

Important
Answers to

Frequently Asked Questions

*for Associate
Professional
Clinical
Counselors*



Board of Behavioral Sciences

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Associate Professional Clinical Counselor Frequently Asked Questions



The information provided in this publication is supplemental and is intended to serve as a quick answer guide for common questions for those pursuing licensure as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). The Board's [Statutes and Regulations](#) contain the official legal code sections and language. The BBS encourages you to thoroughly read the [Statutes and Regulations](#) pertaining to the professional clinical counseling profession.

For information about the examination process and requirements for registered Associates, see the Board's [website](#).

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A. ASSOCIATE REGISTRATION; LAW AND ETHICS EXAM

1. What coursework will I need when I apply for Associate registration?

Please see the [Application for Registration as an Associate Professional Clinical Counselor](#) for a list of required coursework.

2. Can I count hours of experience after I graduate but before I receive an Associate registration number? What is the “90-day rule”?

If the Board receives your application for an Associate registration within 90 days of your degree award date, and you are thereafter issued an Associate registration, all postdegree hours of supervised experience may be credited. Hours gained under this “90-day rule” must comply with all experience and supervision requirements in order to count toward licensure.

For applicants completing graduate study on or after January 1, 2020:

Hours may only be accepted under the “90-day-rule” described above IF the hours are obtained at a workplace that, prior to the applicant gaining hours, required live scan fingerprinting. The applicant must provide documentation to the Board consisting of a copy of the processed “State of California Request for Live Scan Service” form. This form must be submitted with the application for licensure in order for the hours gained between graduation and registration issuance to be accepted. There are no exceptions.

Statute cited: Business and Professions Code (BPC) section 4999.46

3. When can I begin working in a private practice setting?

4. Are there any limitations on working in a private practice?

You may not work in a private practice until your Associate registration has been issued by the Board. You may work in private practice for a maximum of six (6) years, until your first Associate registration has met its maximum length. There are no exceptions.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.46 and 4999.46.1

5. Now that my Associate registration has been issued, can I start practicing independently or open my own office?

No. Independent practice cannot begin until you have completed all licensure requirements and the Board issues you a license as a LPCC. Independent practice (or opening your own office) is considered unlicensed practice and is subject to disciplinary action by the Board. Additionally, you are prohibited from billing clients directly until you are licensed.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.30 and 4999.90

6. When am I required to renew my Associate registration?

Registrations expire annually and have a total six (6)-year time limit. Your registration's expiration date will be printed on your registration certificate. You will be mailed a courtesy renewal notice 90 days prior to your expiration date. The Board encourages renewing online because it takes effect instantly as long as all renewal requirements are met.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.1

7. Are Associates required to take an exam to renew?

Yes. Associates who have not yet passed the LPCC California Law and Ethics Exam **MUST** have taken this exam during their renewal cycle in order to renew. There are no exceptions.

To apply for the exam, download the exam application from the Board's [website](#) and mail it in with the required fee. Allow 4-6 weeks for processing. See the [FAQs](#) about the Law and Ethics Exam for more information.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.53 and 4999.55

8. What happens if I don't pass the California Law and Ethics Exam?

You do not need to pass the exam in order to renew your registration; you just need to have taken it. You may retake the exam after at least 90 days have passed from the date you last took the exam. The *Application for Re-Examination* is available on the Board's [website](#).

If you don't pass the exam prior to your registration's expiration date, you must complete a 12-hour course in California Law and Ethics before you will be allowed to retake the exam during your NEXT renewal cycle. You will not be allowed to retake the exam after your registration expires until you submit proof of course completion. See the [FAQs](#) about the Law and Ethics Exam for more information.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.55; Regulation cited: Title 16, California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1805.05

9. Where can I take the 12-hour California Law and Ethics course?

The course must be taken through a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, or an acceptable continuing education provider.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.55

10. What happens if I haven't passed the Law and Ethics Exam by my registration's 6-year time limit?

California law permits a registration to be renewed a maximum of five (5) times before being cancelled. Associates may apply for a subsequent (second or third) registration number. You cannot be granted a subsequent number unless you have passed the LPCC Law and Ethics Exam. There are no exceptions.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.1

11. How do I obtain a second or third Associate registration number?

12. Can I work in a private practice under a subsequent Associate registration number?

Download the [APCC Subsequent Registration](#) application from the Board's website and submit it with the required fee. Be sure to submit it in advance of your registration's expiration date to allow time for processing.

Only those who have been issued a first Associate registration number may work in a private practice. Associates issued a subsequent registration may NOT work in a private practice setting. There are no exceptions. All other work settings are permissible.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.46.1 and 4999.55

13. What happens once I pass the Law and Ethics Exam?

If you are still earning hours of supervised experience, you will continue as a registrant until you have completed your hours. No further exams are required until you apply for licensure. You may submit your *Application for Licensure and Examination* once you have met all education and experience requirements.

Upon approval of your *Application for Licensure and Examination*, you will be required to take and pass the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam (NCMHCE) offered by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC).

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.50; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1822.50

B. EXPERIENCE HOURS, SUPERVISION AND EMPLOYMENT

14. What is the breakdown for the required hours of experience to become a LPCC?

California law currently requires 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience, including 104 supervised weeks, in order to qualify for LPCC licensure.

Applicants have two different options for gaining supervised experience. Hours can qualify under either Option 1 (streamlined categories) or Option 2 (multiple categories) as described below.

Applicants must fully qualify under either Option 1 OR Option 2. There is no “mixing and matching” between the two categories. Individuals who wish to qualify under Option 2 must submit an *Application for Licensure and Examination* **postmarked** no later than December 31, 2020. Otherwise the applicant must fully qualify under Option 1.

OPTION 1 – STREAMLINED CATEGORIES

Under Option 1, the supervised work experience categories break down into just two overall types:

- Direct counseling experience (*Minimum 1,750 hours*)
 - Must include a minimum of 150 hours of clinical experience in a hospital or community mental health setting.
- 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.

OPTION 2 – MULTIPLE CATEGORIES

This option expires on December 31, 2020

- A. Direct Counseling with Individuals, Groups, Couples or Families (*Minimum 1,750 hours*)
- B. Group Therapy or Counseling (*Maximum 500 hours*)
- C. Telehealth Counseling (*Maximum 375 hours*)
- D. Maximum 1,250 hours that include all of the following:
 - Workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences directly related to professional clinical counseling (*Maximum 250 hours*)
 - Administering and evaluating psychological tests of counselees, writing clinical reports and progress or process notes (*Maximum 250 hours*)
 - Client-Centered Advocacy
 - Direct Supervisor Contact
- E. Minimum of 150 hours of clinical experience in a hospital or community mental health setting

IMPORTANT INFORMATION APPLICABLE TO BOTH OPTIONS

“Community Mental Health Setting” Definition:

A community mental health setting is a clinical setting that meets all of the following requirements:

- Lawfully and regularly provides mental health counseling or psychotherapy
- Clients routinely receive psychopharmacological interventions in conjunction with psychotherapy, counseling, or other psycho-social interventions
- Clients receive coordinated care that includes the collaboration of mental health providers
- Is not a private practice owned by a BBS-licensed professional, a licensed physician or surgeon, a professional corporation of any of these licensed professions, or a corporation of unlicensed individuals.

Experience with Couples, Families and Children

A minimum of 500 hours of supervised experience working directly with couples, families or children is required if the applicant wishes to assess or treat couples or families after being issued a LPCC license. See questions 24 and 44 for more information.

Limitations on Experience Hours:

- Maximum 40 hours of experience earned in any week between all settings
- Maximum six (6) hours of individual, triadic or group supervision in any week

104 Supervised Weeks Required:

Each of these 104 weeks must contain:

- One (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) hours of group supervision during **any** week in which experience is claimed
- 52 weeks in which the applicant received at least one (1) hour of **individual or triadic** supervision

An applicant for licensure cannot be approved to sit for the clinical exam without completing both the 3,000 hours of experience AND 104 supervised weeks.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46; Regulation cited: Title 16 CCR section 1820

15. What is triadic supervision?

Triadic supervision is defined as face-to-face supervision consisting of one supervisor and two supervisees. It is counted under the law as equivalent to individual supervision.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.2

16. What is the definition of “telehealth counseling”?

17. How many telehealth hours can I gain?

Telehealth refers to the mode of delivering health care services and public health via information and communication technologies to facilitate the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of a patient’s health care while the patient is at the originating site and the health care provider is at a distant site. Associates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the “Standards of Practice for Telehealth,” available in the Board’s [Statutes and Regulations](#).

Experience Option 1: There is no limit on the number of telehealth hours.

Experience Option 2: Up to 375 hours of supervised experience may be gained providing personal psychotherapy, crisis counseling, or other counseling services via telehealth. This may include telephone counseling.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 2290.5 and 4999.46; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815.5

18. How far back can experience hours be counted? What is the 6-year rule?

The Board cannot accept hours of experience (including workshops, training or conferences) that are older than six (6) years from the date the Board receives your *Application for Licensure and Examination*.

For example, the Board receives an *Application for Licensure and Examination* on 03/24/2018. The Board can only accept hours earned by this applicant between 03/24/2012 and 03/24/2018.

It is important to note that if your *Application for Licensure and Examination* is abandoned, you will be required to re-apply. Your six (6)-year period will be recalculated to six (6) years back from the date your new application is received. For more information on abandonment, see question 34.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46

19. How do I determine the amount of supervision I need each week?

20. What is the required ratio of supervision to client contact hours?

“One unit” of supervision = one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision OR two (2) hours of group supervision

Associates must receive one (1) unit of supervision, as defined above, during any week in which experience is gained in each work setting.

In addition, if the Associate provides more than 10 hours of direct clinical counseling in a single week in his or her work setting, the Associate must receive one (1) additional unit of supervision in that same week in that setting.

The above supervision ratios only apply to direct clinical counseling hours (under Option 2, this also includes Group Counseling and Telehealth Counseling).

EXAMPLE #1: An Associate works one job and provides 25 hours of direct clinical counseling during a single week. This Associate must receive two (2) units of supervision during that week.

EXAMPLE #2: An Associate works two jobs, and provides 12 hours of direct clinical counseling at Job A and nine (9) hours at Job B during the same week. This Associate must receive a total of three (3) units of supervision during that week - two (2) units at Job A and one (1) unit at Job B.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.2

21. Can I be paid as a 1099 / independent contractor?

22. Can I be employed as a volunteer?

All Associates must either be a paid W-2 employee or a volunteer employee. Associates may also not bill clients directly. There are limited circumstances under which you may be paid under a 1099. If you work as a volunteer in any setting other than a private practice, and receive reimbursement for expenses actually incurred, receiving a 1099 for those reimbursements is acceptable. If you have received a stipend or educational loan repayment from a program designed to encourage demographically underrepresented groups to enter the profession, or to improve recruitment and retention in underserved regions or settings, a 1099 for the stipend or loan repayment is acceptable. Those paid under a 1099 may be audited by the Board to ensure the payment was for one of the above purposes.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.3

23. Who can supervise Associates?

24. Who can supervise experience with couples, families or children?

Only licensed mental health professionals can supervise Associates and Associate applicants. Licensed mental health professionals include any of the following:

- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs)
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCCs)
- Licensed Clinical Psychologists
- Licensed Physicians certified in Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

Additionally, the supervisor must meet all of the following:

- Maintain a current and active California license that is not under suspension or probation. (You can check your supervisor's status any time [here](#)).

- Have been licensed in California or any other state for at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision.
- Have practiced psychotherapy during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision OR
- Provided direct supervision to Marriage and Family Therapist Trainees, Associate Marriage and Family Therapists, Associate Professional Clinical Counselors, or Associate Clinical Social Workers who perform psychotherapy during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision. Supervision of psychotherapy performed by a student (social work intern or a professional clinical counselor trainee) shall be accepted if the supervision performed is substantially equivalent to the supervision required for registrants.
- Complete a minimum of six (6) hours of supervision training or coursework within 60 days of commencement of supervision and every two-year renewal period thereafter (Psychologists and Psychiatrists are exempt from this training requirement).

Supervisors of Experience with Couples, Families or Children:

In order to be allowed to assess and treat couples or families once you become licensed as an LPCC, you must first meet certain [requirements](#). One of those requirements is 500 hours of supervised experience with couples, families or children. This experience may be gained while you are an Associate or after you become licensed, and must be supervised by a licensee who, in addition to meeting the qualifications listed in the above section, meets the following:

- LPCCs: Must have already met the qualifications to assess and treat couples and families, and have obtained written confirmation from the Board of meeting the qualifications. LPCC supervisors must provide the supervisee with a copy of his or her “confirmation of qualifications to assess and treat couples and families” from the Board.
- LCSWs, Licensed Clinical Psychologists, or Licensed Physicians certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology: Must have sufficient education and experience in treating couples and families to competently practice couples and family therapy in California.
- LMFTs: No additional requirements.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.12 and 4999.20; Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1820.5 and 1820.7

25. How many supervisees can participate in a session of group supervision?

Group supervision sessions shall include no more than eight (8) persons receiving supervision, even if there are two or more supervisors present. Group supervisors must ensure that the amount and degree of supervision is appropriate for each supervisee.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.2

26. Can group supervision be broken into one-hour increments?

Group supervision can be broken into one-hour sessions, as long as both increments (full two hours) are provided in the same week as the experience being claimed.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.2

27. Can I receive supervision via videoconferencing or over the telephone?

An Associate working for a governmental entity; school, college, or university; or an institution that is both nonprofit and charitable may obtain supervision via live two-way videoconferencing. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the client confidentiality is preserved.

Individual or group supervision may not be provided over the telephone, as supervision must consist of face-to-face contact.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.2

28. Do my supervisor and I have to be employed by the same employer?

29. Does my supervisor need to be on site?

Only in a private practice setting does a supervisor need to be employed by, and practice at, the same site as the registrant's employer. Alternatively, the supervisor may be an owner of the private practice. However, if the site is a corporation, the supervisor must be employed full-time at the site and be actively engaged in performing professional services at the site.

In a setting that is not a private practice, the supervisor may be employed by the Trainee's, Associate's, or applicant's employer on either a paid or volunteer basis. If employed as a volunteer, a written oversight agreement that addresses the supervisor's and employer's responsibilities must be signed by the supervisor and the employer prior to commencement of supervision. Please see the Board's [website](#) for a sample written oversight agreement. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure and Examination*.

In any setting, Associates and applicants may only perform services at the places where their employers regularly conduct business, which may include performing services at other locations, so long as the services are performed under the direction and control of their employer and supervisor, and in compliance with the laws pertaining to supervision.

Whether a supervisor is required to be on site depends on the situation. Supervisors must consider their responsibilities as defined in the LPCC statutes and regulations, which includes taking responsibility for, and control of, the quality of services being

provided. Among other responsibilities, supervisors are required to do all of the following, whether they are on site or off site:

- Ensure that the extent, kind and quality of counseling performed by the Associate is consistent with the education, training and experience of the person being supervised.
- Monitor and evaluate the supervisee's assessment, diagnosis and treatment decisions and providing regular feedback.
- Monitor and evaluate the ability of the Associate to provide services at the site(s) where he or she will be practicing and to the particular clientele being served.
- Monitoring and addressing clinical dynamics, including, but not limited to, countertransference-, intrapsychic-, interpersonal-, or trauma-related issues that may affect the supervisory or the practitioner-patient relationship.
- Ensure compliance with all laws governing the practice of professional clinical counseling.
- Reviewing the supervisee's progress notes, process notes, and other patient treatment records, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.
- With the client's written consent, providing direct observation or review of audio or video recordings of the supervisee's counseling or therapy, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.

Upon request by the Board, a supervisor is required to provide the Board with documentation that verifies the supervisor's compliance with all requirements.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.4; Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1820 and 1821

30. Where can I find more information about supervision?

Please see the Board's *Guide to Supervision*, available on our [website](#).

31. What forms must I use to record my experience hours and supervision?

While gaining your hours of experience you must use the following forms, available on the Board's [website](#):

Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of an APCC: Your supervisor must sign this form prior to commencing supervision and provide you with the original. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure and Examination*.

Supervisory Plan: Your supervisor must sign this form prior to commencing supervision and provide you with the original. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure and Examination*.

Weekly Summary of Experience Hours (“Weekly Log”): Log your hours on this form on a weekly basis and have your supervisor sign weekly. You will retain the original logs. Do not submit *Weekly Logs* to the Board except upon request.

Experience Verification: This form is completed upon the termination of your supervised experience with your supervisor, and must indicate the total hours completed in each category under your supervisor, your supervisor’s license information and certain information about your employer. Your supervisor will sign the form and provide you with the original for submission with your *Application for Licensure and Examination*.

Submission of forms as directed in the licensure application instructions will lessen the possibility that the licensing evaluator will need to request additional information from you, which will delay the approval of your application.

32. How do I fill out *Experience Verification* forms or *Weekly Logs* if I have more than one supervisor in the same work setting?

If you are receiving supervision from two individuals in one employment setting, document the hours from each supervisor on separate forms. As long as the time periods on the two forms overlap and the employment setting is the same, the BBS will combine the experience and supervision together when evaluating your experience.

33. When do I need to send in supervision-related forms?

All supervision-related forms (*Supervisor Responsibility Statement*, *Supervisory Plan* and *Experience Verification* forms) must be submitted with your *Application for Licensure and Examination*.

Do not send the *Weekly Summary of Experience Hours (“Weekly Log”)* form unless the Board specifically requests you to do so.

C. APPLYING FOR LICENSURE

34. Should I be concerned about abandonment of my *Application for Licensure and Examination*?

Yes – and abandonment could have major consequences, such as losing experience hours that are too old. Once an application is abandoned, an applicant may reapply, but must pay a new application fee and meet all current requirements. One of those requirements is that your hours are less than six (6) years old.

If your *Application for Licensure and Examination* is abandoned, you would lose any hours of experience that are more than six (6) years old, based on the date the Board receives the new *Application for Licensure and Examination*. See question 18 for more information about the six-year rule.

In accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1806, an application shall be deemed abandoned in any of the following circumstances:

- Applicant does not submit the remaining documents or information requested in the application deficiency letter within one (1) year from the date of the deficiency letter
- Applicant does not complete the application within one (1) year after it has been filed.
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not sit for an examination within one (1) year after being notified of initial eligibility to take the examination.
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not take an examination within one (1) year from the date the applicant was notified of failing an examination
- The applicant fails to pay the initial license fee within one (1) year after notification by the Board of successful completion of LPCC licensing requirements.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

35. What additional coursework do I need to complete before applying for licensure?

For those applying for licensure on or after January 1, 2021, a 6-hour course in “Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention” is required. However, if this content was included within your supervised experience and you can obtain a written certification from the program’s director of training, or from your primary supervisor, stating that the training was included within your supervised experience, it may be accepted in lieu of a course.

If this content was included within your degree program, you will need to obtain a written certification from the registrar or training director of your school or program stating that this coursework was included within the curriculum required for graduation, or within the

coursework that was completed by you. If you need to take a course, it may be completed through an accredited or state-approved college, a CE provider, or a governmental entity, and may be taken in-person or online.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.66

36. What type of employment documentation does the Board require with my *Application for Licensure and Examination*?

If a Paid Employee: You must provide a W-2 for each year of paid employment with your *Application for Licensure and Examination*. W-2s are required for all tax years during which you gained experience. For the current tax year, include a photocopy of your most recent pay stub. A copy of your 1040 or other tax filing form is not acceptable.

If a Volunteer Employee: You must provide a letter from your employer verifying your status as a volunteer with your *Application for Licensure and Examination*. A sample letter verifying volunteer status is available on the Board's [website](#).

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.3

37. Do I need to send in originals of my W-2s or most recent pay stub with my *Application for Licensure and Examination*?

Originals are not required - photocopies are acceptable.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46.3

38. How can I provide verification of my experience if my supervisor is deceased or incapacitated?

The Board will review documentation on a case by case basis in order to make a determination. However, we recommend that you submit all of the following:

- If your supervisor is deceased, documentation such as a copy of the obituary
- The previously signed, original *Supervisor Responsibility Statement*
- The previously signed, original *Supervisory Plan*
- The previously signed, original *Weekly Log* forms
- Documentation by the employer verifying employment of the supervisor and supervisee
- The letter of agreement for supervision if your supervisor was not employed by your employer

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.46.3 and 4999.46.4; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1820

39. Do I need to resubmit fingerprints with my *Application for Licensure and Examination*?

Applicants do not need to resubmit fingerprints if one or more of the following applies at the time the Board receives the application:

- Applicant still possesses a current Associate registration number; or
- Applicant's Associate number has been cancelled for less than 30 days.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815

40. What happens once I submit my *Application for Licensure and Examination*?

The Board will evaluate your application and notify you either that:

- There are one or more deficiencies in your application. You will have one (1) year from the date of the initial deficiency notice to clear all deficiencies

OR

- You have been found eligible for examination, and will be provided with information on how to register.

Once you pass both required exams: Download the *Request for Initial License Issuance* form from the Board's [website](#), and submit it with the required fee. Your license will be issued within 30 business days from the date of receipt.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

41. Do I need to maintain a current Associate registration number to participate in the clinical examination?

The Board encourages all individuals to maintain a current Associate registration and to continue recording experience hours until licensed as an LPCC, as a safeguard in the event that some of the hours submitted are unable to be accepted by the Board either now or in the future due to application abandonment and/or the "six-year rule" (see question 34 for more information).

Whether you are required by law to maintain a registration, however, will depend on the type of setting you are working in. If working in a private practice, you are required to maintain a current Associate registration until your LPCC license has been issued. If you are working in an exempt setting (an institution that is both non-profit and charitable, a school or a governmental entity), or other non-private practice setting, you are not required to maintain a registration once you have submitted your experience hours. However, your employer may require it as a condition of employment.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.22 and 4999.46.1

42. Must I continue to have supervision after my experience hours have been approved?

Once the required number of experience hours are gained, you must receive a minimum of one hour of direct supervisor contact per week for each practice setting in which direct clinical counseling is performed. Once the required number of experience hours are gained, further supervision for nonclinical practice shall be at the supervisor's discretion.

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.46

43. Once I pass my exams, can I start practicing independently?

No. A successful examinee still must submit a *Request for Initial License Issuance* form and fee before the Board will issue a LPCC license. You will need to [download](#) and submit this form and fee upon completion of all licensure requirements. Your license will be issued within 30 business days from the date of receipt. Independent practice cannot begin until the Board issues a license. Otherwise it is considered unlicensed practice, which is subject to disciplinary action by the Board.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4999.30 and 4999.90

44. Once I pass my exams, how do I become legally qualified to assess and treat couples or families?

The scope of practice for LPCCs includes the assessment and treatment of individuals and groups. It does NOT include the assessment or treatment of couples or families unless the LPCC meets all of the qualifications listed below, as defined in California law:

1. Six (6) semester units or nine (9) quarter units specifically focused on the theory and application of marriage and family therapy OR a named specialization or emphasis area on the qualifying degree in marriage and family therapy; marital and family therapy; marriage, family, and child counseling; or couple and family therapy.
2. No less than 500 hours of documented supervised experience working directly with couples, families, or children.
3. A minimum of six (6) hours of CE specific to marriage and family therapy during each license renewal cycle. The six (6) hours will count toward the required overall 36 hours of CE.

LPCCs must obtain written confirmation from the Board stating that he or she meets the requirements to assess and treat couples and families prior to assessing or treating a couple or family client.

The *Request for Confirmation of Qualifications to Assess and Treat Couples and Families* packet is available on the Board's [website](#).

Statute cited: BPC section 4999.20; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1820.7