

262 CMR 2.00: Requirements For Licensure As a Mental Health Counselor

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2.01: Preface

To qualify for licensure as a mental health counselor, pursuant to the requirements of M.G.L. c. 112, § 165, an applicant must provide evidence satisfactory to the Board that the education and clinical field experience requirements listed in 262 CMR 2.04 – 2.08 have been met by the applicant.

All Licensed Mental Health Counselors are charged with having knowledge of 262 CMR and are required to practice Mental Health Counseling in accordance with its provisions.

2.02: Definitions

Approved Supervisor. A practitioner with three years of Full Time or the equivalent Part Time post-licensure clinical Mental Health Counseling experience who is also:

- (a) a Massachusetts Licensed Mental Health Counselor;
- (b) a Massachusetts licensed independent clinical social worker;
- (c) a Massachusetts licensed marriage and family therapist;

- (d) a Massachusetts licensed psychologist with Health Services Provider Certification;
- (e) a Massachusetts licensed physician with a sub-specialization in psychiatry;
- (f) a Massachusetts licensed nurse practitioner with a sub-specialization in psychiatry; or
- (g) where practice and supervision occur outside of the Commonwealth, an individual who is an independently licensed mental health practitioner with a license or registration equivalent to one listed under 262 CMR 2.02(a) - (f).

Board. The Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions established under M.G.L. c. 13, § 88.

Board Examination. The National Clinical Mental Health Examination administered by the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc.

Clinical Field Experience Site. A site providing pre and post-Master's clinical field experience training that is a public or private Recognized Educational Institution or health or mental health institution regulated by the state, or other appropriate entity regulated by the state or otherwise exempt from regulation, that has integrated programs for the delivery of clinical Mental Health Counseling and has established provisions for appropriate supervision. A Clinical Field Experience Site does not include individual private practice or group private practice.

Contact Hour. The unit of measurement of Direct Client Contact Experience of at least 45 minutes which may be composed of segments of at least 15 consecutive minutes.

Contract Supervisor. A licensed mental health counselor with three years of Full Time or the equivalent Part Time post-licensure clinical Mental Health Counseling experience who has a written agreement with the individual receiving supervision and the clinical field experience site where supervision is occurring regarding the supervision to be provided.

Direct Client Contact Experience. Direct, face-to-face, clinical Mental Health Counseling experience with a range of individuals, groups, couples, or families at Clinical Field Experience Sites that conforms to the Mental Health Counseling scope of practice as defined in this section. Such experience does not include vocational guidance services, academic school guidance counseling, industrial or organizational consulting services, teaching or conducting research.

Emergency Contact. In school settings where individuals are working as school adjustment counselors, the school principal, a guidance counselor or a licensed educational psychologist

who serves as the contact in the temporary absence of an approved supervisor. In certain health care facilities where Mental Health Counseling is provided, a licensed rehabilitation counselor, a licensed psychologist, a psychiatric nurse practitioner or a designated clinical administrator who serves as the contact in the temporary absence of an approved supervisor.

Full Time. 35 hours per week, 48 weeks per year. The full time practice of clinical Mental Health Counseling must include at least ten Contact Hours per week of Direct Client Contact Experience.

Graduate Level Course. A course consisting of graduate level academic work. For required courses, a Graduate Level Course is a minimum of three semester credits or four quarter credits. For elective courses, a Graduate Level Course may be one or more semester/quarter credits.

Group Supervision. A regularly scheduled meeting of not more than ten mental health supervisees under the direction of an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor for a period of at least one Supervisory Contact Hour. "Peer" supervision groups do not constitute Group Supervision.

Individual Supervision. A meeting of one supervisee with an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor for at least one Supervisory Contact Hour.

Internship. A distinctly defined, post-Practicum, supervised curricular experience that totals a minimum of 600 clock hours. An internship enables the supervisee to enhance clinical Mental Health Counseling skills and integrate professional knowledge and skills appropriate to the supervisee's initial professional placement. An internship provides an opportunity for the individual to perform all the activities that a regularly employed staff member in the setting would be expected to perform.

Licensed Mental Health Counselor. A person licensed as a mental health counselor under M.G.L. c. 112, § 165.

Mental Health Counseling. The rendering of professional services to individuals, families or groups for compensation, monetary or otherwise. These professional services include: applying the principles, methods, and theories of counseling, human development, learning theory, group and family dynamics, the etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional behavior and psychotherapeutic techniques to define goals and develop a treatment plan of action aimed toward the prevention, treatment and resolution of mental and emotional dysfunction and intra or interpersonal disorders to all persons irrespective of diagnosis. The practice of Mental Health

Counseling includes, but is not limited to, assessment, diagnosis and treatment, counseling and psychotherapy, of a nonmedical nature of mental and emotional disorders, psychoeducational techniques aimed at prevention of such disorders, and consultation to individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Part Time. Experience gained in less than 35 hours per week for the purpose of meeting the post-graduate clinical field experience requirement.

Practicum. A distinctly defined, pre-Internship, supervised curricular experience that totals a minimum of 100 clock hours. A practicum provides for the development of clinical Mental Health Counseling and group work skills under supervision. A practicum may take place on the academic campus or in a Clinical Field Experience Site.

Recognized Educational Institution. An educational institution licensed or accredited by the state regional accrediting body in which it is located which meets regional standards for the granting of a Master's or Doctoral degree.

Related Field. Counseling, counselor education, expressive therapies, adjustment counseling, rehabilitation counseling, counseling psychology, clinical psychology, or another Mental Health Counseling field determined by the Board to be a Related Field.

Supervised Clinical Field Experience. Supervision by an approved supervisor while in the practice of clinical Mental Health Counseling services.

Supervisory Contact Hour. The unit of measurement of Individual Supervision, Group Supervision, or Supervised Clinical Field Experience lasting a minimum of 45 consecutive minutes.

2.03: Licensure Application Requirements

(1) An applicant for licensure as a mental health counselor must provide to the Board the following:

(a) a complete application for licensure as prescribed by the Board;

(b) a final transcript which demonstrates that the applicable degree and education requirements under 262 CMR 2.04 and 2.05 have been met;

(c) evidence which demonstrates that the applicant has completed the clinical field experience requirements under 262 CMR 2.06, 2.07, and 2.08; and

(d) evidence of a passing score on the Board Examination. Passing scores remain valid for a period of five years from the date the examination was taken.

(2) Any applicant who holds a license, certification or registration as a mental health counselor, or the equivalent thereof as determined by the Board, issued by another state or jurisdiction, may apply to the Board for licensure as a mental health counselor by reciprocal recognition. Such applicants must submit to the Board:

(a) a complete application for licensure as prescribed by the Board;

(b) written proof, in a form acceptable to the Board, that the requirements and standards for the applicant's license, certification or registration are substantially equivalent to or exceed the standards of the Commonwealth as determined by the Board;

(c) written proof, in a form acceptable to the Board, that the applicant received a passing score on the Board Examination as part of the requirements and standards for the applicant's license, certification or registration or written proof, in a form acceptable to the Board, that the applicant received a passing score on the Board Examination within the previous five years;

(d) written proof, in a form acceptable to the Board, that the applicant's license, certification, or registration is in good standing with the licensing authority that issued it; and

(e) written proof, in a form acceptable to the Board, that the applicant has been actively practicing mental health counseling with a license continuously for at least three years full-time or the part-time equivalent in the state or jurisdiction that issued the license, certification or registration.

2.04: Education and Degree Requirements: Pre-July 1, 2017

(1) Eligible applicants who matriculated into their degree program pre-July 1, 2017 must demonstrate the completion of a minimum of 60 semester credit hours of Graduate Level Courses in Mental Health Counseling or a Related Field; this includes a minimum 48 semester credit Master's degree.

(2) If the candidate does not have a minimum 48 semester credit Master's degree, the candidate must have:

(a) a Master's degree with an advanced certificate;

(b) a second Master's degree; or

(c) a Doctoral degree.

All degrees and certifications must be from Recognized Educational Institutions.

(3) As components of the 48 semester credit Master's degree and the degrees and certificates listed in 262 CMR 2.04(2) candidates must meet the following requirements:

(a) Required course areas. The successful completion of Graduate Level Courses in each of the ten content areas listed in 262 CMR 2.04(3)(a)1. through 10. Candidates must successfully complete a minimum of ten Graduate Level Courses, covering the specific content area as each course can be used to fill only one requirement. All courses must focus on Mental Health Counseling. The ten content areas are as follows:

1. Counseling Theory:

Examination of the major theories, principles and techniques of Mental Health Counseling and their application to professional counseling settings. Understanding and applying theoretical perspectives with clients.

2. Human Growth and Development:

Understanding the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental stages of life. Understanding major theories of physical, cognitive, affective and social development and their application to Mental Health Counseling practice.

3. Psychopathology:

Identification and diagnosis and mental health treatment planning for abnormal, deviant, or psychopathological behavior, includes assessments and treatment procedures.

4. Social and Cultural Foundations:

Theories of multicultural counseling, issues and trends of a multicultural and diverse society. Foundational knowledge and skills needed to provide Mental Health Counseling services to diverse populations in a culturally competent manner.

5. Clinical Skills:

Understanding of the theoretical bases of the counseling processes, Mental Health Counseling techniques, and their therapeutic applications. Understanding and practice of counseling skills necessary for the mental health counselor.

6. Group Work:
Theoretical and experiential understandings of group development, purpose, dynamics, group counseling methods and skills, as well as leadership styles. Understanding of the dynamics and processes of Mental Health (therapeutic, psychosocial, psycho-educational) groups.
7. Special Treatment Issues:
Areas relevant to the practice of Mental Health Counseling, i.e. psychopharmacology, substance abuse, school or career issues, marriage and family treatment, sexuality and lifestyle choices, treating special populations.
8. Appraisal:
Individual and group educational and psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal. Examination of the various instruments and methods of psychological appraisal and assessment including, but not limited to, cognitive, affective, and personality assessment utilized by the mental health counselor. The function of measurement and evaluation, purposes of testing, reliability and validity.
9. Research and Evaluation:
Understanding social science research, evaluative methodologies and strategies, types of research, program evaluation, needs assessments, ethical and legal considerations.
10. Professional Orientation:
Understanding of professional roles and functions of Mental Health Counselors, with particular emphasis on legal and ethical standards. Ethical case conceptualization, analysis and decision making as it relates to clinical practice. Knowledge and understanding of the standards set by the code of ethics of the American Counseling Association and the American Mental Health Counselors Association. Understanding of licensure and regulatory practices.

(b) Electives areas. Graduate Level Courses other than required Graduate Level Courses must be elective Graduate Level Courses which include knowledge and skills in the practice of Mental Health Counseling. Appropriate Graduate Level Courses may include but are not limited to, any of the content areas listed under 262 CMR 2.04(3)(a)1. through 10., as well as:

1. best practices for maintaining and terminating counseling and psychotherapy;
2. consultation skills;
3. outreach and prevention strategies;
4. diagnosis and treatment issues;
5. working with special populations;
6. professional identity and practice issues, including historical perspectives;
7. mental health regulations and policy; and
8. management of community mental health programs.

(c) a Practicum; and

(d) an Internship.

2.05: Education and Degree Requirements: Post-July 1, 2017

(1) Eligible Applicants who matriculated into their degree program on or after July 1, 2017 must meet the following degree requirements:

(a) a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling or a Related Field with a minimum of 60 semester credit hours or 80 quarter credit hours from an integrated, planned and comprehensive program from a Recognized Educational Institution; or

(b) a Doctoral degree in Mental Health Counseling or a Related Field from an integrated, planned and comprehensive program from a Recognized Educational Institution.

(2) As components of the degrees listed in 262 CMR 2.05(1), candidates must meet the following requirements:

(a) Required course areas. The successful completion of Graduate Level Courses in each of the ten content areas listed in 262 CMR 2.05(2)(a)1. through 10. Candidates must successfully complete a minimum of ten Graduate Level Courses covering the specified content areas as each course may be used to fill only one requirement. All courses must focus specifically on Mental Health Counseling. The ten content areas are as follows:

1. Counseling Theory:
Examination of the major theories, principles and techniques of Mental Health Counseling and their application to professional counseling settings. Understanding and applying theoretical perspectives with clients.
2. Human Growth and Development:
Understanding the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental stages of life. Understanding major theories of physical, cognitive, affective and social development and their application to Mental Health Counseling practice.
3. Psychopathology:
Identification and diagnosis and mental health treatment planning for abnormal, deviant, or psychopathological behavior, includes assessments and treatment procedures.
4. Social and Cultural Foundations:
Theories of multicultural counseling, issues and trends of a multicultural and diverse society.

Foundational knowledge and skills needed to provide Mental Health Counseling services to diverse populations in a culturally competent manner.

5. Clinical Skills:

Understanding of the theoretical bases of the counseling processes, Mental Health Counseling techniques, and their therapeutic applications. Understanding and practice of counseling skills necessary for the mental health counselor.

6. Group Work:

Theoretical and experiential understandings of group development, purpose, dynamics, group counseling methods and skills, as well as leadership styles. Understanding of the dynamics and processes of Mental Health (therapeutic, psychosocial, psycho-educational) groups.

7. Special Treatment Issues:

Areas relevant to the practice of Mental Health Counseling, i.e. psychopharmacology, substance abuse, school or career issues, marriage and family treatment, sexuality and lifestyle choices, treating special populations.

8. Appraisal:

Individual and group educational and psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal. Examination of the various instruments and methods of psychological appraisal and assessment including, but not limited to, cognitive, affective, and personality assessment utilized by the mental health counselor. The function of measurement and evaluation, purposes of testing, reliability and validity.

9. Research and Evaluation:

Understanding social science research, evaluative methodologies and strategies, types of research, program evaluation, needs assessments, ethical and legal considerations.

10. Professional Orientation:

Understanding of professional roles and functions of Mental Health Counselors, with particular emphasis on legal and ethical standards. Ethical case conceptualization, analysis and decision making as it relates to clinical practice. Knowledge and understanding of the standards set by the code of ethics of the American Counseling Association and the American Mental Health Counselors Association. Understanding of licensure and regulatory practices.

(b) Electives areas. Graduate Level Courses other than required Graduate Level Courses must be elective Graduate Level Courses which include knowledge and skills in the practice of Mental Health Counseling. Appropriate Graduate Level Courses may include, but are not limited to, any of the content areas listed under 262 CMR 2.05(2)(a)1. through 10., as well as:

1. best practices for maintaining and terminating counseling and psychotherapy;
2. consultation skills;
3. outreach and prevention strategies;
4. diagnosis and treatment issues;

5. working with special populations;
6. professional identity and practice issues, including historical perspectives;
7. mental health regulations and policy;
8. management of community mental health programs.

(c) a Practicum; and

(d) an Internship.

2.06 Pre-Master's Degree Clinical Field Experience Requirements

(1) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of a pre-Master's degree Practicum that includes Supervised Clinical Field Experience and Direct Client Contact Experience. The Practicum must take place over a minimum period of at least seven weeks on the academic campus or in a Clinical Field Experience Site. The Practicum must include:

(a) 40 Contact Hours of Direct Client Contact Experience in Clinical Field Experience Sites conforming to the Mental Health Counseling scope of practice as defined under 262 CMR 2.02 or peer role plays and laboratory experience in individual, group, couple and family interactions;

(b) 25 Supervisory Contact Hours of supervision; of which:

1. a minimum of ten Supervisory Contact Hours must be Individual Supervision;
2. a minimum of five Supervisory Contact Hours must be Group Supervision with no more than ten supervisees in a group;
3. the remaining ten Supervisory Contact Hours may be Individual or Group Supervision.

(2) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of a pre-Master's degree Internship which includes Supervised Clinical Field Experience and Direct Client Contact Experience. Where the Internship is conducted in the intern's place of employment, the Internship site must provide additional activities and supervision clearly delineated from the intern's usual work activities. The Internship must include:

(a) 240 Contact Hours of Direct Client Contact Experience in Clinical Field Experience Sites conforming to the Mental Health Counseling scope of practice defined under 262 CMR 2.02;

(b) 45 Supervisory Contact Hours of supervision; of which:

1. a minimum of 15 Supervisory Contact Hours must be Individual Supervision;
2. a minimum of 15 Supervisory Contact Hours must be Group Supervision, with no more than ten supervisees in a group;
3. the remaining 15 Supervisory Contact Hours may be either Individual Supervision or Group Supervision.

(3) Practicum and Internship supervisees in a Clinical Field Experience Site may see clients only when there is an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor on site. In the temporary absence of either, a supervisee may see clients so long as an Emergency Contact is on site.

(4) Supervisors must conduct regular evaluations of the Practicum and Internship supervisee's performance throughout the experience including a formal evaluation upon completion of the experience. Such evaluations shall include but not be limited to direct observation and review of process notes.

2.07 Post-Master's Degree Clinical Field Experience Requirements

(1) Eligible applicants must complete, in no less than two and no more than eight years, a minimum of two years of full-time or equivalent part-time, post-Master's degree Supervised Clinical Field Experience and Direct Client Contact Experience.

(2) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of the following post-Master's experience requirements:

(a) 3,360 total hours; which includes

(b) 960 Contact Hours of Direct Client Contact Experience, of which:

1. a minimum of 610 Direct Client Contact Experience Contact Hours are in individual, couples, or family counseling; and
2. a maximum of 350 Direct Client Contact Experience Contact Hours may be in group

counseling.

(3) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the completion of the following supervision hour requirements during post-Master's experience:

(a) at least 130 total hours of supervision of which at least 75 hours must be in Individual Supervision;

(b) a minimum of one Supervisory Contact Hour of supervision for every 16 Contact hours of Direct Client Contact Experience; and

(c) if working Part Time, supervision that is pro-rated no less than one Supervisory Contact Hour bi-weekly.

(4) Eligible applicants must demonstrate the following on-site supervision conditions:

(a) the applicant must have a formal relationship with the Clinical Field Experience Site;

(b) the supervisor must be a staff member of the Clinical Field Experience Site who is an Approved Supervisor or a Contract Supervisor so long as written notice of agreements with a contract supervisor are provided to and maintained on file by appropriate personnel at the Clinical Field Experience Site;

(c) annual evaluations of the supervisee must be completed by the Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor and reviewed and maintained on file by appropriate personnel at the site; and

(5) The provision of an Emergency Contact must be in place for all Clinical Field Experience Sites. The Emergency Contact individual shall not replace the requirement for an Approved Supervisor or Contract Supervisor.

2.08: Supervision by Licensed Mental Health Counselors

(1) For supervision received before July 1, 2017, a minimum of 50 Supervisory Contact Hours of the 200 total Supervisory Contact Hours of supervision required (pre- or post-Master's degree) must be supervision by a Licensed Mental Health Counselor or an equivalently Licensed Mental Health Counselor from another state or jurisdiction.

(2) For Supervision received after July 1, 2017, a minimum of 75 Supervisory Contact Hours of the 200 total Supervisory Contact Hours of supervision required (pre- or post-Master's degree) must be supervision by a Licensed Mental Health Counselor or an equivalently licensed mental health counselor from another state or jurisdiction.