

**645—31.6(154D) Educational qualifications for mental health counselors.** The applicant must present proof of meeting the following educational requirements for a mental health counselor:

**31.6(1) Accredited program.** Applicants must present with the application an official transcript verifying completion of a master's degree of 60 semester hours (or equivalent quarter hours) or a doctoral degree in counseling with emphasis in mental health counseling from a mental health counseling program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) from a college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. Applicants who entered a program of study prior to July 1, 2008, must present with the application an official transcript verifying completion of a master's degree of 45 semester hours or the equivalent; or

**31.6(2) Content-equivalent program.** Applicants must present an official transcript verifying completion of a master's degree or a doctoral degree from a college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education which is content-equivalent to a master's degree in counseling with emphasis in mental health counseling. Applicants who entered a program of study prior to July 1, 2008, must present with the application an official transcript verifying completion of a master's degree of 45 semester hours or the equivalent. After March 31, 2009, graduates from non-CACREP-accredited mental health counseling programs shall provide an equivalency evaluation of their educational credentials by the Center for Credentialing and Education, Inc. (CCE), Web site <http://cce-global.org>. The professional curriculum must be equivalent to that stated in these rules. Applicants shall bear the expense of the curriculum evaluation. The degree will be considered as "content-equivalent" if it includes 60 semester hours (or equivalent quarter hours) and successful completion of graduate-level coursework in each of the following areas:

*a. Professional identity.* Studies that provide an understanding of all of the following aspects of professional functioning:

- (1) History and philosophy of the counseling profession, including significant factors and events;
- (2) Professional roles, functions, and relationships with other providers of human services;
- (3) Technological competence and computer literacy;
- (4) Professional organizations, primarily ACA, its divisions, branches, and affiliates, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases;
- (5) Professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues;
- (6) Public and private policy processes, including the role of the professional counselor in advocating on behalf of the profession;
- (7) Advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients; and
- (8) Ethical standards of ACA and related entities, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling.

*b. Social and cultural diversity.* Studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural and diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and spiritual values, socioeconomic status and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups, and communities including all of the following:

- (1) Multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns between and within diverse groups nationally and internationally;
- (2) Attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities;
- (3) Individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with diverse populations and ethnic groups;
- (4) Counselors' roles in social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, cultural self-awareness, the nature of biases, prejudices, processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination, and other culturally supported behaviors that are detrimental to the growth of the human spirit, mind or body;

(5) Theories of multicultural counseling, theories of identity development, and multicultural competencies; and

(6) Ethical and legal considerations.

*c. Human growth and development.* Studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, including all of the following:

(1) Theories of individual and family development and transitions across the life span;

(2) Theories of learning and personality development;

(3) Human behavior including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, exceptional behavior, addictive behavior, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior;

(4) Strategies for facilitating optimum development over the life span; and

(5) Ethical and legal considerations.

*d. Career development.* Studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors, including all of the following:

(1) Career development theories and decision-making models;

(2) Career, avocational, educational, occupational and labor market information resources, visual and print media, computer-based career information systems, and other electronic career information systems;

(3) Career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation;

(4) Interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors including the role of diversity and gender in career development;

(5) Career and educational planning, placement, follow-up, and evaluation;

(6) Assessment instruments and techniques that are relevant to career planning and decision making;

(7) Technology-based career development applications and strategies, including computer-assisted career guidance and information systems and appropriate worldwide Web sites;

(8) Career counseling processes, techniques, and resources, including those applicable to specific populations; and

(9) Ethical and legal considerations.

*e. Helping relationships.* Studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes, including all of the following:

(1) Counselor and consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes including age, gender, and ethnic differences, verbal and nonverbal behaviors and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills;

(2) An understanding of essential interviewing and counseling skills so that the student is able to develop a therapeutic relationship, establish appropriate counseling goals, design intervention strategies, evaluate client outcome, and successfully terminate the counselor-client relationship. Studies will also facilitate student self-awareness so that the counselor-client relationship is therapeutic and the counselor maintains appropriate professional boundaries;

(3) Counseling theories that provide the student with a consistent model(s) to conceptualize client presentation and select appropriate counseling interventions. Student experiences should include an examination of the historical development of counseling theories, an exploration of affective, behavioral, and cognitive theories, and an opportunity to apply the theoretical material to case studies. Students will also be exposed to models of counseling that are consistent with current professional research and practice in the field so that they can begin to develop a personal model of counseling;

(4) A systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions. Students will be exposed to a rationale for selecting family and other systems theories as appropriate modalities for family assessment and counseling;

(5) A general framework for understanding and practicing. Student experiences should include an examination of the historical development of consultation, an exploration of the stages of consultation

and the major models of consultation, and an opportunity to apply the theoretical material to case presentations. Students will begin to develop a personal model of consultation;

(6) Integration of technological strategies and applications within counseling and consultation processes; and

(7) Ethical and legal considerations.

*f. Group work.* Studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understanding of group purpose, development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group approaches, including all of the following:

(1) Principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work;

(2) Group leadership styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles;

(3) Theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature;

(4) Group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness;

(5) Approaches used for other types of group work, including task groups, psychoeducational groups, and therapy groups;

(6) Professional preparation standards for group leaders; and

(7) Ethical and legal considerations.

*g. Assessment.* Studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation, including the following:

(1) Historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment;

(2) Basic concepts of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment techniques including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations, and computer-managed and computer-assisted methods;

(3) Statistical concepts, including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations;

(4) Reliability (i.e., theory of measurement error, models of reliability, and the use of reliability information);

(5) Validity (i.e., evidence of validity, types of validity, and the relationship between reliability and validity);

(6) Age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, disability, culture, spirituality, and other factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations;

(7) Strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling;

(8) An understanding of general principles and methods of case conceptualization, assessment, or diagnoses of mental and emotional status; and

(9) Ethical and legal considerations.

*h. Research and program evaluation.* Studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including all of the following:

(1) The importance of research and opportunities and difficulties in conducting research in the counseling profession;

(2) Research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;

(3) Use of technology and statistical methods in conducting research and program evaluation, assuming basic computer literacy;

(4) Principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and use of findings to effect program modifications;

(5) Use of research to improve counseling effectiveness; and

(6) Ethical and legal considerations.

*i. Diagnosis and treatment planning.* Studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) The 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;
- (2) The established diagnostic criteria for mental or emotional disorders that describe treatment modalities and placement criteria within the continuum of care;
- (3) The impact of co-occurring substance use disorders on medical and psychological disorders;
- (4) The relevance and potential biases of commonly used diagnostic tools as related to multicultural populations;
- (5) The appropriate use of diagnostic tools, including the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, to describe the symptoms and clinical presentation of clients with mental or emotional impairments; and
- (6) The ability to conceptualize accurate multi-axial diagnoses of disorders presented by clients and how to communicate the differential diagnosis to clients' managed care and insurance companies or other third-party payers.

*j. Psychopathology.* Studies that provide an understanding of emotional and mental disorders experienced by persons of all ages, characteristics of disorders, and common nosologies of emotional and mental disorders utilized within the U.S. health care system for diagnosis and treatment planning. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Study of cognitive, behavioral, physiological and interpersonal mechanisms for adapting to change and to stressors;
- (2) Role of genetic, physiological, cognitive, environmental and interpersonal factors, and their interactions, on development of the form, severity, course and persistence of the various types of disorders and dysfunction;
- (3) Research methods and findings pertinent to the description, classification, diagnosis, origin, and course of disorders and dysfunction;
- (4) Theoretical perspectives relevant to the origin, development, and course and outcome for the forms of behavior disorders and dysfunction; and
- (5) Methods of intervention or prevention used to minimize and modify maladaptive behaviors, disruptive and distressful cognition, or compromised interpersonal functioning associated with various forms of maladaptation.

*k. Practicum.* A graduate-level clinical supervised counseling practicum in which students must complete supervised practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours prior to receiving the master's degree. The practicum provides for the development of counseling skills under supervision. The student's practicum includes all of the following:

- (1) Forty hours of direct service with clients, including experience in individual counseling and group work;
- (2) Weekly interaction with an average of one hour per week of individual and triadic supervision which occurs regularly over a minimum of one academic term by a program faculty member or a supervisor working under the supervision of a program faculty member;
- (3) An average of one and one-half hours per week of group supervision that is provided on a regular schedule over the course of the student's practicum by a program faculty member or a supervisor under the supervision of a program faculty member; and
- (4) Evaluation of the student's performance throughout the practicum including a formal evaluation after the student completes the practicum.

*l. Internship.* A graduate-level clinical supervised counseling internship that requires students to complete a supervised internship of 600 clock hours that is begun after successful completion of the student's practicum and prior to receiving the master's degree. The internship provides an opportunity for the student to perform, under supervision, a variety of counseling activities that a professional counselor is expected to perform. The student's internship includes all of the following:

- (1) A minimum of 240 hours of direct service with clientele appropriate to the program of study;

- (2) A minimum of one hour per week of individual supervision and triadic supervision, throughout the internship, usually performed by the on-site supervisor;
- (3) A minimum of one and one-half hours per week of group supervision, throughout the internship, usually performed by a program faculty member supervisor;
- (4) The opportunity for the student to become familiar with a variety of professional activities in addition to direct service (e.g., record keeping, supervision, information and referral, in-service and staff meetings);
- (5) The opportunity for the student to develop program-appropriate audiotapes or videotapes, or a combination of both, of the student's interactions with clients for use in supervision;
- (6) The opportunity for the student to gain supervised experience in the use of a variety of professional resources such as assessment instruments, technologies, print and nonprint media, professional literature, and research; and
- (7) A formal evaluation of the student's performance during the internship by a program faculty member in consultation with the site supervisor.

If the applicant has taught a graduate-level course as outlined above at a college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education or the Council on Professional Accreditation, that course may be credited toward the course requirement.

**31.6(3)** *Foreign-trained marital and family therapists or mental health counselors.* Foreign-trained marital and family therapists or mental health counselors shall:

- a.* Provide an equivalency evaluation of their educational credentials by the following: International Educational Research Foundations, Inc., Credentials Evaluation Service, P.O. Box 3665, Culver City, CA 90231-3665; telephone (310)258-9451; Web site [www.ierf.org](http://www.ierf.org) or E-mail at [info@ierf.org](mailto:info@ierf.org). The professional curriculum must be equivalent to that stated in these rules. A candidate shall bear the expense of the curriculum evaluation.
- b.* Provide a notarized copy of the certificate or diploma awarded to the applicant from a mental health counselor program in the country in which the applicant was educated.
- c.* Receive a final determination from the board regarding the application for licensure.