



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Public Health
Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions
250 Washington Street, 3rd floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 624-6199
amh.board@mass.gov

Licensed Supervised 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, please have the following available:

- ☐ A head and shoulders photograph of yourself to upload
- ☐ You will be asked to enter contact information for a dean, department head, or faculty advisor to provide information about your graduate degree and pre-master's degree experience.
- ☐ The result of your self-query through the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) for upload (see [here](#))
- ☐ The unofficial 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) that you received when you passed 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.**
- ☐ A notarized Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Form (form available in the application online).
- ☐ You must use a credit card or checking account to pay the non-refundable application fee of \$117.

You must arrange for the following to be emailed or mailed to the Board (see contact information above):

- ☐ 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.

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 who obtained their qualifying education in a foreign country also must submit a table of the courses the applicant completed that matches one course to each of the ten required course content areas listed in 262 CMR 2.05. The table should include columns and rows, with the first column listing the required course area, the second the course the applicant completed to satisfy that area, and the third the credits for that course listed on the foreign education evaluation report. Applicants must provide a syllabus or course description in English from the college or university for each course listed.

II. Definition of Approved Supervisor for All Experiences

Your pre-master's degree practicum and pre-master's degree internship must be supervised by an approved supervisor.

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 Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. A Massachusetts-licensed psychologist with a health service provider certification, a physician with a sub-specialization in psychiatry, and a nurse practitioner with a sub-specialization in psychiatry also are approved supervisors regardless of how long they have practiced. 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 also qualifies.

An approved supervisor also is a Massachusetts-licensed Licensed Mental Health Counselor or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, regardless of how long that person has practiced, who holds (1) an approved Clinical Supervisor certification from the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association (MaCCS), American Mental Health Counselors Association, American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, National Board for Certified Counselors, or a similar certificate approved by the Board, or (2) who has completed twelve continuing education hours in supervision provided by Entity-approved Sponsors, as defined in 262 CMR 7.02, that cover legal and ethical issues, theories, and recordkeeping in supervision.

III. Pre-Master's Degree Experience and Education

A. Education Requirements

You must complete at least 60 semester credit hours (or 80 quarter credit hours) of graduate coursework in mental health counseling or a relevant field, including a master's degree or doctoral degree of at least 48 semester credit hours. Three semester credit hours are equal to four quarter credit hours.

If your master's degree or doctoral degree was less than 48 semester credit hours, you must have additional coursework from one of the following to equal at least 60 semester credit hours:

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

All degrees must be in mental health counseling or a relevant field. Applicants who have a master's degree or doctoral degree of at least 48 semester credit hours, or a master's degree and a CAGS, a second master's degree, or a doctoral degree and another graduate degree or certificate, but are missing required coursework or credits hours, may complete additional qualifying coursework, **but applicants must earn all post-master's degree experience hours for the Licensed Mental Health Counselor license after satisfying all education requirements.**

2. 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 through 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 through 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