, etc.

The program was great.

I think the mentoring could be lengthened out. I didn't really feel that we got enough time with our mentors during the practicum. I would have been nice to have some of that support possibly transfer into our internship as well.

More multicultural/diversity issues talked about and how to deal with them in Utah.

Provide more targeted learning for those interested in elementary counseling. Very little support for those of us going into that field. More balanced instruction on the most valuable content: too much emphasis on the state model and not enough on applied counseling skills i.e. individual and small group counseling sessions

More overview of what the different districts in state offer for pay and benefits. More "how to run groups." Offer a PHD in Counseling Supervision.

Timing of program. Graduate in time to get a job when school starts in the fall.

We only had one class on college / scholarship. I feel that so much of what I do is focused on this and gathering data to prove it. I would spend more time on this concept.

More flexibility in scheduling allowing students to take classes faster and graduate faster. Possibly opening up the opportunity to take the in-person and the online program classes to do both years in just one year plus the practicum and internship.

Most of the program was focused on high school. I think it would be helpful to focus on all levels.

More help with careers

The only improvement I can think of is more real-life in-field experiences. I think connecting more actual policies and procedures that school counselors use, sharing actual scenarios and ideas on how to handle things would be helpful. I know that this is hard to do, but it would be helpful.

Spend more time on the CCA Strands and Standards.

The rising costs of college are challenging for many. I am not familiar with different scholarships available for upcoming school counselors. This could be something to look into.

More hands on training outside of practicum and internship.

I would have loved to learn more about classroom management! This was a totally foreign area for me and I had a pretty big learning curve!

More structure in helping students find practicum and internship placement.

I was not prepared with all of the Mental Health in this area of work I am in. I went into school counseling for the academic side and wish I had a lot more experience with the mental health side since that is what we work with quite a bit.

more classes in counseling

More classes on counseling students

Employ others who are currently working as school counselors to teach these classes.

I do wish sometimes I could have gone faster in the program and taken more classes each semester to finish faster, but I recognize that not everyone has the option to do that.

I wish we had more scheduling options with class schedules.

More elementary preparation, I feel that was a huge hole when I attended USU. BUT I have heard from current students that has evolved which makes me really happy that they will get more focused schooling on this type of school counseling.

more practical experiences

Provide more support or preparation for student mental health services- ie counseling skills and techniques

Smaller class sizes, more option to class availability.

From when I was in the program, I wanted more hands on experience to develop my counseling skills. It is a professional program, but most of my classes were 100% academic based. Many of the things I was learning didn't make sense until I was actually in a school setting. So I think there would be a great benefit of requiring students to do the practicum the spring of Year 1, and the internship Year 2 WHILE taking the classes. It would make the learning much more meaningful. Then it also would truly be a 2 year program and you are ready for licensure and job opportunities. I think the program is almost TOO catered to teachers who are becoming counselors. It would be nice if there was a full time program option for those who want to expedite the learning and finish quicker.

The program was helpful, however, there was too much overlap with curriculum. It would be best to condense the program into 2 years and combine a few courses. Another improvement would be to return the group counseling course to a full semester instead of a half semester summer course. This was an important applied class that was difficult to grasp in the shortened time frame. The data course or the classroom teaching course could be shortened to a 7-week course in its place.

Shorten the program so students are able to apply in February/March for jobs that open or begin in the fall. I would eliminate the second Career Readiness class, just keep Sandra Ameal's.

I would also figure out a way to better teach the Utah Model. I love the instructor, don't get me wrong. It's just that I earned an 'A' in that class and still don't know the model as well as I should. I felt that so much emphasis was spent on teaching us how to create documents that we would use as evidence rather than really learning the model. I would also retool the Data class with Megan Stone. She is also a great person and I'm sure outstanding as a counselor. As a student, it was hard to read the slides along with her.

Better prepare students for what counseling is really like instead of what the theory of it is. More depth on reality would be better.

Online options

Busy work. By far, the most inefficient part of the program. Many classes had a large quantity of assignments that bogged down the learning process and hindered the development of implementing practical application of school counseling knowledge.

The classes that had a handful of meaningful and practical (cannot stress these words enough) projects or assignments were the classes I received the most benefit from. Assignments should be vetted for content before being allowed, and should focus on practical application of knowledge rather than using as fill space to give out points.

A class on how to use excel or google sheets

Better instruction on teaching lessons and classroom management - The only reason I had those skills was because I was previously a teacher, but what we learned in the program on this was minimal, and as counselors, we teach in classrooms a lot.

We need even more education on equity and addressing biases of those going into the profession. They have a class on equity and diversity but I believe we could expand it and really engage those who could take a more passive participant approach to being a part of this important work in fighting for equitable and social justice practice.

Broadcast classes could be more engaging, state requirements/information regarding high school graduation for students should be covered

Accessibility with teachers & clear instructions. Grading was not always fair. I did the work and got the same grades as others who never read and spent class time on Facebook or even listening to books on tape, online shopping etc.

I have enjoyed seeing improvements here - especially teacher development courses with active learning. That was evident in the teaching demonstrations of the applicants!

Help them realize the Utah Model changes over time. Collaboration and sharing is helpful and vital to our profession. It would be helpful if ASCA had more real-life resources--maybe advocate for that.

I would like to understand better what an individual school counseling appointment should look like in one session and over time. How long do I visit with a student? Do I just listen and let them talk? Or do we need to always have goals and objectives?

As I have been working, something I wish we would have talked more about is how to professionally care for myself. Especially after dealing with traumatic events like suicide or even helping students with

Finding internships was good, but could be improved.

The USU Masters of Education in School Counseling is supposed to be a practical degree with hands-on experience. When I was in the program, the first Practicum class took place during the 2nd year, Spring Semester. That's fall, spring, summer, fall--4 semesters of classes BEFORE you get any practical experience. Very inefficient and actually harmful to many students' educations, because the materials they learned for 4 semesters were not being applied until the end of their degree.

The internship experience is also way more complicated because of this. It creates a situation where people are looking for full-time jobs in the middle of the school year, which is just impractical and can be financially detrimental to people who need to get a job right after graduating. Taking the internship during a 3rd year with no additional courses also makes the internship experience much less valuable if you are not taking courses during that time to apply it in practice at your internship.

The program should model itself closer to what the University of Utah's School Counseling program does, which is:

Program starts in May, starting with summer courses

Practicum takes place Spring semester of the 1st year of the program

Internship takes place Fall&Spring during the 2nd year of the program

2nd year ends in May, which means students can be working in full-time counseling positions after only 2 years of a Masters degree.

If USU wants to stretch out their courses for this program to make it less rigorous for certain students, then they can offer that option to the students. UofU does the same thing. But you NEED to have an option to do this program faster and more efficiently for the students who can and want to.

Also, some of the classes (they were new during my cohort 2017-2019) were completely repeats of previous classes and totally a waste of time and effort and money. You could get rid of 2 or 3 of them, or consolidate them, and make the program higher quality.



More guidance for elementary level counseling.

My only frustration was in one class where the professor gave no options to miss even one class without docking the grade. This was extremely frustrating because I needed to be at my sons wedding and I

Allow students with educational/work experience get credit for that experience and skip or test out of some classes.

Maybe do the course about the state review after the students have done the practicum. That course was really difficult for me because I had no idea what I was doing when it came to putting together

Scheduling practicum hours was difficult to navigate around work hours. More flexibility with completing those hours would be great.

I did not feel I had a good experience with psychological testing. The class was not taught well and put unnecessary stress on me to succeed without clear instructions. This has hurt me when it comes to evaluating students for mental health issues.

Have more information on classroom management and techniques.

Stronger training in MTSS and Tier 2 interventions. Stronger training in PBIS.

One of the summer classes where effective interviewing should be done in a longer semester to get the full engagement of interviewing

Teach the actual day to day things school counselors do.

My first counseling job was in a high school. It would have been helpful to have had a class that taught about Utah state graduation requirements, how to read a high school transcript (detailed analysis) and Teaching actual, usable interventions for use with kids with mental or emotional health challenges

In my experience, counselors get called in often as behavioral supports. Fortunately, my husband has a lot of training in behavioral interventions, and I have been able to learn a lot from him and others. It would have been really helpful to have received more training for PBIS, or something similar.

More trauma informed practices and mental health education. There are not enough mental health resources in the school and it ends up falling on the counselor.

More real world experience seeing the day to day.

I think the program could improve by using more real life scenarios. I think there was one class where we went over "what would you do in this situation?" And that was very helpful.

There were few teachers who were not school counselors and I feel their material was not as applicable. From what i understand those teachers are no longer in the program, but I do not know the new teachers.

During our internship or practicum, it would be great to have one of the criteria to focus on the review, either best lessons learned from the school, or how they organize their evidence box, etc. Reviews bring a lot of pressure and it would be nice to have at least one school's perspective under our belt before we go through it personally. Going through an evidence box or even semi-preparing for a review would be so valuable.

I would love to see more supervised hands on experiences like practicum and internship. Also, more speakers and panels from individuals currently working in the field of school counseling.

There was a lot of repetition from one course to the next. More flexibility with course pre-requisites and program requirements. For example, the program could count previous education and experience, especially from those who are already licensed as educators with the state of Utah. Sometimes it seems as if higher education is about more classes and more money than what is practical and needed in the profession. The class on testing was way more advanced than what is needed by a school counselor in their day to day work.

Working with challenging behaviors. Potentially more on ABA therapy.

I think, finding the right school and finding the right fit would be helpful. I had a really hard time finding a school that would take me. My practicum was ok, but my internship was not. It was the wrong school and the wrong fit. So, maybe being assigned a school or schools would be beneficial to others like myself.

Less bias from a few professors.

More counseling modeling

I always think more real world examples and cases are awesome.

This program could improve by not having any psychometrics classes in the program. This class does absolutely nothing but waste time & money for students. Counselors NEVER use the tests learned about in those classes with students. School Psychologists do.

Also, a major weakness of the program is that there is absolutely zero education on elementary counseling. Elementary counseling could be an entire program on it's on since it is SO different from secondary counseling. When I was hired in elementary, I had NO idea that I was to TEACH every single day in the classroom. My job has been very difficult because I was not prepared at USU for that.

I needed more training on individual and small group counseling. It is a huge part of what I do, and I had only one short, summer class on counseling theories. I also feel that all counselors need specific training on classroom management and quality teaching as all counselors should be in classrooms teaching effectively.

As an ARL teacher, it would have been very helpful to cut back on the amount of internship hours that were required of me. But because I wasn't certified yet, I still had to do the full hours amount and that was really hard.



Are there any skills you need as a school counselor that were not addressed by the program?

Data collection, management, and interpretation.

Listed above. Classroom management. How to do lesson plans.

Information on classroom management and instruction. More information for individual & group counseling- working on anxiety, depression, etc. Information on Elementary School Counseling Programs.

Continued mental health knowledge for students and parents.

I don't feel like we covered the mental health piece as in depth as needed

How to navigate life after high school.

I felt prepared but was still nervous about starting as a School Counselor. While there is always new things to learn as a School Counselor, I realized quickly that the USU program had prepared me for way more than I realized. I have always been highly-impressed with the preparation I received.

The program cannot adequately prepare you for the emotional attachment counselors often feel when working with students. That was the biggest surprise to me, when I began working in the field. A lot of things are easy to handle when presented in textbook form, but not so easy when dealing with real children, their situations at home, their parental issues, and other things you cannot learn from a book.

Classroom instruction and management

Stuff that you can't really deal with until you're in the field but how to find DCF's phone number, what to say when you call a parent about their child cutting, how to deal with angry parents, ect. So maybe more role playing in the program would help that!

Mental health issues.

More real, practical classes such as practicum. A lot of the classes curriculum contain common sense subject matter. It would have been more valuable to really focus in on what school counselors do. Also, with the rise of elementary school counselors, a more focus on their role.

How to adequately respond to the amount of mental health and crisis situations that are currently in schools.

Stronger Self-Care Skills and roles when collaborating with various teams.

When I worked for the elementary schools I did not feel prepared. The amount of behavior management - behavior plans, working with kids in crisis, etc. was surprising.

More focus on mental health counseling

Using student information systems

Really, there's not a whole lot in the program directly related to elementary counseling. Just a couple lectures on teaching lessons. There should be more information about classroom management with young children, teaching young children, responsive services for this age group.

Student emancipation from their parents. Working with our McKinney Vento representative effectively. How to manage being head counselor

As far as what we should know on day one of our first job, I think the program did very well in preparing us!

Skills that I would need is learning the school systems (probably impossible due to the differences in districts) of running data reports, schedule changes, etc.

How to coordinate community outreach, interaction with other agencies. Not enough direction on individual and small group counseling, for example, where to find curriculum and content for these sessions.

Computer Skills, documentation, IEPs and 504s -- how to write/ laws.

More skills on how to help students with anxiety/depression/suicidal ideation

Still not super comfortable with crisis intervention.

I work with so many transgender and non-binary students. I wish that I would have been given more training on how to best support them. I have sought out additional professional development, but it would have been nice to get it in school.

There are skills such as scheduling, working on master schedule questions, etc. that are utilized by many counselors, but are not necessarily part of the ideal counselor position.

Many counselors are assigned to be 504 coordinators for their grade or alphabet level, but there isn't much discussion on 504's in the program. Having said that counselors ideally would not be over 504's in any school.

Essentially I feel like there are responsibilities that have been passed on to school counselors that shouldn't necessarily be handled by them, but are, and not much training is provided for those.

I think more evidence-based mental health counseling methods (i.e., BRISC) could have been implemented.

More information about collaboration, the counselor's role in different meetings, how to reach diverse students/appropriate ways to implement a multicultural approach within your school, and more information about how to create interventions/what to do in certain responsive scenarios. I also wish that more schools in Cache Valley ran groups because I never got to see that during my practicum or internship, and I am now in charge of running groups at my school.

Maybe a little more background about how a school works and what programs and supports are offered. I had to figure it out on the fly during my practicum, internship and even into my first year. It's a complex beast, and having a little background knowledge at the start of the program would have helped a lot.

Not really, but then again a lot of the necessary skills are gained through work/on the job experience, and gaining confidence through that experience.

Classroom management!

Navigating multicultural issues

So much of our job is graduation and tracking graduation and state graduation requirements. I feel like that isn't touched on at all in school. I still wish I felt more prepared in supporting students mental health.

Student Information Systems, working with students who struggle with attendance, understanding resources and how to best use them, resources to help parents,

Interpersonal skills that are needed cannot really be taught in a class, they need to be practiced in real-time with real students, making mistakes as you go and learning how to better address a situation when it comes up again.

I feel that mental health needs could be talked about a lot more. Counselors have many roles, but after being in the field for a while I realize how much time we spend helping students with mental health concerns. I wish I could have had more courses on how to prepare me to counsel students with these kinds of concerns.

elementary, most the training when I was in the program was based around secondary. They did try and get stuff in but it truly is two different worlds and there were pieces missing.

Counseling skills and techniques- needed more in-depth

More teaching and class room management.

I would have appreciated more interviewing skills training in the program.

The first time in my internship when I had a student who was actively at risk for suicide sitting across the desk from me, I had NO idea what to do. I would have appreciated more scaffolding and opportunities to practice in low stakes situations how to do crisis counseling. Not just the theory of what we need to do as mandated reporters but a plan that I could have, practice, and then implement. Also, I wish I would have received more mental health counseling skills. The only skill / intervention that I felt I was trained in is Solutions Focused Brief Therapy because we actually got to practice that one. We talked a lot about motivational interviewing but I actually don't know how to do it. What are actual interventions to use with anxious or depressed students? I've had to teach myself that outside of the program.

Applied crisis intervention. Although crisis intervention is briefly touched on with the practicum curriculum and the Solution Focused Brief Therapy approach, new school counselors are still not prepared for when a student comes to the office with a severe issue.

Things that I would appreciate are specific skills, evidence-based practices on helping students with anxiety and depression as well as behaviors in general.

Additionally, I would love to find a resource for again, evidence-based practices for classroom presentations we make. I don't mind presenting information to students, in particular high school students, but I don't really find it effective for me to search for information on the internet and hope that it's effective. I'm sure there must be sources, but I don't seem to be able to find them.

Handling mental health of students.

Conflict resolution with co-workers, Classroom management,

I think more information on suicide and self-harm would be beneficial.

I think true application of handling the emotional stress of our job was not emphasized enough. Dealing with angry teachers and parents is something that I did not realize was going to be a daily part of my job. I could have used better preparation in self-confidence and diffusion of tense and stressful situations.

Another thing that could have been emphasized is how to build programs from the ground up. This has been a barrier for me not truly knowing how to try new things. Seeing what others have done and talking about how to do them would have really helped me.

I would like more education on dealing with specific issues (absenteeism, peer issues, etc). I know this is offered through professional development and with experience but being a relatively new counselor, I still am working on this.

More collaboration strategies may have been helpful or me, particularly in advocating for the profession and working with teachers or administration who are reluctant to embrace social and emotional learning and supports.

How to use excel or google sheets

It would have been nice to learn a bit more about how elementary counselors do their work; it was very focused on secondary.

Potentially a run down of student information systems.

I was not prepared for elementary counseling. I had to figure it out as I went. The program focuses on secondary, but elementary positions are opening up everywhere, and our programs look very different from secondary.

The one area I still feel lacking in is the program evaluation piece. Gathering data and making informed decisions is a place that I want more guidance. We did have a course on that, but I did not feel that I had learned enough. I have heard that Sarah Schwartz teaches courses that would help, so I'm hoping to audit one soon.

I had enough background knowledge in helping people with depression and anxiety--we see that all the time!

How to manage after a crisis like suicide and trauma brought on with just helping others through their traumatic experiences.

I believe this program has many strengths, but it needs to try to be more competitive and add actually useful classes like Substance Abuse Counseling, Multicultural Counseling, Counseling Theories and Skills, Child Psychopathology, Child & Adolescent Behavior Therapy, etc. This program had literally ONE counseling theories class. And it was a summer class with only 7 weeks to get the hang of counseling. If you're going to call yourself a counseling program, maybe actually train your students in how to counsel?? I still don't feel as confident as I thought I should have in counseling skills after spending 30K and 3 years of my life on this degree. (And I was counseling students in public schools for 3 years during this program, so I have more experience than most of my peers.)

One thing that comes to mind was the skill of knowing my place in understanding the process of 504's and IEPs who and what were folder holders? Did I need to make sure I made an appearance, what was best practice? I know policy and procedures change often but learning how to help parents differentiate. That was something I definitely learned on site and when situations came up. So I'm grateful I have a great Admin I work with on to figure that all out.

The areas that I felt I would have liked more training in was grief counseling, anxiety counseling, and LGBTQ counseling. I assume that since I left the program has changed with the times so they may already have these topics covered.

Interacting with parents and families, crisis planning, classroom management skills.

I would love to have had some training regarding how to handle a serious crisis in the school. During my internship we had a stabbing at the high school where I worked and I had no idea how to handle the situation I was in. The crisis happened right before school started and there were hundreds of students wandering the halls when an emergency lockdown was announced. I was left in the office with 30 students as emergency vehicles and news stations arrived. There were no other counselors nearby. I feel like I handled it appropriately, but it was extremely stressful! I would like to have had some training on things like:

How to help students remain calm in a crisis situation

What kind of supplies should we have in our office/school in case of an emergency lock-down that lasts for hours

How to respond to the media

How to respond to questions from parents/staff about details

How much information to share with students during and after the incident

The potential after-effects of trauma on student behavior & learning

The importance of ALWAYS carrying your cell phone in order to communicate with school/district leaders.

How to address your own emotional well-being after a crisis

There were SO many things our counseling team learned the hard way.

How to take better care of ourselves as counselors.

More diversity and inclusivity education, more on credit requirements and scheduling software

The horrors of schedule changes.

I felt not prepared for the state review of our evidence box.

I do not feel well enough prepared to help high school students apply for college/tech school, scholarships, complete career pathways, and set-up for internships. This is simply because all of my experience has come from K-9 grades. I have worked at an alternative high school, but it is not the same as a public high school.

MTSS and appropriate interventions/tracking/data evaluation.

How to use a school information system. How to check graduation progress.

I would have liked more information on providing groups in school. We had groups in class, but I realized that wasn't a good way to model a school based group after.

In addition to the above, I would say to include a class or part of a class that deals with elementary school counseling.

How to effectively address suicidal ideation and anxiety, both of which are rampant in the schools

More behavioral intervention skills.

Maybe a little more on crisis response and trauma informed practices

At the end of the day most principals don't care about the where the degree is from or training received. Also other counselors only want to work with people they know.. Those are really the most important parts. Counselors want to work in their comfortable zone and so it becomes a loop. Hire the people that fit.. The friend gets the job or the person that knows the principal. The education really means nothing and the experience... I was always on the outside looking in.

More information and training for 504 accommodations. Explore the real experiences that counselors experience day by day.

Helping parents and dealing with angry parents

Suggest De-Escalate book by Douglass Noll

I have worked at a university since graduating from the program, so I am not sure.

A training in Skyward would have been great, but I understand that not every district uses the same student system.

Knowing how to gather data effectively in our schools (PowerSchool, Skyward, etc.) would be super helpful. Running various reports on whatever info I need (like who has taken an AP class, etc.) is not easy. It would be great for someone to put together a manual on how you could gather this type of information since it isn't "standard" or "uniform" info across the district. We aren't even aware of all the possibilities until someone else mentions they did something and then you learn from there.

I would have appreciated more practical information about how to work effectively with school administration.

More emphasis on short term interventions to improve student success and social/emotional issues. More training on a counselor's role working in a multi-tiered system of support model.

More hands on training in dealing with challenging and disruptive behaviors.

Challenging parent interactions/diffusing conflict

Learning to get along with hard to get along people in the workplace would be great to be trained in.

Yes, teaching & curriculum on the elementary level. The whole program was focused on secondary.

college and career, but I think that has improved since I was in the program

What ways could the program support you now that you have graduated?

They still do support me.

Im not sure. Maybe help those who do not find jobs into positions.

Offer additional coursework for the changing profession - such as mental health.

Connections to PhD options

I haven't reached out since I graduated, but I get emails regularly from our director. I feel if I ever needed anything I could reach out to Camille.

I feel they support me in whatever I need.

I love the job notices. Information about CE credits or jobs out of state would be nice too.

I reach out to former professors and to Camille with questions and receive support regularly.

I don't need support from the program I graduated from.

Help me know how to re-license.

Resources for online mental health education would be useful.

I would appreciate information on possibly furthering my education, or pursuing additional qualifications

I now live in Maine so not a lot they can do for me but if I was in Utah I'd be very grateful for the way they always send job opportunities it to us.

None. When I have had questions as I moved out of state, the director was very responsive to my questions and needs

This isn't needed.

More job placement opportunities/updates

Offer a PHD in Counseling Supervision.

They do reach out with job opportunities and campus opportunities.

I seek out support for USCA and ASCA now that I am graduated.

Continued network sponsored by the USU School Counseling

Continue to send job openings (thank you!)

Nothing—you guys do great!

Professional Development Opportunities

Profesional development options

Opportunities to join with other counselors for advocacy and lobbying. I want to get involved to make schools safer for marginalized students, and also advocate for myself as a professional. It might be nice to have some ways to get involved.

Camille already does an excellent job with sending emails and updates periodically.

I appreciate being included on job postings.

One thing I am interested in finding out about trainings and/or education that could build on my current degree.

Offer credit from attending conferences

Keep training other people!

Maybe some kind of newsletter with updates on the program and what graduates are doing? I don't know. I just felt I needed to add something here.

None; the program feels too distant.

communicating with us on professional development opportunities.

I love still connecting with the program coordinator to continue contact with new students.

Kim Herrera is a God-send----I LOVE what she's done to update and define our job!

I still enjoy receiving emails about new updates and helpful events even after I have graduated. Helps me still feel informed.

Possibly just reminders about updating my license and those continued job openings in case I ever leave this district!!

Updates related to licensing changes

I feel like there is all of the support I need if there's ever a reason for me to reach out.

It shouldn't have to provide support now.

Resources for elementary school counselors. There are a growing number of elementary school counseling positions in my district each year. It wasn't as prevalent when I was in the program and so all of the curriculum dealt with secondary school counseling.

I love that I continue to get emails with info & support about job opportunities, etc. from the USU program director.

I would love if they offered CEU or a refresher course for those wanting to get back into the profession after a break. I feel I have forgotten a lot of the important things but feel it would come back quickly with a refresher course.

Perhaps suggested trainings.

I'd like any recommendations for great webinars, books, or resources that upcoming school counselors are learning, just as way to keep fresh on updated professional development.

I have felt wonderful support.

Professional development opportunities that are non-credit bearing and available to school counselors in rural areas.

More PD opportunities with counselors from our program as we have developed relationship that were previously built. I feel that discussion would go more in depth due to not having to build trust with strangers.

Refresher courses

I like the emails that I continue to receive and continuing to work with the state office will be great for us on the ground..

Sharing of interesting research

Offer ways to earn credits learning relevant material

I've had no additional program support, but some extra support in the areas mentioned above (such as workshops, newsletters, etc.) would be very helpful.



**In closing, is there any other information that might be useful to us as we work towards maintaining a high-quality program?**

Develop an PhD program just like it!! I'd sign up right away. ;)

Camille, I'm gonna miss you! You are amazing!

Make sure students going into practicum and internship are actually working in a school counseling program not just in various departments in a school. It's hard to give them the experiences they need to be prepared if they aren't specifically working with school counselors.

Outstanding program!

Faster program. One year of coursework and one semester of internship and done.

It would be nice to add a double masters program including a CMHC degree.

Burn-out is extremely real and hurtful. After 3 years of not feeling adequately prepared I am switching positions.

I have moved to Louisiana and have tried to transfer my school counseling license but the State Board of Education in Louisiana will not grant me a license because they said that the curriculum at Utah State University does not align with Louisiana's curriculum. I'm not sure this is something that is common for my education to not be valid outside of Utah, but it has been a bit frustrating. I don't think this reflects the quality of my education for working inside of Utah. I worked as a counselor for three years in Utah before moving, and I felt very prepared to do my job in Utah.

No, I feel like it is a great program!

Just add more elementary school counseling to the program. I feel like everything in school counseling is geared towards secondary and elementary gets left behind. We have to fend for ourselves most of the time and have A LOT of issues/focuses that are never discussed in the program. For ex: The main focus of elementary is to provide SEL as a primary intervention, but I had never even heard of SEL in the program.

Overall, I know I had an excellent program, especially when I compare to come colleagues I've worked with.

When I moved out of state and got a counseling job, I had to do extra certification because USU is not CACREP certified.

The program laid a great foundation on what Utah requires, which I feel is a lot more that the current state I work in. I have been able to take the skills I have learned and use those to boost the program I'm in now.

Please provide specific training for those interested in elementary school counseling. A lot of what was presented was irrelevant to elementary school counselors and other needs were completely neglected for this field.

We were told that practicum and intern students could not apply for jobs. \*This was wrong. I had to quit my job and lose a year's worth of pay to do my practicum and internship when I could have been paid all along. Encourage students to look outside their district for opportunities. I am happy in district, but could have made more money/ been hired at the practicum level had I gone out of district. \* Networking opportunity for all state districts.

Keep going! I absolutely loved my experience and am so grateful I went through USU to earn my degree. Camille is amazing and keeps everything so organized and her efforts should be applauded.

None. I thoroughly enjoyed the program.

Keep up the great work!

No, I genuinely loved my experience in the program. Thank you for all you do!

I really enjoyed the program and feel it did a great job in preparing me for my school counseling career.

Maybe do more to help those in remote sites feel more a part of things. It's easy to feel isolated and disconnected when you don't have many others in the classroom with you, or a live instructor to help keep you engaged.

Felt the program was too nebulous/etherial (not sure how to say it really). Felt like we had two classes literally focused exclusively on diversity awareness. Obviously we need to be aware of multicultural issues/diversity/advocating for underserved populations...but I feel like I would have wanted more classes on actually counseling with kids.

Truly, the key for me was the instructors. Any instructor who was currently in the schools had automatic trust from me, the others who were teaching from a text, not so much.....

I appreciated all of my training! I needed to know the secondary side of things in order to prepare my students as they move toward secondary schooling. I like knowing school counseling as a whole and they getting really good at my part in it (elementary).

Thank you for a wonderful and economical experience!

Make the program more professional. More direct application, less busy work. I don't understand the point of having a psychometrics class when counselors don't administer psychological testing for students. If it is required, could we meet the requirements while having that as a 7 week overview class and have Individual Counseling Skills be a full semester class? Time is spent on what is valued. More opportunities to practice skills earlier on, please!

Utah State University is an excellent institution. My only request is to focus on condensing general/broad curriculum and lengthening applied, hands-on learning throughout the program. There were numerous times where the professors had to fill time for the last hour of class with simple material that was already discussed multiple times throughout the program.

Thanks for taking and making the time to be so intentional in developing a living program that adapts to needs and changes.

Keep up the good work!

Keep up the good work and sending us quality graduates to hire.

I appreciate the communication from our director of jobs hiring. I'm happy in my position but I think it's great she gives the information.

No, the program was fantastic.

Since I am not a school counselor, I would love to find out information on how to maintain my certifications in case I ever want to make a transition back to school counseling.

Your program is excellent!

You could maybe include a section during one of your courses on Professional Careers you can pursue with this degree, other than just K-12 school licensure and counseling. Academic Advising in Universities, Online School counseling, etc.

Keep up the great work!

The USU program is incredible! I would highly recommend it to anyone going into the field of school counseling.

Please continue with evening and hybrid/statewide course offerings, as well as flexibility with practicum hours.

I was well prepared to enter the counseling profession and it has helped me pursue administration.

Teach how to help all students, not just the low socioeconomic and minority students.

My experience with USU's school counseling program was so positive. I continue to recommend the program to colleagues who express interest in becoming a school counselor. Very high praise overall. Thank you!

Also, due to this program and Pheonix's I find competition for job openings is very high. It makes it hard to find a position now that I want to get back into things. I worked as a school counselor initially for 3 years after the program. I don't know if it is possible, but I really wish they would scale back the number of new graduates. There not close to enough employment to support them.

You should take what I say with a grain of salt. I disagree with the being able to reach 100% of the students with a good program that the school counseling program preached .. its not possible. Maybe in a perfect world, but the world is far from perfect.. People (students) fall through the cracks always have always will. A good School Counseling can't fix something as complex as what happens in daily life.. And the honest truth is most people never see past their own biases no matter how old or seasoned or skilled or educated they are, not because they can't because they don't want to. What I think should be preached more in the program is tolerance and living without guile.. We are becoming a divided and intolerant society more so that years past ... Just my two cents

I had a wonderful experience in my program and feel I was well prepared when I started my job.

I am so fortunate to have chosen this program. I feel that it prepared me well and gave me the necessary supports to be successful in the profession. Excellent advisors.

None, thank you.

Not any more than was stated.

Camille and Beverly did an amazing job at program administration

I don't feel like it is easy to help promote the program in Carbon at USU-E. I can't ever find information about when cohorts are starting, etc.

I felt like I had a very positive experience! Thank you!