



## AAQEP Annual Report for 2023

Provider/Program Name:	University of the Virgin Islands/School Counseling Program
End Date of Current AAQEP Accreditation Term (or “n/a” if not yet accredited):	December 2029

### PART I: Publicly Available Program Performance and Candidate Achievement Data

#### 1. Overview and Context

This overview describes the mission and context of the educator preparation provider and the programs included in its AAQEP review.

<p><b>Overview and Context</b></p> <p>The School of Education (SOE) serves communities in and out of the territory. Within the territory our partners are the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE), Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBOE), Infants and Toddlers Program, Virgin Islands Department of Human Services, Office of Childcare Regulatory Services and Young children and families. Stated previously, the SOE also serves communities in neighboring Caribbean islands through partnerships with schools/colleges of education at community colleges and ministries of education. Our services include but are not limited to the preparation of school counselors,</p>
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teachers, administrators, other school professionals; early care and education services; and consultation for certification requirements.

The main inhabited islands that comprise the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) are separated by as much as 40 miles of ocean within the territory. Interisland travel is done through seaplane, airplane, and ferry/boat for two of the four main inhabited islands, St. Thomas and St. Croix. Travel to the remaining inhabited islands, St. John and Water Island, is via ferry/boat only, as these smaller islands do not have an airport or seaplane terminal. A bridge is not available to drive to/from each island.

In September 2017, the USVI experienced devastation resulting from two category 5 hurricanes: Irma and Maria. These hurricanes came through the USVI within 12 days of each other and wreaked havoc. Irma was swift and deadly, sucking residents out of condos. Lives were lost. Maria lingered, causing flooding. Roads were blocked due to mangled trees, objects, and downed power lines that resulted in a loss of power and connectivity for approximately three months. Lines for gas and grocery stores were wrapped around buildings. Communications were interrupted and remain unreliable. Five years later, cables for power were placed below ground.

While others on the U.S. mainland appear to have bounced back from these storms, even now in late 2023, the U.S. Virgin Islands continues to be negatively impacted due to the destruction caused by them. Some buildings destroyed on the campuses of the University of the Virgin Islands are now under renovations six years later. Public schools have been merged to accommodate schools that were destroyed. Some schools that previously served children in grades K-6 are now serving children in grades K-8. The U.S. Census shows a decline of the Virgin Islands population from over 106,000 to under 84,000 from 2017 to 2021. Amid the rebuilding of our community, the USVI was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the rest of the world. Classes were again disrupted, an expedited shift to online learning had to be incorporated in traditionally on-ground classes, and employees and students were lost to the university owing to the vaccine mandates and other factors. These and other circumstances have significantly impacted the UVI School of Education (SOE).

## Vision, Mission, and Values

The School of Education's strategic plan, ***Enhancing School Outcomes Through a Culture of Innovation in the Preparation of Educators and Other School Professionals***, provides a map of the route that the School of Education (SOE) at the University of the Virgin Islands will take during the years, 2019-2024. This plan was established based on the following assertions: (1) The SOE will address the challenges of low student enrollment, evidenced across Schools and Colleges of Education in the United States; (2) The SOE will be a first choice for educator and other school professional preparation in the USVI, US mainland, and the wider Caribbean; (3) The SOE will increase program offerings and innovative ways in which to instruct preservice majors, as well as in-service professionals; (4) The SOE will develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century blueprint for transforming itself into a 21<sup>st</sup> century program; (5) The SOE will prepare its candidates to become change agents for embedding 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills in every aspect of P-12 curricula in accordance with national and state standards. The assumption of leadership and faculty in the School of Education is that these assertions will be made realities only from strategic supports, such as responsible stewardship of the University, a robust faculty in expertise and size, as well as contributions of alumni, current students, and collaborative partnerships.

The purpose of the Unit is to prepare professionals who are leaders that are reflective and active learners and that are committed to enabling students' academic development and success. The goal *is to produce high quality education professionals who are ethically and culturally competent to serve schools, foster innovation and change, and address social justice issues locally, regionally, and globally.*

The philosophical framework of the School of Education is rooted in the SOE's mission and is consistent with the mission of the university. We believe that the primary need of today's professional is a well-rounded knowledge base which provides one with the ability to deal with the complexities of the modern world. Specialization, therefore, is to supply that theoretical and practical knowledge which provides tools necessary for competent practice of the profession.

## Leadership

The UVI School of Education (SOE) is a small academic unit. The Dean, Dr. Karen H. Brown, is the *Unit Manager*. The Chair, Dr. Magdalene Tobias, is the *Academic Supervisor*. Each program has a director or lead faculty member. At the undergraduate level, Dr. Magdalene Tobias serves as the lead of the Elementary Education and Secondary Teacher Education Preparation programs. Dr. Karen Brown serves as the lead of the Inclusive Early Childhood Education (IECE) programs (certificate, AA, and BA). Dr. Clinton Valley serves as Program Director for the Master of Arts in Educational Leadership program. Dr. Xuri Maurice Allen serves as the Program Director for the Master of Arts in School Counseling Program.

## Master of Arts in School Counseling

The UVI Master of Arts in School Counseling (MASC) program is a rigorous 48-credit hour program consistent with the 2016 *Standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)*. More specifically, the curriculum of the MASC program covers the 2016 School Counseling specialty standards labeled as, and found within “Foundations,” “Contextual Dimensions,” and “Practice.”

Students enrolled in the MASC program preparing for positions and careers as school counselors in the US Virgin Islands, the broader Caribbean, the Continental United States, or elsewhere in the world, undergo coursework and experiential learning activities to develop and demonstrate dispositions and the professional knowledge and skills that promote development among students in the three primary school counseling domains. The three domains, as identified by CACREP and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2016) are academic development, career development (which includes college awareness, preparation, and selection), and social/emotional (i.e., personal) development.

The Master of Arts in School Counseling program “represents a synthesis of content and experiences that result in [MASC] students’ demonstration of the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions articulated in [CACREP] standards needed for successful practice.” Additionally, the MASC program promotes the professional ethical codes and standards, competencies, and

positions as advanced by the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Moreover, the MASC program students are encouraged at every point during their enrollment to aspire to the professional ethical codes and standards, competencies, and positions of these organizations, especially in terms of advocacy, beneficence to student counselees, diversity, inclusivity, and rights of student counselees.

### Key Features

Key features of the Master of Arts in School Counseling program are as follows:

- 48-credit hour program which includes 3 credit-hours (100 hours) of Practicum
- Accredited by the Association for Advancing Quality Educator Preparation (AAQEP)  
Current certification period expires December 2029
- Satisfies Association for Advancing Quality Educator Preparation (AAQEP, 2021), Council for the Accreditation of Counseling Related Educational Programs [School Counseling Specialty] (CACREP, 2016), and Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBOE) standards
- Promotes familiarity with, and knowledge of, national regional, and local counseling and school counseling professional associations including, but not limited to, the following: the American Counseling Association (ACA) and its Divisions, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and the US Virgin Islands branch of the American Counseling Association (ACAVI)
- Offered via virtual (i.e., Zoom or Teams) and hybrid modalities (i.e., virtual and on-ground); Presently offered in hybrid modality via Zoom

**Public Posting URL**

Part I of this report is posted at the following web address (accredited members filing this report must post at least Part I):

<https://www.uvi.edu/academics/education/programs/master-arts-school-counseling/index.html>

**2. Enrollment and Completion Data**

Table 1 shows current enrollment and recent completion data for each program included in the AAQEP review.

**Table 1. Program Specification: Enrollment and Completers for Academic Year 2022-2023**

<b>Degree or Certificate</b> granted by the institution or organization	<b>State Certificate, License, Endorsement, or Other Credential</b>	<b>Number of Candidates</b> enrolled in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending <b>07/23</b> )	<b>Number of Completers</b> in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending <b>07/23</b> )
<i>Programs that lead to initial teaching credentials</i>			
Total for programs that lead to initial credentials			
<i>Programs that lead to additional or advanced credentials for already-licensed educators</i>			
Total for programs that lead to additional/advanced credentials			
<i>Programs that lead to credentials for other school professionals or to no specific credential</i>			
Master of Arts in School Counseling	School Counselor Virgin Islands Board of Education (VIBOE)	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
Total for additional programs			

TOTAL enrollment and productivity for all programs		
Unduplicated total of all program candidates and completers	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>  <b>NOTE:</b> The completer was not enrolled in Academic Year 2022-2023 due to medical reasons. She was granted an extension until Spring 2023 to resolve “Incompletes” of Spring 2022 without additional registration /enrollment. As the completer was <u>not</u> enrolled in Academic Year 2022-2023, she is not counted in the program total for MASC <u>candidates</u> .

**Added or Discontinued Programs**

Any programs within the AAQEP review that have been added or discontinued within the past year are listed below. (This list is required only from providers with accredited programs.)

No programs were added or discontinued during this reporting period.

**3. Program Performance Indicators**

The program performance information in Table 2 applies to the academic year indicated in Table 1.

**Table 2. Program Performance Indicators**

<p><b>A. Total enrollment</b> in the educator preparation programs shown in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals earning more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.</p>
<p>Total enrollment in the Master of Arts in School Counseling (MASC) program numbered 15 candidates during Academic Year 2022-2023..This total represents a 114% increase over the total (N = 7) reported to AAQEP in May 2022 within the program’s Quality Assurance Report (QAR).</p> <p>Total enrollment included a 10-member cohort sponsored by the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) that began the program in Summer Session II, 2022. The additional candidates consisted of three additional continuing students and two new, first-year students.</p> <p>In regard to total enrollment demographics, five candidates were Albert A. Sheen Campus (i.e., St. Croix) students, nine candidates were Orville E. Kean Campus (i.e., St. Thomas) students, and the remaining candidate was enrolled via the UVI@USM (i.e., University of the Virgin Islands at University of St. Martin) Campus.</p>
<p><b>B. Total number of unique completers</b> (across all programs) included in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals who earned more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.</p>
<p>There was one unique Master of Arts in School Counseling (MASC) program completer during Academic Year 2022-2023. This completer was a UVI @ USM (i.e., University of the Virgin Islands at University of St. Martin) student whose degree was conferred in May 2023.</p>
<p><b>C. Number of recommendations</b> for certificate, license, or endorsement included in Table 1.</p>
<p>The Master of Arts in School Counseling program prepares candidates for, but do not recommend them for, school counselor certification.</p>



D. **Cohort completion rates** for candidates who completed the various programs within their respective program’s expected timeframe **and** in 1.5 times the expected timeframe.

The cohort completion rate for candidates who completed the MASC program within its expected timeframe, **and** in 1.5 times the expected timeframe, for 2022-2023 is 100%.

E. **Summary of state license examination results**, including teacher performance assessments, and specification of any examinations on which the pass rate (cumulative at time of reporting) was below 80%.

N/A

F. Narrative explanation of **evidence available from program completers**, with a characterization of findings.

Upon graduating from the MASC program, the lone 2022-2023 completer provided assessment of the program, the student experience, and the degree to which the program prepares students for professional school counseling via the *UVI School of Education Completer Exit Survey - Graduate Programs*. The 32-item instrument consists of three demographic items, 25 four-point Likert scale items ranging from “1 – Not Observed” to “4 – Excellent,” and four items that permit open-ended narrative responses. The program completer responded “4 – Excellent” to all 25 fixed-choice Likert scale items and provided very favorable narrative feedback on the open-ended items. This suggests the completer was pleased with the MASC program and believes that it was educationally, professionally and personally valuable. The narrative feedback received is found below:

Item 29 – What do you see as the strengths of your program?

- *“The school counseling program has a strong program director who is [a] dedicated advocate for the school counseling field, its students, and the community. Additional strengths of the program include highly skilled and experienced faculty, relevant course content, interactive discussions, and challenging assignments. The SOE fosters a supportive environment both on the faculty and higher leadership levels.”*
- *“The faculty is friendly, helpful, understanding, knowledgeable in their respective fields. The Program Director goes out of his way to support student development. He checks in with students, is flexible in his approach, provides relevant course*

*material, and creates a conducive and safe learning environment in the different courses and practicum experience. Other strengths of the program are that the course and assignments are integrative, which helps promote deeper learning, critical thinking, and better application of the concepts.”*

Item 30 – What do you see as priorities for growth in the next three to five years?

- *“Continue with the excellent student recruitment efforts.”*
- *“Continue with the excellent recruitment efforts so that potential students can see the value and enroll in this outstanding program.”*

Item 31 – What change(s), if any, need to be made to the program you did?

- *“I would not change anything to the program I completed.”*
- *“Not applicable.”*

Item 32 – What needs to be discontinued?

- *“Not applicable.”*
- *“Not applicable. The courses are relevant.”*

**NOTE:** The 2022-2023 program completer submitted the graduate exit survey twice due to administrative error. In both instances, the completer responded “4 – Excellent” on all of the fixed-choice Likert scale items. In regard to the open-ended narrative items, there are two responses for each item with very high consistency reflected within them.

G. Narrative explanation of **evidence available from employers of program completers**, with a characterization of findings.

Subsequent to the conferral of the MASC degree to the lone program completer for 2022-2023, the *UVI School of Education Stakeholders Satisfaction Survey: MA in School Counseling* was distributed with responses from two stakeholders. The survey consists of 29 items (i.e., three demographic items, 22 four-point Likert scale items ranging from “1 – Not Satisfied” to “4 – Very

Satisfied,” and four items that allow for open-ended narrative responses). Succinctly put, the Likert scale items and those items for which narrative responses can be provided assess stakeholders’ perceptions of (a) MASC program quality and (b) program completer’s demonstration of knowledge, awareness, skills, competence, and professionalism in the workplace.

Survey results on the 22 Likert scale items suggest that stakeholders were either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” for all but one item in regard to their perceptions of both MASC program quality and program completer’s prowess. The only item for which there was a response other than “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” reads “*Show initiative and self-motivation in leadership.*” One of the two stakeholders responded, “Somewhat Satisfied.” It should be noted here that both stakeholders indicated “Very Satisfied” on 27% (N = 6) of the 22 Likert scale items. The items are

- Item 4 – Engage in opportunities for professional growth
- Item 6 – Give and accept constructive criticism
- Item 9 – Show respect for all students
- Item 14 – Demonstrate sensitivity and appreciation for diversity
- Item 24 – Demonstrate caring dispositions towards all students
- Item 25 – Seek opportunities to build interpersonal relationships with staff/colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders

The responses to Item 26 (What do you see as the strengths of the program?), the first of four items that allow open-ended narrative feedback, were

- “*The knowledgeable and caring professors, breadth of the academic subjects covered, the practicum coursework, the skills learned are transferable.*”
- “*Strong theoretical background; ability to apply theory to practice; Diversity and inclusive approach.*”

The responses to Item 27 (What do you see as priorities for growth in the next three to five years?) were

- “*More on self-care and managing case load.*”
- “*Continued expansion of the program.*”

The responses to Item 28 (What change[s], if any, need to be made to the program?) were

- *“Maybe consider more from point 27.”*
- *“I find that the coursework are [is] relevant.”*

The responses to Item 29 (What needs to be discontinued?), the final item on the survey, were

- *“Nothing.”*
- *“N.A.”*

H. Narrative explanation of how the program investigates **employment rates for program completers**, with a characterization of findings. This section may also indicate rates of completers’ ongoing education, e.g., graduate study.

Currently, no formal mechanism exists to investigate the employment rates for MASC program completers. Given the small size of the program, however, with most completers residing and working in the territory, program faculty have knowledge of where completers are employed and/or continue their educational pursuits. The School of Education and the Master of Arts in School Counseling program know that the single completer for 2022-2023, a UVI@USM (University of the Virgin Islands at University of St. Martin) is gainfully employed with the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) in Sint Maarten, Dutch Caribbean.

#### **4. Candidate Academic Performance Indicators**

Tables 3 and 4 report on select measures of candidate/completer performance related to AAQEP Standards 1 and 2, including the program’s expectations for successful performance and indicators of the degree to which those expectations are met.

**Table 3. Expectations and Performance on Standard 1: Candidate and Completer Performance**

<b>Provider-Selected Measures</b>	<b>Explanation of Performance Expectation</b>	<b>Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation</b>
GPA for Admission and Program Entry	Minimum GPA of <b>2.5/4.0</b> for admission and program entry	100%
Student Advisement	Absence of reported grievances	90%
Comprehensive Examination	Receipt of “Pass” on first or second attempt	100%
School Counseling Field Placement (i.e., Practicum) Evaluation	Minimum score of “3 – Good, Average Performance”	100%
E-Portfolio Assessment	Minimum score of 80%	100%
Completer Exit Survey	Minimum score of “3 – Satisfactory”	100%
Stakeholder Survey	Minimum score of “3 – Satisfied”	100%
Program Completion Rate	Graduation rate of at least 80% within the program’s expected timeframe <u>and</u> in 1.5 times the expected timeframe	90%

**Table 4. Expectations and Performance on Standard 2: Completer Professional Competence and Growth**

<b>Provider-Selected Measures</b>	<b>Explanation of Performance Expectation</b>	<b>Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation</b>
School Counseling Field Placement (i.e., Practicum) Self-Assessment/Dispositions Survey	Minimum score of “3 – Sufficient Extent”	100%
School Counseling Field Placement (i.e., Practicum) Instructor/Institutional Supervisor Evaluation	Minimum score of “3 – Good”	100%
Completer Exit Survey	Minimum score of “3 – Satisfactory”	100%
Stakeholder Survey	Minimum score of “3 – Satisfied”	100%
Program Completion Rate	Graduation rate of at least 80% within the program’s expected timeframe <u>and</u> in 1.5 times the expected timeframe	90%
Program Completion/Graduation GPA	Minimum GPA of <b>3.0/4.0</b>	100%

## **5. Notes on Progress, Accomplishment, and Innovation**

This section describes program accomplishments, efforts, and innovations (strengths and outcomes) to address challenges and priorities over the past year.

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, the Master of Arts in School Counseling program experienced several significant accomplishments, efforts, and innovations to address challenges and priorities. For ease of reference, please find the accomplishments, efforts, and innovations listed below:

- A cohort of 10 elementary, middle, and secondary school professionals and paraprofessionals within the territory began the MASC program in July 2022. These candidates were, and continue to be, sponsored by the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE).
- The program designed and developed a six-panel trifold promotional/recruitment brochure in October 2022 for distribution at on-ground new student outreach and recruitment activities. See: [MASC Brochure \(Designed and Developed October 2022\)](#)

**NOTE:** The QR code which took one to the UVI SOE website is no longer active due to challenges with the vendor. The next edition of the brochure may have a QR code (to be determined) but will definitely contain the AAQEP logo.

- New student outreach and recruitment for the program was conducted in St. Kitts and Nevis and Tortola, British Virgin Islands in October and November 2022, respectively.
- The program received accreditation without concerns or conditions by the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) in December 2022.
- The program conducted virtual “MASC Interest and Information Meetings” for prospective students in March and April 2023 via Zoom.
- The university’s Graduate Council approved a subject/course prefix change in April 2023 for all counseling-specific courses within the program paradigm. The council approved, subsequent to approval by the School of Education to change the prefix from “EDU” to “EDC.” Use of the new “EDC” prefix will commence late fall 2023.
- The program conducted its first “MASC Student Forum” in May 2023. The primary purpose of the forum was to receive qualitative data from five questions that address matters pertaining to continuous improvement of the program. After the

purpose of the forum and program updates were provided, candidates provided verbal responses to the following five questions:

1. How might recruitment and admissions be improved for future MASC applicants?
2. How might the MASC program better serve you (i.e., candidate) in facilitating your student success, persistence, and retention?
3. Based upon your experience, what do you believe are the strengths of the MASC program?
4. Based upon your experience, what do you believe are the shortcomings of the MASC program?
5. What would you like to see accomplished by the MASC program, its candidates, and its completers within the next: (a) one to two years, (b) five years, (c) more than five years?

**NOTE:** This informative activity will be an annual one and conducted in the latter part of the spring semester.

- Much improved and enhanced web pages for the MASC program were launched on the UVI web site were launched in May 2023.. See: [MA in School Counseling Home Web Page \(Launched May 2023\)](#)
- Three program candidates, as well as the program director, were selected to participate in the “UVI Education in Costa Rica” program in June 2022. The candidates engaged in a host of educational, experiential, and cultural activities to promote multicultural knowledge, awareness and skills and to become familiar with how academic, career, and social-emotional development is promoted within the varied school types in Costa Rica.
- Among the accomplishments of program candidates in 2022-2023 include: (a) conducting professional presentations, (b) submitting an article to an interdisciplinary academic journal for possible publication, (c) gaining certification as an Adult Mental Health First Aid Provider, (d) becoming certified as a Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper, and receiving UVI institutional and School of Education academic achievement awards, including the School of Education’s Outstanding Graduate Student Award (i.e., the honor awarded to the graduate-level candidate within the School of Education who has the highest grade point average among all SOE graduate-level candidates).