

Counseling Credentials Needed for a Licensed Professional Counselor

Step 1. Earning a counseling graduate degree.

The degree program requires one to earn 60 credits in a master's degree in counseling for clinical mental health, accredited by the CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs). Accreditation by this body is done for all gold-standard institutions offering counseling courses, mostly in the United States. Topics of interest in this body include the following;

1. Helping relationships and counseling theory
2. Social and cultural diversity
3. Counseling ethics
4. Counseling assessments
5. Programs evaluations and research
6. Career assessments
7. Lifestyle development and career counseling

A student must undergo a 100-hour practicum based on the CACREP standards to qualify for an LPC licensure. This practicum also includes 40 hours of providing direct service to clients. After the practicum, CACREP requires students to participate in 600 hours of counseling under a qualified supervisor, which includes 240-hour direct service provision to a client.

Step 2. Completion of a state field experience.

The student must complete the supervised field experience after the master's degree program and the field practicum. This exercise takes two years, and in the period of 4000 hours, one obtains a provisional state license from the state board of counseling.

Step 3. Passing the NBCC exam

The student then must pass an examination with the national board for certified counselors, a body which offers the LPC license. State laws require a student to pass the exam to qualify for the license.

Step 4. Application of the LPC license. The NBCC notifies the state board of the student's passing of exams, and the student submits the LPC license application fees to the state board. Upon receiving the license, the student can practice counseling in the state.

Step 5. Maintaining the LPC license.

The licensing board requires that all licenses be renewed after two years. All professionals must work within the scope of counseling practice and renew their licenses every two years.