

# **Guide to Licensure Requirements**

## **Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor**

### **OUT-OF-STATE AND OUT-OF-COUNTRY APPLICANTS**

This guide provides a summary of requirements for Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC) applicants with an out-of-state license, and/or an out-of-state or out-of-country degree.

“Out-of-State degree” 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 degree” means a degree earned from a school located outside of the United States or its territories.

Note: All code sections listed in this document may be accessed by clicking on the link provided or by accessing the [Statutes and Regulations](#), available at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov) (scroll to the blue bar at the bottom of the page).

#### **1. What are the two paths to licensure for out-of-state applicants?**

Path A is called “Licensure by Credential”. It is for applicants who meet ALL of the qualifications listed in #2 below.

Path B is called “Licensure via Education and Experience”. It is for applicants who do NOT meet all four of the requirements of Path A.

#### **2. What are the qualifications I need to apply under Path A?**

Path A “Licensure by Credential” is only available if you meet **ALL four** of the following qualifications:

1. You have held a license as a Professional Clinical Counselor in another United States jurisdiction for at least two years; and
2. Your Professional Clinical Counselor license is at the highest level for independent clinical practice in that jurisdiction; and
3. The license you hold is current, and has been active and unrestricted for at least two years immediately before the date the Board receives your application; and
4. The degree that qualified you for your Professional Clinical Counselor license is a master’s or doctorate degree obtained from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), or from a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education.

If you do NOT meet ALL FOUR of the above requirements, you must apply under Path B. You may also apply for a [registration](#) as an Associate Professional Clinical Counselor (APCC), which allows you to work under supervision while you work on meeting the requirements to become licensed under Path B (*access the APCC application at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)>Applicant>LPCC*).

### 3. I meet all four of the qualifications to apply under Path A. What do I need to do to become licensed?

Applicants who qualify to apply under Path A must meet all of the requirements specified in BPC section [4999.60](#) (as summarized below) and submit the [Application for Licensure – Path A](#) (access at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)>Applicant>LPCC).

#### 1. COURSEWORK

You must complete all of the coursework described below before your *Application for Licensure* can be approved. Courses must be taken at the graduate level from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the USDE, a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), or an acceptable [continuing education provider](#) (access at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)>Licensees). Undergraduate coursework cannot be accepted.

#### 2. EXAMINATION

Once your *Application for Licensure* is approved, you will be eligible to take the LPCC California Law and Ethics Exam. Information about the exam is available under the Exams tab of the Board's [website](#).

#### 3. SUBMIT A REQUEST FOR INITIAL LICENSE ISSUANCE AND FEE

Once you have passed the exam you must submit a [Request for Initial License Issuance](#) form and pay a \$200 initial licensure fee. Allow up to 30 days for processing.

#### PATH A: REQUIRED COURSEWORK

1 semester unit = 15 hours; 1 quarter unit = 10 hours; 1 semester unit = 1.5 quarter units

COURSE	LENGTH	CONTENT REQUIRED
<b>California Law and Ethics</b>  <b>NOTE:</b> This is a SEPARATE requirement from the California Law and Ethics Exam	12 hours	Must be California-specific and include instruction in advertising, scope of practice, scope of competence, treatment of minors, confidentiality, dangerous clients, psychotherapist-client privilege, recordkeeping, client access to records, state and federal laws relating to confidentiality of patient health information, dual relationships, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, online therapy, insurance reimbursement, civil liability, disciplinary actions and unprofessional conduct, ethics complaints and ethical standards, termination of therapy, standards of care, relevant family law, therapist disclosures to clients, the application of legal and ethical standards in different types of work settings, and licensing law and licensing process.

## PATH A: REQUIRED COURSEWORK (continued)

Course	Length	Content Required
<b>Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California</b>	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. See
<b>California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position</b>	15 hours or 1 semester unit	Instruction must include an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position.
<b>Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention</b>	6 hours of coursework or applied experience	Course must cover suicide risk assessment and intervention. For more information see <a href="#">BPC section 4999.66</a> .

#### **4. What are the qualifications required to become licensed under Path B?**

Below is a summary of the requirements for becoming licensed under Path B, as specified in BPC sections [4999.61](#) and [4999.62](#):

1. Your degree must meet all of the requirements described in question 5; and
2. You must remediate any deficiencies in your degree (where allowed) as described in question 6; and
3. You must complete the additional coursework as described in question 6; and
4. You must fulfill the supervised experience requirements as described in question 9; and
5. You must pass the California Law and Ethics Exam and the National Clinical Mental Health Counselor (NCMHCE) Exam as described in question 10.

See the instructions in the [Application for Licensure – Path B](#) for full details. You may also apply for APCC [registration](#), which would allow you to work under supervision while you work to meet the Path B licensure requirements (*access the application at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)>Applicant>LPCC*).

## 5. What are the minimum degree requirements for licensure under Path B?

California law requires a degree to meet certain minimum requirements to qualify under Path B. 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.

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 licensure in California.

➡ These are minimums only - see question 6 for ADDITIONAL educational requirements you must meet prior to approval of your *Application for 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.

## 6. What additional units and coursework must I complete prior to approval of my *Application for LPCC Licensure under Path B*?

### DEGREE REMEDIATION

Prior to approval of your *Application for 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 CCA (including the full number of units) as described on pages 11-12, you must complete graduate level coursework to meet all 13 CCAs. Courses must be taken from an accredited or approved school (see question 7 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 7 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 13-14 for a list of courses and required content.

### CALIFORNIA LAW AND ETHICS COURSE

**Note:** This is a separate requirement from the California Law and Ethics Exam.

➡ 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 [acceptable continuing education provider](#).

## CALIFORNIA LAW AND ETHICS COURSE (continued)

### ➡ 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. **A CE course will not be accepted.**

**See question 7 for information on acceptable course providers.**

## REMEDATION 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 Degree 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 EXCEPTION RE: CCA and Advanced Coursework**

**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\(b\)\(2\)](#)). However, course units may be split. Note: CCA and Advanced Coursework units may be used to fulfill Additional Coursework requirements.

## 7. 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 [acceptable continuing education provider](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/Licensees) (access at [www.bbs.ca.gov>Licensees](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/Licensees)).

## 8. What if my degree is from a school located outside of the United States or its territories?

In addition to meeting all of the other requirements listed in this document (and as specified in the BPC), 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 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](http://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 Licensure](#) to help you determine whether to proceed.



## 9. What are the experience requirements of Path B?

### ➡ If you are licensed as a professional clinical counselor in another state or country at the highest level for independent clinical practice:

Your requirements will depend on the conditions under which you were licensed, as described below:

- If you are licensed as a professional clinical counselor in another United States jurisdiction that requires at least 3,000 hours of supervised experience:

You do not need to submit verification of experience.

- If you are licensed as a professional clinical counselor in another country:

You must submit verification of 3,000 hours and 104 weeks of substantially equivalent\* work experience that includes 104 supervised weeks.

- If you were licensed as a professional clinical counselor in another state or country that requires LESS than 3,000 hours of supervised experience:

If the state or country requires less than 3,000 hours of supervised experience (Colorado or Florida for example), you must make up the deficit using either or both of the following methods:

- Counting time actively licensed as a professional clinical counselor in good standing in another state or country at the rate of 100 hours per month licensed at the highest level (up to a maximum of 1,200 hours, with no verification of experience required for these hours); and/or
- Submitting additional hours of substantially equivalent\* supervised experience.

### ➡ All other applicants:

You must submit verification of substantially equivalent\* supervised post-degree work experience totaling 3,000 hours and 104 weeks.

### \*Substantially equivalent experience

For your supervised experience to be accepted as “substantially equivalent” it must meet ALL of the following requirements:

- Experience must have been gained within the six (6) years prior to the Board’s receipt of your California *Application for Licensure*.
- Your 3,000 hours must meet the following requirements:
  - **Direct counseling experience (Minimum 1,750 hours)** with individuals, groups, couples or families.
  - **Non-clinical experience (Maximum 1,250 hours).** May consist of direct supervisor contact, administering and evaluating psychological tests, writing clinical reports, writing progress or process notes, client centered advocacy, and workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences directly related to professional clinical counseling.

## 9. What are the experience requirements of Path B? (continued)

- Experience must have been supervised by a licensed mental health professional who met ALL of the following qualifications:
  - Licensed in the state or country where the hours were earned at the highest level for independent practice as a LCSW, LMFT, LPCC, Licensed Psychologist or Board-Certified Psychiatrist; and
  - Licensed as one of the above for at least two years prior to the commencement of supervision; and
  - License was active and in good standing at the time your hours were earned.
  - If your experience was earned outside of the U.S. or its territories, your supervisor must also meet the following qualifications:
    - The license the supervisor holds was issued by a government regulatory body; and
    - The supervisor completed post-degree supervised experience in order to get their license; and
    - The supervisor took a licensing exam recognized by their country's regulatory body; and
    - The supervisor holds at least a master's degree in a mental health discipline recognized by the Board.
- If the state or country in which your hours were earned required a registration in order to gain experience, you must have been registered during the time you earned your hours.

### **If you need to gain additional hours**

If additional hours are needed and will be gained in California, you must first register as an [Associate](#) and comply with all requirements for hours gained in California (*access the application at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)>Applicant>LPCC*).

## 10. What are the examination requirements of Path B?

You must pass both of the following exams:

- **California Law and Ethics Exam:**  
You will be eligible to take this exam after issuance of your Associate number or upon approval of your *Application for Licensure*.
- **National Clinical Mental Health Counselor (NCMHCE) Exam:**  
You will be eligible to take this exam after approval of your *Application for Licensure* and after passing the Law and Ethics Exam.

## 10. What are the examination requirements of Path B? (continued)

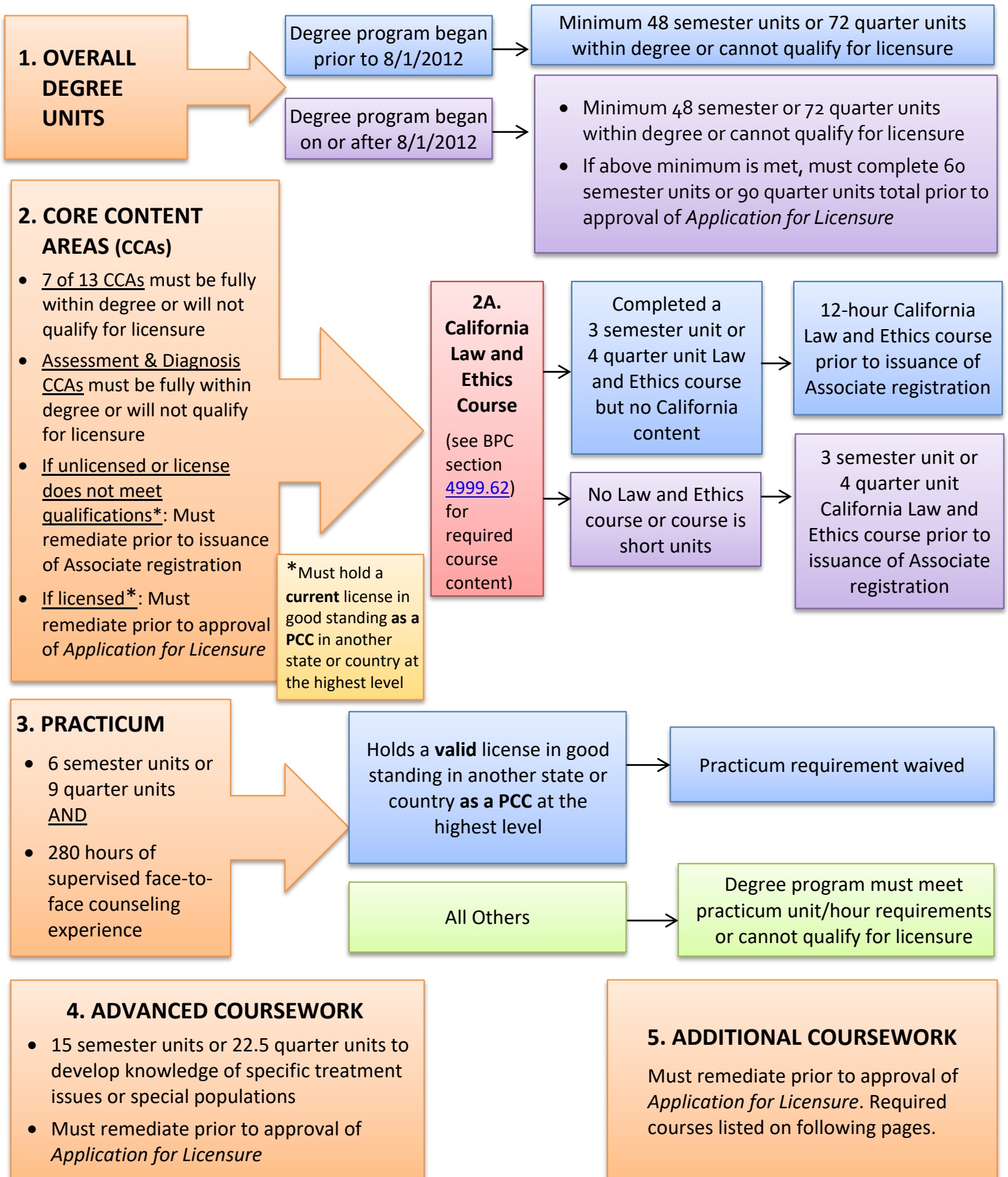
If you have already passed the NCMHCE exam, the Board may be able to accept your passing score, as described below:

- If you do NOT hold a current license or registration in another state or country:  
Your passing score must be less than seven (7) years old as determined by the date of the Board's receipt of your California *Application for Licensure*.
- If you DO currently hold a license or registration in another state or country, AND your license or registration is active and in good standing at the time of application and is not revoked, suspended, surrendered, denied or otherwise restricted or encumbered:  
A passing score of any age will be accepted.
- The Board must receive official verification of your passing score from the [National Board for Certified Counselors](http://www.nbcc.org) (www.nbcc.org). Be sure to follow the score verification requirements as described in the *Application for Licensure* instructions.

**For QUESTIONS, contact:**

[BBS.LPCC@dca.ca.gov](mailto:BBS.LPCC@dca.ca.gov)

## Summary – Path B LPCC Education Requirements



## PATH B: CORE CONTENT AREA (CCA) REQUIREMENTS

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

CORE CONTENT AREA	REQUIRED CONTENT
<b>1. Counseling and psychotherapeutic theories and techniques</b>	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.
<b>2. Human growth and development across the lifespan</b>	Normal and abnormal behavior and an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior.
<b>3. Career development theories and techniques</b>	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.
<b>4. Group counseling theories and techniques</b>	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.
<b>5. Assessment, appraisal, and testing of individuals</b>	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. <b>A DEGREE DEFICIENT UNITS IN THIS AREA WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR REGISTRATION OR LICENSURE UNDER PATH B</b>
<b>6. Multicultural counseling theories and techniques</b>	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.
<b>7. Principles of the diagnostic process</b>	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. <b>A DEGREE DEFICIENT UNITS IN THIS AREA WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR REGISTRATION OR LICENSURE UNDER PATH B</b>

## **PATH B: CORE CONTENT AREA (CCA) REQUIREMENTS** *(continued)*

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

<b>CORE CONTENT AREA</b>	<b>REQUIRED CONTENT</b>
<b>8. Research and evaluation</b>	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.
<b>9. Professional orientation, ethics and law in counseling</b>	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.
<b>10. Psychopharmacology</b>	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.
<b>11. Addictions counseling</b>	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.
<b>12. Crisis or trauma counseling</b>	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.
<b>13. Advanced counseling and psychotherapeutic theories and techniques</b>	The application of counseling constructs, assessment and treatment planning, clinical interventions, therapeutic relationships, psychopathology, or other clinical topics.

**PATH B: ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LPCC LICENSURE  
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*

<b>COURSE</b>	<b>LENGTH</b>	<b>CONTENT REQUIRED</b>
<b>a) Human Sexuality</b>	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>b) Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection and Intervention</b>	15 hours	Instruction must cover spousal and partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same-gender abuse dynamics.
<b>c) Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California</b>	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.
<b>d) Aging, Long Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse</b>	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.

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

<b>COURSE</b>	<b>LENGTH</b>	<b>CONTENT REQUIRED</b>
<b>e) Mental Health Recovery Oriented Care and Methods of Service Delivery</b>	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.
<b>f) California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position</b>	15 hours or 1 semester unit	Instruction must include an understanding of various California cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position.
<b>g) Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention</b>	6 hours of coursework or applied experience	Course must cover suicide risk assessment and intervention. For more information see <a href="#">BPC section 4999.66</a> .