

ASSOCIATE

The Board shall grant a license as a licensed clinical mental health counselor associate to persons preparing for the practice of counseling who have:

- (1) if applied before July 1, 2025, completed graduate training as defined in G.S. 90-336(b1) or (b2), as applicable; and three semester hours or five quarter hours in each of the required coursework areas of study as follows:
 - (a) Coursework in Helping Relationships in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes, including the following:
 - (i) counseling and consultation theories, including both individual and systems perspectives, as well as coverage of relevant research and factors considered in applications;
 - (ii) basic interviewing, assessment, and counseling skills;
 - (iii) counselor or consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence mental health counseling relationships, including age, gender, and ethnic differences; verbal and nonverbal behaviors; personal behaviors; and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills;

- (iv) client or consultee characteristics and behaviors that influence mental health counseling relationships, including age, gender, and ethnic differences; verbal and nonverbal behaviors; and personal behaviors; personal characteristics, orientations and skills; and
- (v) ethical considerations.
- (b) Coursework in Practicum and Internship. Practicum and internship experience shall be provided in a supervised graduate counseling experience in a regionally accredited program of study. This graduate counseling experience shall be completed as defined in Rule .0206 of this Chapter.
- (c) Coursework in Professional Orientation to Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning, including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing, including the following:
 - (i) history of the counseling profession, including significant factors and events;
 - (ii) professional roles and functions of counselors, including similarities and differences with other types of professionals;
 - (iii) professional organizations (primarily the ACA, its divisions, branches and affiliates), including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases;
 - (iv) ethical standards of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) or ACA and related ethical and legal issues, and their applications to various professional activities (e.g., appraisal, group work);
 - (v) clinical mental health counselor preparation standards, their evolution, and current applications;
 - (vi) clinical mental health counselor credentialing, including counselor certification, licensure and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues;
 - (vii) public policy processes, including the role of the clinical mental health counselor advocating on behalf of the profession and its clientele; and
 - (viii) ethical considerations.
- (d) Coursework in Human Growth and Development Theories in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, relevant to counseling practice, including the following:
 - (i) theories of individual and family development, and transitions across the life span;
 - (ii) theories of learning and personality development;
 - (iii) human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, addictive behavior, psychopathology, and environmental factors as they affect both normal and abnormal behavior;
 - (iv) counseling strategies for facilitating development over the life span; and
 - (v) ethical considerations.
- (e) Coursework in Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society that impact clinical mental health counselors and the counseling profession, including, the following:
 - (i) multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns of counseling individuals from diverse groups;
 - (ii) attitudes and behavior based on factors such as age, race, religious preferences, physical disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and culture, family patterns, gender, socioeconomic status, and intellectual ability;
 - (iii) individual, family, and group counseling strategies with diverse populations; and
 - (iv) ethical considerations.
- (f) Coursework in Group Counseling Theories and Processes. Studies in this area provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling theories; group counseling methods and skills; and other group work approaches, including the following:

- (i) principals of group dynamics, including group counseling components, developmental stage theories, and group members' roles and behaviors;
 - (ii) group leadership styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles;
 - (iii) theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature;
 - (iv) group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, ethical standards, appropriate selection criteria, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness;
 - (v) approaches used for other types of group work in counseling, including task groups, support groups, and therapy groups; and
 - (vi) ethical considerations.
- (g) Coursework in Career Counseling and Lifestyle Development. Studies in this area provide an understanding of career counseling, development, and related life factors, including the following:
- (i) career-counseling theories and decision-making process;
 - (ii) career, avocational, educational, and labor market information resources; visual and print media; and computer-based career information systems;
 - (iii) career-counseling program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation;
 - (iv) interrelationships among work, family, and other life roles and factors, including multicultural and gender issues as related to career counseling;
 - (v) career and educational placement counseling, follow-up, and evaluation;
 - (vi) assessment instruments and techniques relevant to career counseling;
 - (vii) computer-based career-development applications and strategies, including computer-assisted career-counseling systems;
 - (viii) career-counseling processes, techniques and resources, including those applicable to specific populations; and
 - (ix) ethical considerations.
- (h) Coursework in Assessment in Counseling. Studies in this area provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in counseling practice, including the following:
- (i) theoretical and historical bases for assessment techniques in counseling;
 - (ii) validity, including evidence for establishing content, construct, and empirical validity;
 - (iii) reliability, including methods of establishing stability, internal, and equivalence reliability;
 - (iv) appraisal methods, including environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations, and computer-managed and computer-assisted methods;
 - (v) psychometric statistics, including types of assessment scores, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, standard errors, and correlations;
 - (vi) age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, and cultural factors related to the use of assessment and evaluation in counseling services;
 - (vii) strategies for selecting, administering, interpreting, and using assessment and evaluation instruments, and techniques in counseling; and
 - (viii) ethical considerations.
- (i) Coursework in Research and Program Evaluation. Studies in this area provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal consideration in research, including the following:
- (i) basic types of research methods to include qualitative and quantitative research designs;
 - (ii) basic parametric and nonparametric statistics;
 - (iii) principles, practices, and applications of needs assessment and program evaluation;
 - (iv) uses of computers for data management and analysis; and

- (v) ethical and legal considerations; or
- (2) If applied on or after July 1, 2025, completed graduate training as defined in G.S. 90-336(b2) and the required content areas of study of the current standards set by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), as incorporated in Rule .0206 of this Chapter, at the time of the receipt of application as defined in Rule .0308(a) of this Chapter. The graduate coursework shall also include three semester hours or five quarter hours in each of the required content areas of study as follows:
 - (a) introduction to clinical mental health counseling with professional issues and ethics;
 - (b) practicum and clinical mental health internship; and
 - (c) appraisal and assessment of mental health disorders with use and application of the current edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), to include psychopharmacology and differential diagnosis; and
- (3) passed an examination as defined in Rule .0305 of this Chapter;
- (4) submitted a complete application for licensed clinical mental health counselor associate; and
- (5) earned 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of graduate training in counseling or related field from a program that is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

To prevent a lapse in licensure, licensed clinical mental health counselor associates who desire to become licensed clinical mental health counselors shall complete the application process for the licensed clinical mental health counselor licensure no earlier than 60 days prior to expiration of their licensed clinical mental health counselor associate license or upon completion of the supervised professional practice hours as set forth in Rule .0208 of this Chapter to allow for administrative processing and Board action.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-334(h); 90-336(a); 90-336(b1); 90-336(b2); Eff. January 1, 2010; Amended Eff. July 1, 2014; January 1, 2010; Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. April 27, 2019; Amended Eff. February 1, 2023; January 1, 2020 (S.L. 2019-240, s. 3.(k)).