



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Public Health
Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions
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Licensed Mental Health Counselor Application Guide

I. How to Apply: You Must Apply Online

Applications are only accepted through the [Health Professions Licensing Portal](#). If this is your first time using this new portal, please visit [Health Professions Licensing System User Guide](#).

Before you apply online, you must have the following documents to upload:

- A head and shoulders photograph of yourself
- A completed Pre-Master's Degree Experience and Education Form (found at the end of this guide)
- One or more completed Post-Master's Degree Clinical Experience Forms (found at the end of this guide)
- A completed Applicant's Post-Master's Degree Clinical Experience Attestation Form (found at the end of this guide)
- A score report showing that you passed the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) from the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) (www.nbcc.org). This is the unofficial report you receive when you pass the exam. The Board will receive an official report directly from NBCC. If you passed the NCMHCE in another state, please contact NBCC and have an official score report sent to the Board by NBCC. **Exam scores expire after 5 years unless you hold a Licensed Mental Health Counselor license in another state.**
- A notarized Criminal Offender Record Information Form (form available within the application online).
- You must use a credit card or checking account to pay the non-refundable application fee of \$117.

You will also need to arrange for the following to be emailed (to amh.board@mass.gov) or mailed (at the address above) to the Board:

- Your graduate school(s) must send an official transcript of the graduate education you are submitting to meet the licensing requirements.
- If you currently hold or have previously held a professional license in another jurisdiction, regardless of its status, please arrange for an official license verification to be sent to the Board by the issuing entity. Please contact the Board for further directions in the event the entity that licensed you does not issue verifications and only offers an online license lookup. A copy of your license is not an acceptable alternative.
- If you passed the NCMHCE in another state, please contact the NBCC and have an official score report sent to the Board by the NBCC.

Please note that you must complete a board-approved training in domestic and sexual violence before you apply. Please see chapter260training.org to take the free online training.

Important Message Regarding Application Reviews by Staff

Board staff will review your application, and if your application is complete and you are eligible for licensure, staff will email you with instructions to pay the \$155 license fee to get your license. If your application is missing information, staff will email you to provide detailed descriptions of what is missing and will review your application again 30 days after notifying you. If any information is still missing after 30 days, your application will be closed as incomplete. You will have to pay another application fee if you wish to reapply. All verifications and transcripts should be delivered close to when you apply. Staff will review an application no more than two times and, outside of those reviews, cannot answer questions about specific applications, including whether forms have been completed correctly or if the Board has received certain documents.

Education Obtained in a Foreign Country

Applicants who obtained their qualifying education in a foreign country, including master's degrees or doctoral degrees, must obtain a foreign education evaluation of those degrees from a foreign education evaluation service. The Board has accepted evaluation reports from Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) and World Education Services (WES) but will accept reports from any foreign education evaluation service that evaluates educational documentation *delivered to the service directly from the educational institution, and not from the applicant*. This report must be mailed or emailed directly to the Board from the evaluation service.

Applicants Licensed as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (or the Equivalent) in another Jurisdiction

If you are currently licensed as a licensed mental health counselor or the equivalent in another state, you may apply by reciprocal recognition. You do not need to submit the Pre-Master's Degree Experience and Education Form, the Post-Master's Degree Clinical Experience Form, or the Applicant's Post-Master's Degree Clinical Experience Attestation Form, but you must submit everything else **plus**:

- An official score report for the NCMHCE (no other exam will be accepted).
- A final transcript which demonstrates that the applicable degree and education requirements have been met.
- An official verification of your license(s) from every jurisdiction in which you were or are licensed.

II. Definition of Approved Supervisor for All Experiences

All experiences (pre-master's degree practicum, pre-master's degree internship, and post-master's degree experience) must be supervised by an approved supervisor. **Please note that at least 75 of the required 200 total supervision hours for all experiences (pre- or post-master's degree) must be supervised by a Massachusetts licensed mental health counselor or the equivalent in another state or jurisdiction.**

A. For experiences that were arranged after June 5, 2015:

An approved supervisor is a practitioner with three years of full-time or the equivalent part-time post-licensure clinical mental health counseling experience who is either a **Massachusetts licensed** mental health counselor, independent clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, psychologist with a health services provider certification, physician with a sub-specialization in psychiatry, nurse practitioner with a sub-specialization in psychiatry or, where the practice and supervision occurred outside of Massachusetts, an individual who is an independently licensed mental health practitioner with a license or registration equivalent to one listed above.

B. For experiences that were arranged before June 5, 2015:

An approved supervisor is a practitioner with five years of full-time or the equivalent part-time postgraduate clinical mental health counseling experience who is either a (1) certified clinical mental health counselor, or a **Massachusetts licensed** (2) mental health counselor, (2) independent clinical social worker (LICSW) who has a master's degree in social work, (3) marriage and family therapist (LMFT) who has a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, (4) psychologist who has a doctoral degree in clinical, counseling, or developmental psychology, or (5) medical doctor who has medical degree and a sub-specialization in psychiatry (a psychiatrist).

An approved supervisor may also be a (1) licensed mental health practitioner who (2) has a master's or doctoral degree in rehabilitation counseling, pastoral counseling, psychiatric nursing, developmental or educational psychology, or a related field, (3) completed a supervised clinical experience (i.e., supervision by an approved supervisor while in the practice of clinical mental health counseling services), and (4) passed the NCMHCE examination.

If your experience occurred in another state, an approved supervisor must be licensed in that state and meet the same criteria above.

For the specific purpose of college supervision (e.g., support seminars) of students in a practicum or internship, an approved supervisor may be a mental health practitioner who holds a teaching or supervisory position in an educational institution which trains mental health counselors and a graduate degree in mental health counseling or a related field, but site supervisors in a practicum or internship must meet one of the other definitions above.

III. Pre-Master's Degree Experience and Education Form

A. Education Requirements

1. Degree Programs Where You Started Your First Class Before July 1, 2017

If you started taking your first class for your last required degree or certificate before July 1, 2017, you must complete at least 60 semester credit hours of graduate coursework in mental health counseling or a related field, including a master's degree of at least 48 semester credit hours. Three semester credit hours are equal to four quarter credit hours.

If you do not have a master's degree of at least 48 semester credit hours, you must have additional coursework to equal at least 60 semester credit hours, including:

- an advanced certificate (CAGS);
- a second master's degree; or
- a doctoral degree.

2. Degree Programs Where You Started Your First Class After July 1, 2017

If you started your degree after July 1, 2017, you must complete a master's degree of at least 60 semester credit hours (or 80 quarter credit hours) in mental health counseling or a related field.

3. Requirements for All Educational Programs

All degrees and certifications must be from 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.

Your 60 semester credit hours (or 80 quarter credit hours) must cover the following required course areas. You must successfully complete a minimum of 10 graduate courses, covering each of the specific content areas, as each course can be used to fill only one requirement. Each course must be at least three semester credit hours or four quarter credit hours. All courses must focus on mental health counseling. The 10 content areas are:

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

- **Research and Evaluation:** Understanding social science research, and evaluative methodologies and strategies, types of research, program evaluation, needs assessments, ethical and legal considerations.
- **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.
- **Electives Areas:** Graduate courses other than required graduate courses must include knowledge and skills in the practice of mental health counseling. Appropriate courses may include, but are not limited to, the areas listed above as well as best practices for maintaining and terminating counseling and psychotherapy; consultation skills; outreach and prevention strategies; diagnosis and treatment issues; working with special populations; professional identity and practice issues, including historical perspectives; mental health regulations and policy; and management of community mental health programs.

B. Pre-Master's Degree Experience Requirements

1. Practicum

As part of your master's degree program, you must complete a pre-internship experience of at least seven weeks and 100 clock hours at the academic campus or a clinical field experience site.

A clinical field experience site is a site providing pre- and post-master's degree clinical field experience training that is (1) part of 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, or (2) a health or mental health institution regulated by the state, or another 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.

The 100 clock hours of experience must include at least:

- 40 contact hours of direct client contact experience or peer role plays and laboratory experience in individual, group, couple and family interactions. Direct client contact experience is direct, face-to-face, clinical mental health counseling with a range of individuals, groups, couples, or families, and does not include vocational guidance services, academic school guidance counseling, industrial or organizational consulting services, teaching or conducting research.
- 25 supervisory contact hours with:
 - At least 10 hours of individual supervision
 - At least 5 hours of group supervision, with no more than 10 supervisees in a group
 - 10 additional supervision hours, which may be individual or group in nature

2. Internship

As part of your master's degree program, you must complete a post-practicum experience of at least 600 clock hours at a clinical field experience site (defined above).

The 600 clock hours of experience must include at least:

- 240 contact hours of direct client contact experience at a clinical field experience site in mental health counseling, which does not include vocational guidance services, academic school guidance counseling, industrial or organizational consulting services, teaching or conducting research.
- 45 supervisory contact hours with:
 - At least 15 hours of individual supervision
 - At least 15 hours of group supervision, with no more than 10 supervisees in a group
 - 15 additional supervision hours, which may be individual or group in nature

IV. Post-Master's Degree Experience Form

After you have received your master's degree or other qualifying education, you must complete at least 3360 total hours of full-time, or equivalent part-time, experience in mental health counseling in a period of not less than two years and not more than eight years. Full time is no more than 35 hours per week for 48 weeks a year. Thus, you cannot count more than 35 hours per week and 48 weeks a year, even if you worked more than one job at the same time.

A. Client Contact Hours

At least 960 hours of the 3360 total hours must be in direct, face-to-face, clinical mental health counseling with a range of individuals, groups, couples, or families.

- At least 610 of those hours must be in individual, couples, or family counseling
- No more than 350 of those hours may be in group counseling
- You must have at least 10 client contact hours each week for the experience to be full-time.

B. Supervision Hours

At least 130 hours of the 3360 total hours must be supervisory contact hours.

- At least 75 hours of individual supervision
- At least one hour of supervision for every 16 hours of direct client contact
- If you are working part-time, you can have no less than one supervision hour every two weeks

Applicant's Name: _____

PRE-MASTER'S DEGREE EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION FORM

A Dean, Department Head, or Faculty Advisor from the Applicant's graduate program must sign this form.

Please see pages 2-6 of the Mental Health Counselor Application Guide on the Board's website for the definition of an Approved Supervisor and education and pre-master's degree experience requirements.

Name of Dean, Department Head, or Faculty Advisor:

Name: _____ Title: _____

College/University: _____

I certify that the Applicant listed above completed the following:

- **Pre-Master's Practicum:** A minimum of 100 total hours, including a minimum of 40 clinical hours and 25 hours of supervision (at least 10 of which were individual in nature and at least 5 of which were group in nature) provided by a supervisor who met the definition of an Approved Supervisor.
- **Pre-Master's Internship:** A minimum of 600 total hours, including a minimum of 240 clinical hours, and 45 hours of supervision (at least 15 of which were individual in nature and 15 of which were group in nature) provided by a supervisor who met the definition of an Approved Supervisor.
- Total Hours of Supervision by a Licensed Mental Health Counselor: _____
- A degree program that required the Applicant to complete a least 3 semester credit-hours (or 4 quarter credit-hours) of coursework in each of the following course content areas that focused on mental health counseling: **Counseling Theory, Human Growth and Development, Psychopathology, Social and Cultural Foundations, Clinical Skills, Group Work, Special Treatment Issues, Appraisal, Research and Evaluation, and Professional Orientation.**

I certify under the pains and penalties of perjury that, to the best of my knowledge, the information above is true and correct.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPLICANT'S POST-MASTER'S DEGREE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE ATTESTATION

I attest, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that I completed my post-master's degree clinical experience hours in compliance with the definitions in 262 CMR 2.02 and in compliance with 262 CMR 2.07, which states:

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.

I further attest, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that I completed my pre- and post-master's degree clinical experience hours in compliance with 262 CMR 2.08, which states:

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.

Signature of Applicant

Date

***Note that a small number of applicants will be randomly selected on a regular basis to provide forms with precise hour calculations, including forms from their supervisors.**

POST-MASTER'S DEGREE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE FORM

Supervisor Information

Name: _____

Title: _____

License Type: _____ License Number: _____

State Where Licensed: _____

Applicant's Experience Information

Name and Address of Clinical Facility:

Dates of Experience: _____ (mm/dd/year) to _____ (mm/dd/year)

Supervisor's Attestations

Do you believe the applicant is of good moral character? Yes__ No__

(If no, please explain on a separate sheet.)

Do you meet the definition of an Approved Supervisor, as defined in 262 CMR 2.02? Yes__ No__

I attest under the pains and penalties of perjury that I supervised the applicant listed above and the information above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I also understand that if any of the information above is inaccurate, I may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board.

Signature of Approved Supervisor

Date

***Note that a small number of applicants will be randomly selected on a regular basis to provide forms with precise hour calculations, including forms from their supervisors.**