FIELD EXPERIENCE
What’s it all about?

Introduction
Your coursework in Clinical Mental Health Counseling will include three field experience courses. The FAQs in this document address common questions from students about field experience.

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Field Experience Basics

What is a field experience course?
Field experience courses are those that require students to apply classroom-based learning to counseling practice with real clients in community-based settings. The CMHC program requires students to complete three field experience courses.

What are the 3 field experience courses in the CMHC program?
The field experience courses are: Practicum (CNDV 5392), Internship 1 (CNDV 5394 A), and Internship 2 (CNDV 5394 B).

Do the field experience courses have to be taken in a specific order?
Yes. The field experience courses must be taken in this order:
1. Practicum (CNDV 5392)
2. Internship 1 (CNDV 5394)
3. Internship 2 (CNDV 5394)

When do I take the field experience courses?
Students should prepare to enroll in the first field experience course, Practicum (CNDV 5392), after the completion of 12-14 courses (i.e., 36-42 credit hours) in the CMHC program. For most students, this means that it is possible to enroll in Practicum after 1.5 - 2 years of coursework.

Are the field experience courses offered every semester?
Yes. Practicum (CNDV 5392), Internship 1 (CNDV 5394 A), and Internship 2 (CNDV 5394 B) are offered every fall, spring, and summer semester.

Do field experience courses run for 5 weeks only, or are they semester-long courses?
Field experience courses are semester-long courses. Fall and spring semesters last 15 weeks. Summer semesters last 10 weeks.
Are there prerequisites for the field experience courses?
The prerequisites for Practicum (CNDV 5392) include successful completion (meaning a grade of B or better) in:
- CNDV 5310 - Counseling Skills
- CNDV 5311 - Individual Counseling Theories & Techniques
- CNDV 5312 - Group Counseling Theories & Techniques
Students also must pass the following courses with a grade of C or better:
- CNDV 5320 - Multicultural Counseling
- CNDV 5322 - Professionalism, Ethics, & Law
- CNDV 5380A - Residency 1
- CNDV 5380B - Residency 2
Internship 1 requires successful completion of Practicum in addition to the prerequisites listed above, and Internship 2 requires successful completion of Internship 1.

Internships 1 and 2 (CNDV 5394) require students to have no more than 6 credit hours (i.e., 2 classes) of classroom coursework (i.e., courses other than field experience courses) left to complete before enrolling in them.

How do I register for a field experience course?
Students cannot register themselves for Practicum (CNDV 5392), Internship 1 (CNDV 5394 A), or Internship 2 (CNDV 5394 B). Neither will students be automatically enrolled in field experience courses.

The semester before enrollment in Practicum (CNDV 5392), the student must submit a Practicum application using the designated link on the “Field Experience” page of the “Clinical Mental Health Counseling Resources” Blackboard organization. If the student's application is approved, then the Field Experience Coordinator will submit the student's name for enrollment in Practicum for the following semester. If the student’s application is not approved due to deficiencies, then the student will be given an opportunity to correct the deficiencies, and to submit a late application for a second review.

Current Practicum and Internship 1 students complete an electronic application for Internship 1 and Internship 2 that is embedded in their Practicum and Internship 1 Blackboard courses. The Field Experience Coordinator will review students’ applications and notify students of their eligibility for the next field experience course via email.

For more information, see the section titled Applying for Field Experience Courses.
Who is the Field Experience Coordinator?
The CMHC Field Experience Coordinator for the Fall 2022 semester is Dr. Shannon McFarlin.

Contact Information:
Email - Shannon.McFarlin@lamar.edu
Phone - (409) 880-7723
Applying for Field Experience Courses

How do I apply for a field experience course?

BEGINNING FALL 2022: To apply for Practicum (CNDV 5392), the student must complete an electronic application by the designated deadline during the semester before enrollment in the course. The link to the application will be located on both the main menu and the “Field Experience” page of the “Clinical Mental Health Counseling Resources” organization during the application window.

If the student's application is approved, then the Field Experience Coordinator will submit the student's name for enrollment in Practicum for the following semester. If the student's application is not approved due to deficiencies, then the student will be given an opportunity to correct the deficiencies, and to submit a late application for a second review.

Students who will enroll in Internship 1 (CNDV 5394 A) the semester immediately following Practicum, as well as those who will take Internship 2 (CNDV 5394 B) immediately following Internship 1, will complete an electronic form that is embedded in their Practicum or Internship 1 Blackboard course, whichever is applicable. The Field Experience Coordinator will review students’ responses to the electronic form and notify each student of eligibility for the next field experience course via email. The Field Experience Coordinator will submit the names of students who are eligible for the next field experience course to LU Academics for enrollment the following semester.

Where can I find the field experience application?

Each semester, the link to the Practicum application is posted on the main menu of the “Clinical Mental Health Counseling Resources” Blackboard organization during the application window. (See the question “What is the Deadline for Practicum Applications?” for a table that displays the application window for each semester.) The Internship 1 application is located in the Practicum Blackboard course, and the Internship 2 application is located in the Internship 1 Blackboard course.

What documents do I have to turn in with my field experience application?

When completing the electronic Practicum application, students are required to submit valid URLs for these files:

- The student's degree audit (obtained via Self-Serv Banner)
- Verification of the proposed site supervisor's license/certificate to practice
- Copy of the student's professional liability insurance policy
Applications that are missing valid URLs for any of the documents listed above will not be approved for enrollment in Practicum. For more information about site supervisor qualifications, see the section titled Field Experience Supervision.

How do I get URLs for the documents I have to submit with my application?

Students can generate a URL for a document by uploading the document file to a cloud server and then copying the link (a.k.a., URL) to the file. Examples of cloud servers include DropBox, OneDrive, and similar others.

How do I get verification of my proposed site supervisor’s license/certificate to practice?

There are two ways to obtain verification of your proposed site supervisor’s license/certificate:

1. Ask your proposed site supervisor for a copy of her/his paper license/certificate; or
2. Search for your proposed site supervisor’s license/certificate information on the credentialing body’s (e.g., State Board) website, and print or save the website page that contains the information as a PDF file.

What is professional liability insurance, what does it cost, and how do I get it?

Professional liability insurance provides coverage for legal expenses in the event that a party files a lawsuit against the student-counselor for work-related activities at the student’s field experience site. Students who are enrolled in field experience courses are required to provide proof of a current professional liability insurance policy with a minimum coverage of $1,000,000/$3,000,000 (i.e., the standard coverage amount). Students must obtain a policy prior to working at their field experience sites and must maintain active coverage throughout the duration of their field experience courses.

Students typically purchase professional liability insurance via:

- Membership with the American Counseling Association (ACA) (Policy is free with a student membership, which costs $105.00; For this option, go to www.counseling.org to register for a student membership), or
- Membership with the student’s state counseling association (Texas students applying for a $70.00 student membership with the Texas Counseling Association [TCA] can elect to purchase a policy with their membership for an additional $18, bringing the total cost to $88.00; For this option, go to www.txca.org to register for a student membership and a policy).
What is an affiliation agreement?
An affiliation agreement is a written contract between the university and another organization that outlines which services, spaces, and/or personnel that each organization will provide to the other, but without exchanges of money.

A site has agreed to accept me as a student intern for the upcoming semester. How do I know if the site needs an affiliation agreement?
It is the student’s responsibility to ask the site if they need an affiliation agreement. NOTE: Lamar does not require an affiliation agreement with the field experience site. However, Lamar will establish an affiliation agreement with any site that requests it.

My site needs an affiliation agreement. Now what do I do?
When the student completes the electronic Practicum application (or the electronic Internship application that currently enrolled Practicum and Internship 1 students complete), the student will respond to a question to indicate whether the proposed field experience site will require an affiliation agreement. If the site needs an agreement, then, when the student submits the form, an email notification will automatically be sent to Rhonda Marcontell, who will initiate the process of establishing an affiliation agreement with the site. The student also will receive an email that includes a form titled “Request for Affiliation Agreement”, which the student must complete and submit to Mrs. Marcontell along with a copy of the site’s W-9 form. PLEASE NOTE: It typically requires 4-6 weeks to complete an affiliation agreement.

The student will incur no cost for the affiliation agreement.

What is the deadline for field experience applications?

PRACTICUM APPLICATIONS

The dates below are estimates only. The actual dates for any given semester may vary. Students will be notified of exact dates at the start of each semester.

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</tbody>
</table>

**INTERNERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Window Opens for Regular Applications...</th>
<th>Final Deadline for Regular Applications...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Semester</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>June 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Semester</td>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>October 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Semester</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>April 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How will I know if my application has been approved?**

The Field Experience Coordinator will review ONLY applications that are successfully submitted by the due date. After an application is reviewed, the outcome of the review will be emailed to the student.

If the student’s application was approved, then there is nothing that the student needs to do to register for Practicum; LU Academics will enroll students in Practicum and Internship before the start of the semester for which they were approved for enrollment. If the student’s application was denied due to deficiencies, then the email notification will include an outline of application deficiencies, as well as the due date for correcting them. Students must follow instructions in the email to resolve their deficiencies by the due date specified.

**My application has deficiencies. How long will I be given to correct them?**

Students will have ONE opportunity ONLY to correct application deficiencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Applying for Practicum</th>
<th>Applying for Internship 1 or 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Semester</td>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>July 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Semester</td>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>November 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I’ve already taken Practicum, and I need to enroll in Internship 1 or 2. I’m not taking classes this semester, so how can I apply for my next field experience course?

Students in this situation should contact Dr. McFarlin at Shannon.McFarlin@lamar.edu.

NOTE: If you have not been enrolled in any courses within the past calendar year, then you must re-apply to www.ApplyTexas.org before your field experience application can be approved. Returning students do not have to complete a new application for admission to the CMHC Program to the Department of Counseling.

I’m in the CMHC Certificate Program. Do I have to take Practicum or Internship?

No, students in the Certificate Program are not required to take Practicum or Internship. However, some students in the Certificate Program might need to take a field experience course to satisfy licensure requirements in their state. Students who need to take a field experience course for this purpose will take Internship 1. To apply for Internship 1, students complete an electronic application that is located on the “CMHC Certificate Program” page of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Resources organization in Blackboard.

NOTE: Financial aid does not cover tuition/fees for Internship 1 for students in the Certificate Program, as the course is not included in their degree plan.
Field Experience Sites

What is a field experience site?

A field experience site is an organization/business/agency in the community that provides counseling services to clients, and that agrees to allow graduate students in counseling to provide services to clients at their location under the supervision of a licensed staff member on site.

When should I start looking for a field experience site?

Some students struggle to find field experience sites, especially when they wait until the semester before they want to enroll in a field experience course to start looking for one.

Students should begin to look for sites early in their programs. Students should look ahead in the course rotation/carousel schedule to identify the earliest possible semester that they might be eligible to enroll in Practicum (CNDV 5392). Then, students should begin to contact potential sites at least TWO semesters before the semester that they want to enroll in Practicum.

How do I find a field experience site?

Students are responsible for finding their own sites.

To find a site, students should:

- Identify potential sites in their local communities;
- Visit sites in person to inquire about internship opportunities; and
- At each site, ask to speak to the Clinical Director, and ask the Clinical Director if the site works with graduate students who are enrolled in Practicum and Internship courses.

Telephone inquiries are not recommended, as they don't tend to yield satisfactory results to the same degree as face-to-face inquiries.

Some sites have their own processes for hiring student interns, which might resemble employee hiring processes. Students are encouraged to approach the process of finding a field experience site as they would if searching for paid employment. This is because, after completing their field experience courses, many students are hired as paid employees at their field experience sites following graduation and licensure.
What kinds of facilities/businesses qualify as sites?
An appropriate site for field experience is one that includes clinical counseling as a treatment provision for clients. Such sites include, but are not limited to:

- Behavioral health inpatient hospitals
- PHP/IOP hospitals (PHP = Partial Hospitalization Program; IOP = Intensive Outpatient Program)
- Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA; a.k.a., MHMRA facilities)
- Residential treatment programs
- Substance abuse treatment programs
- Juvenile Justice facilities
- Prison facilities
- Shelters for women and children
- Non-profit counseling agencies
- Private practice counseling offices
- Schools (but only those that offer mental health services for students through community- or school-based providers)

Can my field experience site be my current place of employment?
If you currently are employed at a facility that provides mental health services for clients, then your place of employment CAN BE your approved field experience site, with one caveat. If your site of employment will be your field experience site, then you cannot accrue field experience hours via your typical job functions. In other words, the tasks that you complete to accrue direct and indirect hours for your field experience courses must be qualitatively/experientially different from the tasks that you complete for your employed position.

Example: Tasha is employed as a case worker at a MHMRA facility. Tasha’s paid employment requires that she assess clients’ treatment needs, construct treatment plans for clients, link clients to services, advocate for clients, conduct skills training sessions with individual clients, and monitor clients’ treatment progress. When searching for a field experience site, Tasha seeks permission from her employer to complete her field experience hours at the MHMRA facility where she works. Her employer agrees to accept Tasha as a student intern, and an LPC on staff at the site agrees to be Tasha’s site supervisor for her field experience work. In their first meeting together, Tasha and her site supervisor discuss ways that Tasha can accrue direct counseling hours with clients at the MHMRA facility. Because Tasha cannot accrue hours performing her normal work tasks, they devise a plan for Tasha to co-lead 8 group counseling sessions with a staff therapist during the semester, and to co-counsel with a staff therapist in individual counseling sessions with clients for 4 hours per week (with permission from clients). In addition, Tasha’s site supervisor
links her with the facility's coordinator for emergency services, who agrees to allow Tasha to complete emergency suicide assessments with clients after normal work hours in the evenings. None of the tasks that Tasha will complete for her field experience courses are tasks that she performs for her paid employment, which means that they are qualitatively and experientially different from her normal work tasks. Tasha knows that the agreed-upon tasks are in addition to the tasks that she must complete for her paid position, that completing the field experience tasks will require her to work additional hours at the MHMRA facility each week, and that she is responsible for maintaining productivity in her paid position in order to be able to perform the additional tasks for her field experience courses.

**Can my field experience site be a school?**

Your field experience site CAN BE a school campus/district, but only if these conditions are met:

- The school employs/contracts licensed clinicians (e.g., LPC, LMSW, LCSW) whose primary function is to provide clinical mental health counseling services to the students;
- The licensed clinicians on staff are not employed as school counselors and do not perform school counseling tasks (e.g., student scheduling, campus-wide assessments);
- The school has a licensed clinician on staff who agrees to be the student’s site supervisor; and
- The school administrator(s) and site supervisor understand that the Practicum/Internship student is not to perform work tasks that are not related to clinical counseling, and they agree not to assign non-counseling-related duties to the Practicum/Internship student.

A certified school counselor can be a site supervisor IF the school counselor also (a) holds a current counseling license (e.g., LPC, LMSW, LCSW), (b) is employed by the school district to provide clinical counseling services to students, and (c) does not perform school counseling tasks at work (i.e., school counseling activities do not comprise the counselor’s job description).

**Can my field experience site be one that solely provides group counseling services?**

The student’s Practicum and Internship experiences are to include direct service to actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills. This means that, yes, students can have field experience sites that provide group counseling as the primary service to clients.

**Can I have more than one field experience site?**

Yes, students can have more than one field experience site during a given semester. If a student has more than one site, then the student must have an approved site
Supervisor at each site and MUST SUBMIT A PRACTICUM APPLICATION FOR EACH SITE. For more information about Site Supervisor qualifications, see the section titled Field Experience Supervision.

I have to go for an interview at a potential site. What questions should I ask during the interview?

Before interviewing at a potential site, the student should do some preliminary research to learn about the services that the site provides and the population that comprises the site’s clientele.

During the interview, the student should demonstrate knowledge of the site’s services and articulate how the experience of working there would align with the student’s long-term professional goals.

Additionally, the student should inquire about the following:

· What counseling modalities/theoretical orientations do your clinicians use?
· What pre-service training do you require, if any?
· What tasks would I perform as a student intern?
· Is there a licensed clinician on staff who would agree to be my site supervisor?
· What is the institution’s dress code for clinicians?
· What information do you need from me about my university’s requirements?
· Does your organization require an affiliation agreement with the university?

This list is not all-inclusive. Students are encouraged to ask any other questions that they might have about the sites where they interview.

How many hours will I be required to work at my site each week while I am enrolled in a field experience course?

Practicum requires students to accrue a minimum of 100 total practice hours (i.e., 40 direct hours and 60 indirect hours) during the semester. Internships 1 and 2 require students to accrue a minimum of 300 total practice hours during each semester of enrollment in Internship, which totals 600+ total practice hours for the combined Internship experience.

Use the information from the chart on p. 19 to complete the statement:

“If I am enrolled in (course) in the (semester), which has (weeks in semester) weeks in the semester, then I will need to work at least (minimum hours each week) hours at my field experience site(s) each week.”
**Example:** “If I am enrolled in Internship 1 in the summer, which has 10 weeks in the semester, then I will need to work at least 30 hours at my field experience site(s) each week.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Weeks in Semester</th>
<th>Minimum Hours Each Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>*Fall</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Requires 100 hours)</td>
<td>*Spring</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship 1</td>
<td>*Fall</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Requires 300 hours)</td>
<td>*Spring</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship 2</td>
<td>*Fall</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Requires 300 hours)</td>
<td>*Spring</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Length of semester can range in weeks.

**Can I earn field experience hours at my site in between semesters?**

Students may not provide direct services to clients or count practice hours in between semesters, **with no exceptions. Students are not to contact the Field Experience Coordinator, Dept. Chair, or Practicum/Internship Instructor to request otherwise.**

**Can I add another site to my application in the middle of a semester in which I’m taking a field experience course?**

Yes, the student may add another site during a semester in which the student is enrolled in Practicum or Internship. To do this, the student needs to email site/site supervisor information and a copy of the new site supervisor’s license to the Field Experience Coordinator.

The Field Experience Coordinator will review the new site/site supervisor information and notify the student of approval status. The student may not begin to accrue practice hours at the new site until receiving notification of site approval.

Please note that the student must have a Site Supervisor for each field experience site on record for the student, and must participate in an hour of supervision with each Site Supervisor weekly throughout the duration of the semester. **Example:** Sarah’s primary site is an inpatient hospital, and her secondary site is a private practice. Each week, Sarah meets for one hour of supervision with Ms. Bellows, her
Site Supervisor at the inpatient hospital. Sarah also meets for one hour of supervision with Mr. Kadik, her Site Supervisor at the private practice, each week.

Can I change sites in the middle of a semester in which I’m taking a field experience course?
If the student needs to change sites during a semester in which she/he is enrolled in Practicum or Internship, then the student may do so. To do this, the student needs to email site/site supervisor information and a copy of the new site supervisor’s license to the Field Experience Coordinator. The Field Experience Coordinator will review the new site/site supervisor information and notify the student of approval status. The student may not begin to accrue practice hours at the new site until receiving notification of site approval.
Field Experience Supervision

What is supervision?
Supervision is a formal process by which an individual who holds an appropriate degree, credentials, experience, and licensure provides leadership, mentorship, and support for an individual who desires entry into the counseling profession. The relationship between a supervisor and supervisee is contractual in nature.

What are the 2 types of supervision required for field experience courses?
Field experience courses require two types of weekly supervision:
- **Site Supervision** – The student meets with her/his Site Supervisor at the student’s field experience site for 1 hour each week.
- **University Supervision** – The student meets with her/his professor and classmates for an average of 1.5 hours each week.

Will I have to pay for supervision while I am enrolled in field experience courses?
The student should not pay for site supervision at the field experience site. If the Site Supervisor informs the student that they must pay for site supervision, then the student can choose either (a) to look for a different site or (b) to encumber the expense. However, it is not common practice in the field to require graduate student interns to pay for site supervision, and students are encouraged to select their sites carefully.

The student’s tuition payment is the only expense required for university supervision.

Who will be my University Supervisor?
The University Supervisor will be the student’s professor for the field experience course in which she/he is enrolled.

How often do I have to meet for university supervision?
Students are required to meet for 1.5 hours (on average) of weekly university supervision throughout the duration of the semester. For summer semesters, there will be 10 university supervision meetings; for spring and fall semesters, there will be 15 university supervision sessions. Students participate in university supervision via video conferences.
What happens in university supervision sessions?

In university supervision sessions, the professor will facilitate discussion of the work that the students are doing at their practice sites. Students will have homework assignments to submit for class and will present case conceptualizations to her/his peers and professor.

What happens if I miss a week of university supervision during a semester when I am enrolled in a field experience course?

Failure to attend university supervision in a given week prohibits the student from counting practice hours (both direct and indirect) for that week. **Missing more than one university supervision session can result in dismissal from the class or a failing grade.**

What happens if my University Supervisor misses a week of university supervision?

If the student’s University Supervisor/Professor must miss a week of university supervision, then the University Supervisor/Professor has the discretion to assign students an alternate assignment to complete in lieu of the university supervision session that week, or to make other arrangements to ensure that students meet the requirement for university supervision that week. Students will not be penalized for the University Supervisor’s/Professor’s absence.

Who will be my Site Supervisor?

The student’s Site Supervisor will be a licensed employee at the student's field experience site who agrees to assume supervisory responsibilities for the student. The Site Supervisor must have **a minimum of a Master degree, a valid license to practice counseling, and a minimum of two years of experience in the field.** The Site Supervisor does not need to work in a paid supervisory position at the field experience site (e.g., Clinical Director); she/he may be employed as a staff clinician, or the like.

**An individual who holds a temporary/preliminary license (e.g., LPC-Associate, LMFT-Associate) CANNOT qualify to be a Site Supervisor.** This is because clinicians who hold temporary licenses receive supervision themselves, and they do not yet have the experience necessary to provide supervision to others.

A full license to practice independently is required for Site Supervisors. A qualifying license may be any of the following (or the equivalent in the student’s state of residence):

- LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor)
- LMFT (Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist)
- LMSW (Licensed Master Social Worker)
· LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
· Licensed Psychologist

Psychiatrists are medical doctors, not counselors. Therefore, **psychiatrists do not qualify as Site Supervisors for counselor trainees.**

A Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC) cannot qualify as a Site Supervisor UNLESS the LCDC also holds a Master-level counseling degree and a qualifying license to practice counseling (e.g., LPC). This is because a LCDC license does not require a Master’s degree, and Bachelor- and Associate-level clinicians cannot supervise graduate-level trainees.

**Does my Site Supervisor have to be a LPC-S?**

The student's Site Supervisor **DOES NOT** have to hold Supervisor status with their license, which is denoted with the letter “S” at the end of their license (e.g., LPC-S, LMFT-S, LCSW-S). For more information, see the section titled *Graduate Student Internship vs. Licensed Internship.*

**How often do I have to meet for site supervision?**

Students are **required to meet for 1 hour** of site supervision each week throughout the duration of the semester.

**What happens in site supervision sessions?**

In site supervision sessions, the student meets with her/his supervisor either individually or in a triad (i.e., Site Supervisor and two graduate student interns) to discuss client cases, institutional procedures and practices, and the like. No more than two graduate student interns can meet with the same Site Supervisor at the same time for site supervision. **Student interns and licensed Associates are not to participate in supervision together at their practice sites.**

**Can I meet with my Site Supervisor virtually for site supervision sessions?**

The student may meet with her/his Site Supervisor virtually for site supervision sessions.

**What happens if I miss a week of site supervision during a semester when I am enrolled in a field experience course?**

Failure to attend site supervision in a given week prohibits the student from counting direct hours for that week. If the student misses university supervision, also, then the student cannot count indirect hours for that week, either.
What happens if my Site Supervisor is unable to meet with me for site supervision in a given week?

If the student’s Site Supervisor is unable to meet with the student for site supervision in a given week, then the student needs to contact the University Supervisor immediately to discuss the student’s options for site supervision that week.

How should I resolve conflicts with my Site Supervisor?

If the student experiences a conflict with her/his Site Supervisor, then, first, the student should discuss the conflict directly with the Site Supervisor, being mindful to employ facilitative conflict resolution skills (e.g., active listening, patience, positivity, open communication). If direct discussion with the Site Supervisor does not result in a satisfactory outcome for the student, then the student can consult with the University Supervisor about how to proceed from there.

What should I do if my University Supervisor and my Site Supervisor offer me conflicting guidance?

First, the student needs to identify the nature of the conflicting information. Does it relate to ethics? Client care? Field experience requirements?

After identifying the nature of the conflicting information, the student needs to obtain more information. If the nature of the information pertains to ethics or client care, then the student should consult the ACA (2014) Code of Ethics. If the information pertains to field experience requirements, then the student should seek clarification of the requirements by consulting the CACREP (2009) Standards, the course syllabus, and the Field Experience Handbook.

Then, the student should discuss the information gleaned from research with the Supervisors. Open communication generally is the most effective strategy for achieving a consensus among stakeholders. Keeping with professional standards, the student should refrain from triangling Supervisors and from speaking derogatorily about Supervisors to others.

Will my University Supervisor and Site Supervisor communicate with each other during the semester?

Yes. The student’s University Supervisor will communicate with the student’s Site Supervisor periodically during each semester that the student is enrolled in Practicum or Internship. The Site Supervisor may contact the University Supervisor at any time throughout the semester when the student is working at her/his site.
Practicum (CNDV 5392)

How is the Practicum course different from the Internship courses?

Practicum is the first field experience course in the course rotation. Essentially, it is an introduction to real practice with actual clients in the field. Internships 1 & 2 (CNDV 5394 A&B) are much more intensive than Practicum and require a greater devotion of time in the field. For more information about Internships 1 & 2, see the section titled Internships 1 & 2 (CNDV 5394).

What does the Practicum course require?

Practicum requires that students document a minimum of 100 clock hours of counseling practice over a minimum academic term of 10 weeks.

- At least 40 practice hours must constitute direct hours of counseling services to actual clients.
- At least 60 practice hours must be indirect hours of counseling-related tasks that the student performs at the field experience site.

Additionally, students enrolled in the Practicum course must:

- Participate in 1 hour of individual or triadic supervision each week with their Site Supervisor throughout the duration of the Practicum semester;
- Participate in 1.5 hours (on average) of university supervision each week with their University Supervisor/Professor throughout the duration of the Practicum semester;
- Arrange for audio/video recordings of client sessions for use in supervision sessions;
- Complete and submit all course assignments to the University Supervisor/Professor by the appropriate deadlines listed in the syllabus; and
- Sit for the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) during the semester of enrollment in Practicum. For more information about the CPCE, see the section titled CPCE Exam.

During the Practicum semester, the student's Site Supervisor will evaluate the student's counseling performance via Mid-Term and Final Evaluations, which are submitted to the University Supervisor for review.
What do the Mid-Term and Final Evaluations that the Site Supervisor completes for me during Practicum look like?

The Counselor Competency Scale (CCS) constitutes the Mid-term and Final Evaluations. The CCS includes three (3) sections. Section 1 includes 11 items that address the student’s primary counseling skills. Section 2 includes 10 items that assess the student’s professional dispositions, and Section 3 includes 10 items that target the student’s professional behaviors. Both the student and the Site Supervisor must sign and date each evaluation. The student must submit the completed evaluations to the University Supervisor/Professor.

What if my field experience site doesn’t allow me to audio- or video-record client sessions?

Sometimes field experience sites do not allow client sessions to be recorded. If the student's site does not allow video-/audio-recordings of client sessions, then the student may record a mock session with her/his Site Supervisor, who must attempt to role-play an actual client on the student's caseload. If the student’s Site Supervisor does not agree to a recorded mock session, then the student should consult with the University Supervisor to discuss options for meeting the requirements for assignments that necessitate client recordings.

How much information about clients at my field experience site will I have to share with my University Supervisor and classmates?

Students do discuss their work with clients at their field experience sites in university supervision sessions with the University Supervisor and peers. When discussing and/or presenting information about clients to the classroom community, students use pseudonyms in place of their clients’ real names to protect their clients’ identities. Students also withhold other identifying information about their clients (e.g., work location, city of residence) that might reveal their clients’ identities.

If I accrue more than 100 practice hours for Practicum, can I roll over the extra hours to Internship 1?

No, if the student earns hours in excess of 100 during the Practicum semester, then she/he cannot carry the extra hours forward to Internship 1.

What happens if I do not achieve the minimum number of required hours by the end of the Practicum semester?

If the student does not achieve a minimum of 40 direct hours and 60 indirect hours by the end of the semester, then the student will fail Practicum.
Internships 1 & 2 (CNDV 5394)

How is Internship 1 different from Internship 2?
Internship 2 is an extension of Internship 1. Together, the two courses comprise the total Internship experience.

What does Internship 1 require?
Internship 1 students must work at their field experience sites and accrue a minimum of 300 clock hours of counseling practice over one semester.

- At least 120 of the 300 practice hours must constitute direct hours of counseling services to actual clients during the Internship 1 semester.
- At least 180 of the 300 practice hours must be indirect hours of counseling-related tasks that the student performs at the field experience site during the Internship 1 semester.

Additionally, students enrolled in the Internship 1 course must:

- Participate in 1 hour of individual or triadic supervision each week with their Site Supervisor throughout the duration of the Internship semester;
- Participate in 1.5 hours (on average) of university supervision each week with their University Supervisor/Professor throughout the duration of the Internship semester;
- Arrange for audio/video recordings of client sessions for use in supervision sessions;
- Complete and submit all course assignments to the University Supervisor/Professor by the appropriate deadlines listed in the syllabus; and
- Sit for the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) a second time during the Internship 1 semester. (This applies only if the student did not achieve a passing score for their first attempt during the Practicum semester. If the student achieved a passing score for their first attempt, then they do NOT need to sit for the CPCE again during Internship 1.) For more information about the CPCE, see the section titled CPCE Exam.

During the Internship 1 semester, the student's Site Supervisor will evaluate the student's counseling performance via Mid-Term and Final Evaluations.

What happens if I don't earn at least 300 hours for Internship 1?
Students who fall short of 300 practice hours in Internship 1 can enroll in Internship 2 the following semester IF they meet all other course requirements. However, during the Internship 2 semester, the student must make up the hours that they
were short for Internship 1. By the end of Internship 2, students must have documented a minimum of 600 total practice hours in order to complete Internship 2 successfully and to graduate. Of the 600 total hours, at least 240 must be direct hours of counseling services to clients, and at least 360 must be indirect hours of counseling-related tasks that are performed at the field experience site(s).

**Example:** Cindy accrues a total of 281 hours of counseling practice during her Internship 1 semester, which is 11 hours short of the 300 hours that are required. Of the 281 hours that she accumulated, 103 were direct hours and 178 were indirect hours. For Internship 2, Cindy must accrue a total of at least 319 hours to satisfy the requirements for her total Internship experience. At minimum, she must accrue 137 direct hours (i.e., $103 + 137 = 240$, the required minimum for direct hours over the total Internship experience) and 182 indirect hours (i.e., $178 + 182 = 360$, the required minimum for indirect hours over the total Internship experience).

**If I earn more than 300 hours for Internship 1, will the extra hours count toward my Internship 2 hours?**

Yes, students may apply up to 100 extra hours accrued for Internship 1 to the hours that are required for Internship 2. If a student accrued more than 100 extra hours for Internship 1, then the student should roll over all extra direct hours to Internship 2 before rolling over indirect hours. This is because direct hours tend to be more difficult for students to accumulate.

**Example:** Consuela accrues a total of 407 hours of counseling practice during her Internship 1 semester. Of the 107 extra hours that she accumulated, 42 were direct hours and 65 were indirect hours. When Consuela begins Internship 2, she carries over the 42 extra direct hours, as well as 58 extra indirect hours, from Internship 1 (i.e., $42 + 58 = 100$). She is unable to roll over the 7 additional indirect hours from Internship 1, because they are in excess of the 100 roll-over hours that are allowed. Consuela begins Internship 2 with 100 hours on her time log, and she must accrue at least 200 more hours to satisfy the requirements for her total Internship experience.

**Example:** Jamal accrues a total of 319 hours of counseling practice during his Internship 1 semester. Of the 19 extra hours that he accumulated, 2 were direct hours and 17 were indirect hours. When Jamal begins Internship 2, he carries over all 19 extra hours from Internship 1. Jamal begins Internship 2 with 19 hours on his time log, and he must accrue at least 281 more hours to satisfy the requirements for his total Internship experience.

**What does Internship 2 require?**

Just as they were required to do for Internship 1, Internship 2 students must work at their field experience sites and accrue a minimum of 300 clock hours of counseling practice over one semester that is no less than 10 weeks in length.
At least 120 of the 300 practice hours must constitute direct hours of counseling services to actual clients during the Internship 2 semester.

At least 180 of the 300 practice hours must be indirect hours of counseling-related tasks that the student performs at the field experience site during the Internship 2 semester.

Additionally, students enrolled in the Internship 2 course must:

- Participate in 1 hour of individual or triadic supervision each week with their Site Supervisor throughout the duration of the Internship semester;
- Participate in 1.5 hours (on average) of university supervision each week with their University Supervisor/Professor throughout the duration of the Internship semester;
- Arrange for audio/video recordings of client sessions for use in supervision sessions; and
- Complete and submit all course assignments to the University Supervisor/Professor by the appropriate deadlines listed in the syllabus.

During the Internship 2 semester, the student’s Site Supervisor will evaluate the student’s counseling performance via Mid-Term and Final Evaluations, which are submitted to the University Supervisor for review.

**What do the Mid-Term and Final Evaluations that the Site Supervisor completes for me during Internships 1 & 2 look like?**

The Counselor Competency Scale (CCS) constitutes the Mid-term and Final Evaluations for Internships 1 & 2. For more information, refer to the same question in the section titled *Practicum*.

**What happens if I don’t earn 600 hours by the end of Internship 2?**

If the student does not accrue at least 600 practice hours, OR if the student does not accrue the minimum required hours for direct and indirect services to clients (i.e., 240 total direct hours and 360 total indirect hours) by the end of Internship 2, then the student will fail Internship and will be prohibited from graduating.

**Can I take Internships 1 and 2 at the same time?**

No, students may not enroll in Internships 1 and 2 during the same semester. The courses must be taken sequentially following completion of Practicum.
The only courses I have left to take are Internships 1 & 2. I need to take 6 credit hours during each semester of Internship in order to get financial aid, but I can’t take both Internship courses at the same time. What should I do?

Unfortunately, the only option for students in this situation is to pay for each Internship course out of pocket. Students are strongly encouraged to use the course rotation/carousel schedule well in advance of enrollment in Internship to plan ahead for coursework and tuition requirements.

Can Internship students conduct telehealth services with clients?

Students may conduct telehealth services for clients. However, if the student will be providing telehealth services, both the student and her/his/zir Site Supervisor will be required to complete training modules before the student will be allowed to conduct telehealth sessions with clients.
Direct v. Indirect Hours

What kinds of activities count as direct hours?

Direct hours are those in which the counselor trainee provides direct counseling services to clients, which are services that are **conducted with the client present**. Activities that count for direct hours include, but are not limited to:

- Counseling or co-counseling a client in an individual session;
- Counseling or co-counseling a couple or family in session;
- Leading or co-leading a group counseling session;
- Completing a psychosocial assessment with a client;
- Completing a risk assessment with a client;
- Meeting with a client’s family member(s) to discuss the client’s treatment (e.g., meeting with the parent of a minor client); and
- Reviewing a treatment plan with a client, among others.

What kinds of activities count as indirect hours?

Indirect hours are those in which the counselor trainee performs counseling-related tasks that support clients’ treatment at the field experience site, but that are **conducted without the client present**. Activities that count for indirect hours include, but are not limited to:

- Completing a treatment/progress/case note after a counseling session with a client;
- Constructing a client’s treatment plan in the absence of the client;
- Attending a treatment team meeting;
- Participating in counselor training events;
- Participating in site supervision;
- Participating in university supervision; and
- Reading and researching on topics that are related to a client’s treatment, among others.

If ever in doubt about whether an activity constitutes direct or indirect time, then the student should consult with the University Supervisor.

Ultimately, the Site Supervisor is responsible for approving all of the student’s activities at the site and for ensuring that the student accurately documents direct and indirect hours on the student’s time log.
CPCE Exam

What is the CPCE?
The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) is a formal assessment that is “designed to measure a student’s level of mastery of the requisite knowledge and skills” (Pearson VUE, 2018, para. 1) required for professional counselors. Students in the CMHC program at Lamar University take the CPCE for their Master-level comprehensive exam, or “comps”.

When will I take the CPCE?
Students in the CMHC program take the CPCE during the semester that they are enrolled in Practicum. Students who do not achieve a passing score on their first attempt during Practicum must retake the CPCE during their semester of enrollment in Internship 1.

How do I register for the CPCE?
Practicum instructors will instruct students how to register for the CPCE. Students will not receive registration instructions until after the beginning of the Practicum semester.

Do I have to pay for the CPCE?
Yes, students must incur the cost for each testing attempt.

How much does the CPCE cost?
The cost for each testing attempt is $150.

I have a documented disability. Can I receive testing accommodations for the CPCE?
Yes. If you have a documented disability, then, first, you must provide appropriate documentation of it to Lamar’s Disability Resource Center (DRC). Then, the DRC will provide you with a letter that you must submit to this email address: cpce@cce-global.org. Do NOT register with Pearson VUE or pay for your exam until you receive an email from Pearson VUE that verifies your authorization to test.

Students can reach Lamar’s DRC via phone at 409-880-8347 or via email at DRC@lamar.edu.
Where do I take the CPCE?
The student may take the CPCE at a Pearson VUE facility in her/his local area (i.e., CBT administration) or take it online from the comfort of home (i.e., OnVue administration).

How many questions are on the CPCE, and what is the format?
The CPCE contains 160 multiple-choice questions, with 20 questions addressing each of the eight core content areas.

What are the 8 core content areas?
The content areas are:
- Assessment and testing
- Human growth and development
- Counseling and helping relationships
- Orientation and ethical practice
- Career development
- Group counseling and group work
- Research and program evaluation
- Social and cultural diversity

How much time will I be allowed to complete the CPCE on the day that I take it?
Test takers have 4 hours to complete the CPCE.

How can I study for the CPCE?
Students can review their course textbooks to study for the CPCE. In addition to course textbooks, there are multiple study guides that are available for purchase. A common guide that students use is The Encyclopedia of Counseling by Howard Rosenthal. However, students can choose the study materials of their preference to prepare for the exam.

What is a passing score for the CPCE?
Students must obtain a score of 70 or higher to pass the CPCE. (The exam includes 160 questions. Students earn one point for each item answered correctly. Thus, a passing score requires students to answer 70/160 questions correctly, which is less than 50%).
What happens if I don’t pass the CPCE?
Students who do not pass the CPCE on their first try will retake it during the semester that they are enrolled in Internship 1. Students who do not achieve a passing score on the second attempt will not have to retake the exam; nor will they be prohibited from graduating. However, students who fail the exam twice are strongly encouraged to continue studying in their lowest-scoring content areas to prepare for their post-graduation licensure exams.

Where can I get more information about the CPCE?
Students can obtain more information about the CPCE at the Center for Credentialing and Education’s website: https://www.cce-global.org/assessmentsandexaminations/cpce
Licensure Exams

What is the NCE?
“The National Counselor Examination (NCE) is a 200-question, multiple-choice, non-sectioned examination representing each of the...eight...[core] content areas, with question content also emerging from the five work behaviors determined by NBCC’s national job analysis” (NBCC, 2018a, p. 6). Many states require that candidates for state licensure take and pass the NCE prior to obtaining a license to practice counseling.

Do I have to take the NCE?
To know if you have to take the NCE for licensure in your state, check with your State Board. Your state might specifically require candidates for state licensure to take the National Counselor Examination (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE). Some states require both examinations, and some states allow you to choose which exam you will take. Still other states might require a state exam in addition to (or in lieu of) the national exam.

How is the NCMHCE different from the NCE?
The biggest difference between the NCE and the NCMHCE is the format of the questions. Whereas the NCE is a multiple-choice, 200-item assessment that covers the 8 core content areas, the NCMHCE comprises 10 clinical mental health counseling cases (each broken into 5-10 sections) that are simulated to assess the test-taker’s “problem-solving abilities [sic.] including conducting empirically supported and professionally indicated assessments and formation of symptom-based DSM diagnoses and clinically aligned treatment plans” (NBCC, 2018b, p. 6).

When am I eligible to take the NCE/NCMHCE?
Through December 31, 2024, Lamar students may take the NCE/NCMHCE during their final semester of coursework (i.e., the Internship 2 semester) or following graduation. The Field Experience Coordinator will notify students who are eligible to take the exams prior to graduation during their semester of enrollment in Practicum. See the table at the top of the next page for information about the differences between these two options.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking the NCE or NCMHCE During Graduate School</th>
<th>Taking the NCE or NCMHCE After Graduate School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost: $335 (Covers cost of the exam and the application for the NCC credential)</td>
<td>Cost: $275 (Covers cost of the exam only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCE is offered twice every year: In April and October.</td>
<td>NCE is offered each month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCE is administered as a computer-based exam.</td>
<td>NCE is administered as a computer-based exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scores take up to eight weeks to process after you graduate.</td>
<td>Scores are available right after you take the NCE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are applying to become a NCC and take the National Counselor Exam.</td>
<td>You are applying with the LPC Board to take the National Counselor Exam for licensure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NCC is a credential (certification), not a clinical license. Being a NCC offers several benefits such as having a professional credential and access to professional resources, products, and discounts.</td>
<td>You can choose if you want to pursue becoming a NCC or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBCC sends your official NCE scores to you after you verify graduation through an official transcript.</td>
<td>You can register for the NCE as soon as you graduate and then apply for your license after you pass the exam.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When are the NCE and NCMHCE offered each year?**
Refer to the chart above.

**How do I register for the NCE and/or NCMHCE?**

The Field Experience Coordinator will notify students who are eligible to take the exams prior to graduation during their semester of enrollment in Practicum.

Go to this web address to register for the NCE: [https://www.nbcc.org/exams/nce](https://www.nbcc.org/exams/nce)

Go to this web address to register for NCMHCE: [https://www.nbcc.org/exams/ncmhce](https://www.nbcc.org/exams/ncmhce)

**How much do the NCE and NCMHCE cost?**

Refer to the chart on p. 38.

**What is a passing score on the NCE?**

“Passing scores may vary slightly for each version of the examination” (NBCC, 2018a, p. 12). For more information about scoring, see p. 12 of the *Candidate Handbook for National Certification with the National Counselor Examination (NCE) (2016-1017)*: [https://www.nbcc.org/assets/exam/handbooks/nce.pdf](https://www.nbcc.org/assets/exam/handbooks/nce.pdf)

**What is a passing score on the NCMHCE?**

“The exact passing score may vary from one form of the examination to another depending on the scored simulations included” (NBCC, 2018b, p. 11). For more information about scoring, see p. 11 of the *Candidate Handbook for State Credentialing for the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam (NCMHCE)*: [https://www.nbcc.org/Assets/StateLicensure/NCMHCE.pdf](https://www.nbcc.org/Assets/StateLicensure/NCMHCE.pdf)

**Do I have to send my NCE/NCMHCE score report to Lamar University?**

No. The licensing exams are taken for post-graduation state licensure, not for Lamar University course work. Students must submit their score reports to their State Boards when they apply for state licensure.

**What happens if I fail the NCE or NCMHCE?**

In Texas, students are allowed 3 attempts to pass the exam(s). Individuals who do not pass after the third attempt must wait 2 years or take 9 graduate hours of counseling courses before retesting.

Students in other states should consult their State Board Rules for information about testing retakes.

**Where can I get more information about the NCE and NCMHCE?**


Visit the National Board for Counselor Certification (NBCC) website: https://www.nbcc.org/licensure.

**Graduate Student Internship vs. Licensed Supervision Experience**

**How are Practicum and Internship different from a licensed supervision experience?**

Practicum and Internship courses (a.k.a., graduate student internship) are part of a counselor trainee’s training program. During the graduate student internship, the student is not a licensed counselor and has not yet completed a Master degree in counseling. The graduate student intern provides counseling services to actual clients at a field experience site under the supervision of both a University Supervisor and a Site Supervisor. Graduate student interns must accrue practice hours at their field experience sites to satisfy course and graduation requirements. Moreover, graduate student interns typically do not receive compensation for the work that they do at their field experience sites.

The licensed supervision experience commences after graduation from a Master-level program in counseling. After graduating, the student takes and passes the required exam(s) for licensure in her/his state. Then, the student submits an application to the State Board for a temporary/preliminary counseling license (e.g., LPC Associate license). Upon receipt of the temporary/preliminary license, the new counseling professional begins a supervision period that requires the new counselor to participate in supervision sessions with a State Board-approved Supervisor (e.g., LPC-S) for the duration of the internship period. The new counseling professional must complete and log a required number of supervised practice hours (which varies by state) before she/he can apply for a full license with the State Board. In all respects, the new counseling professional is a licensed counseling professional during the licensed supervision experience. However, the licensed Associate in Texas is prohibited from practicing independently (e.g., seeing clients while not undergoing supervision) during the licensed supervision period. (Exceptions to the independent practice rule may vary by state.) Licensed Associates can be (and usually are) paid employees at facilities that provide counseling services.

**Can extra practice hours that were earned for Practicum and/or Internship count toward the required practice hours for the licensed supervision experience?**

Generally, no, any excess practice hours that the student accrued for the graduate student internship cannot be rolled into the hours that are required for the licensed
supervision experience. Students are encouraged to review their State Board’s rules that relate to this question.
Does my supervisor for the licensed supervision experience have to be an LPC-S?

For the licensed supervision experience, the licensed Associate must participate in supervision sessions with a State Board-approved supervisor who holds the same license as the Associate/Intern.

**Example:** A LPC Associate must participate in supervision with a LPC Supervisor. A LPC Associate cannot participate in supervision with a LMFT Supervisor.

Will I have to pay for the services of my LPC-S?

Licensed Associates typically do have to pay for supervision. Licensed supervisors set their own rates for supervision sessions.

Sometimes, a licensed Associate’s employment compensation will include the services of a licensed supervisor on staff at no cost to the intern. Licensed Associates are encouraged to consider the benefits and risks of accepting supervision from a co-worker or supervisor prior to contracting for supervision services.

How do I find a State Board-approved supervisor?

Most State Boards have rosters of their licensed counseling professionals on their websites.

Do my LPC Supervisor and I have to meet in person for supervision sessions?

Texas law stipulates that 100% of LPC supervision sessions may be conducted virtually (e.g., video conference). Residents of other states are encouraged to consult their state laws for regulations pertinent to counseling practices in their state.

Where can I get more information about the requirements for the licensed supervision experience in my state?

To obtain more information about your state’s requirements for the licensed supervision experience, visit your State Board’s website.

To locate your State Board’s website, go to this website and search for your state in the directory: [https://nbcc.org/search/stateboarddirectory](https://nbcc.org/search/stateboarddirectory)
Landing Your First Professional Counseling Position

How do I find a counseling job after I graduate?

If you performed well at your field experience site during Practicum and Internship, then, leading up to or following graduation, consider inquiring with your field experience site about employment opportunities with the organization.

If you are a member of ACA or your state’s counseling association (e.g., Texas Counseling Association), then you have access to the organizations’ career resources and job boards on their websites. Click this link to visit ACA’s Career Central page, where their job board is located: https://www.counseling.org/careers/aca-career-central

The University of Houston’s Social Work Job Board is an excellent resource for counselors both in Texas and out of state. There, employers from across the U.S. post employment opportunities for LPC Associates and other types of mental health professionals. Click this link to visit the UofH Social Work Job Board: https://uh.edu/socialwork/alumni/career-services/job-board/university-faculty/

How do I know which jobs I’m eligible to apply for?

After you obtain a LPC Associate license (or the equivalent in your state), then, when perusing job postings:

Look for those that **DO include these terms/phrases** in their lists of job qualifications, as those are positions that employers are willing to fill with new counselors in the field who hold preliminary licenses (e.g., LPC Associate license):

- “LPC-A” or “LPC-Associate”
- “LPC-I” or “LPC-Intern” (outdated terms, but still used)
- “Master’s degree and ability to obtain licensure”
- “Licensed and under supervision”
- “Master’s level licensure”
- “Temporary license” or “Temporary licensure”

If you see any of the terms/phrases below in a list of job qualifications, then chances are you probably don’t qualify for the position (yet!):

- “Full license” or “Fully licensed”
- “Ability to practice independently”
- “Independent license”
- “Eligible for full license”
What does “ability to practice independently” and “independent license” mean?

A professional counselor who can practice independently is one who is no longer required to participate in supervision with a State Board-approved supervisor, and who has completed the hours of supervised practice that are required for new counselors who hold an Associate license. After an LPC Associate completes the hours of supervised practice that the State Board requires, the LPC can submit an application for a “full license” to the State Board. When the State Board grants a full license to the licensee, the counselor’s licensing credential changes from “LPC Associate” to “LPC” (or the equivalent in your state).

Can I open and run my own private practice while I’m an LPC Associate?

In February of 2022, Texas law changed to allow LPC Associates in Texas to own and operate their own private practices. LPC Associates who work for themselves in private practice are able to bill their own clients for services and to enjoy all rights of a business owner, but because they are required to practice under the supervision of a State Board-approved LPC-S, they are not considered independent practitioners and are not “able to practice independently”. In short, the hours of supervised practice that the State Board requires are not waived for LPC Associates who own and operate their own private practices.

Moreover, LPC Associates in private practice might find it difficult to secure an LPC Supervisor who is willing to provide supervision for them. If they do find a supervisor, then their fees for supervision services might be significantly higher due to added liability risks that the LPC Supervisor assumes when supervising a new clinician who’s self-employed.

Students who reside outside of Texas should consult their state laws to determine if private practice is a viable option for them during their period of provisional licensure.

To review your State Board’s Rules and the laws that govern counseling practice in your state, go to this website and search for your state in the directory: https://nbcc.org/search/stateboarddirectory
References


