Assessment of student learning
The MSC degree provides students with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become effective counselors, with specializations in such areas as Clinical Mental Health, School Counseling, and Marriage and Family Therapy. The College of Social Sciences assesses MSC students’ progress throughout their course of study to determine how well they are meeting program outcomes.

The assessment approach addresses both formative and summative learning through collection and analysis of evidence throughout the program, as well as targeted emphasis in the final courses through internship experiences conducted in appropriate counseling settings. The results of the formal assessment annual reporting, combined with feedback from faculty members, subject matter experts, Faculty Council and College of Social Sciences staff, are all used to ensure the continuous quality improvement of the MSC program through data-driven curriculum revisions and enhancements.

MSC program learning outcomes
Program outcomes for the MSC program and all of its specializations are based on eight core areas of counseling standards established by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC):

• Professional counselor identity
• Social and cultural diversity
• Human growth and development
• Career and vocational development
• Helping relationships
• Group work
• Assessment
• Research and program evaluation.

The outcomes represent the knowledge and skills that counseling students should obtain during their course of study, culminating in their internship experiences at the end of the program.

The MSC program learning outcomes are:

• Professional identity: Instill a clear and comprehensive professional counselor identity for graduates of the counseling program.
• Social and cultural diversity: Multicultural and socially diverse competencies in providing counseling services to clients from diverse social and cultural backgrounds.
• Human growth and development: Knowledge of foundational theories of human development across the life span and relation of those theories to counseling theories and applications working in diverse client environments.
• Career development: Knowledge of vocational and career development theory and application of that knowledge to career counseling and education practice.
• Helping relationships: Practiced and demonstrated counseling skills in simulated and supervised counseling settings.
• Group work: Group process and counseling skills for various types of groups representing clients from diverse backgrounds.
• Assessment: Knowledge of and competencies in psychometric principles, practices and theory, assessment skills involving clinical, psycho-educational and vocational measures, qualitative interviewing and diagnostic decision tree model analytical applications and skills.
• Research and program evaluation: Competency in applying basic quantitative skills in statistical description and inference, qualitative and mixed method approaches to counseling-related research; competency in designing research and evaluation studies.
University learning goals
In addition to program-specific learning outcomes, University of Phoenix has a set of institution-wide learning goals. These University learning goals encapsulate the knowledge, skills and values the institution aims to help students develop through their educational experiences, regardless of the program of study they are enrolled in. The University learning goals cover the following areas:

- Professional competence and values
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Communication
- Information utilization
- Collaboration

Student learning assessments
The MSC program assesses student learning outcomes using multiple methods of direct and indirect assessments. Below is a brief description of some of the key activities used to assess student learning:

A. Course grades
   These are grades achieved by students in key courses that are directly aligned with demonstrating program outcomes.

B. Benchmark assignments/performance assessments
   These are standardized, course-embedded assignments that directly assess specific student learning outcomes at various points in the curriculum.

C. Internship evaluations
   Students are formally evaluated by their site supervisor at the end of their counseling internship.

D. Alumni Academic Questionnaire
   Developed by University of Phoenix, this web-based questionnaire aligns with the University’s mission and student outcomes and is administered every two years by the University’s Office of Learning Assessment and Academic Research Group to graduates who have completed their programs within the past two to three years.