

Chapter 135-5 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE

Rule 135-5-.01 Associate Professional Counselors

Pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 43-10A-11, the requirements for licensure and the restrictions on practice for Associate Professional Counselors are as follows:

(a) **Definitions.**

1. **"The Practice of Professional Counseling"** means practice in that specialty which utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate and treat emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective. The practice is further defined in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-3(10).

OCGA 43-10-A-3 (10) "Professional counseling" means that specialty which utilizes counseling techniques based on principles, methods, and procedures of counseling that assist people in identifying and resolving personal, social, vocational, intrapersonal and interpersonal concerns; utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate, diagnose, treat, and recommend a course of treatment for emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective, provided that the counselor shall have training and experience working with people with mental illness, developmental disability, or substance abuse; administers and interprets educational and vocational assessment instruments and other tests which the professional counselor is qualified to employ by virtue of education, training, and experience; utilizes information, community resources, and goal setting for personal, social, or vocational development; utilizes individual and group techniques for facilitating problem solving, decision making, and behavior change; utilizes functional assessment and vocational planning and guidance for persons requesting assistance in adjustment to a disability or disabling condition; utilizes referral for persons who request counseling services; performs service planning; and utilizes and interprets counseling research.

2. **"Direction"** means the ongoing administrative overseeing by an employer or superior of a Professional Counselor's work in the practice of professional counseling as defined by 135-5-.01 (a)(1) by a director. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of the services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations, which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.
3. **"Director"** means the person who provides direction and who is either the employer of the person who receives direction or is the superior in the administrative chain of command to the person who receives direction.

4. **"Supervision"** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of a Professional Counselor's interaction with their client(s). The purpose of supervision is to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes, and direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision does not require the supervisor to be present at the work site with the supervisee. Supervision may be provided pro bono or for a fee. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.
 - (i) **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees.
 - (ii) **Group Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six supervisees.

5. **"Supervisor"** means a licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist who complies with the ethical standards of practice of their profession with particular attention being paid to prohibited dual relationships. In addition,
 - (i) a supervisor who holds a master's degree must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience; and
 - (ii) a supervisor who holds a specialist degree must have two (2) years of post-licensure experience; and
 - (iii) a supervisor who holds a doctoral degree must have one (1) year of post-licensure experience; and
 - (iv) for supervision entered into after **September 30, 2018**, a supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential or a Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA) Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor credential.
 - (v) however, the Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein.
 - (vi) in a supervised practicum or internship which is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor OR, in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

6. **"Directed Experience"** means time spent under direction engaging in the practice of Professional Counseling as defined in 135-5-.01 (a)(1).

- (i) all work sites must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling as defined in Rule 135-5-.01(a) (1). Valid work sites should have measurable detailed documentation for every candidate, to include a signed contractual agreement that outlines the job description, office hours, performance review procedures and dismissal policies.
- (ii) non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine acceptability in defining the working relationship for the purposes of obtainment of the required post-master's directed work experience only if they meet these requirements. The agreement between the work site and the candidate should be akin to employment.
- (iii) applicants may, at the discretion of the Board, be required to submit documentation substantiating (a) the nature of the working relationship with the directed experience site, (b) the formal structure of the organization, and (c) whether any licensed or associate licensed individuals work there to ensure compliance and understanding of these requirements.

7. **"Directed Experience Under Supervision Contract"** is a document, obtained from the Board, that defines the working relationship for the purposes of obtaining the required post-masters directed experience under supervision. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a) (6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience"

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7. **"Years of Directed Experience"**

- (i) "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 600 hours of directed experience acquired within a period of not less than twelve months and not more than twenty months.
- (ii) "Two years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1200 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than twenty-four months and not more than 60 months.
- (iii) "Three years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1800 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than thirty-six months and not more than 60 months.

- (iv) "Four years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 2400 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than forty-eight months and not more than 60 months.
- (v) **After September 30, 2018** "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience acquired in not less than a twelve (12) month period. The number of required years of Directed Experience is based on the applicant's educational credentials as defined in Rule [135-5-.02](#) (b, c, d, e and f).
- (vi) **After September 30, 2018**, all Directed Experience must be obtained within the sixty (60) months prior to the date of application. Endorsement applications will be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Board.

8. "Years of Supervision"

- (i) "One year of Supervision" means a minimum of 30 hours of supervision obtained during one year of Directed Experience as defined in Rule [135-5-.02\(7\)](#).
- (ii) "Two years of Supervision" means a minimum of 60 hours of supervision obtained during two years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule [135-5-.02\(7\)](#).
- (iii) "Three years of Supervision" means a minimum of 90 hours of s supervision obtained during three years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule [135-5-.02\(7\)](#).
- (iv) "Four years of Supervision" means a minimum of 120 hours of supervision obtained during four years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule [135-5-.02\(7\)](#).
- (v) **After September 30, 2018**, "One year of Supervision" means a minimum of thirty five (35) hours of supervision obtained during one twelve (12) month period of Directed Experience as defined in Rule [135-5-.02\(7\)](#).
- (vi) **After September 30, 2018**, all Supervision must be obtained within the sixty (60) months prior to the date of application. Endorsement applications will be

considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Board.

9. **"Work settings acceptable to the Board"** means a directed work settings in which the practice of Professional Counseling takes place and may include, but is not limited to, education, rehabilitation, career development, mental health, community, or industrial organizations. Practice without direction is not a work setting acceptable to the Board. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule [135-5-.02\(a\) \(6\)](#) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

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An applicant who holds a master's degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.

1. Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\) 11](#).
2. A "Masters" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master's degree and indicated on the official transcript.
3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of four (4) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\)](#)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board OR three (3) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at

least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. **After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required.** A minimum of two (2) years of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\) 5](#), except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule [135-5-.02\(a\) \(6\)](#) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

(c) **An applicant who holds a specialist degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**

1. **Education.** The applicant must have earned a specialist degree from an institution, which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\) 11](#).

2. A "Specialist" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the specialist degree and indicated on the official transcript.

3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of two (2) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions at [135-5-.02 \(a\)](#)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program

OR three (3) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board. **After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required.** A minimum of one (1) year of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\) 5](#), except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule [135-5-.02\(a\) \(6\)](#) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

(d) **An applicant who holds a doctoral degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**

1. **Education.** The applicant must have earned a doctoral degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\) 11](#).
2. A "Doctoral" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the doctoral degree and indicated on the official transcript.
3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of one (1) year of supervised counseling internship of at least seven hundred fifty (750) hours during the doctorate degree program in a work setting acceptable to the Board OR one (1) year of post master's directed experience under

supervision [see definitions in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\)](#)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board. A minimum of half of the one year of supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule [135-5-.02\(a\) 5](#), except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule [135-5-.02\(a\) \(6\)](#) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

(END)
