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Graduate and Professional Studies at The Chicago School

MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling- Chicago Campus

2024-25 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling – Chicago is housed in the Counselor Education Department. The MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling- Chicago program is dedicated to preparing students to become professional counselors for clinical mental health practice in a wide range of settings. The program focuses on students developing a professional identity as a practitioner-scholar; an awareness of diversity and advocacy; and strong helping relationships, diagnosis, and assessment skills. The core belief of the counseling program is that clients can heal from within a therapeutic environment.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Faculty

The following table provides a list of core program faculty for the 2024-25 Academic Year:

Fall 2024		
Name	Title (include email)	Degree
Dr. Dana Laughlin	Department Chair- dlaughlin@thechicaogschool.edu	Ed. D. Counselor Education and Supervision
Dr. Linda Robinson	Director of Clinical Training – lrobinson@thechicagoschool.edu	Psy. D- Clinical Psychology

Dr. Jeff Strozier	Core Faculty- jstrozier@thechicagoschool.edu	Ph. D- Counselor Education and Supervision
Dr. Keiana Winters	Core Faculty- kwinters@thechicagoschool.edu	Ph. D Counselor Education and Supervision
Spring 2025		
Dr. Dana Laughlin	Department Chair- dlaughlin@thechicagoschool.edu	Ed. D. Counselor Education and Supervision
Dr. Linda Robinson	Director of Clinical Training – lrobinson@thechicagoschool.edu	Psy. D- Clinical Psychology
Dr. Jeff Strozier	Core Faculty- Jstrozier@thechicagoschool.edu	Ph. D Counselor Education and Supervision
Dr. Keiana Winters	Core Faculty- kwinters@thechicagoschool.edu	Ph. D. Counselor Education and Supervision
Summer 2025		
Dr. Dana Laughlin	Department Chair- dlaughlin@thechicagoschool.edu	Ed. D. Counselor Education and Supervision
Dr. Linda Robinson	Director of Clinical Training- lrobinson@thechicagoschoo.edu	Psy. D- Clinical Psychology
Dr. Jeff Strozier	Core Faculty- jstrozier@thechicagoschool.edu	Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision
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Program Outcomes

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling -Chicago Program Objectives align with CACREP Standards and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) focus on scholarship, diversity, professional behavior, and professional practice. Program Objectives include:

Institutional Learning Outcomes	Program Objective
Scholarship: Graduates will be able to integrate scientific research and theory, as broadly defined, to enhance their professional and scholarly endeavors.	Students will critically evaluate and utilize research, evidence-based practices, and program evaluation to inform the practice of clinical mental health counseling with diverse client populations.
Diversity: Graduates will respect the value and dignity of individuals and groups across all cultural contexts, and advocate for inclusion and equity. They will demonstrate intercultural competence in domestic and international contexts with people who have ideas, beliefs, worldviews, experiences, and behaviors that are different from their own.	Students will demonstrate an intersectional lens of cultural competence in counseling with individuals, groups, and families from diverse cultural backgrounds as well as the ability to advocate for equity and social justice in the promotion of mental health on the behalf of clients, the community, and the profession of counseling.
Professional Behavior: Graduates will be able to demonstrate by their values, beliefs, and behaviors adherence to the highest ethical and professional standards in their personal and professional lives.	Students will demonstrate knowledge and application related to ethical professional counseling practice, establish a professional counselor identity, and engage in effective interdisciplinary practice.
Professional Practice: Graduates will be able to demonstrate attainment in the areas of competency (as reflected in knowledge, skills, and attitudes) required by their area of education and training. Examples include evaluation, intervention, consultation, teaching, and supervision.	• Students will demonstrate contextual knowledge and application of the principles of mental health, wellness, and human development including prevention, education, consultation, intervention, and advocacy. • Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of strategies for addressing diverse clients' career development and employment opportunities in a global economy. • Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of the helping process with diverse clients; counseling theories and techniques; prevention, education, and consultation; wellness models; counselor self-understanding; and the change process. • Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of group development, dynamics, theories, techniques, therapeutic factors, and how they contribute to the design and facilitation of groups in a culturally relevant manner. • Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of culturally and developmentally appropriate clinical assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation practices for diverse mental health service recipients in mental health service settings.

Student Admissions and Enrollment

The following section addresses student admissions, enrollment, and graduation during the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

Demographic and Other Characteristics of Applicants, Students, and Graduates (Diversity Program Outcome)

A primary component in providing excellent counselor education is a comprehensive evaluation. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling -Chicago program has a plan for systematically evaluating the demographics and other characteristics of applicants, students, and graduates. During the 2024-2025 Academic Year student enrollment, graduation, demographic, and descriptive programmatic data were collected and analyzed. Trends indicate that the program continues to attract, retain, and graduate a diverse student population, across the domain of age and race/ethnicity, with some notable differences in race/ethnicity. Patterns of recruiting, enrolling, and graduating individuals who identify as female tend to be higher than individuals who identify as male or non-binary. The program is currently partnered with admissions to create a plan to recruit and retain individuals across noted underrepresented domains. The following tales represent demographic and other characteristics of applicants, students, and graduates.

Gender Retention Rates 2024-2025

Academic Year Cohort			2024	**Total**
Program	Sex	Year 1 Retention		**Year 1 Retention**
M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling	**Total**		**80.49%**	**80.49%**
	Female		80.65%	**80.65%**
	Male		80.00%	**80.00%**
Total			**80.49%**	**80.49%**

Age Range Data 2024-2025

Academic Year Cohort			2024	**Total**
Program	Age	Year 1 Retention		**Year 1 Retention**
M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling	**Total**		**80.49%**	**80.49%**
	24		100.00%	**100.00%**
	25		84.62%	**84.62%**
	26		66.67%	**66.67%**

27	100.00%	**100.00%**
29	100.00%	**100.00%**

	30	100.00%	**100.00%**
	31	33.33%	**33.33%**
	32	100.00%	**100.00%**
	34	100.00%	**100.00%**
	36	100.00%	**100.00%**
	37	100.00%	**100.00%**
	48	100.00%	**100.00%**
	50	0.00%	**0.00%**
Total		**80.49%**	**80.49%**

Race/Ethnicity Data 2024-2025

Academic Year Cohort Program	Race	Year 1 Retention	2024	**Total Year 1 Retention**
M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling	**Total**		**80.49%**	**80.49%**
	Asian		85.71%	**85.71%**
	Black or African American		100.00%	**100.00%**
	Hispanic		100.00%	**100.00%**
	White		73.08%	**73.08%**
Total			**80.49%**	**80.49%**

Student & Program Effectiveness

A primary component in providing excellent counselor education is a comprehensive evaluation. The Clinical Mental Health Counseling-Chicago program has a comprehensive plan and are required to continuously and systematically assess and report academic quality indicators. Per Section 2, Standard 2.E.2, each program analyzes graduate outcomes and reports in aggregate, by program delivery type and CACREP specialized practice area, the achievement of minimum thresholds determined by the program for each of the following:

a) pass rates on credentialing examinations (Reported in Program Effectiveness Review, Section 4, Capstone, National Pass Rates.)

b) degree completion rates, and
c) employment and doctoral admission rates.

The program uses information collected and analyzed by Office of IDEAAS (responsible for Institutional Effectiveness and Research (IER formally OIR), Accreditation, Assessment, Survey, and Compliance (AASC) and Data Science (DS)) to monitor degree completion rates. In recent years, the program gained traction in terms of retention.

Program-Level Positive Student Success Trends

Positive Trends	Sustainability Plan	Correlation to Which Strategic Planning Goal(s)
Upward Trend in "still active" students	Continued required advising and assessment using multiple measures across multiple points in time.	Program Effectiveness

Further analysis is planned (using the new requisite student evaluation of advising, assessment, as well as a trend analysis of early intervention and remediation effectiveness) to better understand the qualitative reasons that students are persisting. Specifically, the following themes will be explored:

a. What motivates students to continue despite academic challenges?
b. How do external pressures influence persistence or withdrawal?
c. What role does advisor or faculty support play in students' decisions?
d. How does a student's sense of belonging affect their likelihood to stay?
e. In what ways do career goals impact the choice to persist or leave?

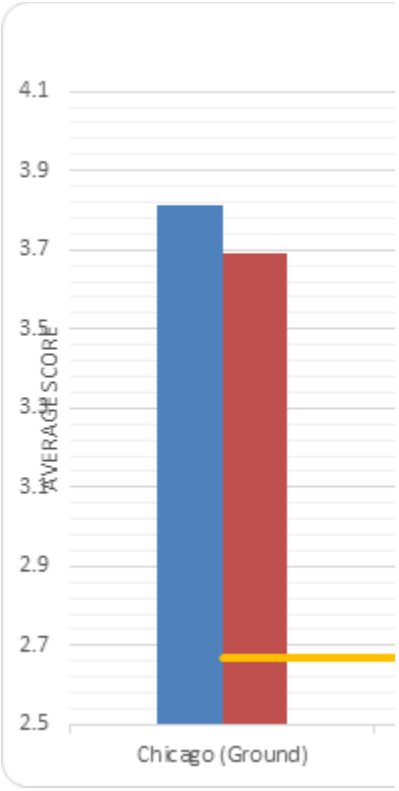
Aggregate Core, Specialty, and Battery Scores

Competency/Specialty Domain	Chicago (Ground)	
	23-24	24-25
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice (CM 500 and CM 507)	3.75	3.77

Social and Cultural Diversity	3.96	3.92
(CM 550)		
Human Growth and Development (CM 521)	3.74	3.63
Career Development (CM 564)	3.68	3.00
Counseling and Helping Relationships (CM 528)	3.83	3.86
Group Counseling and Group Work (CM 543)	3.71	3.95
Assessment and Testing (CM 571)	3.87	3.69
Research and Program Evaluation (CM 578)	3.93	3.61
Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CM 592)	3.86	3.79
CORE AND SPECIALTY COMPOSITE	3.81	3.69

The following graph provides a snapshot of sustained programmatic effectiveness using the composite scores for the 2023-2024 AY and 2024-2025 AY. The orange line represents the minimum threshold of 2.67.

Program Composites



The aggregate scores for all core and specialty (across all programs, curricular area) met or exceeded the minimum threshold of 2.67 (represented by the orange line) across the 2023-2024 AY and 2024-2025 AY). In conclusion, the overall trend within and across competency areas, remained generally stable over the study period for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program- Chicago Campus.

Pass Rates

The following shows pass rates on the NCE. The program continues to meet or exceed thresholds for pass rates.

	23-24	24-25
CORE AND SPECIALTY COMPOSITE	95.25	92.25
PASS RATE	87	80

Fieldwork Performance

Fieldwork Readiness Trends

In accordance with the CACREP Standards all fieldwork components are requisite competency-based clinical training experiences that algin summatively with program learning objectives. Under site supervision, field experience provides the program with measurable evidence that demonstrates student readiness in meeting entry level professional competencies. Site supervisors provide a measure of external validity relative to clinical knowledge, skill, and dispositional comportment and readiness.

A comparative analysis was conducted using fieldwork completion (Practicum and Internship) rates by location across the 2023-2024 AY and the 2024-2025 AY. The program met or exceeded minimum thresholds (80%) completion rates.

Programmatic Field Completion Rates

Practicum 23-24	Internship 23-24	Practicum 24-25	Internship 24-25
96.87	100	100	90.62
100	96.77	100	100

These rates, taken in conjunction with site supervision evaluations demonstrate consistent preparedness and readiness of students across the program for entry level practice. While each individual program uses unique metrics (per CACREP Standards), overall knowledge, skills, and dispositions are universally evaluated. Raw scores for each program were transformed to overall averages and are provided in Table 9: Site Supervisor Evaluation Composites. (important to note all metrics not listed here, can add to Appendix)

Site Supervisor Evaluation Competencies

Proficiency in administration of clinical interviewing skills and use of other assessment tools, i.e., mental status exam.	2.35
Collects and incorporates information from multiple sources to inform diagnosis.	2.31
Ability to recognize how a client's ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs influence the therapeutic relationship.	2.35

Ability to employ effective therapeutic techniques across different clinical presentations.	2.26
Evaluate effectiveness of chosen treatment interventions and strategies.	2.32
Knowledge of professional ethical standards and legal guidelines.	2.43
Case presentation is concise, provides comprehensive information to support diagnosis, treatment recommendations are relevant to the identified areas of concern.	2.37

The current employment trend data reflects responses from alumni of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program who graduated during the 2024–2025 reporting period. The number of alumni respondents was limited, which restricts the overall representativeness of the employment outcome data. To address this limitation, the program has developed a plan in collaboration with the Office of IDDEAS to implement more systematic procedures for collecting and tracking alumni employment outcomes.

Consistent with the program evaluation and continuous improvement expectations outlined in the 2024 standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), this initiative is intended to strengthen the program's ability to gather meaningful alumni outcome data, monitor employment trends, and use these findings to inform ongoing program assessment and improvement efforts.

Alumni employment data serve as an important component of the program's comprehensive evaluation process and are used to assess the extent to which the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program is effectively preparing graduates for entry into the counseling profession. Data regarding alumni employment status, professional roles, and practice settings are reviewed alongside additional stakeholder feedback, including employer input, site supervisor evaluations, student learning outcomes, and graduate self-assessments. Collectively, these data sources allow the program to evaluate alignment between curriculum, professional competencies, and workforce preparation. Findings from alumni employment trends are discussed during program faculty assessment meetings and are used to inform programmatic decisions, including curriculum refinement, professional development opportunities, and partnerships with community agencies. This process supports the program's ongoing commitment to systematic program evaluation and continuous improvement in alignment with the standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related
Educational Programs (CACREP).

Employment Data

Employment Data

Which best describes your employment status?

(n = 9)	%	(n)
Employed, full-time	77.8%	7
Employed part-time, not seeking more hours	11.1%	1
Employed part-time, seeking more hours	11.1%	1
Self-employed	0.0%	0
Unemployed, seeking position	0.0%	0
Unemployed, not seeking position	0.0%	0

Retired	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0

Primary, Current Employer

	(n = 6)
Abound Counseling and Wellness	1
Endeavor Health - Linden Oaks Hospital	1
Glaser and Associates, LLC	1
Grace Integrated, LLC	1
Innovate Counseling Partners	1
The Community House	1

Are you licensed in your field?

	(n = 7)
Yes.*	100.0%
No, but I plan to become licensed.	0.0%
No, and I do NOT plan to become licensed.	0.0%
There is no licensure option in my field.	0.0%

Years to obtain post-graduation	(n = 7)
Less than one year	57.1%
1	0.0%
2	14.3%
3	0.0%
4	0.0%
5	0.0%
6	0.0%
More than 6	0.0%

How long after graduating did you secure employment? By graduation, we mean the date on which you completed your degree.	(n = 6)
While I was enrolled at The Chicago School	50.0%
During first 6 months after graduation	50.0%
During the second 6 months post-graduation	0.0%
More than one year after graduation	0.0%
I have not yet sought a paying job and I am a full-time student	0.0%
I have not yet sought a paying job and I am engaged in other activities	0.0%
I have sought a paying job and I have not found one	0.0%

In your current role, do you serve minorities, special needs, and/or other under-served populations?		
Minorities (n = 6)		
	Yes	100.0%
	No	0.0%
Special Needs (n = 6)		
	Yes	33.3%
	No	66.7%
Other underserved areas or population (n = 6)		
	Yes	50.0%

It is important to note that this alumni survey was conducted in 2024 and yielded a response rate of 7%. Although the response rate was limited, the results indicate positive trends: alumni from our program are employed full-time within six months of graduation, are fully licensed, and are working in professional fields aligned with their degrees. Alumni also reported serving minorities and other specialized or marginalized populations, reflecting our program's learning outcomes, commitment to diversity, and mission-driven practice. Due to the low number of responses, the program collaborated with the Institutional Research Office to develop a more comprehensive alumni survey. The results of this revised survey can be included in the appendix as requested.

Program Modification and Other Substantial Program Changes

Include all areas of impact, modifications AND data used to inform change.

Area of Impact	Modification
Admissions	The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program–Chicago has collaborated with the Office of Admissions to pilot a revised interview schedule designed to improve accessibility for prospective applicants. As part of this initiative, program faculty are now available five days per week to conduct applicant interviews, increasing the number of available interview time slots. Additionally, the department has established an additional two-hour weekly time block during which the Department Chair is available to respond to questions from prospective applicants regarding program structure, expectations, and training opportunities. These efforts are intended to enhance communication with prospective students, improve the admissions experience, and support the program's ongoing recruitment and enrollment management strategies.
Program Evaluation	The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program–Chicago is engaged in a strategic process to align curriculum and coursework with the 2024 standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). As part of this initiative, the program will begin with a comprehensive review and revision of the eight core courses. This process includes updates to course syllabi, course learning outcomes, and program learning outcomes to ensure alignment with the expectations outlined in the 2024 CACREP standards. In addition, faculty are engaging in a systematic curriculum mapping process to ensure that required competencies are intentionally introduced, reinforced, and assessed across the core curriculum. The curriculum review also includes evaluation of assessment methods used to measure student learning outcomes to ensure that coursework effectively demonstrates student competency development in core counseling domains. Data gathered from these assessments will be reviewed as part of the program's ongoing evaluation process to inform curricular decisions and continuous program improvement. Following completion of the core course revisions, the program will extend this alignment and curriculum mapping process to non-core courses and elective offerings. This phased approach allows faculty to systematically evaluate course content, strengthen competency-based learning outcomes, and ensure that all coursework reflects current CACREP expectations and supports the assessment of student learning outcomes across the curriculum.
Program Evaluation	The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program–Chicago plans to pilot a revised Key Performance Indicator (KPI) assessment process designed to evaluate student knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions more effectively across the curriculum. The development and implementation of the KPI assessment will support the systematic measurement of student learning outcomes at multiple points within the program. Data gathered through this process will be reviewed by program faculty to evaluate student competency development and inform

	programmatic decision-making. This collaborative effort is intended to strengthen the program's assessment practices and support ongoing program evaluation and continuous improvement in alignment with the standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
Program Offers	The Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program – Chicago is proud to announce a new academic partnership with the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS**)** designed to strengthen counselor preparation in the field of child welfare. Through this collaboration, the CMHC program will offer two new elective courses that students may complete to earn a Child Welfare Certificate in addition to their graduate counseling degree. This initiative reflects our commitment to preparing counselors who can work effectively with children, adolescents, and families impacted by trauma, instability, systemic inequities, and involvement with child welfare services. By integrating DCFS-aligned content and competencies into our curriculum, students will gain valuable, practice-ready skills that directly address community and workforce needs. To ensure the quality, effectiveness, and continuous improvement of the certificate pathway, each elective course will include a post-course assessment survey, administered at the end of the term. The survey will evaluate: **1. Knowledge Acquisition** • Understanding of child welfare systems, laws, and processes • Application of trauma-informed models in child welfare settings • Competence in risk assessment, case conceptualization, and intervention planning **2. Skill Development** • Ability to engage children, caregivers, and interdisciplinary partners. • Readiness to navigate real-world child welfare scenarios. • Clinical decision-making and ethical practice **3. Self-Efficacy & Preparedness** • Confidence in working with DCFS-involved children and families. • Perceived preparedness for practicum, internship, or employment in child-serving settings. **4. Course Quality & Instructional Feedback** • Effectiveness of teaching methods

	• Accessibility and clarity of course materials • Alignment between learning objectives and assessments • Suggestions for improvement The results of the survey will be used to strengthen the curriculum, refine teaching strategies, and ensure alignment with DCFS workforce needs. **Benefits of the Partnership** • **Enhanced Workforce Readiness:** Students graduate with specialized child welfare competencies valued by public agencies, community mental health centers, and family-service organizations. • **Trauma-Informed and Systems-Focused Training:** Graduates gain essential tools for supporting vulnerable children and families navigating complex systems. • **Career Advantage:** Earning a Child Welfare Certificate provides an additional credential that signals specialized expertise to employers. • **Stronger Community Impact:** By preparing counselors who understand child welfare dynamics, the program contributes to improved outcomes for children and families across Chicago and Illinois.
Clinical Training	**CMHC Handbook Revision (in collaboration with OPT)** 1. Worked closely with the Office of Professional Training (OPT) to review, update, and modify the Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program Handbook. Key contributions included: • Aligning handbook content with current program policies, CACREP-related expectations, and evolving departmental procedures. • Ensuring clarity in student guidelines, academic policies, practicum/internship procedures, and program milestones. • Strengthening accessibility and organization to enhance student understanding and reduce administrative confusion. 2. Addition of Lunch & Learn Series Information Integrated new content into the CMHC Handbook and program materials to introduce the Lunch & Learn Series, including: • Purpose and goals of the series (professional development, networking, skill-building). • Participation expectations for students.

	• Scheduling processes, hosting guidelines, and collaboration with invited speakers or campus partners. • Communication plan for promoting sessions throughout the academic year. 3. Revamped Academic Advising Course Build-Out Led a significant revision and expansion of the Academic Advising course structure and materials, including: • Redesigning the advising curriculum to be more developmentally appropriate and student-centered. • Creating new modules, resources, and advising tools to support student progress from program entry through graduation. • Implementing clearer processes for advisor–advisee communication, documentation, and follow-up. • Aligning advising content with the broader CMHC program sequence, clinical training expectations, and professional competencies.
Program Assessment	**Assessment Governance at a Glance** **Purpose:** Ensure continuous quality improvement (CQI) across instruction, advice, student experience, and graduate outcomes. **Owners:** Department Chair (you), Program Assessment Lead, Clinical Training Director, Faculty **Cadence:** Data collection each term; analysis and action planning at the end of each semester; annual roll-up and presentation each July. **Student Satisfaction Survey (Program & Course Level)** **A. Program-Level Survey (end of each spring term)** **Domains & Sample Items (5-point Likert: Strongly Disagree → Strongly Agree):** • **Program Climate & Inclusion** o "I feel respected and included in the CMHC program community." o "Course materials and examples reflect diverse identities and perspectives." • **Curriculum & Learning Outcomes** o "Program coursework effectively prepares me for practicum/internship." o "Assignments clearly align with stated course and program outcomes." • **Clinical Readiness** o "I feel prepared to apply trauma-informed, culturally responsive counseling skills in practice." • **Resources & Support**

- "I can access needed supports (library, accessibility services, tutoring, tech)."

- **Overall Satisfaction**
  - "I would recommend this program to prospective students."

KPIs & Targets

- Overall satisfaction ≥ 4.2/5
- Clinical readiness ≥ 4.0/5
- Response rate ≥ 60%

Academic Advising Survey (new)

Timing: End of fall and spring terms.
Respondents: Advisees for each assigned advisor (aggregated to protect confidentiality).

Domains & Sample Items

- **Accessibility & Availability**
  - "My advisor is reachable and responds within reasonable timeframes."
- **Accuracy & Guidance**
  - "My advisor provides accurate information on sequencing, licensure, and practicum/internship timelines."
- **Student-Centered Advising**
  - "My advisor helps me set concrete goals and check progress."
- **Belonging & Support**
  - "I feel comfortable discussing concerns with my advisor."

KPIs

- Advisor composite ≥ 4.2/5; any advisor < 3.8 → coaching and support plan.
- Response rate ≥ 60%.

Adjunct/Part-Time Faculty Teaching Survey (new) Two

Perspectives Collected

1. **Student feedback** in course-level survey (tagged 'adjunct')
2. **Peer + Chair review** via short rubric after syllabus review and one observation

	Adjunct Teaching Rubric (Chair/Peer, 4-point scale) • Syllabus quality & alignment with course outcomes • Effective pedagogy (active learning, case work, skills practice) • Assessment quality (valid, reliable, timely feedback) • Accessibility & trauma-informed classroom practices • Professionalism & timeliness (LMS presence, grading turnaround)