



Board of Behavioral Sciences



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Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California

Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
Department of Consumer Affairs

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

An archived recording of this Board of Behavioral Sciences meeting held on October 24, 2025, are available for viewing at the following link:

[BBS Workforce & Development Committee Meeting 10.24.25](#)

DATE October 24, 2025

TIME 1:00 p.m.

LOCATIONS

Primary Location Department of Consumer Affairs
Hearing Room
1747 North Market Blvd., #186
Sacramento, CA 95834

Alternative Platform WebEx Video/Phone Conference

ATTENDEES

Members Present at Remote Locations

Wendy Strack, Chair, Public Member
Eleanor Uribe, LCSW Member
Dr. Annette Walker, Ed.D., Public Member

Members Absent Dr. Nicholas Boyd, Ph.D., LPCC Member
Justin Huft, LMFT Member

Staff Present at Primary Location

Steve Sodergren, Executive Officer
Shelley Ganaway, Legal Counsel
Rosanne Helms, Legislative Manager
Christina Kitamura, Administrative Analyst
Syreeta Risso, Special Projects and Research Analyst

Other Attendees Public participation via WebEx video conference/phone conference
and in-person at Department of Consumer Affairs

1 **1. Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum**

2
3 Wendy Strack, Chair of the Workforce Development Committee (Committee),
4 called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was
5 established.

6
7 **2. Introductions**

8
9 Committee members introduced themselves during role call; staff and public
10 attendees introduced themselves.

11
12 **3. Consent Calendar: Discussion and Possible Approval of July 31, 2025**
13 **Workforce Development Committee Meeting Minutes**

14
15 Motion: Approve the July 31, 2025 Workforce Development Committee meeting
16 minutes.

17
18 M/S: Walker/Uribe

19
20 Public Comment: None

21
22 Vote: 3 yea, 0 nay, 2 absent. Motion carried.

Member	Vote
Dr. Nicholas Boyd	Absent
Justin Huft	Absent
Wendy Strack	Yes
Eleanor Uribe	Yes
Dr. Annette Walker	Yes

23
24 **4. Presentation on Other State Jurisdiction Education Requirements for**
25 **Licensure**

26
27 **Background**

28 Current law requires in-state applicants who began graduate study on or after
29 August 1, 2012, to complete all education requirements before receiving an
30 associate MFT registration; no post-degree remediation is allowed. Missing even
31 one course may require earning a new qualifying degree. Out-of-state applicants
32 have more flexibility, including post-degree remediation, which has raised equity
33 concerns and challenges in verifying education before supervised practice. The
34 rise of hybrid/distance programs further complicates the in-state vs. out-of-state
35 distinction.

36
37 Additionally, qualifying degrees must integrate MFT coursework and
38 competencies, but broad or interdisciplinary program titles can make compliance
39 difficult to assess.

Other State Jurisdiction Review

Staff reviewed Oregon, Ohio, and Texas requirements for comparison and presented its findings:

- **In-State vs. Out-of-State:** Other states do not distinguish; they focus on course content and accreditation.
- **Units:** All align around a 60-semester unit standard, similar to COAMFTE accreditation.
- **Degree Designation:** California is more prescriptive; Ohio requires explicit MFT title, while Oregon/Texas allow related fields if coursework meets standards.
- **Accreditation:** All recognize COAMFTE; Oregon and Texas also accept CACREP programs with added requirements.
- **Content:** Core areas are consistent nationally (systemic practice, ethics, diagnosis, multicultural counseling, research, practicum), but California's in-state requirements are less prescriptive on unit distribution.
- **Remediation:** All states allow post-degree remediation; California limits this to out-of-state applicants.

In contrast, out-of-state applicants are offered greater flexibility and may remediate several educational deficiencies post-degree, including in some cases after receiving an associate registration. This distinction has raised concerns for California graduates and created challenges ensuring that all associates have completed the necessary education prior to beginning supervised practice. Additionally, as more education programs adopt a hybrid or distance-learning models, the distinction between "in-state" and "out-of-state" programs has become increasingly difficult to apply equitably.

Another important consideration is the requirement that the qualifying degree be an integrated degree in marriage and family therapy. Under the current educational requirements, a qualifying degree must include 12 semester units specifically in marriage and family coursework, along with "additional coursework" outlined in statute. Not all the "additional coursework" has a defined content unit requirement, but the program must include integrated certain defined competencies.

While current California's education requirements provide flexibility for institutions to design programs that will prepare students for licensure, they can also create challenges in determining whether a degree meets California education standards. This can be problematic when programs are broadly titled or interdisciplinary in nature and do not clearly demonstrate integration of the required MFT content and competencies within the curriculum.

1 The education and licensure statutes of Oregon, Ohio, and Texas were provided
2 as Attachments A-C.

3 4 **Recommendations**

5 Staff made the following recommendations to be considered when reviewing the
6 proposed LMFT education requirements:

- 7
- 8 • Consider amending the current education requirements to remove the in-
9 state and out-of-state designations and rely on degrees that substantially
10 meet the education requirements as set forth in statute.
 - 11
 - 12 • Consider removing degree titles and instead accept any degree that meets
13 the educational requirements.
 - 14
 - 15 • Consider formally recognizing that degrees accredited by COAMFTE or
16 CACREP as meeting the educational requirements.
 - 17
 - 18 • Consider identifying minimum unit requirements for each content area and
19 revising the competency standards to provide broader, more flexible
20 descriptions.
 - 21
 - 22 • Consider amending the current remediation content to offer a broader
23 range that can be met.
 - 24

25 Committee Comments

26 Committee members expressed appreciation for the work on this topic and
27 acknowledged that there will be lot of work ahead.

28 29 Public Comment

30 Shanti Ezrine, California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists
31 (CAMFT): CAMFT offered initial thoughts on each recommendation and
32 approached the recommendations with the goal of ensuring consumer protection
33 while balancing that with reducing barriers for applicants seeking licensure.

34 1. Recommendations supported for consideration:

- 35
- 36 • Removing in-state and out-of-state designations.
 - 37 • Removing degree titles and focusing instead on degrees that meet
38 educational requirements.
 - 39 • Amending current remediation content to allow for a broader range of
40 options.

41 2. Concerns regarding formally recognizing degrees accredited by 42 COAMFTE or CACREP as automatically meeting educational 43 requirements.

- Potential unintended consequences of deviating from the current practice of evaluating programs beyond accreditation alone.
- The risk of placing non-COAMFTE or non-CACREP programs under additional scrutiny.

3. Unit requirements for specific content areas:

While CAMFT does not have a firm position on this recommendation, if the intent is to ensure quality of content, CAMFT believes this can be better addressed through detailed competency descriptions (as outlined in the recommendation) rather than setting specific unit measurements.

Dr. Ben Caldwell, Psy.D.: Expressed concerns about automatically recognizing programs accredited by COAMFTE or CACREP as meeting California's curriculum requirements. Current state standards are tailored to California's unique needs and populations, serving an important public protection role. Specific concerns were noted regarding CACREP accreditation:

- Only about 10–11 jurisdictions nationwide recognize CACREP for licensure.
- Revisiting this issue could reopen past debates from LPCC licensure discussions.
- Philosophical differences exist between CACREP standards and the MFT profession, as CACREP views marriage and family therapy as a counseling subspecialty rather than an independent profession.

Dr. Leah Brew, Ph.D.: 1) Noted that CACREP views counseling as the foundation (approximately 48 units) with an additional 12 units for a specialty area. CACREP offers multiple specializations, including MFT. If accreditation is acknowledged, it was suggested that for MFT licensure, only the MFT specialization should be recognized, while LPCC could allow broader specializations. 2) Expressed support for using accreditation as a baseline, provided California-specific content requirements remain mandatory. Accreditation could confirm major content areas, reducing the need for applicants to remediate entire degrees. Instead, applicants would only need to complete specific continuing education hours for California-specific topics.

Sara Carrasco: Suggested exploring the possibility of approving existing degree programs (e.g., through a comprehensive review of syllabi) so that individual applications from graduates of those programs would not require full evaluation. This approach could improve efficiency in the licensing process over time.

Staff thanked the commenters for the valuable feedback.

1 **5. Discussion and Possible Action to Make Recommendations Regarding**
2 **Education Requirements for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists**
3 **(Business and Professions Code (BPC) §§4980.36, 4980.37, 4980.74,**
4 **4980.78, 4980.81)**

5 *(This agenda item was heard after item 6.)*
6

7 **Background**

8 At its July 2025 meeting, the Committee began discussing ways to streamline
9 and modernize education requirements for LMFT licensure. The current multi-
10 pathway structure—covering pre-2012 degrees, post-2012 degrees, and out-of-
11 state degrees—creates confusion and inequities, particularly regarding integrated
12 degree definitions, remediation options, and classification of institutions as in-
13 state or out-of-state.

14
15 The Committee expressed interest in creating a single, streamlined pathway to
16 replace the current multi-path structure. Staff were directed to explore this
17 approach further.

18
19 At the July 2025 meeting, staff also presented findings from anonymous surveys
20 of LMFT educators, students, and registrants. These results will serve as a
21 resource in developing the proposed unified education framework.

22
23 Staff presented the proposed outline of the new LMFT education framework,
24 which was provided in the meeting materials as Attachment A and a summary of
25 the three current education pathways to LMFT licensure, which was provided as
26 Attachment B. Survey results were provided as Attachments C and D.

27
28 **Outline of Proposed Education Requirements**

29 The draft proposal consolidated all LMFT education requirements into a single
30 section and is intended to initiate dialogue and foster collaboration between the
31 Board, educators, and all other stakeholders on potential strategies to streamline
32 the LMFT education requirements.

33
34 **Recommended Next Steps**

35 Further development on the draft proposal is needed, particularly with input from
36 educators and subject matter experts. Staff recommends breaking future
37 discussion items into focused components. Suggested topics of discussion
38 include, but are not limited to:

39
40 **1. Qualifying Degree Content and Practicum Requirements**

41 Conduct a detailed discussion on the essential coursework and practicum
42 content that should be required within a qualifying degree program.

43
44 **2. Graduate-Level Remediation**

45 Define which content areas may be remediated through graduate-level

1 coursework, what that coursework should entail, and the appropriate limits of
2 remediation.

3. **Supplemental Coursework Requirements**

5 Review the Board's supplemental content areas individually (e.g., child
6 abuse, substance use, suicide prevention) for relevance, and consider
7 relocating these requirements to the Board's general statutes, with cross-
8 references in each practice act to ensure consistency across license types.

4. **National Attainability and Unintended Consequences**

10 Once the above have been determined, review the proposed requirements to
11 ensure they are reasonably attainable for graduates of programs nationwide
12 and assess whether they may unintentionally disqualify a significant number
13 of applicants.

5. **Pre-Degree Hours**

16 Examine the requirements for MFT trainees in practicum counting pre-degree
17 hours and explore extending the same allowance to PCC trainees and social
18 work interns.

6. **Provisional Associate Registration Concept**

22 Explore whether implementation of the new education framework presents an
23 opportunity to formalize the current "90-day rule" by creating a one-year
24 provisional associate registration for applicants who apply within 90 days of
25 degree conferral.

7. **Formal Approval of School Programs**

28 Consider implementing a formal process to recognize and approve school
29 programs that meet the Board's requirements for a qualifying degree.

Public Comment

32 Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT: Thanked staff for the detailed outline. Will present this
33 information to the CAMFT team for further evaluation. Asked about providing a
34 general timeline for future discussions and whether certain recommendations
35 would be prioritized. Suggested focus on qualifying degree content and practice
36 requirements, as well as graduate-level remediation, with input from subject
37 matter experts for the next meeting.

38
39 Dr. Leah Brew: Raised the following points:

- 40 1. Accreditation: If accreditation is considered, include CACREP's MFT
41 specialty for MFT programs. For LPCC, any CACREP specialization
42 meeting standards should be acceptable.
- 43 2. LPCC Curriculum: Assessment and diagnosis requirements were
44 originally added to ensure coherent programs with dedicated faculty.

3. LPCC programs should continue meeting at least 10 of the 13 post-2012 content areas.
4. Remediation: Concern about removing 12 units of MFT content. Suggested requiring courses in family systems, couples, and/or child therapy, similar to LPCC's structured course approach.
5. Pre-Degree Hours: Recommended excluding pre-degree hours for LPCC to maintain portability for out-of-state students.
6. Program Approval: If programs are approved, regular audits are needed to ensure compliance, especially when faculty changes occur, to maintain coverage of critical areas like recovery-oriented care.

Elyse Springer, Postpartum Support International California: Emphasized that current LMFT coursework requirements do not consistently address perinatal or maternal mental health. Including training on perinatal mental health—aligned with state suicide prevention strategies—would strengthen clinician competency and address rising rates of pregnancy-associated suicide, most of which are preventable. This addition would not overburden graduate programs and would improve public safety. Requested that the Board consider adding this coursework to educational standards.

Dr. Ben Caldwell: Requested clarity on the agenda for the next meeting to help prioritize efforts. Suggested that focusing on the first three recommended next steps would allow for deeper discussion and targeted input.

Dr. Betsy Perez, Ph.D.: Concerned about the lack of flexibility in course sequencing for the school counseling track, which creates barriers to LPCC licensure. Allowing approved coursework to be completed in a non-sequential order and permitting fulfillment of LPCC educational components independently from the PPS credential would reduce delays, improve accessibility, and help expand the behavioral health workforce to meet growing K-12 mental health needs while maintaining licensure integrity.

Discussion

Walker: Asked staff about the anticipated workflow for bringing back portions of this discussion to future committee workshops and whether additional preparation time would be needed. Clarification was sought on whether these topics would return at the next meeting or a later one.

Helms: Outlined plans to develop a more formal draft of proposed legislative changes, starting with converting the framework into a format that reflects statutory revisions. Subject matter experts (SMEs) will be consulted to refine language related to therapy concepts and core requirements. For the next meeting, staff anticipates presenting a preliminary draft of section 4980.36 and collaborating with SMEs on two key areas:

- Qualifying degree content and practice requirements
- Graduate-level remediation requirements

Supplemental coursework requirements will be addressed later, as they require separate detailed review. These steps aim to provide a foundation for discussion with educators and stakeholders.

6. Presentation on Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education and Commission for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs Accreditation Standards

(This item was taken out of order and heard before agenda item 5.)

Background

Accreditation ensures graduate education meets rigorous standards but can create burdens for schools and limit innovation. California's current requirements allow flexibility while requiring degrees from regionally or nationally accredited institutions or BPPE-approved schools. LMFT applicants may also qualify through COAMFTE-accredited programs; CACREP accreditation is not formally recognized for LMFT or LPCC licensure.

Other states often recognize COAMFTE and CACREP accreditation, sometimes without further review. California still reviews transcripts for compliance regardless of accreditation. Currently, the Board recognizes 106 LMFT programs (11 COAMFTE, 3 CACREP) and 113 LPCC programs (21 CACREP).

Because COAMFTE and CACREP have established specialized standards for marriage and family therapy and professional clinical counseling, it is important to understand their requirements for future Committee discussions.

COMAFTE Background and Educational Standards

The 2022 COAMFTE standards established the foundational curriculum areas and credit requirements, which were provided in the meeting materials as Attachment A and are outlined as follows:

- FCA 1: Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester unit credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours)
- FCA 2: Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours)
- FCA 3: Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- FCA 4: Research & Evaluation (Minimum 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- FCA 5: Professional Identity, Law, Ethics & Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)

- FCA 6: Biopsychosocial Health & Development Across the Life Span (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- FCA 7: Systemic/Relational Assessment & Mental Health Diagnosis & Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester/4 quarter credits, 45 clock hours)
- FCA 8: Contemporary Issues (No minimum credit requirements)
- FCA 9: Community Intersections & Collaboration (No minimum credit requirements)
- FCA 10: Preparation for Teletherapy Practice

COAMFTE supervised practice requirements:

- **Clinical Contact:** At least 300 hours, including 100 hours of relational work.
- **Supervision:** 100 hours of relational/systemic supervision, with at least 50 hours focused on MFT relational/systemic supervision.

CACREP Background and Educational Standards

The 2024 CACREP standards, which were provided in the meeting materials as Attachment B, outline the curriculum for entry-level programs to ensure graduates acquire the essential knowledge and skills needed to practice effectively as professional counselors across various service delivery settings. Accredited programs must address the following foundational curriculum areas:

- Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice
- Social and Cultural Identities and Experiences
- Lifespan Development
- Career Development
- Counseling Practice and Relationships
- Group Counseling and Group Work
- Assessment and Diagnostic Process
- Research and Program Evaluation

Each of the eight foundational curriculum areas has clearly defined required content. In addition, CACREP requires students to select one of eight practice specializations, each with its own set of detailed content standards.

- Addiction Counseling
- Career Counseling
- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling
- College Counseling and Student Affairs
- Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling
- Rehabilitation Counseling

- School Counseling

CACREP requires both practicum and internship experiences:

- **Practicum:** Minimum 100 hours over at least eight weeks, including 40 hours of direct client services.
- **Internship:** Minimum 600 hours in the chosen specialization, with at least 240 hours of direct client services.

Considerations for Discussion

- Should CACREP be formally recognized as an accrediting agency for LMFT and LPCC licensure?
- Should COAMFTE or CACREP accreditation be considered sufficient to meet the educational requirements for LMFT and LPCC licensure or registration?

Public Comment

Shanti Ezrine, CAMFT: CAMFT generally supports efforts to address workforce shortages and reduce unnecessary barriers while maintaining consumer protection. While CAMFT typically favors expanding access and degree program options, CAMFT has not yet fully reviewed CACREP's background and educational standards. The information provided will be presented to the CAMFT team for further evaluation.

Dr. Leah Brew: Noted that allowing accreditation as an option (rather than a requirement) could reduce the need for BBS to review degree content. CACREP's MFT specialization includes 14 additional standards beyond the core accreditation requirements, covering areas such as theories and models of marriage and family, assessment principles, and case conceptualization from a systems perspective. These standards are extensive and differ from COAMFTE's structure.

Dr. Ben Caldwell: Noted that MFT programs should remain fully integrated as MFT programs, though this will require further discussion. Question was raised regarding the process for gathering additional input from stakeholders and faculty at various universities.

Rosanne Helms: Staff will begin compiling draft proposals based on key focus areas following this meeting. Once drafts are prepared, feedback will be solicited through future committee meetings, outreach to the MFT consortium, and direct engagement with educators. The goal is to gather comprehensive input from all stakeholders to ensure the process is inclusive and does not create unnecessary barriers.

1 Dr. Betsy Perez: Expressed concerns about CACREP requirements for school
2 counseling programs, specifically the lack of flexibility in course sequencing.
3 Current standards create barriers for individuals with a school counseling
4 specialization seeking LPCC licensure, as certain courses (e.g., assessment and
5 diagnosis) cannot be taken outside the prescribed order. Suggested that allowing
6 approved coursework to be completed in a non-sequential order and permitting
7 LPCC educational components to be fulfilled independently from the PPS
8 credential would reduce barriers, maintain licensure integrity, improve
9 accessibility, and help expand the behavioral health workforce to meet growing
10 K-12 mental health needs.

11 Discussion

13 Uribe: Asked how long this process will take.

15 Helms: Responded that this could take a couple of years.

17 **7. Update Regarding the Workforce Development Action Plan**

19 Steve Sodergren provided a brief update. He will add those items discussed
20 today in Agenda Item 5 above (recommended steps 1 and 2) to the action plan.

22 The Workforce Development Goals Status Report was provided in the meeting
23 materials as Attachment A.

25 Discussion/Public Comment: None

27 **8. Suggestions for Future Agenda items**

29 None

31 **9. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda**

33 None

35 **10. Adjournment**

37 The Committee adjourned at 2:31 p.m.