

Professional Dispositions Competency Assessment Revised (PDCA-R) Process

Utah State University School Counselor Education Program

Updated Fall 2022

Student Dispositions

Students are assessed at admission and checked at various times throughout their program of study in the School Counselor Education program to determine their demonstration of the following student dispositions. The dispositions below are identified by the Utah State University Department of Psychology school counseling faculty, instructors, and staff as representing dispositions that are desirable in counselors-in-training because they will serve the students well in the education and professional counseling fields.

- Conscientiousness – The ability to plan, deliberate, persevere, and demonstrate evidence of self-discipline, a strong sense of responsibility, and a preference toward planning.
- Cooperativeness – Behaviors that suggest cooperation, such as collaborating well with authority figures; avoiding inappropriate competition or power struggles; accepting influence from supervisors and other experts; displaying a general exposition of helpful behaviors; and demonstrates being collaborative in nature.
- Coping and Self-Care – Engages in appropriate levels of self-care. Identifies and responds appropriately to personal stress, burnout, situational impairment, loss, trauma, medical issues, and crisis. Uses positive coping and stress management mechanisms.
- Critical Thinking – Demonstrates fairness in behavior toward others. Flexibility in problem solving and a willingness to abandon nonproductive strategies. Demonstrates the ability to analyze and synthesize.
- Cultural Sensitivity – Behaviors that suggest tolerance for the culture and lifestyle differences of others; cultural sensitivity to the multiple possible factors that make up an individual's identity; awareness of one's own heritage and the impact on others.
- Emotional Stability – Ability to control negative emotions (such as anger and anxiety) and adopt a generally positive perspective; effective management of psychological dysfunction and/or excessive emotional reactions that could potentially interfere with professional functioning.
- Honesty – Academic honesty; reliable and truthful in dealings with others; engenders public trust.
- Interpersonal Skills – Engagement with the external world; capacity to interact effectively with others; energy in interpersonal relationships, and warmth. Capacity to demonstrate state extroversion. Ability to deal appropriately with conflict.
- Legal, Ethical, and Professional – Integration of professionalism and ethical standards into day-to-day behavior. Behavior conveys the ability to judge the rightness or wrongness of actions and act upon the judgment. Except in rare circumstances, the ability to abide by and follow rules, policies, and laws.

- Moral Reasoning – Behaviors that convey the ability to judge the rightness or wrongness of actions and act upon the decision. Abiding by and following rules, policies, and laws.
- Openness – Tolerance for ambiguity; tolerance for the culture and lifestyle differences of others; imaginative; curious; open to new experiences; intellectually interested and engaged.
- Self-Awareness – A conscious knowledge of one’s own traits, character, motive patterns, emotions, and behavior; evidenced by depth of self-understanding.

Student/Program Assessment Process

The dispositions above are assessed at various established points throughout the program identified here as “gate” checks:

Gate 1: Admissions

Student self-assessment and understanding of the PDCA-R process is due at orientation prior to the start of the student’s first semester of the first year in the program

Gate 2: Completion of first year of coursework

Assessed systemically by first-year program instructors and faculty, before the first semester of the second year of the program

Gate 3: Completion of Practicum (PSY 6370)

Student self-assessment is due prior to the start of the practicum semester during the second year of the program

Site and secondary supervisor evaluation of student at mid- and end of the practicum semester are due by the final day of the student’s practicum experience

Gate 4: Completion of first semester Internship (PSY 6250)/Program Exit

Student self-assessment before internship is due two weeks after the start of the internship semester during the third year of the program

Site and secondary supervisor evaluations of student at both mid- and end of internship semesters are due by the final day of the student’s internship experience

Students will be given feedback on their performance on the above dispositions as well as KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) at Gates 2-4 from program faculty or instructors immediately after each gate has been completed. Students must be rated by program faculty, staff, and/or instructors as “**Meeting Expectations**” (a score of 3 out of 5) across all dispositional areas on their most recent performance evaluation. Students who receive a rating of “Below Expectation” will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the School Counselor Education program faculty to determine readiness for practicum or internship placement and/or the need for remediation prior to applying for practicum, internship, or licensure.

Incident Process

In addition, when issues in any of the above identified dispositions occur between gates, program faculty, instructors, and/or staff will file a PDCA – RI form (Professional Dispositions Competency Assessment Revised Incident report form), or also called a “Red/Yellow/Blue/Green form,” on the student, identifying which disposition is of concern. This process initiates a faculty meeting to discuss the individual student and determine if the student needs additional support, remediation, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

The PDCA – RI (Revised Incident) Report from a program faculty, instructor, or staff member includes the following procedures. The individual making the report will identify the student’s name, date of filing, name of individual filing the report, and date of incident being reported. The reporting individual will:

- (1) Check the box most closely associated with the disposition(s) related to the feedback they wish to offer, where more than one disposition box may be checked.
- (2) Check the level of concern (R/Y/G/B) in the box on the far right of the report using the key (outlined below).
- (3) On the third page of the PDCA-RI, the individual will write a detailed explanation of the incident or situation leading to the filing of the PDCA-RI; being as specific as possible, using behavioral terms.
- (4) Record the recommended action, such as a remediation plan, in the space provided; and,
- (5) If a group decision occurred, record the decision of the group in the space provided.

Note: If this form becomes part of the student’s academic file, per FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) requirements, students may have legal access to this record.

Blue: An incident or situation has led the person filing the report to want to recognize a student as needing **evident observable support** or standing out from their cohort peers. A **Blue** signifies that additional **faculty support or encouragement** is needed.

Green: The person filing has **some concerns** of the student, but they do not believe the situation warrants remediation or gatekeeping strategies. A **Green** signifies that additional awareness of student concerns is needed from other program faculty, supervisors, and/or staff members.

Yellow: The person filing has **concerns** and is **recommending remediation** of the student. A **Yellow** signifies that program faculty must meet to discuss and come to an agreement on an appropriate remediation for the student at the earliest opportunity.

Red: The person filing has **very strong concerns** and is recommending **gatekeeping (suspension or dismissal)**, with or without remediation (but with due process). A **Red** signifies that all program faculty, including but not limited to program department head and/or college dean, are made aware of the situation, commence a meeting, and include legal services, the student, and or other authorities where appropriate to determine a proper outcome.

While some identified concerns may require a program response that results in remediation and procedures communicated to support the student with the dispositional concern, other concerns

may require immediate student suspension or dismissal without remediation. These areas are outlined within Utah State University's Graduate School Policies and Procedures. The purpose of the identified gate checks is to give students early and ongoing feedback, as well as to provide the counseling faculty, instructors, and staff with a process to screen the counseling profession, per the ethical requirements of the American Counseling Association, American School Counselor Association, and Utah School Counselor Association.