

ASSESSING PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS FOR MASTER'S LEVEL CACREP
COUNSELING PROGRAMS: EVALUATION OF PERSONAL-EMOTIONAL
CHARACTERISTICS

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study consisted of three main components: 1) to identify effective counselor characteristics in the literature; 2) to describe existing admission requirements of counseling programs; and, if a need was determined, 3) to develop a framework for a standard set of admission requirements, balanced between cognitive-behavioral characteristics and personal-emotional characteristics, to more thoroughly assess prospective master's level counseling students.

This study discusses the typical admission requirements of master's level CACREP (The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) counseling programs and what the research indicates are characteristics of effective counselors. A literature review of effective counselor characteristics and graduate admission requirements was conducted, CACREP guidelines were examined, and admission requirements and procedures for all 129 CACREP counselor education programs were analyzed. The findings from the literature review were then compared with the data collected and analyzed from existing master's level CACREP counseling programs to determine gaps between the literature-identified characteristics of effective counselors and current admission criteria of CACREP programs. Follow-up

telephone interviews with a faculty of leadership stature from a sample of 20 CACREP counseling programs were conducted. After determining a need, information collected was used to develop a framework for a standard set of admission requirements.

Results indicated that currently, a) there is no framework for a standard set of admission requirements for assessing prospective students for master's level counseling programs that identify personal-emotional characteristics, b) there are gaps between what the literature identifies as effective counselor characteristics and what is typically assessed during admission, c) an agreement exists that the counseling profession must do a better job of gate-keeping, and d) that a framework of admission requirements is needed by counselor educators to assist in a more thorough screening and examination of personal characteristics of prospective students. Finally, e) this research established a foundation for this framework of a standard set of admission requirements that could be used by faculty to more exhaustively assess prospective master's level counseling students.