

**645—31.6(154D) Educational qualifications for mental health counselors.** The applicant must complete three semester credit hours, or equivalent quarter hours, of graduate level coursework in each of the content areas identified in 31.6(2); no course may be used to fulfill more than one content area. The applicant must present proof of completion of the following educational requirements for licensure as 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, 2012, 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. 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), website [cce-global.org](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.

*a.* The degree of an applicant who entered a program of study prior to July 1, 2012, will be considered "content-equivalent" if the degree includes 45 semester hours (or equivalent quarter hours) and successful completion of graduate-level coursework in each of the areas in subparagraphs (1) to (12). If the applicant has taught a graduate-level course in any of the areas in subparagraphs (1) to (12) at a college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, that course may be credited toward the coursework requirement.

(1) Counseling theories. Studies that provide an understanding of counseling theories, utilize personal and environmental data in the mental health counseling process, and investigate procedures that are appropriate to various counseling theories and specific settings.

(2) Supervised counseling practicum. A graduate-level clinical supervised counseling practicum in a mental health setting in which students must complete supervised practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours over a minimum ten-week academic term. The practicum provides for the development of counseling skills under supervision. The student's practicum includes all of the following:

1. At least 40 hours of direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills;

2. Weekly interaction with an average of 1 hour per week of individual or triadic supervision throughout the practicum by a program faculty member, a student supervisor, or a site supervisor who is working in biweekly consultation with a program faculty member in accordance with the supervision contract;

3. An average of 1½ hours per week of group supervision that is provided on a regular schedule throughout the practicum by a program faculty member or a student supervisor; and

4. Evaluation of the student's counseling performance throughout the practicum, including documentation of a formal evaluation after the student completes the practicum.

(3) Human growth and development. Studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Theories of human development across the life span;

2. Major theories of personality development; and

3. Human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and cultural factors as they affect both normal and abnormal behavior.

(4) Social and cultural foundations. Studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns of diverse groups;
2. Attitudes and behavior based on factors such as age, race, religious preference, physical disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and culture, gender, socioeconomic status, and intellectual ability; and
3. Individual and group interventions with diverse populations.

(5) Helping relationships. Studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Helping skills and counseling and consultation theories, including coverage of relevant research and factors considered in applications;
2. Counselor or consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes, including gender and ethnicity differences, verbal and nonverbal behaviors and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills; and
3. Client or consultee characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes, including gender and ethnicity differences, verbal and nonverbal behaviors and personal characteristics, traits, capabilities, life circumstances, and developmental levels.

(6) Groups. Studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, and group counseling methods and skills. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, and group members' roles and behaviors;
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; and
4. Group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, ethical considerations, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness.

(7) Career and lifestyle development. Studies that provide an understanding of career development and the interrelationships among work, family, and other life factors. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Career development theories and decision-making models;
2. Career, avocational, educational and labor market sources, print media, computer-assisted career guidance, and computer-based career information;
3. Career development program planning;
4. Interrelationships among work, family, and other life factors such as multicultural and gender issues, as related to career development;
5. Career and educational placement, follow-up and evaluation; and
6. Assessment instruments relevant to career planning and decision making.

(8) Diagnosis and assessment treatment procedures. 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. Theoretical and historical bases for assessment techniques and methods of interpretation of appraisal data and information;
2. Types of educational and psychological appraisal as appropriate to the helping process;
3. Validity, including evidence for establishing content, construct, and empirical validity;
4. Reliability, including methods of establishing stability and internal and equivalence reliability;
5. Major appraisal methods, including environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations, and computer-managed and computer-assisted methods;
6. Psychometric statistics, including types of test scores, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, standard errors and correlations; and

7. Gender, ethnicity, language, disability, and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals and groups.

(9) Research and program evaluation. Studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Basic types of research methods, including qualitative, quantitative-descriptive, and quantitative-descriptive-experimental designs;
2. Basic statistics, including both univariate and bivariate hypothesis testing;
3. Uses of computers for data management and analyses; and
4. Ethical and legal considerations in research.

(10) Professional orientation. Studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning, including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing. Studies in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. History of the helping professions, including significant factors and events;
2. Professional roles and functions, including similarities with and differences from other types of professionals;
3. Professional organizations (primarily ACA or AMHCA, their divisions, and their branches), including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases;
4. Ethical standards of the ACA or AMHCA and the evolution of those standards, legal issues, and applications to various professional activities (e.g., appraisal and group work);
5. Professional preparation standards and their evolution and current applications; and
6. Professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues.

(11) Supervised counseling internship that provides an opportunity for the trainee to perform under supervision a variety of activities that a regularly employed staff member in a setting would be expected to perform. A regularly employed staff member is defined as a person occupying the professional role to which the trainee is aspiring. The internship follows a supervised practicum experience. A three-semester-hour internship includes the following:

1. A minimum of 120 hours of direct service with clientele appropriate to the program of study;
2. A minimum of 1 hour per week of individual supervision, throughout the internship, usually performed by the on-site supervisor; and
3. A minimum of 1½ hours per week of group supervision, throughout the internship, usually performed by a program faculty member supervisor.

(12) Psychopathology. Studies that provide an understanding of the description, classification and diagnosis of behavior disorders and dysfunction. 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.

*b.* The degree of an applicant who entered a program of study on or after July 1, 2012, will be considered “content-equivalent” if the degree includes 60 semester hours (or equivalent quarter hours) and successful completion of graduate-level coursework in each of the areas in subparagraphs (1) to (12). If the applicant has taught a graduate-level course in any of the areas in subparagraphs (1) to (12) at a

college or university accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, that course may be credited toward the coursework requirement.

(1) Professional orientation and ethical practice. Studies that provide an understanding of all of the following aspects of professional functioning:

1. History and philosophy of the counseling profession, including mental health counseling;
2. Professional roles, functions, and relationships of the mental health counselor with other human services providers, including strategies for interagency/interorganization collaboration and communication;
3. Counselors' roles and responsibilities as members of an interdisciplinary emergency management response team during a local, regional, or national crisis, disaster or other trauma-causing event;
4. Self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role;
5. Counseling supervision models, practices, and processes;
6. Professional organizations (primarily ACA or AMHCA, and their divisions, branches, and affiliates), including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases;
7. Professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues;
8. The role and process of the professional mental health counselor advocating on behalf of the profession;
9. Advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients; and
10. Ethical standards of ACA or AMHCA and related entities, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling.

(2) Social and cultural diversity. Studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural and diverse society including all of the following:

1. Multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally;
2. Attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities designed to foster students' understanding of self and culturally diverse clients;
3. Theories of multicultural counseling, identity development, and social justice;
4. Individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies;
5. Counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy, and conflict resolution and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind or body; and
6. Counselors' roles in eliminating biases, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.

(3) Human growth and development. Studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts, 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 including current understandings about neurobiological behavior;
3. Effects of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on persons of all ages;
4. Theories and models of individual, cultural, couple, family, and community resilience;
5. A general framework for understanding exceptional abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions;
6. Human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior;
7. Theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors, including strategies for prevention, intervention, and treatment; and

8. Strategies for facilitating optimum development over the life span.
- (4) 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 and 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 multicultural issues in career development;
  5. Career and educational planning, placement, follow-up, and evaluation;
  6. Assessment instruments and techniques relevant to career planning and decision making; and
  7. Career counseling processes, techniques, and resources, including those applicable to specific populations.
- (5) Helping relationships. Studies that provide an understanding of counseling processes in a multicultural society, including all of the following:
  1. An orientation to wellness and prevention as desired counseling goals;
  2. Counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes;
  3. An understanding of essential interviewing and counseling skills;
  4. Counseling theories that provide the student with a model(s) to conceptualize client presentation and select appropriate counseling interventions. Students shall 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;
  5. A systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions;
  6. A general framework for understanding and practicing consultation; and
  7. Crisis intervention and suicide prevention models, including the use of psychological first-aid strategies.
- (6) Group work. Studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understanding of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills, and other group approaches in a multicultural society, 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 or facilitation 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; and
  5. Experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term.
- (7) Assessment. Studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society, 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, and behavioral observations;
  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. Social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations;

7. Ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling; and

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

(8) 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 in advancing the counseling profession;

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

3. Statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation;

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

5. Use of research to inform evidence-based practice; and

6. Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for interpreting and reporting the results of research and program evaluation studies.

(9) Diagnosis and treatment planning. Studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society. 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;

6. The ability to conceptualize accurate multi-axial diagnoses of disorders presented by clients and discuss the differential diagnosis with collaborating professionals; and

7. The ability to differentiate between diagnosis and developmentally appropriate reactions during crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events.

(10) 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.

(11) Practicum. A graduate-level clinical supervised counseling practicum in a mental health setting in which students must complete supervised practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours over a minimum ten-week academic term. The practicum provides for the development of counseling skills under supervision. The student's practicum includes all of the following:

1. At least 40 hours of direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills;
2. Weekly interaction with an average of 1 hour per week of individual or triadic supervision throughout the practicum by a program faculty member, a student supervisor, or a site supervisor who is working in biweekly consultation with a program faculty member in accordance with the supervision contract;
3. An average of 1½ hours per week of group supervision that is provided on a regular schedule throughout the practicum by a program faculty member or a student supervisor; and
4. Evaluation of the student's counseling performance throughout the practicum including documentation of a formal evaluation after the student completes the practicum.

(12) Internship. A graduate-level clinical supervised counseling internship in a mental health setting that requires students to complete a supervised internship of 600 clock hours that is begun after the student's successful completion of the practicum. The internship is intended to reflect the comprehensive work experience of a professional counselor appropriate to clinical mental health counseling. The internship provides an opportunity for the student to perform, under supervision, a variety of counseling activities that a mental health counselor is expected to perform. The student's internship includes all of the following:

1. At least 240 hours of direct service with clientele, including experience leading groups;
2. Weekly interaction that averages 1 hour per week of individual supervision or triadic supervision throughout the internship, usually performed by the on-site supervisor;
3. An average of 1½ hours per week of group supervision, provided on a regular schedule 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 audio/video recordings for use in supervision or to receive live supervision of the student's interactions with clients;
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. Evaluation of the student's counseling performance throughout the internship including documentation of a formal evaluation by a program faculty member in consultation with the site supervisor after the student completes the internship.

**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; website [www.ierf.org](http://www.ierf.org) or email 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.

[ARC 7673B, IAB 4/8/09, effective 4/30/09; ARC 9547B, IAB 6/1/11, effective 7/6/11; ARC 1758C, IAB 12/10/14, effective 1/14/15; ARC 2845C, IAB 12/7/16, effective 1/11/17; ARC 5010C, IAB 3/25/20, effective 4/29/20]