Overview

The Program in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling in Mental Health at the University of Kentucky (UK-GPRC) prepares Master’s level rehabilitation counselors and doctoral level rehabilitation educators and researchers consistent with the mandates of the state-federal rehabilitation program, and other public and private agencies, programs, and facilities including community rehabilitation programs, and the Veterans Administration.

The Master’s program employs a combination of coursework, practicum, and internship experiences to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to assist in the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities to help them achieve the highest level of functioning consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and 2008, and other related rehabilitation legislation such as the technology act.

The mission of the University of Kentucky Master’s Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling in Mental Health is to promote professional excellence through personal development and the highest academic standards as we work with our students, persons with disabilities, and our state and community partners in rehabilitation counseling to achieve equal rights, social justice, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in our community, in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, nationally, and globally.

Graduates are employed in settings, which include the state-federal rehabilitation program, rehabilitation facilities, mental health facilities, schools, medical facilities, the Veterans Administration, and other public and private agencies.

The Master’s program employs an interdisciplinary, Human Resource Development approach to the preparation of rehabilitation counselors. Issues of cultural diversity, social justice, technology, ethics, and understanding human interactions are infused throughout the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on understanding (a) significant disability, (b) job placement techniques including working with business and industry, (c) school to work transition and supported employment, (d) rehabilitation and assistive technology, (e) consumer issues and empowerment including the Americans with Disabilities Act, (f) ethical and legal practices, (g) cultural diversity, (h) addiction, and (i) quality of life.

The Master’s program also provides course offerings through a web-based distance learning program. Through an accelerated learning process, students enrolled in the web-based program can complete their degree in the same length of time as full time campus students. A partnership with Kentucky State University (KSU) and the two state rehabilitation agencies has led to the development of an Endorsement Curriculum and University Scholars program for qualified students. This allows KSU undergraduate students to be joint UK graduate and KSU
undergraduate students and obtain basic rehabilitation courses and be eligible for employment in the public program and complete their Master’s degree in a shorter time frame.

Ranked #6 nationally in the *U.S. News and World Report* Graduate School Rankings for Rehabilitation Counseling, we pride ourselves on ensuring our students graduate from an elite program that fosters professional growth, leadership, advocacy, and excellence in counselor education, rehabilitation research, and rehabilitation counseling practice.

The Rehabilitation Counseling Program offers a Departmental Ph.D. in Early Childhood, Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling with a Formal Option in Rehabilitation Counseling Education, Research, and Policy. Our Ph.D. program offers students a uniquely strong academic preparation, rich opportunities for research and professional development, and an opportunity to study with nationally known and respected Rehabilitation Counseling faculty and researchers in a setting where our focus is on the student and his or her professional and educational goals.

We have carefully designed our doctoral curriculum to meet the needs of students who are preparing for careers in rehabilitation counselor education, research, and administration. We value a diverse student body and encourage applications from persons with disabilities, international applicants, and applicants from traditionally underserved and minority groups. As a national leader in doctoral rehabilitation education, we are committed to the success and professional growth of our students as rehabilitation counselor educators and leaders.

The doctoral program is campus-based (not offered on-line). Our students enjoy small courses and extensive faculty support and attention. The Rehabilitation Counseling Education, Research, and Policy Doctoral Program typically admits 1-2 students annually for study toward the Ph.D. degree. Students typically already possess a Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a closely related degree. The program generally maintains an enrollment of 6-10 students. Graduates have a 100% job placement rate.

The Program is currently applying for accreditation for the doctoral program by the Council of Accreditation for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

**Background**

**History of the Program.** The program was initially established in 1962 and is among the oldest in the nation. In 1978 it was reorganized and administratively housed in the Graduate School of the university. In July 1992 the program was placed under the Dean of the College of Education as a distinct unit within this college. With the addition of a third faculty member in August 1993, the decision was made to merge the program with Special Education effective July 1, 1994. The doctoral program began enrolling students in 2009, with the formal option in Rehabilitation Counseling Education, Research, and Policy being established in 2013.
The Department is now known as Early Childhood, Special Education, and Rehabilitation Counseling (EDSRC). This structure provides a degree of autonomy in the development of program and course offerings. A fourth tenure track faculty member was appointed to the program in 2000 and a fifth tenure line position was filled in the spring of 2012. A non-tenure track Clinical Assistant Professor person coordinates the distance learning program. In August 2015 a Clinical Assistant Professor was appointed to develop an undergraduate curriculum.

**Degrees.** Graduates receive a Master of Rehabilitation Counseling degree with either a Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling or a Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling in Mental Health (MRC) specialty option. The Doctoral Program in Rehabilitation Counseling Education, Research, and Policy was established in 2009, and given formal designation in 2013.

**Program Administration.** The Coordinator and Director of Graduate Study is Ralph M. Crystal. He reports to the chair of EDSRC. Malachy Bishop is Coordinator of the Doctoral Program. The program has an advisory board that assists with programmatic issues and direction.

**Composition of the Faculty.** There are eight doctoral level faculty affiliated with the program. Five are tenure line and are three are adjunct including the person who coordinates the distance learning program. This includes four Full Professors, one Assistant Professor, two Clinical Assistant Professor, and two adjunct assistant professors. The UK-GPRC also has an endowed professorship, which is presently held by Ralph M. Crystal.

**Number of Students.** There are at present over 100 students enrolled, 25 of who are full-time campus students and the remainder are enrolled in the web based distance education program. There are 8 students currently enrolled in the Doctoral program.

**Number of Graduates.** During the past five years over 200 individuals have graduated with a Master’s degree. They have primarily been employed in the state-federal program, rehabilitation facilities, proprietary programs, and hospitals. The doctoral program has had one graduate so far, who is employed in graduate rehabilitation counselor education.

**Accreditation.** The program is fully accredited through the year 2021 by the Council on Rehabilitation Education. We were reaccredited in July 2013 for an eight-year period. We are also an institutional member of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE). We are in the process of applying for accreditation as a clinical mental health program through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for our master’s and doctoral programs.

**Approval.** The program is approved by the Kentucky Council on Post Secondary Education. It is the only rehabilitation counselor education program in the Commonwealth.
**Program Length (Master’s Degree).** The Master’s program is 60 credit hours. This includes 12 credit hours of field experiences. A minimum of 48 hours. An additional 12 credit hours can be transferred of equivalent coursework.

**Endorsement Curriculum/University Scholars (Master’s Degree).** In conjunction with the state rehabilitation agencies the RCP has established an endorsement curriculum with Kentucky State University in which participants will 12 credit hours of basic course work. A recently implemented program allows KSU students to be classified as UK graduate students at the same time that they are completing their undergraduate degree. As University Scholars we can provide such students with grant support if they agree to enroll in the master’s program. This program was designed to meet, in part, the employment needs of state rehabilitation agencies.

**Distance Learning (Master’s Degree).** Courses are offered via web based instruction. In January 2004 we implemented an accelerated distance education program. Full time state agency counselors can enroll in this program and complete their degree requirements in a 16-month time frame, the same as if they were actually enrolled as full time campus students.

**Funding.** The program has had grant support from the Rehabilitation Services Administration for the distance learning program. Funding has also been available through faculty research projects, and an endowment to train practitioners to work in rural rehabilitation settings. We also have a research endowment related to traumatic brain injury, and one for distance learning students.

**Course work (Master’s Degree).** Classes on campus are offered in the late afternoon and early evening to encourage both full and part-time enrollment. Internship students have the opportunity to do field work at exemplary facilities outside of Lexington. In recent years’ students have done Internships in Florida, New York, California, Colorado, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, and South Carolina.

**Student Composition.** The majority of students are Kentucky residents. Many come from Louisville, Lexington, and southeastern Kentucky. Out of state students have come from California, Virginia, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey, and Florida. We have had students from over half of the states enroll in the distance education program.

**Doctoral Program.** The doctoral program is an on-campus program (not offered via distance learning). The curriculum is a minimum of 74 credit hours, incorporating clinical and research and teaching internships. Time to degree is generally four years. Our students complete advanced doctoral seminars in rehabilitation counseling research, psychosocial aspects of chronic illness and disability, rehabilitation counseling theory, professional rehabilitation counseling issues, and counseling supervision and administration. In these courses, students explore a wide range of psychosocial, societal, and international perspectives on disability and in
Rehabilitation counseling. Our students reflect our commitment to excellence in Rehabilitation Counseling Education, Research, and Policy, and to diversity, professional development, and a global perspective.

**Certification/Licensure**

Program graduates are eligible to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor examination as well as eligible for licensure as professional counselors in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and other states.

**Recent Rankings**

The Rehabilitation Counseling program was ranked in the top 20 Rehabilitation Counseling programs in the nation by US News since 2007. In fact, we moved up in the ranking in 2015 to number 6 nationally.

This ranking is a recognition of the efforts that the faculty have made to have a high quality campus and web based rehabilitation counselor education based on a solid foundation of research, teaching, service, and community engagement. It is also a recognition of faculty accomplishments in these areas.

The Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program at the University of Kentucky has been ranked sixth out of 901 international institutions for publication productivity. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, considered the premiere journal in the field, published the peer reviewed study in its fall 2005 edition.

The study published two ratings lists. The first list, which rated UK eighth overall, tracks the college affiliation of the authors of every article in the six journals. All authors received equal credit regardless of their position in the published article. The second list weighted the authorship of each article. The study gave higher credit to those listed as first author than those listed in second or third position. It was from this list that UK achieved its sixth place rating. Nine hundred and one institutions in 15 nations were included in the analysis. The surveyors reviewed over 1,000 journal articles.

Recently a study published in the *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin* ranked this program 2nd in research and publication productivity internationally.

**Faculty Research/Appointments**

Faculty are presently involved in the following activities:
1. *Sonja Feist-Price* is involved in research involving four core areas: 1) rehabilitation counseling services for ex-offenders with disabilities, 2) homelessness and vocational rehabilitation of veterans with disabilities, 3) social support services for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer’s Disease, and 4) childhood trauma, mental health and HIV prevention. Her grant writing efforts include the development of culturally relevant social support services for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer’s Disease, and examining issues of homelessness and barriers to vocational rehabilitation access and successful return to work outcomes for veterans.

Dr. Feist-Price is Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs at the University of Kentucky. Previously she served for three years as University Academic Ombud.


She along with Dr. Feist-Price co-edited a special issue on offender population of the *Journal on Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*. Her *Handbook on LGBT Elders: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Principles, Practices, and Policies* was released in 2016. Dr. Harley is author of 15 chapters in this book, which she co-edited/co-authored with Dr. Pamela Teaster of Virginia Tech. She continues to serve as a site visitor for CORE. Dr. Harley is working with rehabilitation doctoral students on publications and national presentations.

3. *Malachy Bishop* is conducting research related to the application of quality of life models to the process of psychosocial adaptation to acquired disability and chronic illness, psychosocial aspects of multiple sclerosis and epilepsy, military veteran’s rehabilitation, and self-management. As Research Director of the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute, he promotes research related to the mission of the University of Kentucky’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Research and Service.

In 2015 he co-edited two special issues (Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation and Work-Journal of Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation) on multiple sclerosis employment and community living research with Dr. Phillip Rumrill of Kent State University.

Dr. Bishop recently (2014-2016) had a major grant funded related to investigating the health care priorities of Americans with multiple sclerosis, along with co-PI Dr. Chung-Yi Chiu of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

4. *Noel Ysasi*, Ph.D., CRC, was appointed as an Assistant Professor with the Rehabilitation
Counseling faculty in August 2015. Dr. Ysasi completed a bachelor’s degree in sociology and criminal justice, and master’s and doctoral degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Texas-Pan American. Dr. Ysasi has interests in life care planning and veteran’s services.

Dr. Ysasi is presently assisting with preparing the doctoral application for CACREP accreditation. He is also Assistant Coordinator of the Rehabilitation Counseling program. He is teaching in the Master’s and Doctoral programs in the Rehabilitation Counseling program.

5. **Kristin Maxwell, M.S., CRC** was appointed Clinical Assistant Professor in the Rehabilitation Counseling program in August 2015. She completed a B.S. in Rehabilitation Psychology and a M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Currently she is also a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her professional experiences include working in the field of Mental Health at a county mental health center and the county jail, providing crisis mental health interventions and counseling, crisis stabilization planning and coordination of services, and time-limited case management.

Kristin’s teaching experiences have include teaching academic courses in Rehabilitation Counseling (University of Kentucky), and Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education (University of Wisconsin-Madison); as well as working as a clinical supervisor at both the Rehabilitation Counseling Masters and undergraduate Rehabilitation Psychology levels.

Kristin is currently involved in developing an Undergraduate Program for the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at UK and acting as a working Chapter Faculty Advisor of the University of Kentucky Rho Zeta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (Honors Society). Kristin’s research interests include chronic pain, impression management, invisible disabilities, and program development and evaluation.

6. **Ralph M. Crystal** is Co-PI on a project related to training of distance learning students. He is department Director of Graduate Studies. He is involved with the development of an undergraduate rehabilitation/human services curriculum.

7. **Jackie Rogers** oversees the web based on line rehabilitation counseling in collaboration with rehabilitation program faculty. Dr. Rogers has an interest in forensic rehabilitation practice. She is Pi for a federal grant related to the training of distance learning students.

8. **Kathy Sheppard-Jones** is a program specialist with the Human Development Institute. She has developed and taught classes in the campus and web programs. She conducts research in the area of quality of life and agrarian rehabilitation. She recently received a
federal grant related to transition services for persons with disabilities. Dr. Sheppard-Jones was recently appointed as Director of the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute.

9. Dr. Beach is Director of the University of Kentucky Disability Resource Center. Prior to this time, he was Executive Director of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Faculty Publications**

Recent publications include the following:


Service

Major service contributions provided by the faculty include the following:


2. Board member of Employment Solutions, Opportunities for Work and Learning (OWL), Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Bluegrass, and the Family Counseling Services, all of which are local agencies.

3. Member of the Committee on the Kentucky Office of Prison Fellowship.

4. Board of Directors and Commissioner of the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification Commissioner for Council on Rehabilitation Counselor Education


6. Healthcare Advisory Committee of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Kentucky/Southeast Indiana Chapter.

9. Member: Kentucky Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union

10. Mentor Program of the Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities, Langston University and University of Massachusetts Institute on Community Inclusion

11. South Carolina State University Rehabilitation Counseling Program Advisory Board

12. Member, Standards and Exam Committee, Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

13. Graduate Commissions for the Council on Rehabilitation Education.
Certifications

All faculty hold certification as rehabilitation counselors (CRC) and Drs. Harley, Feist-Price, and Crystal hold certification as Kentucky Licensed Professional Counselors.

Awards


Dr. Debra Harley, Inductee, South Carolina State University Rehabilitation Counseling Program Hall of Fame (2006).

Dr. Debra Harley, National Council on Rehabilitation Education – Educator of the Year (2006)

Dr. Sonja Feist-Price, National Council on Rehabilitation Education Researcher of the Year (2002).

Debra Harley was interviewed with Cassandra Brooks on “Two worlds working together: Forming a link between traditional knowledge and western science” in Advancing Hispanic/Chicanos & Native Americans in Science (2009) for recognition of publication on indigenous healing.

Ralph M. Crystal received the Ben F. Coffman Award at the 2013 Southeast Regional Rehabilitation Conference in Louisville, KY