

Frequently Asked Questions

What services does the Center for Credentialing & Education, Inc. (CCE) provide for the Board?

CCE is an affiliate of the National Board of Certified Counselors, Inc. and has been contracted by the South Carolina Board of Examiners to distribute licensure applications, to answer application questions, and to accept completed applications in order to perform credential and educational reviews for persons seeking licensure as Professional Counselors and Marriage & Family Therapists. They also approve candidate's eligibility to register for the national examinations. When all the licensure requirements are met and the applications are complete (to include passage of national exams), CCE notifies the applicant of pre-approval and sends the file to the State Board. The State Board issues official approval. CCE is an agent for the Board and is a professional credentialing service.

Which NBCC examination does the Board require for licensure as a Professional Counselor?

The Board accepts either the National Counselor Examination (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) for the licensure examination. The applicant for licensure may choose. Both examinations meet the requirements for licensure. Examination descriptions, samples of tests, study materials, etc, must be obtained directly from NBCC. Their website is www.nbcc.org

Do the national exams (NCE or NCMHCE or the MFT national examination for marriage and family therapists) determine if I can assess and treat serious problems when I become licensed?

No. What determines if you can treat serious problems is based on your academic training and documented clinical experience. You must have a 3 graduate semester hour course in both psychopathology and diagnostics of psychopathology, as well as supervised clinical work experience.

Which examination does the Board require for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist?

The Board requires the national examination given by Professional Examination Service (PES). Examination descriptions, samples of tests, study materials, etc, must be obtained directly from PES. Their website is www.proexam.org .

Can I use the supervision hours that I obtained under my academic practicum/internship toward the 150 hours of clinical supervision requirement for the Professional Counselor license or Marriage & Family Therapist license?

No.

For Professional Counselors:

The 150 hours must be obtained in immediate supervision with a licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor (LPC/S) or supervisor candidate, and supervision cannot begin until after you have become licensed as a LPC Intern.

No.

For Marriage & Family Therapists:

The 150 hours must be obtained in immediate supervision with a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Supervisor (LMFT/S) or supervisor candidate, and supervision cannot begin until after you have become licensed as a LMFT Intern.

Can I use the clinical experience that I obtained under my academic practicum/internship toward the 1500 hours of supervised clinical experience required for LPC and LMFT licensure?

No.

Effective 05/26/2006, the revised Code of Regulations under Chapter 36, Section 36-05 (3) for Professional Counselors and Section 36-08 (3) for Marriage & Family Therapists stated that the 1500 hours of supervised clinical experience should be performed over a period of not less than two (2) years while licensed as a LPC Intern or LMFT Intern.

Can LPC Interns or LMFT Interns treat the more serious problems?

For LPC Interns:

Yes, if they meet the requirements specified in the Code of Regulations: Chapter 36, Section 36-04.1 *Specific training required for interns to assess and treat serious problems as categorized in standard diagnostic nomenclature*

For LMFT Interns:

Yes, if they meet the requirements specified in the Code of Regulations: Chapter 36, Section 36-07.1 *Specific training required for licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Interns to assess and treat serious problems as categorized in standard diagnostic nomenclature.*

I recently received my LPC Intern/LMFT Intern license. Can I work for a private practice or open my own private practice?

Yes.

For LPC Interns, you must be under the supervision of a licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor or other qualified licensed mental health practitioner (licensed Psychologist or Medical Doctor (psychiatrist) for the direct counseling for individuals, couples and families or groups for 1350 hours, as well as 150 hours of immediate supervision which must be under a LPC Supervisor or supervisor candidate. The LPC Supervisor does not have to be in the office where you work; however, they must be readily available.

Yes.

For LMFT Interns, you must be under the supervision of a licensed Marriage and Family Supervisor or other qualified licensed mental health practitioner (licensed Psychologist or medical doctor (Psychiatrist) for direct client contact with individuals, couples, families, or groups for 1350 hours, as well as 150 hours of immediate supervision under a LMFT Supervisor or supervisor candidate. The LMFT Supervisor does not have to be in the office where you work; however, they must be readily available.

Please note that the Board does not recommend private solo practice for the newly licensed Interns.

After Intern licensure, I know that I must get my 150 hours of immediate supervision from a licensed SC LPC Supervisor or supervisor candidate. How can I do this while I work for the psychologist?

Your LPC Supervisor or supervisor candidate does not have to be in the office where you work; however, they need to be readily available to discuss your cases.

Can I get my supervised hours of direct client contact from my work with a licensed psychologist?

Yes. You can get your direct client contact hours while working for a licensed psychologist as long as it is counseling hours. The law requires that 1500 hours of supervised clinical experience must be obtained under a licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor or other qualified licensed mental health practitioner which can be a psychologist. 1350 hours of the 1500 can be under the licensed psychologist.

I recently obtained my license and want to open my own private practice. Are there laws/regulations available for counselors regarding patient records?

No. In SC, there is no law for records management for this Board. The Board adopted a policy on record keeping as a guide and safe harbor for professionals of this Board for record keeping. **Regulation 36-19 of the Board, Code of Ethics 36-19 (B) (5)**, states that the Board has the authority to require Professional Counselors to maintain records in accordance with the policy of the Board.

POLICY:

The Physicians Patient Record Act in **Section 44-115-120** (length of time records must be kept and records pertaining to minors) has been adopted as the policy for all licensees of this Board in determining the amount of time to keep records on their patients/clients. Records shall be retained for at least ten (10) years for adult patients and at least thirteen (13) years for minors. These minimum record keeping periods begin to run from the last date of treatment and after these minimum record keeping periods that the records may be destroyed.

I have moved to SC and want to become licensed in this state. I was previously living in a state that required supervision hours be completed before the exam could be taken. I have not taken the exam yet therefore I have not obtained my license. Since I cannot apply under the basis of endorsement (since I do not have a active, current and unrestricted license), can I use the supervision hours that I had accumulated in that state toward the 150 hours of supervision and the 1500 hours of direct client contact?

No. The South Carolina requirements state supervision for licensure is done as a licensee who has passed the national examination and holds a LPC-Intern or LMFT-Intern license. This licensed intern license is held for two years while experience is being obtained as a licensee. [However, when submitting your application documentation, you might want your licensed supervisor in the other state to complete the “Confirmation of Clinical Supervision” form and attach a resume. This will be maintained in your file for information purposes.] NOTE: The Board recommends that all professionals maintain their own professional files throughout their careers. Different states require some different documents and hours of supervision.

Are continuing education hours pro-rated for licensed Psycho-Educational Specialists (LPES), if they hold multiple licenses with this Board? (ex: hold a LPC license and a LPES license).

Yes. The Board pro-rates CE hours which can be 25 hours of CE per license type for each biennial renewal period for licensees who hold multiple licenses with this Board. When CE hours are pro-rated, all of the CE hours must be formal (face-to-face attendance) education.

Are renewal fees pro-rated if you have multiple licenses with the Board?

No pro-rating of fees are permitted.

How many hours of CE credit can I get if I take a graduate level three (3) semester hour course?

Three semester hours equals 45 contact hours. The course would count for 45 CE hours of credit. Refer to the left-hand side of home page on our website under “Education” to obtain more information for the requirements of continuing education for LPC, LMFT, LPES and Supervisor licenses.

Should I have a copy of the statutes and regulations if I have been practicing as a Professional Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist or Psycho-Educational Specialist for years?

Yes. As a professional, you should always have an up-to-date copy of the governing statutes and regulations for your profession. Included in the regulations is the Code of

Ethics for your practice. It is also important to be aware that the laws can change which can impact the way that you are allowed to practice.

What will happen if I do not complete the required 150 hours of supervision by the end of my 2 year period or the expiration date of my Intern license?

You can apply for a two (2) year extension of your Intern license. It is important to keep the Intern license in an active status so you should refer to “Applications/Forms” from the homepage of this website to locate the section related to “Intern-Extension of License”. The required documentation and instructions are provided in this section. There is a \$150.00 fee.

While licensed as an Intern, are there any options for the licensed individuals that can provide the required 150 hours of supervision?

No. You must use a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor, if you are applying for the Professional Counselor license or a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapy Supervisor, if you are applying for the Marriage & Family Therapist license.

I have moved to another state and would like to know if SC has reciprocity or endorsement of licensure with other states? What is the process for applying for a license in another state?

You must contact the state licensing board in the state of which you are seeking licensure. Each state licensing board has their own rules and regulations pertaining to the licensing process. If you are required to provide a verification of your SC license, you can send a request to the Professional Counselors Board, along with the required \$20.00 license verification fee. Make the check/certified funds payable to “SC Board for Counselors”. Upon receipt, we will provide an official license verification letter which includes our gold state seal or we can complete an out-of-state license verification form that you can include with your payment. If you prefer to pay with a credit card, you can refer to the right-hand side of the homepage on our website, under “License Verification Request” and you can order the license verification on-line.

I have almost completed the 150 hours of supervision and the 1350 hours of direct client contact experience that is required for full licensure. How soon should I send my paperwork to the Board?

The Confirmation of Clinical Supervision form and the log of hours must be completed and forwarded to the Board from each Supervisor that you contracted with. You should include a cover letter which states that you have completed all of the requirements for licensure and would like to request a transfer of licensure. This documentation should be remitted to the Board office no later than 2 weeks before your Intern license expires. This will allow time to process your paperwork and mail you the results of the Board review BEFORE YOUR INTERN LICENSE EXPIRES. When approved, the full license will become effective on the expiration date of your Intern license, thereby eliminating a lapse in your license to practice in SC (provided you remit the appropriate pro-rated license fee before the Intern license expires).

How can I get help with a problem with alcohol or other drug problems and preserve my career?

Licenseses of the Board for Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Psycho-educational Specialists who experience problems with alcohol or other drug problems can find help with the Recovering Professional Program (RPP). RPP is a confidential professional substance abuse program uniquely tailored to assist individual healthcare professionals in getting quality services and preserving their careers. Early identification, referral, and monitoring help assure good recovery from this progressive, deadly disease.

Licenseses who enroll with RPP before their substance abuse problems impact their practice are not disclosed to the licensing board while in compliance with RPP's requirements. RPP's team of specialized professionals identifies resources for each individual that best match their personal needs and situations. That individualized personal care from RPP builds strong relationships and provides tools to save or reactivate their careers. RPP's monitoring also provides employers, the licensing board, and patients with assurance of safe, effective practice. A solid record of participation with RPP certifies a licensee's personal commitment to professionalism today and in the future. If you or a colleague is experiencing a problem with substance abuse or dependence, you can find help by contacting RPP at 1-877-349-2094 (toll free). Learn more about RPP at <http://www.scrpp.org>.

How can I have additional questions answered on the requirements regarding continuing education?

Please return to the Board web site under "Education" or "FAQ" and you will find an entire section of questions and answers regarding continuing education.

Are there any requirements for closing a practice?

The Board has no specific statutes or regulations that directly address the closure of a practice. However, the practitioner should refer to statutes and regulations pertaining to client confidentiality, appropriate termination of the counseling relationship to include referral if appropriate, and the maintenance and destruction of records, including S.C. Code Ann. §40-75-190, 44-115-120; Regs. 36-19(B)(5)(6) and (10), 36-20(A)(7), 36-20(B)(1) and (3).

It is recommended that each practitioner develop a plan for disposal of records upon closure of a practice due to retirement, medical or other reasons, including designating an individual to be responsible for securing, disposal and/or transfer of records.

Specific questions should be addressed to the practitioner's attorney or business consultant.

Professional Disclosure Statements/Informed Consent: Are licenseses required to provide this to their clients?

Yes. S.C. Code Ann. §40-75-270, Statement of professional disclosure:

A licensee shall make available to each client a copy of a statement of professional disclosure. The statement of professional disclosure shall include the licensee's address and telephone number, fee schedule, educational training, and area of specialization. The professional disclosure statement shall also explicitly denote that sexual intimacy between a practitioner and a client is prohibited.

