



Board of Behavioral Sciences



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Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.
State of California
State and Consumer Services Agency
Department of Consumer Affairs

Implementation of Registrant Title Change (“Intern” to “Associate”) Marriage and Family Therapist Interns and Professional Clinical Counselor Interns Effective January 1, 2018

Effective January 1, 2018, the titles for Marriage and Family Therapist Interns and Professional Clinical Counselor Interns changed, as follows:

- Marriage and family therapist registrants must use the title “Associate Marriage and Family Therapist” or “Registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist.”
- Professional clinical counselor registrants must use the title “Associate Professional Clinical Counselor” or “Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor.”

The Board has also revised its advertising regulations¹, which permit certain abbreviations to be used in a registrant’s advertising. The acceptable abbreviations are as follows:

For Marriage and Family Therapist Registrants:

- Registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist
- Registered Associate MFT
- AMFT (may only be used if the term “registered associate marriage and family therapist” also appears in the advertisement)

For Professional Clinical Counselor Registrants:

- Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor
- Registered Associate PCC
- APCC (may only be used if the term “registered associate professional clinical counselor” also appears in the advertisement)

¹ Title 16, California Code of Regulations Section 1811.

Frequently Asked Questions

Registrant Title Change

1. Why did the Board of Behavioral Sciences (Board) Change the “Intern” Titles for MFT and PCC Registrants?

Stakeholders and registrants voiced concerns that the “intern” title for MFT and PCC registrants may not be an accurate representation of their post-master’s degree status. After discussing the issue, the Board decided that the “intern” title may be more socially understood as referring to someone who is in school, causing consumers to discount the credibility of MFT and PCC interns based on their title. In addition, the Board found evidence that some other states and professions are moving away from the use of the “intern” title for post-graduates. Therefore, it sponsored legislation to make this change (SB 1478, Chapter 489, Statutes of 2016).

Use of the “associate” title also brings MFT and PCC registrants in line with social work registrants, who already use the “associate” title.

2. May I use the Title “Marriage and Family Therapist Associate,” “MFTA,” or “Professional Clinical Counselor Associate,” or “PCCA” Instead?

No. The law does not recognize these titles. Acceptable titles are specified on page 1.

3. Are the Titles for MFT Trainees and PCC Trainees Changing as Well?

No. The titles for trainees are not changing at this time.

4. I am an Associate Clinical Social Worker. Do These Changes Affect Me?

Social work registrants are keeping the “associate” title and are not affected.

5. What information must I include in an advertisement?

For information on advertising requirements, select “Laws and Guidelines” under the [General Resources](#) section of the Board’s website.