



Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council

Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council Report at the 2024 Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs

Thank you for this opportunity to share our report at the 2024 Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs Conference. MPCAC (M-P-CAC) looks forward to having an ongoing relationship with your organization.

Major Accomplishments:

MPCAC is particularly proud of the approval of our 2024 Standards at our December board meeting along with the posting and sharing of our standards to our accredited programs and programs under review. This arduous process took place over two years which involved weekly executive committee meetings, a thorough analysis report of our 2017 standards completed by our former board member, Dr. Kristy Keefe, an intensive in-person weekend board member meeting at Clayton State University, a public comment period, and several scheduled town hall meetings with accredited programs, programs under review, and pre-application programs. Although exhausted at the end, we are pleased with the outcome with our efforts since this will only continue to benefit our current and future programs in being science-based, competency-grounded and client-focused.

In addition, MPCAC implemented their restructuring organization plan which changed the focus of our board from a “working” to a “strategic” one. As of September 1, 2023, we have been meeting on a quarterly basis along with creating two new committees: Committee on Accreditation and Finance Committee. The formation of the Committee on Accreditation has provided a more thorough and effective accreditation review process which has allowed the full MPCAC board to increase focus on our additional needs and future vision.

Finally, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs contacted our executive directive to learn more about MPCAC and our accreditation standards in order to assess if students from MPCAC accredited programs could be eligible for future employment opportunities. We are currently waiting for the VA to report their decision regarding the inclusion of MPCAC within their new regulations.

MPCAC Leadership

Dr. Jane Stafford, University of South Carolina Aiken, is the chair of the MPCAC Board with Christopher Walter, M.A., Delaware Valley University, serving as secretary, and Dr. Genelle Sawyer, The Citadel, serving as chair of the Committee on Accreditation (CoA) We currently have eleven board members who are from MPCAC accredited programs and from eight states stretching from the East coast to the Rocky Mountains. Our executive director is Dr. Pat O'Connor, Russell Sage College. Our accreditation coordinator is Mark Kenney M.Ed., LPC.

MPCAC Participation in other Organizations

In 2021, we were most pleased that CHEA awarded MPCAC recognition as an accrediting organization for a period of seven (7) years. MPCAC continues to monitor the work of CHEA to identify any changes in standards or expectations that might affect the structure or work of MPCAC. Dr. O'Connor typically attends the CHEA annual conferences and presented at the 2022 Conference.

MPCAC continues its membership in the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA). ASPA is dedicated to enhancing quality in higher education through specialized and professional accreditation and comprises organizations that evaluate programs and institutions of higher learning in more than 100 different specialized disciplines and professions. MPCAC remains an active member of ASPA and our Executive Director participates regularly in ASPA-sponsored webinars, and attends their annual meeting.

MPCAC was accepted as an affiliate member of the American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB) in March 2022. Our executive director participates in the bi-monthly affiliate member meetings. Earlier this month, MPCAC was a sponsor at the 2024 AASCB annual conference in Tucson, AZ. As an accrediting organization in 24 states, MPCAC represents the interests of MPCAC-accredited programs whose graduates can become licensed in those and other states.

Current Status of Accreditations

As of December 31, 2023, 64 applied master's degree programs from 55 institutions across 24 States have been accredited by MPCAC. In 2022-2023, 2 programs were newly accredited and 1 received re-accreditation. Currently 10 programs are under review, that is, they are pre-site visit. Another 12 programs have a deferral, that is, they have stipulations which must be successfully addressed prior to accreditation. These numbers are slightly lower than previous years due to our action in the fall to stop moving forward with any accreditations until our 2024 accreditation standards were approved at our December Board meeting. Due to this action, we had to pause the application process for some programs and anticipate an increase in accreditations starting mid-year.

Future Plans:

With the start of a new year, MPCAC will be working on increasing our visibility as well as exploring our creation of educational trainings pertaining to our accreditation process. With the enactment of our 2024 accreditation standards, we have developed a check list of substantive new changes for our programs to assist them in meeting these standards by September 1, 2025. Our central office will provide additional support to our programs during this time. In addition, we will be piloting a new accreditation procedure which will involve our central office taking over managing the site visit process.

MPCAC will continue to monitor the Counseling Compact as this entity completes their regulation process and possible implementation this year. Alumni and students from MPCAC accredited programs meet the eligibility requirements of the Counseling Compact and will be able to participate upon the completion of their studies.