



Board of Behavioral Sciences

*Memo*

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**To:** Workforce Development Committee                      **Date:** January 27, 2025

**From:** Steve Sodergren, Executive Officer

**Subject:** **Discussion and Possible Recommendation Regarding a Holistic Review of the In-State and Out-of-State Education Requirements for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors.**

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### **Overview**

In November 2004, California voters enacted the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), transforming the state's mental health services. The MHSA emphasized culturally and linguistically competent approaches, community involvement in treatment of serious mental illnesses, a client/family-driven mental health system, and a wellness focus, which includes the concepts of recovery and resilience. This shift necessitated changes in public mental health practices, including those provided by Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs). At the time, the Board did not license Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCCs). Consequently, the Board reviewed its educational requirements to align with the principles of the MHSA.

In July 2006, the Board established the MFT Education Committee to examine curriculum requirements and assess their relevance to contemporary MFT practice, including competencies as defined by the MHSA. The committee reviewed competency studies and workforce data to recommend updates, and had robust stakeholder involvement, including schools. This effort culminated in Senate Bill 33 (Chapter 26, Statutes of 2009), which became law on January 1, 2010. The bill updated curriculum requirements for LMFT licensure, increasing the number of required degree units from 48 semester units to 60 semester units (with a corresponding change for quarter unit system), built in greater flexibility for schools to determine the number of hours spent on most topics, and integrating public mental health principles for students beginning graduate study on or after August 1, 2012.

In 2010, Senate Bill 788 (Chapter 619, Statutes of 2009) was passed, setting forth licensure requirements for LPCCs. MHSA principles were also incorporated into LPCC educational requirements.

In 2014, a law revised the options for out-of-state LMFT and LPCC applicants to address barriers in remediating educational deficiencies. The Out-of-State Education

Review Committee examined these challenges, focusing on educational requirements, remediation options, and associated costs. This led to distinct pathways for in-state and out of state applicants.

### **Current Challenges**

The educational requirements for LMFT and LPCC licensure are codified separately for in-state and out-of-state applicants under the Business and Professions Code:

LMFT: Sections 4980.36, 4980.37, 4980.41 and 4980.78 (Attachment A)

LPCC: Sections 4999.32, 4999.33, and 4999.62 (Attachemnt B)

For in-state applicants\*, all educational requirements must be met before associate registration. For LMFT applicants who began graduate study on or after August 1, 2012, the law does not permit any coursework to be remediated post-degree and LPCC law permits very limited content to be remediated post-degree. This means that some applicants, even if missing one course topic, would have to obtain a completely new degree to qualify. In contrast, out-of-state applicants can remediate many more deficiencies, including some after registration as an associate. This distinction creates inequities for in-state applicants, and concerns that associates are practicing prior to completing all educational requirements. The Board has grappled with increasing ambiguity in determining whether a program qualifies as in-state or out-of-state, given the evolving landscape of education programs incorporating remote learning modalities into their degree programs.

### **Proposed Plan**

To address these challenges, the Board proposes a holistic review of the education requirements for LMFTs and LPCCs. Key considerations include:

- **Comprehensive Review:** Evaluate current education requirements for in-state and out-of-state programs, focusing on course timing, length, and content. Assess educational standards in other jurisdictions to identify best practices.
- **Standardized Requirements:** Explore the feasibility of standardized educational requirements for all applicants to ensure equity.
- **Approval of Educational Programs:** Consider instituting a process for Board approval of educational institution programs to increase efficiency in processing, oversight of accepted degrees, communications with programs, and portability.
- **Course Timing:** Require LMFT and LPCC applicants to complete specified courses before associate registration to ensure practitioners are prepared to meet client needs.

*\*Exception: LMFT applicants who began graduate study prior to August 1, 2012 can make up some coursework prior to licensure.*

- Continuing Education (CE) vs. Graduate-Level Courses: Allow out-of-state applicants to fulfill certain requirements through CE courses instead of graduate coursework, which is more costly. This change would align requirements for in-state and out-of-state applicants, promoting equity.

The proposed review aims to eliminate inequities and confusion in educational requirements for LMFT and LPCC licensure. By establishing a standardized framework, the Board seeks to ensure fair and consistent pathways to licensure for all applicants while maintaining the highest standards of competency and consumer protection.

### **Recommendation**

Conduct an open discussion regarding the holistic review of In-State and Out-Of-State education requirements for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors and direct staff to complete a comprehensive review of current education requirements for California and other jurisdictions.

### **Attachments**

**Attachment A:** Business and Professions Code of California, Chapter 13: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists Education Requirements

**Attachment B:** Business and Professions Code of California, Chapter 16: Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors Education Requirements

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**Attachment A-Business and Professions Code of California, Chapter 13: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists**

**§ 4980.36. QUALIFYING DEGREE PROGRAM FOR LICENSURE OR REGISTRATION; GRADUATE STUDY BEGAN ON OR AFTER AUGUST 1, 2012 OR COMPLETED AFTER DECEMBER 31, 2018**

- (a) This section shall apply to the following:
- (1) Applicants for licensure or registration who begin graduate study before August 1, 2012, and do not complete that study on or before December 31, 2018.
  - (2) Applicants for licensure or registration who begin graduate study before August 1, 2012, and who graduate from a degree program that meets the requirements of this section.
  - (3) Applicants for licensure or registration who begin graduate study on or after August 1, 2012.
- (b) To qualify for a license or registration, applicants shall possess a doctoral or master's degree meeting the requirements of this section in marriage, family, and child counseling, marriage and family therapy, couple and family therapy, psychology, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, or either counseling or clinical mental health counseling with an emphasis in either marriage, family, and child counseling or marriage and family therapy. The degree shall be obtained from a school, college, or university approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, or accredited by either the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education, or a regional or national institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education. The board has the authority to make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements, regardless of accreditation or approval.
- (c) A doctoral or master's degree program that qualifies for licensure or registration shall be a single, integrated program that does the following:
- (1) Integrate all of the following throughout its curriculum:
    - (A) Marriage and family therapy principles.
    - (B) The principles of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environments, among others.
    - (C) An understanding of various cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position, and an understanding of how poverty and social stress impact an individual's mental health and recovery.

- (2) Allow for innovation and individuality in the education of marriage and family therapists.
  - (3) Encourage students to develop the personal qualities that are intimately related to effective practice, including, but not limited to, integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, insight, compassion, and personal presence.
  - (4) Permit an emphasis or specialization that may address any one or more of the unique and complex array of human problems, symptoms, and needs of Californians served by marriage and family therapists.
  - (5) Provide students with the opportunity to meet with various consumers and family members of consumers of mental health services to enhance understanding of their experience of mental illness, treatment, and recovery.
- (d) The degree described in subdivision (b) shall contain no less than 60 semester or 90 quarter units of instruction that includes, but is not limited to, the following requirements:
- (1) Both of the following:
    - (A) No less than 12 semester or 18 quarter units of coursework in theories, principles, and methods of a variety of psychotherapeutic orientations directly related to marriage and family therapy and marital and family systems approaches to treatment and how these theories can be applied therapeutically with individuals, couples, families, adults, including elder adults, children, adolescents, and groups to improve, restore, or maintain healthy relationships.
    - (B) Practicum that involves direct client contact, as follows:
      - (i) A minimum of six semester or nine quarter units of practicum in a supervised clinical placement that provides supervised fieldwork experience.
      - (ii) A minimum of 150 hours of face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families, or groups.
      - (iii) A student must be enrolled in a practicum course while counseling clients, except as specified in subdivision (c) of Section 4980.42.
      - (iv) The practicum shall provide training in all of the following areas:
        - (I) Applied use of theory and psychotherapeutic techniques.
        - (II) Assessment, diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment planning.
        - (III) Treatment of individuals and premarital, couple, family, and child relationships, including trauma and abuse, dysfunctions, healthy functioning, health promotion, illness prevention, and working with families.

- (IV) Professional writing, including documentation of services, treatment plans, and progress notes.
- (V) How to connect people with resources that deliver the quality of services and support needed in the community.
- (v) Educational institutions are encouraged to design the practicum required by this subparagraph to include marriage and family therapy experience in low income and multicultural mental health settings.
- (vi) In addition to the 150 hours required in clause (ii), 75 hours of either of the following, or a combination thereof:
  - (I) Client centered advocacy, as defined in Section 4980.03.
  - (II) Face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families, or groups.
- (2) Instruction in all of the following:
  - (A) Diagnosis, assessment, prognosis, treatment planning, and treatment of mental disorders, including severe mental disorders, evidence-based practices, psychological testing, psychopharmacology, and promising mental health practices that are evaluated in peer-reviewed literature.
  - (B) Developmental issues from infancy to old age, including instruction in all of the following areas:
    - (i) The effects of developmental issues on individuals, couples, and family relationships.
    - (ii) The psychological, psychotherapeutic, and health implications of developmental issues and their effects.
    - (iii) Aging and its biological, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects. This coursework shall include instruction on the assessment and reporting of, as well as treatment related to, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect.
    - (iv) A variety of cultural understandings of human development.
    - (v) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of socioeconomic status and other contextual issues affecting social position.
    - (vi) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of a representative variety of the cultures found within California.
    - (vii) The understanding of the impact that personal and social insecurity, social stress, low educational levels, inadequate housing, and malnutrition have on human development.

- (C) The broad range of matters and life events that may arise within marriage and family relationships and within a variety of California cultures, including instruction in all of the following:
  - (i) A minimum of seven contact hours of training or coursework in child abuse assessment and reporting as specified in Section 28, and any regulations promulgated thereunder.
  - (ii) Spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same gender abuse dynamics.
  - (iii) Cultural factors relevant to abuse of partners and family members.
  - (iv) Childbirth, child rearing, parenting, and stepparenting.
  - (v) Marriage, divorce, and blended families.
  - (vi) Long-term care.
  - (vii) End-of-life and grief.
  - (viii) Poverty and deprivation.
  - (ix) Financial and social stress.
  - (x) Effects of trauma.
  - (xi) The psychological, psychotherapeutic, community, and health implications of the matters and life events described in clauses (i) to (x), inclusive.
- (D) Cultural competency and sensitivity, including a familiarity with the racial, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds of persons living in California.
- (E) Multicultural development and cross-cultural interaction, including experiences of race, ethnicity, class, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender, and disability, and their incorporation into the psychotherapeutic process.
- (F) The effects of socioeconomic status on treatment and available resources.
- (G) Resilience, including the personal and community qualities that enable persons to cope with adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other stresses.
- (H) Human sexuality, including the study of physiological, psychological, and social cultural variables associated with sexual behavior and gender identity, and the assessment and treatment of psychosexual dysfunction.
- (I) Substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, and addiction, including, but not limited to, instruction in all of the following:
  - (i) The definition of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, and addiction. For purposes of this subparagraph, “co-occurring disorders”



means a mental illness and substance abuse diagnosis occurring simultaneously in an individual.

- (ii) Medical aspects of substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders.
  - (iii) The effects of psychoactive drug use.
  - (iv) Current theories of the etiology of substance abuse and addiction.
  - (v) The role of persons and systems that support or compound substance abuse and addiction.
  - (vi) Major approaches to identification, evaluation, and treatment of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, and addiction, including, but not limited to, best practices.
  - (vii) Legal aspects of substance abuse.
  - (viii) Populations at risk with regard to substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders.
  - (ix) Community resources offering screening, assessment, treatment, and follow up for the affected person and family.
  - (x) Recognition of substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, and addiction, and appropriate referral.
  - (xi) The prevention of substance use disorders and addiction.
- (J) California law and professional ethics for marriage and family therapists, including instruction in all of the following areas of study:
- (i) Contemporary professional ethics and statutory, regulatory, and decisional laws that delineate the scope of practice of marriage and family therapy.
  - (ii) The therapeutic, clinical, and practical considerations involved in the legal and ethical practice of marriage and family therapy, including, but not limited to, family law.
  - (iii) The current legal patterns and trends in the mental health professions.
  - (iv) The psychotherapist-patient privilege, confidentiality, the patient dangerous to self or others, and the treatment of minors with and without parental consent.
  - (v) A recognition and exploration of the relationship between a practitioner's sense of self and human values and the practitioner's professional behavior and ethics.
  - (vi) The application of legal and ethical standards in different types of work settings.

(vii) Licensing law and licensing process.

- (e) The degree described in subdivision (b) shall, in addition to meeting the requirements of subdivision (d), include instruction in case management, systems of care for the severely mentally ill, public and private services and supports available for the severely mentally ill, community resources for persons with mental illness and for victims of abuse, disaster and trauma response, advocacy for the severely mentally ill, and collaborative treatment. This instruction may be provided either in credit level coursework or through extension programs offered by the degree-granting institution.
- (f) The changes made to law by this section are intended to improve the educational qualifications for licensure in order to better prepare future licentiates for practice, and are not intended to expand or restrict the scope of practice for marriage and family therapists.

**§ 4980.37. QUALIFYING DEGREE PROGRAM FOR LICENSURE OR REGISTRATION; BEGAN GRADUATE STUDY BEFORE AUGUST 1, 2012 AND COMPLETED ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2018**

- (a) This section shall apply to applicants for licensure or registration who began graduate study before August 1, 2012, and completed that study on or before December 31, 2018. Those applicants may alternatively qualify under paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 4980.36.
- (b) To qualify for a license or registration, applicants shall possess a doctoral or master's degree in marriage, family, and child counseling, marriage and family therapy, couple and family therapy, psychology, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, or either counseling or clinical mental health counseling with an emphasis in either marriage, family, and child counseling or marriage and family therapy. The degree shall be obtained from a school, college, or university accredited by a regional or national institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education or approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education. The board has the authority to make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements, regardless of accreditation or approval. In order to qualify for licensure pursuant to this section, a doctoral or master's degree program shall be a single, integrated program primarily designed to train marriage and family therapists and shall contain no less than 48 semester units or 72 quarter units of instruction. This instruction shall include no less than 12 semester units or 18 quarter units of coursework in the areas of marriage, family, and child counseling, and marital and family systems approaches to treatment. The coursework shall include all of the following areas:

- (1) The salient theories of a variety of psychotherapeutic orientations directly related to marriage and family therapy, and marital and family systems approaches to treatment.
- (2) Theories of marriage and family therapy and how they can be utilized in order to intervene therapeutically with couples, families, adults, children, and groups.
- (3) Developmental issues and life events from infancy to old age and their effect on individuals, couples, and family relationships. This may include coursework that focuses on specific family life events and the psychological, psychotherapeutic, and health implications that arise within couples and families, including, but not limited to, childbirth, child rearing, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, marriage, divorce, blended families, stepparenting, abuse and neglect of older and dependent adults, and geropsychology.
- (4) A variety of approaches to the treatment of children.

The board shall, by regulation, set forth the subjects of instruction required in this subdivision.

- (c) (1) In addition to the 12 semester or 18 quarter units of coursework specified in subdivision (b), the doctoral or master's degree program shall contain not less than six semester units or nine quarter units of supervised practicum in applied psychotherapeutic technique, assessments, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment planning, and treatment of premarital, couple, family, and child relationships, including dysfunctions, healthy functioning, health promotion, and illness prevention, in a supervised clinical placement that provides supervised fieldwork experience within the scope of practice of a marriage and family therapist.
- (2) For applicants who enrolled in a degree program on or after January 1, 1995, the practicum shall include a minimum of 150 hours of face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families, or groups.
- (3) The practicum hours shall be considered as part of the 48 semester or 72 quarter unit requirement.
- (d) As an alternative to meeting the qualifications specified in subdivision (b), the board shall accept as equivalent degrees those master's or doctoral degrees granted by educational institutions whose degree program is approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.
- (e) In order to provide an integrated course of study and appropriate professional training, while allowing for innovation and individuality in the education of marriage and family therapists, a degree program that meets the educational qualifications for licensure or registration under this section shall do all of the following:
  - (1) Provide an integrated course of study that trains students generally in the diagnosis, assessment, prognosis, treatment planning, and treatment of mental disorders.

- (2) Prepare students to be familiar with the broad range of matters that may arise within marriage and family relationships.
  - (3) Train students specifically in the application of marriage and family relationship counseling principles and methods.
  - (4) Encourage students to develop those personal qualities that are intimately related to the counseling situation such as integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, insight, compassion, and personal presence.
  - (5) Teach students a variety of effective psychotherapeutic techniques and modalities that may be utilized to improve, restore, or maintain healthy individual, couple, and family relationships.
  - (6) Permit an emphasis or specialization that may address any one or more of the unique and complex array of human problems, symptoms, and needs of Californians served by marriage and family therapists.
  - (7) Prepare students to be familiar with cross-cultural mores and values, including a familiarity with the wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds common among California's population, including, but not limited to, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans.
- (f) Educational institutions are encouraged to design the practicum required by this section to include marriage and family therapy experience in low income and multicultural mental health settings.

**§ 4980.41. ELIGIBILITY TO SIT FOR LICENSING EXAMINATIONS; COURSEWORK OR TRAINING**

- (a) An applicant for licensure whose education qualifies him or her under Section 4980.37 shall complete the following coursework or training in order to be eligible to sit for the licensing examinations as specified in subdivision (d) of Section 4980.40:
- (1) A two semester or three quarter unit course in California law and professional ethics for marriage and family therapists, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas of study:
    - (A) Contemporary professional ethics and statutory, regulatory, and decisional laws that delineate the profession's scope of practice.
    - (B) The therapeutic, clinical, and practical considerations involved in the legal and ethical practice of marriage and family therapy, including family law.
    - (C) The current legal patterns and trends in the mental health profession.
    - (D) The psychotherapist-patient privilege, confidentiality, the patient dangerous to self or others, and the treatment of minors with and without parental consent.

- (E) A recognition and exploration of the relationship between a practitioner's sense of self and human values and his or her professional behavior and ethics.

This course may be considered as part of the 48 semester or 72 quarter unit requirements contained in Section 4980.37.

- (2) A minimum of seven contact hours of training or coursework in child abuse assessment and reporting as specified in Section 28 and any regulations promulgated thereunder.
- (3) A minimum of 10 contact hours of training or coursework in human sexuality as specified in Section 25, and any regulations promulgated thereunder. When coursework in a master's or doctor's degree program is acquired to satisfy this requirement, it shall be considered as part of the 48 semester or 72 quarter unit requirement contained in Section 4980.37.
- (4) For persons who began graduate study on or after January 1, 1986, a master's or doctor's degree qualifying for licensure shall include specific instruction in alcoholism and other chemical substance dependency as specified by regulation. When coursework in a master's or doctor's degree program is acquired to satisfy this requirement, it shall be considered as part of the 48 semester or 72 quarter unit requirement contained in Section 4980.37. Coursework required under this paragraph may be satisfactory if taken either in fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure or in a separate course. The applicant may satisfy this requirement by successfully completing this coursework from a master's or doctoral degree program at an accredited or approved institution, as described in subdivision (b) of Section 4980.37, or from a board-accepted provider of continuing education, as described in Section 4980.54.
- (5) For persons who began graduate study during the period commencing on January 1, 1995, and ending on December 31, 2003, a master's or doctor's degree qualifying for licensure shall include coursework in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention. For persons who began graduate study on or after January 1, 2004, a master's or doctor's degree qualifying for licensure shall include a minimum of 15 contact hours of coursework in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, and same gender abuse dynamics. Coursework required under this paragraph may be satisfactory if taken either in fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure or in a separate course. The applicant may satisfy this requirement by successfully completing this coursework from a master's or doctoral degree program at an accredited or approved institution, as described in subdivision (b) of Section 4980.37, or from a board-accepted provider of continuing education, as described in Section 4980.54.

(6) For persons who began graduate study on or after January 1, 2001, an applicant shall complete a minimum of a two semester or three quarter unit survey course in psychological testing. When coursework in a master's or doctor's degree program is acquired to satisfy this requirement, it may be considered as part of the 48 semester or 72 quarter unit requirement of Section 4980.37.

(7) For persons who began graduate study on or after January 1, 2001, an applicant shall complete a minimum of a two semester or three quarter unit survey course in psychopharmacology. When coursework in a master's or doctor's degree program is acquired to satisfy this requirement, it may be considered as part of the 48 semester or 72 quarter unit requirement of Section 4980.37.

(b) The requirements added by paragraphs (6) and (7) of subdivision (a) are intended to improve the educational qualifications for licensure in order to better prepare future licentiates for practice and are not intended in any way to expand or restrict the scope of practice for licensed marriage and family therapists.

#### **§ 4980.78. LICENSURE BY EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT EDUCATION**

(a) This section applies to persons with education gained from an out-of-state school who apply for licensure or registration and who do not qualify for a license under Section 4980.72.

(b) For purposes of Section 4980.74, education is substantially equivalent if all of the following requirements are met:

(1) The degree is obtained from an accredited institution or approved institution and consists of, at a minimum, the following:

(A)(i) For an applicant who obtained a degree within the timeline prescribed by subdivision (a) of Section 4980.36, the degree shall contain no less than 60 semester units or 90 quarter units of instruction.

(ii) Up to 12 semester units or 18 quarter units of instruction may be remediated, if missing from the degree. The remediation may occur while the applicant is registered as an associate.

(B) For an applicant who obtained a degree within the timeline prescribed by subdivision (a) of Section 4980.37, the degree shall contain no less than 48 semester units or 72 quarter units of instruction.

(C)(i) Six semester units or nine quarter units of supervised practicum, including, but not limited to, a minimum of 150 hours of face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families, or groups, and an additional 75 hours of either face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families, or groups or client centered advocacy, or

a combination of face-to-face experience counseling individuals, couples, families, or groups and client centered advocacy.

(ii) An out-of-state applicant who holds a valid license in good standing in another state or country as a marriage and family therapist at the highest level for independent clinical practice is exempt from the practicum requirement specified in clause (i).

(D) Twelve semester units or 18 quarter units in the areas of marriage, family, and child counseling and marital and family systems approaches to treatment, as specified in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 4980.36.

(2) The applicant shall complete coursework in California law and ethics as follows:

(A) An applicant who completed a course in law and professional ethics for marriage and family therapists as specified in paragraph (8) of subdivision (a) of Section 4980.81, that did not contain instruction in California law and ethics, shall complete a 12-hour course in California law and professional ethics. The content of the course shall include, but not be limited to, advertising, scope of practice, scope of competence, treatment of minors, confidentiality, dangerous patients, psychotherapist-patient privilege, recordkeeping, patient access to records, state and federal laws relating to confidentiality of patient health information, dual relationships, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, online therapy, insurance reimbursement, civil liability, disciplinary actions and unprofessional conduct, ethics complaints and ethical standards, termination of therapy, standards of care, relevant family law, therapist disclosures to patients, the application of legal and ethical standards in different types of work settings, and licensing law and licensing process. The coursework shall be from an accredited institution, an approved institution, or from a continuing education provider identified as acceptable by the board pursuant to Section 4980.54. This coursework shall be completed before registration as an associate.

(B) An applicant who has not completed a course in law and professional ethics for marriage and family therapists as specified in paragraph (8) of subdivision (a) of Section 4980.81 shall complete this required coursework. The coursework shall contain content specific to California law and ethics. This coursework shall be completed before registration as an associate.

(3) The applicant completes the educational requirements specified in Section 4980.81 not already completed in the applicant's education. The coursework shall be from an accredited institution, an approved institution, or from a

continuing education provider that is identified as acceptable by the board pursuant to Section 4980.54. Undergraduate courses shall not satisfy this requirement.

- (4) The applicant completes the following coursework not already completed in the applicant's education from an accredited institution, an approved institution, or from a continuing education provider that is identified as acceptable by the board pursuant to Section 4980.54. Undergraduate courses shall not satisfy this requirement.
  - (A) At least three semester units, or 45 hours, of instruction regarding the principles of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environments, including structured meetings with various consumers and family members of consumers of mental health services to enhance understanding of their experience of mental illness, treatment, and recovery.
  - (B) At least one semester unit, or 15 hours, of instruction that includes an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position.
- (5) An applicant may complete any units and course content requirements required under paragraphs (3) and (4) not already completed in the applicant's education while registered as an associate, unless otherwise specified.
- (6) On and after January 1, 2021, an applicant for licensure shall show proof of completion of at least six hours of coursework or applied experience under supervision in suicide risk assessment and intervention using one of the methods specified in Section 4980.396.
- (7) The applicant's degree title need not be identical to that required by subdivision (b) of Section 4980.36.



**Attachment B-Business and Professions Code of California, Chapter 16: Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors**

**§ 4999.32. QUALIFYING DEGREE PROGRAM FOR LICENSURE OR REGISTRATION; GRADUATE STUDY BEGAN BEFORE AUGUST 1, 2012 AND COMPLETED ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2018**

- (a) This section shall apply to applicants for licensure or registration who began graduate study before August 1, 2012, and completed that study on or before December 31, 2018. Those applicants may alternatively qualify under paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 4999.33.
- (b) To qualify for licensure or registration, applicants shall possess a master's or doctoral degree that is counseling or psychotherapy in content and that meets the requirements of this section, obtained from an accredited or approved institution, as defined in Section 4999.12. For purposes of this subdivision, a degree is "counseling or psychotherapy in content" if it contains the supervised practicum or field study experience described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) and, except as provided in subdivision (d), the coursework in the core content areas listed in subparagraphs (A) to (I), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c).
- (c) The degree described in subdivision (b) shall be a single, integrated program that contains not less than 48 graduate semester units or 72 graduate quarter units of instruction, which shall, except as provided in subdivision (d), include all of the following:
  - (1) The equivalent of at least three semester units or four quarter units of graduate study in each of the following core content areas:
    - (A) Counseling and psychotherapeutic theories and techniques, including the counseling process in a multicultural society, an orientation to wellness and prevention, counseling theories to assist in selection of appropriate counseling interventions, models of counseling consistent with current professional research and practice, development of a personal model of counseling, and multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, and disasters.
    - (B) Human growth and development across the lifespan, including normal and abnormal behavior and an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior.
    - (C) Career development theories and techniques, including career development decisionmaking models and interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors, including the role of multicultural issues in career development.

- (D) Group counseling theories and techniques, including principles of group dynamics, group process components, developmental stage theories, therapeutic factors of group work, group leadership styles and approaches, pertinent research and literature, group counseling methods, and evaluation of effectiveness.
  - (E) Assessment, appraisal, and testing of individuals, including basic concepts of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment techniques, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, statistical concepts, social and cultural factors related to assessment and evaluation of individuals and groups, and ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment instruments and techniques in counseling.
  - (F) Multicultural counseling theories and techniques, including counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, identity development, promoting cultural social justice, individual and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, and counselors' roles in eliminating biases and prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.
  - (G) Principles of the diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis, and the use of current diagnostic tools, such as the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the impact of co-occurring substance use disorders or medical psychological disorders, established diagnostic criteria for mental or emotional disorders, and the treatment modalities and placement criteria within the continuum of care.
  - (H) Research and evaluation, including studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, the use of research to inform evidence-based practice, the importance of research in advancing the profession of counseling, and statistical methods used in conducting research, needs assessment, and program evaluation.
  - (I) Professional orientation, ethics, and law in counseling, including professional ethical standards and legal considerations, licensing law and process, regulatory laws that delineate the profession's scope of practice, counselor-client privilege, confidentiality, the client dangerous to self or others, treatment of minors with or without parental consent, relationship between practitioner's sense of self and human values, functions and relationships with other human service providers, strategies for collaboration, and advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients.
- (2) In addition to the course requirements described in paragraph (1), a minimum of 12 semester units or 18 quarter units of advanced coursework to develop knowledge of specific treatment issues, special populations, application of

counseling constructs, assessment and treatment planning, clinical interventions, therapeutic relationships, psychopathology, or other clinical topics.

(3) Not less than six semester units or nine quarter units of supervised practicum or field study experience that involves direct client contact in a clinical setting that provides a range of professional clinical counseling experience, including the following:

(A) Applied psychotherapeutic techniques.

(B) Assessment.

(C) Diagnosis.

(D) Prognosis.

(E) Treatment planning.

(F) Treatment.

(G) Issues of development, adjustment, and maladjustment.

(H) Health and wellness promotion.

(I) Other recognized counseling interventions.

(J) A minimum of 150 hours of face-to-face supervised clinical experience counseling individuals, families, or groups.

(d) (1) (A) An applicant whose degree is deficient in no more than two of the required areas of study listed in subparagraphs (A) to (I), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) may satisfy those deficiencies by successfully completing postmaster's or postdoctoral degree coursework at an accredited or approved institution, as defined in Section 4999.12.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), an applicant shall not be deficient in the required areas of study specified in subparagraph (E) or (G) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) unless the applicant meets one of the following criteria and remediates the deficiency:

(i) The application for licensure was received by the board on or before August 31, 2020.

(ii) The application for registration was received by the board on or before August 31, 2020, and the registration was subsequently issued by the board.

(2) Coursework taken to meet deficiencies in the required areas of study listed in subparagraphs (A) to (I), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) shall be the equivalent of three semester units or four quarter units of study.

- (3) The board shall make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements, regardless of accreditation.
- (e) In addition to the degree described in this section, or as part of that degree, an applicant shall complete the following coursework or training prior to registration as an associate:
- (1) A minimum of 15 contact hours of instruction in alcoholism and other chemical substance abuse dependency, as specified by regulation.
  - (2) A minimum of 10 contact hours of training or coursework in human sexuality as specified in Section 25, and any regulations promulgated thereunder.
  - (3) A two semester unit or three quarter unit survey course in psychopharmacology.
  - (4) A minimum of 15 contact hours of instruction in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention strategies, including knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, and same gender abuse dynamics.
  - (5) A minimum of seven contact hours of training or coursework in child abuse assessment and reporting as specified in Section 28 and any regulations adopted thereunder.
  - (6) A minimum of 18 contact hours of instruction in California law and professional ethics for professional clinical counselors that includes, but is not limited to, instruction in advertising, scope of practice, scope of competence, treatment of minors, confidentiality, dangerous clients, psychotherapist-client privilege, recordkeeping, client access to records, dual relationships, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, online therapy, insurance reimbursement, civil liability, disciplinary actions and unprofessional conduct, ethics complaints and ethical standards, termination of therapy, standards of care, relevant family law, therapist disclosures to clients, and state and federal laws related to confidentiality of patient health information. When coursework in a master's or doctoral degree program is acquired to satisfy this requirement, it shall be considered as part of the 48 semester unit or 72 quarter unit requirement in subdivision (c).
  - (7) A minimum of 10 contact hours of instruction in aging and long-term care, which may include, but is not limited to, the biological, social, and psychological aspects of aging. On and after January 1, 2012, this coursework shall include instruction on the assessment and reporting of, as well as treatment related to, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect.
  - (8) A minimum of 15 contact hours of instruction in crisis or trauma counseling, including multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, or disasters, and brief, intermediate, and long-term approaches.

**§ 4999.33. QUALIFYING DEGREE PROGRAM FOR LICENSURE OR REGISTRATION;  
GRADUATE STUDY BEGAN ON OR AFTER AUGUST 1, 2012 OR COMPLETED  
AFTER DECEMBER 31, 2018**

- (a) This section shall apply to the following:
- (1) Applicants for licensure or registration who begin graduate study before August 1, 2012, and do not complete that study on or before December 31, 2018.
  - (2) Applicants for licensure or registration who begin graduate study before August 1, 2012, and who graduate from a degree program that meets the requirements of this section.
  - (3) Applicants for licensure or registration who begin graduate study on or after August 1, 2012.
- (b) To qualify for licensure or registration, applicants shall possess a master's or doctoral degree that is counseling or psychotherapy in content and that meets the requirements of this section, obtained from an accredited or approved institution, as defined in Section 4999.12. For purposes of this subdivision, a degree is "counseling or psychotherapy in content" if it contains the supervised practicum or field study experience described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) and, except as provided in subdivision (f), the coursework in the core content areas listed in subparagraphs (A) to (M), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c).
- (c) The degree described in subdivision (b) shall be a single, integrated program that contains not less than 60 graduate semester units or 90 graduate quarter units of instruction, which shall, except as provided in subdivision (f), include all of the following:
- (1) The equivalent of at least three semester units or four quarter units of graduate study in all of the following core content areas:
    - (A) Counseling and psychotherapeutic theories and techniques, including the counseling process in a multicultural society, an orientation to wellness and prevention, counseling theories to assist in selection of appropriate counseling interventions, models of counseling consistent with current professional research and practice, development of a personal model of counseling, and multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, and disasters.
    - (B) Human growth and development across the lifespan, including normal and abnormal behavior and an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior.
    - (C) Career development theories and techniques, including career development decisionmaking models and interrelationships among and between work,

- family, and other life roles and factors, including the role of multicultural issues in career development.
- (D) Group counseling theories and techniques, including principles of group dynamics, group process components, group developmental stage theories, therapeutic factors of group work, group leadership styles and approaches, pertinent research and literature, group counseling methods, and evaluation of effectiveness.
  - (E) Assessment, appraisal, and testing of individuals, including basic concepts of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment techniques, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, statistical concepts, social and cultural factors related to assessment and evaluation of individuals and groups, and ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment instruments and techniques in counseling.
  - (F) Multicultural counseling theories and techniques, including counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, identity development, promoting cultural social justice, individual and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, and counselors' roles in eliminating biases and prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.
  - (G) Principles of the diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis, and the use of current diagnostic tools, such as the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the impact of co-occurring substance use disorders or medical psychological disorders, established diagnostic criteria for mental or emotional disorders, and the treatment modalities and placement criteria within the continuum of care.
  - (H) Research and evaluation, including studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, the use of research to inform evidence-based practice, the importance of research in advancing the profession of counseling, and statistical methods used in conducting research, needs assessment, and program evaluation.
  - (I) Professional orientation, ethics, and law in counseling, including California law and professional ethics for professional clinical counselors, professional ethical standards and legal considerations, licensing law and process, regulatory laws that delineate the profession's scope of practice, counselor-client privilege, confidentiality, the client dangerous to self or others, treatment of minors with or without parental consent, relationship between practitioner's sense of self and human values, functions and relationships with other human service providers, strategies for collaboration, and advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients.

- (J) Psychopharmacology, including the biological bases of behavior, basic classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications so that appropriate referrals can be made for medication evaluations and so that the side effects of those medications can be identified.
  - (K) Addictions counseling, including substance abuse, co-occurring disorders, and addiction, major approaches to identification, evaluation, treatment, and prevention of substance abuse and addiction, legal and medical aspects of substance abuse, populations at risk, the role of support persons, support systems, and community resources.
  - (L) Crisis or trauma counseling, including crisis theory; multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, or disasters; cognitive, affective, behavioral, and neurological effects associated with trauma; brief, intermediate, and long-term approaches; and assessment strategies for clients in crisis and principles of intervention for individuals with mental or emotional disorders during times of crisis, emergency, or disaster.
  - (M) Advanced counseling and psychotherapeutic theories and techniques, including the application of counseling constructs, assessment and treatment planning, clinical interventions, therapeutic relationships, psychopathology, or other clinical topics.
- (2) In addition to the course requirements described in paragraph (1), 15 semester units or 22.5 quarter units of advanced coursework to develop knowledge of specific treatment issues or special populations.
- (3) Not less than six semester units or nine quarter units of supervised practicum or field study experience that involves direct client contact in a clinical setting that provides a range of professional clinical counseling experience, including the following:
- (A) Applied psychotherapeutic techniques.
  - (B) Assessment.
  - (C) Diagnosis.
  - (D) Prognosis.
  - (E) Treatment planning.
  - (F) Treatment.
  - (G) Issues of development, adjustment, and maladjustment.
  - (H) Health and wellness promotion.
  - (I) Professional writing including documentation of services, treatment plans, and progress notes.

- (J) How to find and use resources.
  - (K) Other recognized counseling interventions.
  - (L) A minimum of 280 hours of face-to-face supervised clinical experience counseling individuals, families, or groups.
- (d) The 60 graduate semester units or 90 graduate quarter units of instruction required pursuant to subdivision (c) shall, in addition to meeting the requirements of subdivision (c), include instruction in all of the following:
- (1) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of socioeconomic status and other contextual issues affecting social position.
  - (2) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of a representative variety of the cultures found within California.
  - (3) Cultural competency and sensitivity, including a familiarity with the racial, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds of persons living in California.
  - (4) An understanding of the effects of socioeconomic status on treatment and available resources.
  - (5) Multicultural development and cross-cultural interaction, including experiences of race, ethnicity, class, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender, and disability and their incorporation into the psychotherapeutic process.
  - (6) Case management, systems of care for the severely mentally ill, public and private services for the severely mentally ill, community resources for victims of abuse, disaster and trauma response, advocacy for the severely mentally ill, and collaborative treatment. The instruction required in this paragraph may be provided either in credit level coursework or through extension programs offered by the degree-granting institution.
  - (7) Human sexuality, including the study of the physiological, psychological, and social cultural variables associated with sexual behavior, gender identity, and the assessment and treatment of psychosexual dysfunction.
  - (8) Spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same gender abuse dynamics.
  - (9) A minimum of seven contact hours of training or coursework in child abuse assessment and reporting, as specified in Section 28, and any regulations promulgated thereunder.
  - (10) Aging and long-term care, including biological, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects of aging. This coursework shall include instruction on the assessment and reporting of, as well as treatment related to, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect.



(e) A degree program that qualifies for licensure under this section shall do all of the following:

- (1) Integrate the principles of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environments.
- (2) Integrate an understanding of various cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position.
- (3) Provide the opportunity for students to meet with various consumers and family members of consumers of mental health services to enhance understanding of their experience of mental illness, treatment, and recovery.

(f) (1) (A) An applicant whose degree is deficient in no more than three of the required areas of study listed in subparagraphs (A) to (M), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) may satisfy those deficiencies by successfully completing post-master's or postdoctoral degree coursework at an accredited or approved institution, as defined in Section 4999.12.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), an applicant shall not be deficient in the required areas of study specified in subparagraphs (E) or (G) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) unless the applicant meets one of the following criteria and remediates the deficiency:

(i) The application for licensure was received by the board on or before August 31, 2020.

(ii) The application for registration was received by the board on or before August 31, 2020, and the registration was subsequently issued by the board.

(2) Coursework taken to meet deficiencies in the required areas of study listed in subparagraphs (A) to (M), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) shall be the equivalent of three semester units or four quarter units of study.

(3) The board shall make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements, regardless of accreditation.

#### **§ 4999.62. LICENSURE BY EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT EDUCATION**

(a) This section applies to persons with education gained from an out-of-state school who apply for licensure or registration and who do not qualify for a license under Section 4999.60.

(b) For purposes of Section 4999.61, education is substantially equivalent if all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) The degree is obtained from an accredited or approved institution, as defined in Section 4999.12, and consists of, at a minimum, the following:
- (A) (i) For an applicant who obtained a degree within the timeline prescribed by subdivision (a) of Section 4999.33 the degree shall contain no less than 60 graduate semester or 90 graduate quarter units of instruction.
    - (ii) Up to 12 semester or 18 quarter units of instruction may be remediated, if missing from the degree. The remediation may occur while the applicant is registered as an associate.
  - (B) For an applicant who obtained a degree within the timeline prescribed by subdivision (a) of Section 4999.32 the degree shall contain no less than 48 graduate semester or 72 graduate quarter units of instruction.
  - (C) (i) Six semester or nine quarter units of supervised practicum or field study experience, including, but not limited to, a minimum of 280 hours of face-to-face supervised clinical experience counseling individuals, families, or groups.
    - (ii) An out-of-state applicant who holds a valid license in good standing in another state or country as a professional clinical counselor at the highest level for independent clinical practice is exempt from the practicum requirement specified in clause (i).
  - (D) The required areas of study listed in subparagraphs (A) to (M), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 4999.33.
    - (i) (I) An applicant whose degree is deficient in no more than six of the required areas of study listed in subparagraphs (A) to (M), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 4999.33 may satisfy those deficiencies by successfully completing graduate level coursework at an accredited or approved institution, as defined in Section 4999.12. Coursework taken to meet any deficiencies shall be the equivalent of three semester units or four quarter units of study.
      - (II) Notwithstanding subclause (I), no applicant shall be deficient in the required areas of study specified in subparagraph (E) or (G) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 4999.33.
    - (ii) An applicant who completed a course in professional orientation, ethics, and law in counseling as required by subparagraph (I) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 4999.33 that did not contain instruction in California law and ethics shall complete a 12-hour course in California law and professional ethics that includes, but is not limited to, instruction in advertising, scope of practice, scope of competence, treatment of minors, confidentiality, dangerous clients, psychotherapist-client privilege,

recordkeeping, client access to records, state and federal laws relating to confidentiality of patient health information, dual relationships, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, online therapy, insurance reimbursement, civil liability, disciplinary actions and unprofessional conduct, ethics complaints and ethical standards, termination of therapy, standards of care, relevant family law, therapist disclosures to clients, the application of legal and ethical standards in different types of work settings, and licensing law and the licensing process. The coursework may be from an accredited or approved school, college, or university, as defined in Section 4999.12, or from a continuing education provider that is acceptable to the board, as defined in Section 4999.76. Undergraduate coursework shall not satisfy this requirement. An applicant shall complete this coursework before registration as an associate.

- (iii) An applicant who has not completed a course in professional orientation, ethics, and law in counseling as required by subparagraph (I) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 4999.33 shall complete this required coursework, including content in California law and ethics. An applicant shall complete this coursework before registration as an associate.
  - (iv) An applicant who holds a valid license in good standing in another state or country as a professional clinical counselor at the highest level for independent clinical practice may complete any units and course content requirements required in this subparagraph not already completed in the applicant's education while registered as an associate, unless otherwise specified.
- (2) The applicant completes any units required by subdivision (c) of Section 4999.33 not already completed in the applicant's education as follows:
- (A) At least 15 semester units or 22.5 quarter units of advanced coursework to develop knowledge of specific treatment issues or special populations. This coursework is in addition to the course requirements described in subparagraph (D) of paragraph (1).
  - (B) Coursework shall be from an accredited or approved school, college, or university as defined in Section 4999.12.
- (3) (A) The applicant completes the following coursework not already completed in the applicant's education:
- (i) A minimum of 10 contact hours of training in human sexuality, as specified in Section 25 and any regulations promulgated thereunder, including the study of the physiological, psychological, and social cultural variables associated with sexual behavior, gender identity, and the assessment and treatment of psychosexual dysfunction.

- (ii) A minimum of 15 contact hours of instruction in spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same-gender abuse dynamics.
  - (iii) A minimum of seven contact hours of training or coursework in child abuse assessment and reporting as specified in Section 28 and any regulations promulgated thereunder.
  - (iv) A minimum of 10 contact hours of instruction in aging and long-term care, including biological, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects of aging. This coursework shall include instruction on the assessment and reporting of, as well as treatment related to, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect.
- (B) This coursework may be from an accredited or approved school, college, or university as defined in Section 4999.12, or from a continuing education provider that is described in Section 4999.76. Undergraduate coursework shall not satisfy this requirement.
- (4) The applicant completes the following coursework not already completed in the applicant's education from an accredited or approved school, college, or university as defined in Section 4999.12, or from a continuing education provider that is described in Section 4999.76. Undergraduate coursework shall not satisfy this requirement.
- (A) At least three semester units, or 45 hours, of instruction regarding the principles of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environments, including structured meetings with various consumers and family members of consumers of mental health services to enhance understanding of their experiences of mental illness, treatment, and recovery.
- (B) At least one semester unit, or 15 hours, of instruction that includes an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position.
- (5) An applicant may complete any units and course content requirements required under paragraph (2), (3), or (4) not already completed in the applicant's education while registered with the board as an associate.
- (6) On and after January 1, 2021, an applicant for licensure shall show proof of completion of at least six hours of coursework or applied experience under supervision in suicide risk assessment and intervention using one of the methods specified in Section 4999.66.