

CEP ADMISSION REQUIREMENT

COUNSELOR CHARACTERISTICS/CULTURAL WRITING SAMPLE

SCHOOL AND MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Neukrug's 8 Characteristics of an Effective Counselor (Neukrug, E. (2011) *The World of the Counselor: An Introduction to the Counseling Profession*). The department believes that the following 8 characteristics are important aspects of professional counseling. Consider the descriptions of the 8 characteristics listed below and use the directions to provide a writing sample to be included with your application materials.

Neukrug's 8 Characteristics of an Effective Counselor:

1. Relationship Building (ability to build rapport and trust with a client)
2. Empathy (ability to understand a client's feelings and world)
3. Genuineness (ability to be authentic and monitor one's emotions)
4. Acceptance (ability to regard all people unconditionally despite differences in race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, cultural heritage, etc.)
5. Open Mindedness (ability to reduce and work toward being free from preconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding issues involving race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, cultural heritage, etc.)
6. Cognitive Complexity (ability to be self aware and receive feedback)
7. Psychological Adjustment (ability to work on your own psychological issues so they do not negatively impact your role as a counselor)
8. Competence (ability to maintain competence through lifelong learning)

First: Self Review of the Characteristics

Rate yourself on the degree that you possess each of these 8 characteristics on a scale of 1-10, with 1,2,3 representing a low amount of this characteristic, 4,5,6,7 representing a moderate amount of this characteristic, and 8,9,10 representing a high amount of this characteristic.

Second: Criteria for the Writing Sample

Construct a 1500-2500 word writing sample answering the following questions about these 8 characteristics:

1. Begin this paper with a brief introductory, biographical paragraph telling the department something about yourself and your culture (e.g. where did you grow up, describe the diversity of your and your family's friends, discuss the positives and negatives of your cultural background, and discuss what groups of people you would find the most challenging to work with as a counselor).

2. Give yourself a numerical rating in each of the 8 areas and provide concrete examples from your life on 2 of Neukrug's 8 Characteristics listed above that represent your strengths. Then pick 2 of Neukrug's 8 Characteristics listed above that you might be able to improve, and state what could you do and how do you think the program, classes, and faculty could help you improve in these areas? This will be part of your personal growth plan for improvement over the course of the program.
3. Discuss Items 4 and 5 of Neukrug's 8 Characteristics listed above (Acceptance and Open-Mindedness), explaining how you are continuing to improve in your ability to regard all people unconditionally and reduce your preconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding issues involving race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, cultural heritage, etc. This will be part of your personal growth plan for improvement over the course of the program.

Scoring Rubric for Counselor Characteristics/Cultural Writing Sample

Follow the guidelines outlined in this scoring rubric for a successful writing sample.

Satisfactory Writing Sample

A Satisfactory score indicates that the student: gave complete responses to all aspects of the writing requirement; and responses on the 8 characteristics appear to be a fit for the counseling program; and responses provide adequate clarity in written expression; and responses consistently used correct punctuation and were grammatically correct; and the overall writing sample is at the beginning graduate level; and overall the response appears to be a fit for the counseling program. If two faculty agree that the writing sample is Satisfactory, the student is given a clear pass and continues with the admission process. If the student receives an Unsatisfactory on the writing sample, the student may: a) withdraw their application for admission; or b) continue with the two-step appeal process outlined below.

A Satisfactory Score Requires a Yes Response to All Items Listed Below (A No response to any item(s) listed below indicates an Unsatisfactory score, and the student may appeal as outlined above):

Complete response to all aspects of the writing requirement

Responses on all 8 of the characteristics appear to be a fit for the counseling program

All responses provide adequate clarity in written expression

All responses consistently used correct punctuation and were grammatically correct

Appeal Process for Unsatisfactory Writing Sample

Step 1: Any student receiving an Unsatisfactory score on their Writing Sample may request in writing (email or letter) to meet face to face with two faculty members chosen by the department chair to discuss in greater depth his/her ability to express themselves in written format, his/her commitment to graduate work, and his/her overall fit for a counseling program. If the student has any ADA issues related to this matter, current and relevant documentation must be provided with the written request. The Department Chair will select two faculty (which could include the Chair) to meet with the student individually. After the interview, if both faculty agree that the student has adequately met this admission requirement, the student is given a clear pass and continues with the admission process. If both faculty do not agree that the student has met this requirement, the student receives an Unsatisfactory score, and the student may: a) withdraw their application for admission; or b) continue with the appeal process outlined in Step 2.

Step 2: If the student continues to receive an Unsatisfactory, after the two reviews outlined above, the student may request in writing (email or letter) an interview by the full faculty to discuss in greater depth his/her ability to express themselves in written format, his/her commitment to graduate work, and his/her overall fit for a counseling program. After the interview, if any two faculty agree that the student has met this requirement, the student is given a clear pass and continues with the admission process. If any two faculty do not agree that the student has met this requirement, the student receives an Unsatisfactory score, alternative suggestions are provided to the student, and the student's application is rejected for a final decision by the department.