

Guide to Educational Requirements

Associate Professional Clinical Counselor

OUT-OF-STATE AND OUT-OF-COUNTRY APPLICANTS

This guide is for Associate Professional Clinical Counselor (APCC) applicants with an out-of-state or out-of-country degree. “Out-of-State” means a degree from a school located outside of California, or from an online program that is not designed to meet California’s requirements. “Out-of-Country” means a degree earned from a school located outside of the United States or its territories.

APCC applicants with an out-of-state or out-of-country degree must meet the educational requirements specified in Business and Professions Code (BPC) sections [4999.61](#) and [4999.62](#). This document provides a summary of those requirements.

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1. How will I know if my degree qualifies for registration as an APCC?

California law requires a degree to meet certain minimum requirements to qualify for APCC registration. The law allows for some types of coursework to be remediated, and also allows a limited number of units to be remediated. Unfortunately, in some cases an applicant’s degree will not qualify at all, and a new degree would be required. This guide will help you determine whether your degree qualifies.

Exception: *If you have been licensed for two or more years in another U.S. state and hold a professional clinical counselor license at the highest level for independent clinical practice in the other state, and that license is current and in good standing, you may be able to qualify for LPCC licensure under “Path A” regardless of degree qualifications. See the [Guide to LPCC Out-of-State Applicant Requirements](#) for more information (access at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LPCC>Out-of-State Applicants).*

2. What are the minimum degree requirements for APCC registration?

If your out-of-state or out-of-country degree does NOT fully contain ALL of the minimum requirements listed below, it will NOT qualify for APCC registration in California and a new degree would be required in order to qualify.

➔ These are minimums only - see question 4 for ADDITIONAL requirements you must meet prior to approval of your *Application for LPCC Licensure*.

✓ **A master's or doctorate degree from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE), or a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE)**

✓ **Degree fully contains a minimum of 48 semester units or 72 quarter units**

✓ **Degree fully contains a minimum of 7 Core Content Areas (CCAs) as described on pages 7- 8**

➔ **Degree must not be deficient units in any of those 7 CCAs**

➔ **All 13 CCAs are required PRIOR to issuance of an APCC registration if NOT licensed as a professional clinical counselor at the highest level for independent clinical practice in another state or country (must be valid and in good standing)**

✓ **Degree fully contains a minimum of 6 semester units or 9 quarter units of practicum that includes 280 hours of supervised face-to-face counseling experience**

➔ *Exception: If you hold a valid professional clinical counselor license in good standing in another state or country at the highest level for independent clinical practice the practicum requirements are waived*

✓ **Degree fully contains a minimum of 3 semester units or 4 quarter units in the *Diagnosis* Core Content Area**

✓ **Degree fully contains a minimum of 3 semester units or 4 quarter units in the *Assessment* Core Content Area**

NOTE: The Board may require submission of syllabi for required coursework after evaluating your application. Please gather your syllabi so that you can be prepared in the event that any are requested.

3. What additional coursework must I take prior to issuance of my APCC registration?

CALIFORNIA LAW AND ETHICS COURSE

- ➡ If you completed a 3 semester unit or 4 quarter unit law and ethics course that does NOT contain California content:

You must complete a 12-hour California Law and Ethics course that contains the content specified in BPC section [4999.62\(b\)\(1\)\(D\)\(ii\)](#). This course must be taken from an [accepted continuing education provider](#).

- ➡ If you completed a law and ethics course that is LESS THAN 3 semester units or 4 quarter units:

You must complete a graduate level California law and ethics course to bring your total to 3 semester units or 4 quarter units. This course must be taken at an accredited or approved school (see question 5 for more information on approved providers). **A CE course will not be accepted.**

CORE CONTENT AREAS (CCAs)

- ➡ If you do NOT hold a valid professional clinical counselor license in good standing at the highest level for independent clinical practice in another state or country, and your degree did NOT contain all 13 CCAs as described on pages 7- 8:

You must complete graduate level coursework to meet all 13 CCAs before your APCC registration can be issued. **CE courses will not be accepted.**

- ➡ If you DO hold a valid license as a professional clinical counselor at the highest level for independent clinical practice in good standing in another state or country:

You may remediate eligible CCAs while registered as an APCC. You must remediate all missing/deficient CCAs prior to approval of your *Application for LPCC Licensure*. **CE courses will not be accepted.**

See question 5 for information on acceptable course providers.

4. What additional units and coursework must I complete prior to approval of my *Application for LPCC Licensure*?

DEGREE REMEDIATION

Prior to approval of your *Application for LPCC Licensure*, you will be required to complete additional units and coursework if any of the following are deficient within your degree:

Overall Units: If you began your degree program on or after August 1, 2012 OR graduated after December 31, 2018, and your degree contained less than 60 semester units or 90 quarter units, you must take graduate level coursework to bring your total to 60 semester units or 90 quarter units (a maximum of 12 semester units or 18 quarter units may be remediated). **CE courses will not be accepted.**

Core Content Areas (CCAs): If your degree did not fully contain all 13 CCAs as described on pages 7-8, you must complete graduate level coursework to meet all 13 CCAs. Courses must be taken from an accredited or approved school (see question 5 for more information on providers). **CE courses will not be accepted.**

Advanced Coursework (AC): If your degree did not contain a minimum of 15 semester units or 22.5 quarter units of AC (coursework designed to develop knowledge of specific treatment issues or special populations), you must complete graduate level coursework to bring your AC total to 15 semester units or 22.5 quarter units. These courses/units must be IN ADDITION to CCA courses and units. Courses must be taken from an accredited or approved school (see question 5 for more information on providers). **CE courses will not be accepted.**

ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK

You must also complete “Additional Coursework” at the graduate level as specified in BPC section [4999.62](#) (if not already taken) prior to approval of your *Application for LPCC Licensure*. Certain courses must be California-specific and must be taken from an [accepted continuing education provider](#). See pages 9-10 for a list of courses and required content.

REMEDIATION AND DOUBLE-COUNTING

➡ **If you are remediating Overall Degree Units and are deficient in one or more CCAs or in Advanced Coursework:**

The courses you take to meet the CCA or Advanced Coursework requirements may also be counted toward fulfilling your overall unit requirements.

➡ **If you are remediating CCAs or Advanced Coursework:**

You may be able to also count the course toward Additional Coursework requirements.

For Example:

Your degree is deficient in CCA #6 Multicultural Counseling Theories and Techniques.

⇒ The course you take includes education about California cultures.

✓ This course may then also count toward fulfilling Additional Coursework item f) “California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position.”

IMPORTANT: A course taken to meet a CCA will NOT also count toward Advanced Coursework (and vice-versa). Double-counting is not permitted because California law specifies that Advanced Coursework must be in addition to CCA courses/units (per BPC section [4999.62\(b\)\(2\)](#)).

5. Who is an acceptable course provider?

➡ If you are remediating any of the following:

- ✓ Overall Degree Units
- ✓ CCAs
- ✓ Advanced Coursework
- ✓ California Law and Ethics (3 semester units or 4 quarter units) course

The above courses/units must be taken at the graduate level from a school with a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the USDE, or from a school approved by the BPPE. **CE courses will not be accepted.**

➡ For the 12-hour California Law and Ethics course AND Additional Coursework:

Must be taken at the graduate level from an [accepted continuing education provider](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/Licensees/Continuing%20Education) (access at [www.bbs.ca.gov>Licensees>Continuing Education](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/Licensees/Continuing%20Education)).

6. What if my degree is from a school located outside of the United States?

In addition to meeting all of the other requirements in this document, you must obtain an evaluation of your degree by a foreign credential evaluation service to determine equivalency with California's requirements, and submit it with your APCC application (per BPC section [4999.40\(c\)](#)). The evaluation service must be a member of the [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](http://www.naces.org) (www.naces.org). You will also be required to submit an official transcript, and a syllabus for each course you believe will help the Board determine whether your degree qualifies (translated if not in English).

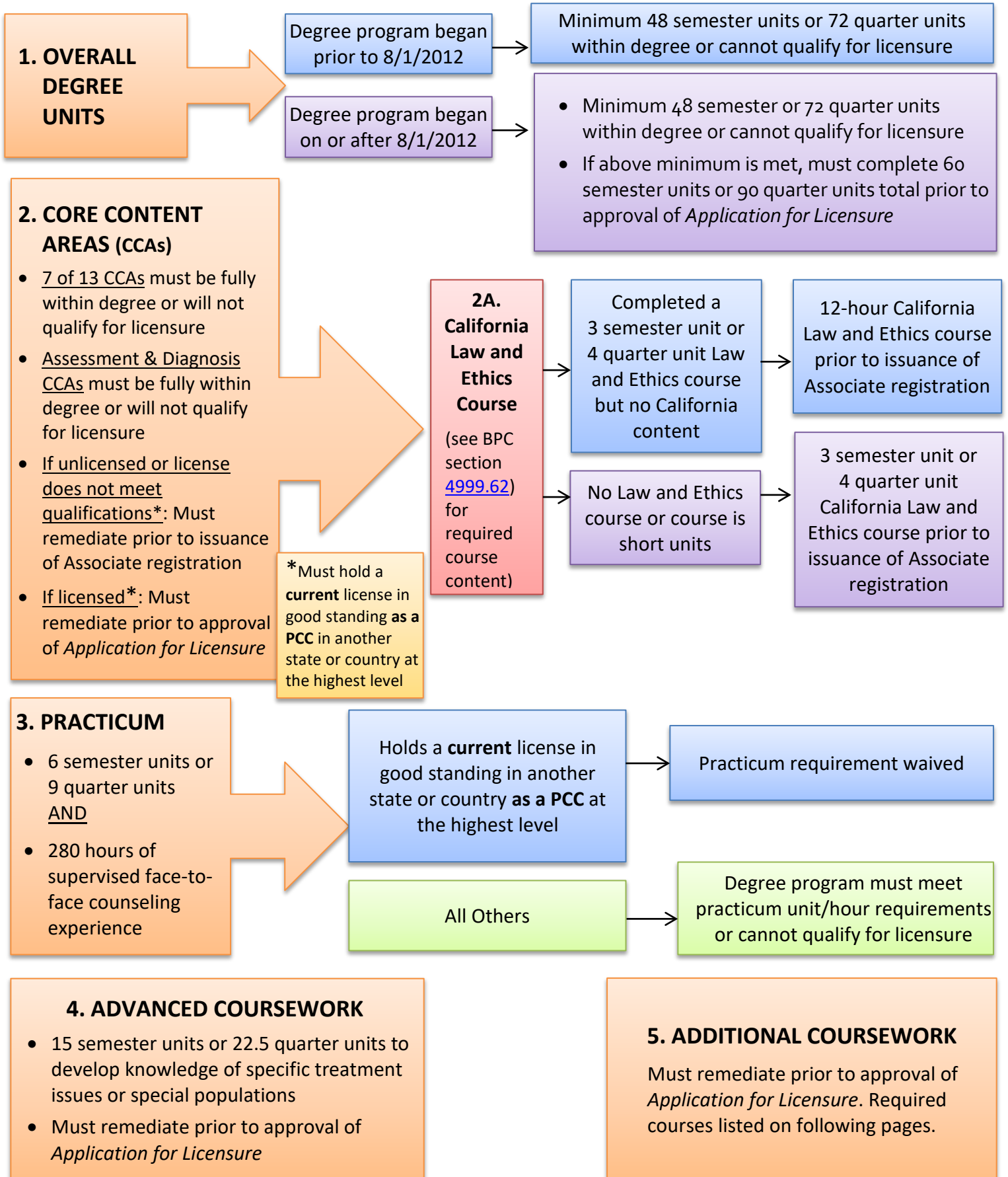
Suggestion: Prior to paying a credentials evaluation service for an evaluation, compare your degree to California's requirements by using the optional "Out-of-Country Degree Program Worksheet" contained in the *Application for APCC Registration* to help you determine whether to proceed.

For QUESTIONS about out-of-state requirements, contact:

BBS.APCC@dca.ca.gov

For information about EXPERIENCE and EXAMINATION requirements that you must meet prior to licensure:

See Path B of the [Guide to LPCC Out-of-State Applicant Requirements](#) (access at [www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LPCC>Out of State Applicants](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/Applicant/LPCC/Out%20of%20State%20Applicants)).



CORE CONTENT AREA (CCA) REQUIREMENTS

3 Semester Units or 4 Quarter Units are required in each CCA

CORE CONTENT AREA	REQUIRED CONTENT
1. Counseling & psychotherapeutic theories & techniques	The counseling process in a multicultural society, an orientation to wellness and prevention, counseling theories to assist in selection of appropriate counseling interventions, models of counseling consistent with current professional research and practice, development of a personal model of counseling, and multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, and disasters.
2. Human growth and development across the lifespan	Normal and abnormal behavior and an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior.
3. Career development theories & techniques	Career development decision-making models and interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors, including the role of multicultural issues in career development.
4. Group counseling theories & techniques	Principles of group dynamics, group process components, developmental stage theories, therapeutic factors of group work, group leadership styles and approaches, pertinent research and literature, group counseling methods, and evaluation of effectiveness.
5. Assessment, appraisal, & testing of individuals	Basic concepts of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment techniques, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, statistical concepts, social and cultural factors related to assessment and evaluation of individuals and groups, and ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment instruments and techniques in counseling. A DEGREE DEFICIENT UNITS IN THIS AREA WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR REGISTRATION OR LICENSURE*
6. Multicultural counseling theories & techniques	Counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, identity development, promoting cultural counseling theories social justice, individual and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse and techniques populations, and counselors' roles in eliminating biases and prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination.
7. Principles of the diagnostic process	Differential diagnosis, and the use of current diagnostic tools, such as the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, the impact of co-occurring substance use disorders or medical psychological disorders, established diagnostic criteria for mental or emotional disorders, and the treatment modalities and placement criteria within the continuum of care. A DEGREE DEFICIENT UNITS IN THIS AREA WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR REGISTRATION OR LICENSURE*

**Exception:* If you have held a current, active, and unrestricted license in another U.S. state as a professional clinical counselor at the highest level for independent clinical practice for at least two years, you may be able to qualify for licensure via Path A regardless of degree qualifications. See the [Guide to LPCC Out-of-State Applicant Requirements](#) (access at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant> LPCC>Out-of-State Applicants).

CORE CONTENT AREA REQUIREMENTS *(continued)*

3 Semester Units or 4 Quarter Units are required in each CCA

CORE CONTENT AREA	REQUIRED CONTENT
8. Research and evaluation	Studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, the use of evaluation research to inform evidence-based practice, the importance of research in advancing the profession of counseling, and statistical methods used in conducting research, needs assessment, and program evaluation.
9. Professional orientation, ethics & law in counseling	Professional ethical standards and legal considerations, licensing law and process, regulatory laws that delineate the profession's scope of practice, counselor-client privilege, confidentiality, the client dangerous to self or others, treatment of minors with or without parental consent, relationship between practitioner's sense of self and human values, functions and relationships with other human service providers, strategies for collaboration, and advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impeded access, equity, and success for clients.
10. Psychopharmacology	The biological bases of behavior, basic classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications so that appropriate referrals can be made for medication evaluations and so that side effects of those medications can be identified.
11. Addictions counseling	Substance abuse, co-occurring disorders, and addiction, major approaches to identification, evaluation, treatment, and prevention of substance abuse and addiction, legal and medical aspects of substance abuse, populations at risk, the role of support persons, support systems, and community resources.
12. Crisis or trauma counseling	Crisis theory; multidisciplinary responses to crises, emergencies, or disasters; cognitive, affective, behavioral, and neurological effects associated with trauma; brief, intermediate, and long-term approaches; and assessment strategies for clients in crisis and principles of intervention for individuals with mental or emotional disorders during times of crisis, emergency, or disaster.
13. Advanced counseling & psychotherapeutic theories and techniques	The application of counseling constructs, assessment and treatment planning, clinical interventions, therapeutic relationships, psychopathology, or other clinical topics.

ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LPCC LICENSURE FOR APPLICANTS WITH AN OUT-OF-STATE OR OUT-OF-COUNTRY DEGREE

*Note: 1 semester unit = 15 hours; 1 quarter unit = 10 hours
1 semester unit = 1.5 quarter units*

COURSE	LENGTH	CONTENT REQUIRED
a) Human Sexuality	10 hours	Instruction must include the study of the physiological, psychological, and social-cultural variables associated with sexual behavior, sexual dysfunctions, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender dysphoria and the assessment and treatment of psychosexual dysfunction.
b) Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection and Intervention	15 hours	Instruction must cover spousal and partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same-gender abuse dynamics.
c) Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California	7 hours	Instruction must include detailed knowledge of the California Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting Act (CANRA). It must also include assessment and methods of reporting of sexual assault, neglect, severe neglect, general neglect, willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment, corporal punishment or injury, and abuse in out-of-home care. The training shall also include physical and behavioral indicators of abuse, crisis counseling techniques, community resources, rights and responsibilities of reporting, consequences of failure to report, caring for a child's needs after a report is made, sensitivity to previously abused children and adults, and implications and methods of treatment for children and adults.
d) Aging, Long Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse	10 hours	Instruction must cover aging and long-term care, including biological, social, cognitive and psychological aspects of aging, and instruction on the assessment and reporting of, as well as treatment related to, elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect.

**ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LPCC LICENSURE
FOR APPLICANTS WITH AN OUT-OF-STATE OR OUT-OF-COUNTRY DEGREE *(continued)***

COURSE	LENGTH	CONTENT REQUIRED
e) Mental Health Recovery Oriented Care and Methods of Service Delivery	45 hours or 3 semester units	Instruction must cover principles of mental health recovery-oriented care and methods of service delivery in recovery-oriented practice environments, including structured meetings with various consumers and family members of consumers of mental health services to enhance understanding of their experience of mental illness, treatment and recovery.
f) California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position	15 hours or 1 semester unit	Instruction must include an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position.
g) Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention	6 hours of coursework or applied experience	See BPC section 4999.66