

Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and  
Marriage and Family Therapists  
237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, GA 31217-3858  
Conf. Call Meeting Agenda: April 4 2025 @ 10:00 A.M.

**EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION - COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS**

**APC/LPC:**

- 4 Interviews- 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

**OPEN SESSION**

<https://gasos.webex.com/gasos/j.php?MTID=mff0a5a5ad8b2868a510337c711cd9f07>

**Phone:** 1-650-479-3208    **Access code:** 25334697729

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|--|-------|------------|
| 1. Call Meeting to Order                             | Chair | 10:00 a.m. |
| • Agenda - Addition of late agenda items             |       |            |
| 2. Meeting Minutes                                   | Board |            |
| • March 07, 2025                                     |       |            |
| 3. Correspondences                                   | Board |            |
| 4. Petitions for Waiver/Variance                     | Board |            |
| 5. Application Ratify List                           | Board |            |
| 6. Public Rule Hearing                               | Board | 10:30 a.m. |
| • 135-5-.01 Associate Professional Counselors        |       |            |
| • 135-5.02 Professional Counselors                   |       |            |
| • 135-5-.05 Associate Marriage and Family Therapists |       |            |
| • 135-5-.06 Marriage and Family Therapists           |       |            |

**EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION**

- |                                    |                |  |
|------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| 7. Applications                    | P.S.C.'s       |  |
| 8. Complaints/Compliance Committee | P.P.C.         |  |
| 9. Attorney General's Report       | S. Guider, AAG |  |
| 10. Exec. Session Minutes          | Board          |  |
| • March 06, 2025                   |                |  |
| • March 07, 2025                   |                |  |

**OPEN SESSION**

- |                     |       |  |
|---------------------|-------|--|
| 11. Board Votes     | Board |  |
| 12. Adjourn Meeting | Board |  |

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE  
THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS,  
SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS  
BOARD RULE CHAPTER 135-5 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE, BOARD  
RULE 135-5-.01 ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS AND BOARD RULE  
135-5-.02 PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS  
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**Rule 135-5-.01 Associate Professional Counselors  
Rule 135-5-.02 Professional Counselors**

**TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:**

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the authority set forth below, the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists (hereinafter “Board”) proposes amendments to Rule 135-5-.01 Associate Professional Counselors and Rule 135-5-.02 Professional Counselors (herein after “proposed rules”).

This notice, an exact copy of the proposed rules, and a synopsis of the proposed rules are being sent to all persons who have requested, in writing, to be included on a notification list. This notice, an exact copy of the proposed rules, and a synopsis of the proposed rules may also be reviewed during normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except official State holidays, at the Office of the Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217. The documents will also be available for review on the Board’s website at <https://sos.ga.gov/board-professional-counselors-social-workers-and-marriage-family-therapists>. Copies may also be requested by contacting the Board office at (404) 424-9966.

The public will have an opportunity to comment upon and provide input into the proposed rules at a public hearing to be held **Friday, April 04, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.** The hearing will be held via teleconference. Please see Board’s website for information on how to join the meeting via teleconference.

Interested parties affected by the rule may submit written comments to the Board no later than close of business on **Friday, March 28, 2025**. Written comments must be legible, signed, contain contact information from the maker (address, telephone number, email address), and addressed to Todd Zandrowicz, Division Director, Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217. Written comments may also be submitted via email to [ExamBoards-Healthcare@sos.ga.gov](mailto:ExamBoards-Healthcare@sos.ga.gov).

During the public hearing, anyone may present data, make a statement, comment, or offer a viewpoint or argument, whether orally or in writing. Lengthy statements or statements of a considerable technical or economic nature, as well as previously recorded messages, must be submitted for the official record. Oral statements will be limited to five (5) minutes per person.

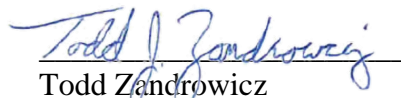
The Board voted to post this Notice of Intent at its meeting on **November 08, 2024**. The Board also voted that the formulation and adoption of these proposed rules does not impose an excessive regulatory cost on any licensee, and any cost to comply with the proposed rules cannot be reduced by a less expensive alternative that fully accomplishes the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-7, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10 and 43-10A-11. Additionally, the Board voted that it was neither legal nor feasible in meeting the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-7, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10 and 43-10A-11 to adopt or implement differing actions for businesses as listed in O.C.G.A. § 50-13-4(a)(3)(A), (B), (C) and (D). The formulation and adoption of these proposed rules will impact every licensee in the same manner and each licensee is independently licensed in the field of professional counseling.

According to the Department of Law of the State of Georgia, the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists has the authority to adopt proposed Rules 135-5-.01 and 135-5-.02 pursuant to authority contained in O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-7, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10 and 43-10A-11.

For further information, contact the Board office at (404) 424-9966.

This notice is given in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 50-13-4.

This the 3rd day of March, 2025.



Todd Zandrowicz  
Division Director  
Professional Licensing Boards Division

Posted: March 3, 2025

**SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES OF TO THE  
THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS,  
SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS  
BOARD RULE CHAPTER 135-5 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE,  
RULE 135-5-.01 ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the proposed changes is to amend the rule to reflect statutory updates.

**Rule 135-5-.01 Associate Professional Counselors**

Pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 43-10A-11, the requirements for licensure and the restrictions on practice for Associate Professional Counselors are as follows:

**(a) Definitions.**

1. **"The Practice of Professional Counseling"** means practice ~~in that specialty~~ which utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate, diagnose and treat emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective. ~~The practice~~ Professional Counseling is further defined in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-3(~~4014~~).
2. **"Direction"** means the ongoing administrative ~~overseeing~~ oversight by an employer or superior of a ~~Professional Counselor's practitioner's~~ work in the practice of professional counseling, ~~as defined by 135-5-.01 (a)(1) by a director. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of the services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations, which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.~~
3. **"Director"** means the ~~person who provides direction and who is either the employer of the person practitioner, who receives direction or is the superior in the administrative chain of command, who to the person who receives direction.~~ provides non-clinical administrative oversight for all services rendered by the practitioner to include, but not be limited to, client assignment and fees. The director shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.
  - (i) All direction entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:

(I) Directors shall not provide direction to family members, nor shall they provide direction to any practitioner with whom they have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the director is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.

(II) Family Member means members of a practitioner's immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.

4. **"Supervision"** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of a Professional Counselor's interaction with their client(s). of the practitioner's interaction with clients as well as the development of the practitioner's professional identity, ethics, and clinical skills. The purpose of supervision is to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision is separate from any managerial role of client care, and Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes, and direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision does not require the supervisor to be present at the work site with the supervisee practitioner. Supervision and may be provided pro bono or for a fee. The supervision may be provided either face to face or by technology assisted media, in compliance with the telemental health rules, such as but not limited to videoconference or telephone. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

(i) Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there

are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

- (ii) **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees. For two supervisees, supervision shall be for no less than one clock hour (60 minutes). For one supervisee, supervision shall be no less than 30 minutes.
- (iii) **Group Supervision** means at least one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six individual supervisees for no less than one and a half (1.5) clock hours and all supervisees in attendance must be listed in the contemporaneous record.

5. ~~"Supervisor" means a licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist who complies with the ethical standards of practice of their profession with particular attention being paid to prohibited dual relationships. In addition,~~
- ~~(i) a supervisor who holds a master's degree must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience; and~~
  - ~~(ii) a supervisor who holds a specialist degree must have two (2) years of post-licensure experience; and~~
  - ~~(iii) a supervisor who holds a doctoral degree must have one (1) year of post-licensure experience; and~~
  - ~~(iv) for supervision entered into after September 30, 2018 a supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential or a Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA) Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor credential.~~
  - ~~(v) however, the Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein.~~
  - ~~(vi) in a supervised practicum or internship which is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor OR, in the education~~

~~of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.~~

5. "Supervisor" for post-master's work experience under supervision means a licensed Professional Counselor who meets the specific requirements as outlined below. The required practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content may be supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist or Psychiatrist. In the education of rehabilitation counselors, an approved supervisor may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.
- (i) A supervisor must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience.
  - (ii) A supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold, in addition to meeting (i) above, either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential (ACS) or Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA), Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor Credential (CPCS). MFTs, CSWs, and CRCs may not supervise directed work experience.
  - (iii) The Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor who is licensed and in good standing and whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein. Approval must be granted prior to the supervision beginning and must be approved through the Petition for Waiver of a Board rule (Reference OCGA 50-13-9.1).
  - (iv) All supervision entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:
    - (I) Supervisors shall not provide supervision to family members, nor shall they provide supervision to any practitioner with whom they have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the supervisor is employed or

where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.

(II) Family Member means members of a practitioner’s immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.

6. **"Directed Work Experience"** means time spent under direction engaging in the practice of Professional Counseling ~~as defined in 135-5-.01(a)(1).~~

~~(i) all work sites must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling as defined in Rule 135-5-.01(a)(1). Valid work sites should have measurable detailed documentation for every candidate, to include a signed contractual agreement that outlines the job description, office hours, performance review procedures and dismissal policies.~~

~~(ii) non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine acceptability in defining the working relationship for the purposes of obtainment of the required post-master's directed work experience only if they meet these requirements. The agreement between the work site and the candidate should be akin to employment.~~

~~(iii) applicants may, at the discretion of the Board, be required to submit documentation substantiating (a) the nature of the working relationship with the directed experience site, (b) the formal structure of the organization, and (c) whether any licensed or associate licensed individuals work there to ensure compliance and understanding of these requirements.~~

(i) “Direct work experience” means contact with one or more clients and includes diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, and may also include psychoeducation for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. **For all direction entered into after July 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:**

(I) A minimum of 40% percent of the required annual hours shall be direct clinical work experience.

- (II) Psychoeducation shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
- (III) Assessment and referral activities shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
- (IV) The practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members, shall not have any ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the professional counseling services will be provided by the practitioner.
- (ii) "Indirect Work Experience" means training for, and the performance of, the practice of professional counseling functions including, but not limited to, case consultation, case staffing, treatment teams, direction, or continuing education courses.
- (iii) The practitioner receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall not engage in the independent practice of professional counseling. All clients must be assigned to the practitioner by the Director of the supervisee. Practitioners shall not directly recruit clients.
- (iv) The practitioner while receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule, shall not be directly compensated by clients.
- (v) The directed work experience for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors shall be in a rehabilitation setting defined as a practice, or in a rehabilitation center, and is restricted to counseling those individuals who are seeking re-training for the work force.
- (vi) Directed work experience for School Counselors may only be obtained while school is in session and students are present for the hours to be accepted toward those required for licensure.
- (vii) All work sites must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling.

  - (I) Work sites acceptable to the Board may include, but are not limited to, education, rehabilitation, career development, mental health, or community organizations.

- (II) Practice without direction is not considered a work setting acceptable to the Board.
- (III) Valid work sites shall employ and/or provide access to at least one licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist.
- (IV) Non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine acceptability only if they meet the above requirements, specific to the post-master's directed work experience. The agreement between the work site and practitioner should be akin to employment.

7. **"Associate Professional Counselors Post-Masters Contract Affidavit Directed Experience Under Supervision Contract"** is a document, ~~obtained from~~ available on the Board website, that defines the working relationship for the purposes of obtaining the required post-masters directed work experience under supervision. Directed work experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a) (6) above; ~~the definition of "Directed Experience"~~. to be approved by the Board.
8. **"Program Primarily in Clinical Counseling or Counseling Psychology in Content" and "Program in Applied Psychology"** means a course of study at ~~an~~ master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited program that consists of a master's, degree which at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours with an approved supervised internship or practicum, consisting of at least 600 hours, that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content. which includes The graduate level courses, as specified in rule 135-5-.01(b)1(iii) below, shall also be required either as part of the degree program or as additional course work completed prior to, during or after the degree program. ~~the following graduate level courses. After September 30, 2018 the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The~~

~~approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.~~

~~(i) A practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content shall include at least 40% client contact and documentation.~~

~~(i) **Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory**, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.~~

~~(ii) **A Counseling or Applied Psychology Practicum or Internship** as part of the graduate degree program.~~

~~(iii) **Courses in six (6) of the following nine (9) content areas, after September 30, 2018, all 9 content areas of the following course work are required:**~~

~~(I) **Human Growth and Development**, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infantile to geriatric stages.~~

~~(II) **Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training**, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles, societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles; and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.~~

~~(III) **Counseling Techniques or Skills**, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the facilitation of client change; **OR Advanced Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory**, which includes the in-depth~~

study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.

(IV) ~~Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other group approaches.~~

(V) ~~Lifestyle and Career Development, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure counseling, guidance and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.~~

(VI) ~~Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.~~

(VII) ~~Research Methods and Evaluation, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation, needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research; OR Research Statistics, which includes an understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer generated statistical measures.~~

(VIII) ~~Professional Orientation and Ethics, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles,~~

responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.

(IX) ~~Psychopathology, which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD).~~

(b) **Requirements for Licensure.**

1. **Education.** ~~Effective July 1, 2024, the applicant must have earned a master's degree or higher in a from a regionally accredited program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology primarily counseling in content or in a program of applied psychology that consists of at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours which degree includes a supervised practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content and consists of at least 600 hours. 300 hours which was part of the degree program, from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required. After September 30, 2018, the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is either primarily counseling in content or a program of applied psychology.~~

- (i) In a supervised practicum or internship which is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content, and is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor as defined above in 135-5-.01(a)(5), or in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.
- (ii) A person who has an active, unencumbered Associate Professional Counselor license issued by the Board shall be deemed to have met the educational requirements when applying for licensure as a professional counselor.
- (iii) Graduate level coursework in the following ten (10) content areas shall be required. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.
  - (I) **Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory**, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.
  - (II) **Human Growth and Development**, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infancy to geriatric stages.
  - (III) **Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training**, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles, societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles; and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.
  - (IV) **Counseling Techniques or Skills**, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the

facilitation of client change; Or **Advanced**

**Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory** which includes the in-depth study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.

(V) **Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy**, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other group approaches.

(VI) **Lifestyle and Career Development**, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure counseling, guidance, and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.

(VII) **Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals**, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/ assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.

(VIII) **Research Methods and Evaluation**, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation, needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research. **OR** Research Statistics, which includes an

understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer-generated statistical measures.

**(IX) Professional Orientation and Ethics**, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles, responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.

**(X) Psychopathology** which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Coursework shall encompass psychopathology from infancy to geriatric stages.

(iv) If the degree program did not include all the above required graduate courses, additional graduate level course work can be completed prior to, during, or after the degree program.

## **2. Degree Programs**

(i) The degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or be a program in a regionally accredited institution recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program.

(ii) Degrees received on or after **May 31, 2028**, must be from a program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

(iii) Applicants with degrees obtained from an educational degree program located outside the United States shall have their educational

credentials evaluated by an independent foreign credential evaluation service to determine eligibility for licensure.

**2.3. Registration of a contract, ~~for obtaining postmaster's directed experience under supervision.~~** The applicant shall register with the Board an acceptable ~~contract, the Directed Experience Under Supervision Contract, Associate Professional Counselor (APC) Post-Masters Contract Affidavit~~ for purposes of obtaining the ~~post-master's directed work~~ experience required for licensure as a ~~Professional Counselor.~~ with concurrent supervision by a qualified licensed professional counselor. ~~The applicant is responsible for notifying the Board of any changes in the contract, by submitting a new contract within fourteen (14) days of the change. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".~~

- (i) If the Director, Supervisor or work experience location change, the practitioner shall submit a new contract affidavit to the Board for consideration **within thirty (30) days** of the change, or the accrued interim work experience and supervision may not be accepted by the Board for licensure.
- (ii) A practitioner shall have no more than six (6) different supervisors throughout the duration of the directed work experience under supervision. Practitioners may petition the Board, in the form of a Rule Waiver/Variance, for consideration of extenuating circumstances related to this rule.
- (iii) APC's who are licensed by the Board shall submit all the Board's approval letters for any new contract affidavits with supervision and/or work experience changes submitted after the initial application contract affidavit approval with their applications for licensure as a professional counselor.
- (iv) **Directed Work Experience:**  
For all Directed Work Experience entered into after July 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:

- (I) A minimum of 40% percent of the required annual hours shall be direct clinical work experience.
- (II) Psychoeducation shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
- (III) Assessment and referral activities shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
- (IV) The practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members, shall not have any ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the professional counseling services will be provided by the practitioner.
- (v) Indirect Work Experience means training for, and the performance of, professional counseling functions including, but not limited to, case consultation, case staffing, treatment teams, direction, or continuing education courses.
- (vi) The practitioner receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall not engage in the independent practice of professional counseling. All clients must be assigned to the practitioner by the Director of the supervisee.
- (vii) The practitioner while receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall have all client payments reviewed by the director.
- (viii) The directed work experience for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors shall be in a rehabilitation setting defined as a practice, or in a rehabilitation center, and is restricted to counseling those individuals who are seeking re-training for the workforce.
- (ix) Directed work experience for School Counselors may be obtained only while school is in session and students are present for the hours to be accepted toward those required for licensure.
- (x) **Work Sites**
- (I) Valid work sites shall employ and/or provide access to at least one licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist.

- (II) Non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine acceptability only if they meet the above requirements, specific to the post-master's directed work experience. The agreement between the work site and practitioner should be akin to employment.
- (III) If the Director, Supervisor or work experience location change, a new contract affidavit **MUST** be submitted to the Board for consideration **within thirty (30) days** of the change, or the accrued work experience and supervision shall not be accepted by the Board for licensure.
- (IV) Practitioners may, at the discretion of the Board, be required to submit documentation substantiating:
  - I. The nature of the working relationship with the directed experience site.
  - II. The formal structure of the organization.
  - III. Whether any licensed or associate licensed individuals work on site to ensure compliance and understanding of these requirements.

(xi) **Supervision**

- (I) Supervision shall be under a licensed professional as defined above in 135-5-.01(a)(5).
- (II) It is the responsibility of the supervisee to assure the supervisor they choose and or contract with meets all eligibility requirements to provide supervision.
- (III) Clients recruited by the practitioner outside the agency must be approved by the supervisor prior to first session.
- (IV) Both supervisor and practitioner are required to maintain a contemporaneous record for each clinical supervision session and may be requested to submit this record to the Board upon request. At a minimum, this record shall contain the following:

- I. The date, duration, and type (individual or group) of each supervision session including the name of the individual(s) receiving clinical supervision, the name and signature of the approved clinical supervisor and the date signed.
  - II. A summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to include a description of topics discussed in each supervision session and case review activities.
  - III. Summary of all periodic supervisor evaluations and any remediation of the practitioner's professional development, performance, including a final supervisory evaluation.
  - IV. Upon request, copies of contemporaneous records of both supervisors and practitioners, as well as copies of the periodic and final supervisory evaluations, shall be submitted to the Board.
- (V) For supervision entered into after **July 1, 2025**, the Board shall accept the supervision hours only when:
- I. The hours are from a qualified supervisor as defined above in section 135-5-.01(a)(5).
  - II. For every month of directed work experience with direct client contact, the practitioner has obtained a minimum of three (3) concurrent hours of supervision. A minimum of 100 supervision hours must be obtained for licensure.
  - III. A minimum of four (4) hours annually are in individual supervision and involve the review of audio, video, or direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills.

**34. Examination.** To qualify for licensure as an associate professional counselor, ~~applicant~~ the practitioner must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board in rule 135-3-.03(2)(a)(2).

(c) **Restrictions on Practice.**

1. A person who holds ~~aan~~ an active license as an Associate Professional Counselor may only use the title “Associate Professional Counselor-” or “Licensed Associate Professional Counselor.”
2. A person who holds a an active license as an Associate Professional Counselor may engage in the practice of Professional Counseling, but only ~~under~~ with direction and concurrent supervision, and only for a period not to exceed five years [Ref: OCGA 43-10A-11(c)] while obtaining the ~~post-master's post-degree directed work~~ experience and with concurrent supervision required for licensure as a Professional Counselor. Directed work experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a) (6) above, ~~the definition of "Directed Work Experience".~~ to be accepted by the Board.
3. An APC must specify the associate level of practice is “under supervision” to clients, naming the supervisor and their credentials.

**Statutory Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-7, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10 and 43-10A-11.**

**SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES OF TO THE  
THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS,  
SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS  
BOARD RULE CHAPTER 135-5 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE,  
RULE 135-5-.02 PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the proposed changes is to amend the rule to reflect statutory updates.

**135-5-.02 Professional Counselors**

Pursuant to Official Code of Georgia Annotated 43-10A-11 an applicant for a license in Professional Counseling must meet the following requirements.

(a)

**Definitions.**

1. **"The Practice of Professional Counseling"** means practice ~~in that specialty~~ which utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate, diagnose and treat emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective. ~~The practice~~ Professional Counseling is further defined in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-3(~~10-14~~).
2. **"Direction"** means the ongoing administrative ~~overseeing~~ oversight by an employer or superior of a ~~Professional Counselor's practitioner's~~ work in the practice of professional counseling, ~~as defined by 135-5-.01 (a)(1) by a director. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of the services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations, which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.~~
3. **"Director"** means the ~~person who provides direction and who is either the employer of the person-practitioner, who receives direction or is the superior in the administrative chain of command, who to the person who receives direction.~~ provides non-clinical administrative oversight for all services rendered by the practitioner to include, but not be limited to, client assignment and fees. The director shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.

(i) All direction entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:

(I) Directors shall not provide direction to family members, nor shall they provide direction to any practitioner with whom they have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the director is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.

(II) Family Member means members of a practitioner's immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.

4. **"Supervision"** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, ~~by a supervisor of a Professional Counselor's interaction with their client(s).~~ of the practitioner's interaction with clients as well as the development of the practitioner's professional identity, ethics, and clinical skills. The purpose of supervision is to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision is separate from any managerial role of client care, and Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes, and direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision does not require the supervisor to be present at the work site with the supervisee practitioner. Supervision and may be provided pro bono or for a fee. The supervision may be provided either face to face or by technology assisted media, in compliance with the telemental health rules, such as but not limited to videoconference or telephone. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

(i) Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired,

or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

- (ii) **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees: for For two supervisees, supervision shall be no less than one clock hour (60 minutes). For one supervisee, supervision shall be no less than 30 minutes.
- (iii) **Group Supervision** means at least one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six individual supervisees for no less than one and a half (1.5) clock hours and all supervisees in attendance must be listed in the contemporaneous record.

5. ~~"Supervisor" means a licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist who complies with the ethical standards of practice of their profession with particular attention being paid to prohibited dual relationships. In addition,~~

- ~~(i) a supervisor who holds a master's degree must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience; and~~
- ~~(ii) a supervisor who holds a specialist degree must have two (2) years of post-licensure experience; and~~
- ~~(iii) a supervisor who holds a doctoral degree must have one (1) year of post-licensure experience; and~~
- ~~(iv) for supervision entered into after September 30, 2018, a supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential or a Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA) Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor credential.~~
- ~~(v) however, tThe Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein.~~

~~(vi) in a supervised practicum or internship which is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor OR, in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.~~

5. "Supervisor" for post-master's work experience under supervision means a licensed Professional Counselor, who meets the specific requirements as outlined below. The required practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content may be supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist. In the education of rehabilitation counselors, an approved supervisor may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

(i) A supervisor must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience.

(ii) A supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold, in addition to meeting (i) above, either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential (ACS) or Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA), Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor Credential (CPCS). MFTs, CSWs, and CRCs may not supervise directed work experience.

(iii) The Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor who is licensed and in good standing and whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein. Approval must be granted prior to the supervision beginning and must be approved through the Petition for Waiver of a Board rule (Reference OCGA 50-13-9.1).

(iv) All supervision entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:

(I) Supervisors shall not provide supervision to family members, nor shall they provide supervision to any practitioner with whom they have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or

manage the business entity where the supervisor is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.

(II) Family Member means members of a practitioner's immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.

6. **"Directed Work Experience"** means time spent under direction engaging in the practice of Professional Counseling ~~as defined in 135-5-.02(a)(1).~~
- (i) ~~all work sites must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling as defined in Rule 135-5-.01(a)(1). Valid work sites should have measurable detailed documentation for every candidate, to include a signed contractual agreement that outlines the job description, office hours, performance review procedures and dismissal policies.~~
- (ii) ~~non compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine acceptability in defining the working relationship for the purposes of obtainment of the required post-master's directed work experience only if they meet these requirements. The agreement between the work site and the candidate should be akin to employment.~~
- (iii) ~~applicants may, at the discretion of the Board, be required to submit documentation substantiating (a) the nature of the working relationship with the directed experience site, (b) the formal structure of the organization, and (c) whether any licensed or associate licensed individuals work there to ensure compliance and understanding of these requirements.~~
- (i) "Direct work experience" means contact with one or more clients and includes diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, and may also include psychoeducation for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. **All direction entered into after July 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:**

- (I) A minimum of 40% percent of the required annual hours shall be direct clinical work experience.
- (II) Psychoeducation shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
- (III) Assessment and referral activities shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
- (IV) The practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members, shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the director is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.
- (ii) "Indirect Work Experience" means training for, and the performance of, the practice of professional counseling functions including, but not limited to, case consultation, case staffing, treatment teams, direction, or continuing education courses.
- (iii) The practitioner receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall not engage in the independent practice of professional counseling. All clients must be assigned to the practitioner by the Director of the supervisee. Practitioners shall not directly recruit clients.
- (iv) The practitioner while receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule, shall not be directly compensated by clients.
- (v) The directed work experience for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors shall be in a rehabilitation setting defined as a practice, or in a rehabilitation center, and is restricted to counseling those individuals who are seeking re-training for the work force.
- (vi) Directed work experience for School Counselors may only be obtained while school is in session and students are present for the hours to be accepted toward those required for licensure.
- (vii) All **work sites** must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling.

- (I) Work sites acceptable to the Board may include, but are not limited to, education, rehabilitation, career development, mental health or community organizations.
- (II) Practice without direction is not considered a work setting acceptable to the Board.
- (III) Valid work sites shall employ and/or provide access to at least one licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist.
- (IV) Non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine acceptability only if they meet the above requirements, specific to the post-master's directed work experience. The agreement between the work site and practitioner should be akin to employment.

**7. “Years of Directed Experience with concurrent Supervision”**

- (i) ~~“One year of Directed Experience” means a minimum of 600 hours of directed experience acquired within a period of not less than twelve months and not more than twenty months.~~
- (ii) ~~“Two years of Directed Experience” means a minimum of 1200 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than twenty-four months and not more than 60 months.~~
- (iii) ~~“Three years of Directed Experience” means a minimum of 1800 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than thirty-six months and not more than 60 months.~~
- (iv) ~~“Four years of Directed Experience” means a minimum of 2400 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than forty-eight months and not more than 60 months.~~
- (vi) ~~After September 30, 2018 “One year of Directed Experience” means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience acquired in one year as defined below. not less than a twelve (12) month period. The number of required years of Directed Experience is based on the applicant’s educational credentials as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(b)2.~~

(I) "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience with 35 concurrent supervision hours, acquired within a period of not less than twelve months.

(II) "Two years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 2000 hours of directed experience with 70 concurrent supervision hours, acquired within a period of not less than twenty-four months.

(viii) After September 30, 2018, all Directed Experience under Supervision, as defined above, must be obtained within the a sixty (60) months period and further, shall be obtained within the ten (10) year period prior to the date of application. Endorsement applications will be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Board.

(iii) Directed work experience under supervision entered into on or after July 1, 2025, means:

(I) "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience with 50 concurrent supervision hours, acquired within a period of not less than twelve months.

(II) "Two years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 2000 hours of directed experience with 100 concurrent supervision hours, acquired within a period of not less than twenty-four months.

(III) Directed Experience under Supervision, as defined above, must be obtained within a sixty (60) month period.

(iv) The sixty (60) months of directed work experience concurrent with supervision shall be obtained within the ten (10) year period prior to the date of application.

**8. "Years of Supervision"**

(i) "One year of Supervision" means a minimum of 30 hours of supervision obtained during one year of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).

- (ii) ~~“Two years of Supervision” means a minimum of 60 hours of supervision obtained during two years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).~~
- (iii) ~~“Three years of Supervision” means a minimum of 90 hours of supervision obtained during three years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).~~
- (iv) ~~“Four years of Supervision” means a minimum of 120 hours of supervision obtained during four years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).~~
- (v) ~~After September 30, 2018, "One year of Supervision" means a minimum of thirty five (35) hours of supervision obtained during one twelve (12) month period of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).~~
- (vi) ~~After September 30, 2018, all Supervision must be obtained within the sixty (60) months prior to the date of application. Endorsement applications will be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Board.~~

9. ~~“Work settings acceptable to the Board” means a directed work settings in which the practice of Professional Counseling takes place and may include, but is not limited to, education, rehabilitation, career development, mental health, community, or industrial organizations. Practice without direction is not a work setting acceptable to the Board. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a) (6) above, the definition of “Directed Experience”.~~

108. **“Certified Rehabilitation Counselor”** means a person who is certified as a rehabilitation counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

119. **Program Primarily in Clinical Counseling or Counseling Psychology in Content** and **Program in Applied Psychology** means a course of study at an accredited educational institution consisting of a master's specialist or doctoral degree which includes degree or higher from a regionally accredited

program that consists of at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours, with an approved supervised internship or practicum consisting of at least 600 hours, that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content. includes  
The graduate level courses as specified in rule 135-5-.02(b)(1) below shall also be required either as part of the degree program or as additional course work completed prior to, during or after the degree program. ~~the following graduate level courses.~~ **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.

- (i) ~~Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.~~
- (ii) ~~A Counseling or Applied Psychology Practicum or Internship as part of the graduate degree program.~~
- (iii) ~~Courses in six (6) of the following nine (9) content areas: After September 30, 2018, all 9 content areas of the following course work are required:~~
  - (I) ~~Human Growth and Development, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infantile to geriatric stages.~~
  - (II) ~~Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles,~~

societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.

- (III) — Counseling Techniques or Skills, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the facilitation of client change; OR Advanced Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory, which includes the in-depth study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.
- (IV) — Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other group approaches.
- (V) — Lifestyle and Career Development, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure counseling, guidance and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.
- (VI) — Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.

~~(VII) Research Methods and Evaluation, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation, needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research; OR Research Statistics, which includes an understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer-generated statistical measures.~~

~~(VIII) Professional Orientation and Ethics, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles, responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.~~

~~(IX) Psychopathology, which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders, with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD).~~

~~(i) A practicum or internship that is primarily counseling in content includes at least 40% client contact and documentation.~~

~~**(b) An applicant who holds a master's degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**~~

**(b) Requirements for Licensure**

1. ~~Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). After September 30, 2018 the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally~~

accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.

~~2. A “Masters” degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master’s degree and indicated on the official transcript.~~

~~3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of four (4) years of post-master’s directed experience under supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. **After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required.** A minimum of two (2) years of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)(5), except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of Rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of “Directed Experience”.~~

~~4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.~~

~~1. **Education.** Effective July 1, 2024, the applicant must have earned a master’s degree or higher from a regionally accredited program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology that consists of at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours and that includes a supervised practicum or internship that is primarily counseling in content as part of the degree program of at least 600 hours. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily clinical~~

counseling or counseling psychology in content. The degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or be a program in a regionally accredited institution recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program.

- (i) In a supervised practicum or internship which is primarily counseling in content, and is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor as defined above in 135-5-.02(a)(5) or in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.
- (ii) Graduate coursework in the following ten (10) content areas shall be required. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.

(I) **Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory**, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.

(II) **Human Growth and Development**, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infancy to geriatric stages.

(III) **Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training**, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles, societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles; and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.

- (IV) Counseling Techniques or Skills**, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the facilitation of client change; Or **Advanced Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory**, which includes the in-depth study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.
- (V) Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy**, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other group approaches.
- (VI) Lifestyle and Career Development**, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure counseling, guidance and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.
- (VII) Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals**, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/ assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.
- (VIII) Research Methods and Evaluation**, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation,

needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research. OR Research Statistics, which includes an understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer-generated statistical measures.

(IX) **Professional Orientation and Ethics**, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles, responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.

(X) **Psychopathology** which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Coursework shall encompass psychopathology from infancy to geriatric stages.

(iii) If the degree program did not include all the above required courses, additional graduate level course work can be completed prior to, during, or after the degree program.

(iv) Applicants who have obtained their degrees from an educational degree program located outside of the United States shall have their educational credentials evaluated by a Board approved independent foreign credential service.

(v) Degrees received on or after **May 31, 2028**, must be a program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

~~(e) — An applicant who holds a specialist degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.~~

(c) **Educational Degrees**

1. ~~Education. The applicant must have earned a specialist degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. After September 30, 2018 the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.~~
2. ~~A “Specialist” degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the specialist degree and indicated on the official transcript.~~
3. ~~Directed Experience under Supervision. The applicant must present evidence of two (2) years of post-master’s directed experience under supervision [see definitions at 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program OR three (3) years of post-master’s directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board. After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required. A minimum of one (1) year of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)(5), except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of Rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of “Directed Experience”.~~

- ~~4. — Examination. To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.~~
- ~~1. Prior to May 31, 2028, an applicant who holds a master's degree or higher from a program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology primarily counseling in content that is either regionally accredited or (CACREP) accredited.~~
- ~~2. After May 31, 2028, an applicant who holds a master's degree or higher from a program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology primarily counseling in content that is (CACREP) accredited must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.~~
- ~~(i) A “Masters” degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master’s degree and indicated on the official transcript along with the date conferred.~~
- ~~(ii) **Directed Experience with concurrent Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of two (2) years of post-degree directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 600 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. The two (2) years of supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor. Directed experience sites must meet the requirements of Rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of “Directed Experience”.~~
- ~~(iii) Examination. To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.~~
- ~~(d) — An applicant who holds a doctoral degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor:~~
- ~~1. — Education. The applicant must have earned a doctoral degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a~~

~~regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. After September 30, 2018 the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.~~

- ~~2. A "Doctoral" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the doctoral degree and indicated on the official transcript.~~
- ~~3. Directed Experience under Supervision. The applicant must present evidence of one (1) year of supervised counseling internship of at least seven hundred fifty (750) hours during the doctorate degree program in a work setting acceptable to the Board OR one (1) year of post master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board. A minimum of half of the one year of supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)5, except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".~~
- ~~4. Examination. To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.~~

~~(e) An applicant who is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.~~

- ~~1. Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree from in a rehabilitation counseling program which, at the time the degree was awarded,~~

~~was accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education, OR a master's degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation with documented graduate level coursework demonstrating that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11. After September 30, 2018 the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program.~~

- ~~2. A "masters" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master's degree and indicated on the official transcript.~~
- ~~3. Directed Experience under Supervision. The applicant must present evidence of three (3) years of post-master's directed experience providing rehabilitation services in a rehabilitation setting acceptable to the Board under the supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] of a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified supervisor. OR, two (2) years of post-master's directed experience providing rehabilitation services in a rehabilitation setting acceptable to the Board under the supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] of a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified supervisor and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required. A minimum of one (1) year of the supervision must be provided by a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a) 5. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a) (6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".~~
- ~~4. Certification. The applicant must hold the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor~~

designation.

5. ~~Examination. To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.~~

~~(f) An applicant who holds a master's degree in psychology must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.~~

1. ~~Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree in a program of applied psychology which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). After September 30, 2018, the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is a program of applied psychology. The degree program must meet the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a) 11.~~

2. ~~A "Masters" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master's degree and indicated on the official transcript.~~

3. ~~**Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of four (4) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board OR three (3) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling or applied psychology practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. A minimum of two (2) years of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor who meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a) 5, or a licensed~~

~~Psychologist, except that if the supervision was acquired prior to January 1, 2004, such supervision may have been provided by a person with a master's degree from an accredited educational institution in a program of applied psychology. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a) (6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".~~

- ~~4. — Examination. To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.~~

**Statutory Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10 and 43-10A-11.**

**RULES**  
**OF**  
**THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS,**  
**SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS**  
**CHAPTER 135-5**  
**REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE**  
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**135-5-.01 Associate Professional Counselors**

**135-5-.02 Professional Counselors**

**Rule 135-5-.01. Associate Professional Counselors**

Pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 43-10A-11, the requirements for licensure and the restrictions on practice for Associate Professional Counselors are as follows:

**(a) Definitions.**

1. **"The Practice of Professional Counseling"** means practice which utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate, diagnose and treat emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective. Professional Counseling is further defined in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-3(~~4~~14).
2. **"Direction"** means the ongoing administrative oversight by an employer or superior of a practitioner's work in the practice of professional counseling.
3. **"Director"** means the employer of the practitioner, or the superior in the administrative chain of command, who provides non-clinical administrative oversight for all services rendered by the practitioner to include, but not be limited to, client assignment and fees. The director shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.
  - (i) All direction entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:
    - (I) Directors shall not provide direction to family members, nor shall they provide direction to any practitioner with whom they

have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the director is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.

(II) Family Member means members of a practitioner's immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.

4. **"Supervision"** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching of the practitioner's interaction with clients as well as the development of the practitioner's professional identity, ethics, and clinical skills. Supervision is separate from any managerial role of client care, and may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes, and direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision does not require the supervisor to be present at the work site with the practitioner and may be provided pro bono or for a fee. The supervision may be provided either face to face or by technology assisted media, in compliance with the telemental health rules, such as but not limited to videoconference or telephone.

- (i) Both **supervisors and supervisees** are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.
- (ii) **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees-for no less than one clock hour (60 minutes). For one supervisee, supervision shall be no less than 30 minutes.
- (iii) **Group Supervision** means at least one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six individual supervisees for no less than one and a half (1.5) clock hours and all supervisees in attendance must be listed in the contemporaneous record.

5. "Supervisor" for post-master's work experience under supervision means a licensed Professional Counselor who meets the specific requirements as outlined below. The required practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content may be supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist. In the education of rehabilitation counselors, an approved supervisor may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.
  - (i) A supervisor must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience.
  - (ii) A supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold, in addition to meeting (i) above, either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential (ACS) or Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA), Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor Credential (CPCS). MFTs, CSWs, and CRCs may not supervise directed work experience.
  - (iii) The Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor who is licensed and in good standing and whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein. Approval must be granted prior to the supervision beginning and must be approved through the Petition for Waiver of a Board rule (Reference OCGA 50-13-9.1).
  - (iv) All supervision entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:
    - (I) Supervisors shall not provide supervision to family members, nor shall they provide supervision to any practitioner with whom they have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the supervisor is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.

(II) Family Member means members of a practitioner's immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.

6. **"Directed Work Experience"** means time spent under direction engaging in the practice of Professional Counseling.

(i) "Direct work experience" means contact with one or more clients and includes diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, and may also include psychoeducation for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. **For all direction entered into after July 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:**

(I) A minimum of 40% percent of the required annual hours shall be direct clinical work experience.

(II) Psychoeducation shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.

(III) Assessment and referral activities shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.

(IV) The practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members, shall not have any ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the professional counseling services will be provided by the practitioner.

(ii) "Indirect Work Experience" means training for, and the performance of, the practice of professional counseling functions including, but not limited to, case consultation, case staffing, treatment teams, direction, or continuing education courses.

(iii) The practitioner receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall not engage in the independent practice of professional counseling. All clients must be assigned to the practitioner by the Director of the supervisee. Practitioners shall not directly recruit clients.

(iv) The practitioner while receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule, shall not be directly compensated by clients.

(v) The directed work experience for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors shall be in a rehabilitation setting defined as a practice, or in a

rehabilitation center, and is restricted to counseling those individuals who are seeking re-training for the work force.

- (vi) Directed work experience for School Counselors may only be obtained while school is in session and students are present for the hours to be accepted toward those required for licensure.
- (vii) All work sites must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling.
  - (I) Work sites acceptable to the Board may include, but are not limited to, education, rehabilitation, career development, mental health, or community organizations.
  - (II) Practice without direction is not considered a work setting acceptable to the Board.
  - (III) Valid work sites shall employ and/or provide access to at least one licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist.
  - (IV) Non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine acceptability only if they meet the above requirements, specific to the post-master's directed work experience. The agreement between the work site and practitioner should be akin to employment.

7. **"Associate Professional Counselors Post-Masters Contract Affidavit"** is a document, available on the Board website, that defines the working relationship for the purposes of obtaining the required post-masters directed work experience under supervision. Directed work experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a) (6) above to be approved by the Board.
8. **"Program in Clinical Counseling or Counseling Psychology"** means a master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited program that consists of at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours with an approved supervised internship or practicum, consisting of at least 600 hours, that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content. The graduate level courses, as

specified in rule 135-5-.01(b)1(iii) below, shall also be required either as part of the degree program or as additional course work completed prior to, during or after the degree program.

- (i) A practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content shall include at least 40% client contact and documentation.

**(b) Requirements for Licensure.**

1. **Education.** Effective July 1, 2024, the applicant must have earned a master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology that consists of at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours which degree includes a supervised practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content and consists of at least 600 hours.

- (i) In a supervised practicum or internship which is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content, and is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor as defined above in 135-5-.01(a)(5), or in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

- (ii) A person who has an active, unencumbered Associate Professional Counselor license issued by the Board shall be deemed to have met the educational requirements when applying for licensure as a professional counselor.

- (iii) Graduate level coursework in the following ten (10) content areas shall be required. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.

- (I) **Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory**, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.

- (II) **Human Growth and Development**, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all

developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infancy to geriatric stages.

- (III) **Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training**, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles, societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles; and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.
- (IV) **Counseling Techniques or Skills**, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the facilitation of client change; Or **Advanced Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory** which includes the in-depth study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.
- (V) **Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy**, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other group approaches.
- (VI) **Lifestyle and Career Development**, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure counseling, guidance, and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.

- (VII) **Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals**, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/ assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.
- (VIII) **Research Methods and Evaluation**, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation, needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research. **OR** **Research Statistics**, which includes an understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer-generated statistical measures.
- (IX) **Professional Orientation and Ethics**, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles, responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.
- (X) **Psychopathology** which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Coursework shall encompass psychopathology from infancy to geriatric stages.

- (iv) If the degree program did not include all the above required graduate courses, additional graduate level course work can be completed prior to, during, or after the degree program.

## 2. **Degree Programs**

- (i) The degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or be a program in a regionally accredited institution recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program.
- (ii) Degrees received on or after **May 31, 2028**, must be from a program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
- (iii) Applicants with degrees obtained from an educational degree program located outside the United States shall have their educational credentials evaluated by an independent foreign credential evaluation service to determine eligibility for licensure.

**3. Registration of a contract.** The applicant shall register with the Board an acceptable Associate Professional Counselor (APC) Post-Masters Contract Affidavit for purposes of obtaining the directed work experience with concurrent supervision by a qualified licensed professional counselor.

- (i) If the Director, Supervisor or work experience location change, the practitioner shall submit a new contract affidavit to the Board for consideration **within thirty (30) days** of the change, or the accrued interim work experience and supervision may not be accepted by the Board for licensure.
- (ii) A practitioner shall have no more than six (6) different supervisors throughout the duration of the directed work experience under supervision. Practitioners may petition the Board, in the form of a Rule Waiver/Variance, for consideration of extenuating circumstances related to this rule.
- (iii) APC's who are licensed by the Board shall submit all the Board's approval letters for any new contract affidavits with supervision and/or work experience changes submitted after the initial application contract

affidavit approval with their applications for licensure as a professional counselor.

(iv) **Directed Work Experience:**

For all Directed Work Experience entered into after July 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:

- (I) A minimum of 40% percent of the required annual hours shall be direct clinical work experience.
  - (II) Psychoeducation shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
  - (III) Assessment and referral activities shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
  - (IV) The practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members, shall not have any ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the professional counseling services will be provided by the practitioner.
- (v) Indirect Work Experience means training for, and the performance of, professional counseling functions including, but not limited to, case consultation, case staffing, treatment teams, direction, or continuing education courses.
- (vi) The practitioner receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall not engage in the independent practice of professional counseling. All clients must be assigned to the practitioner by the Director of the supervisee.
- (vii) The practitioner while receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall have all client payments reviewed by the director.
- (viii) The directed work experience for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors shall be in a rehabilitation setting defined as a practice, or in a rehabilitation center, and is restricted to counseling those individuals who are seeking re-training for the workforce.

(ix) Directed work experience for School Counselors may be obtained only while school is in session and students are present for the hours to be accepted toward those required for licensure.

(x) **Work Sites**

(I) Valid work sites shall employ and/or provide access to at least one licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist.

(II) Non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine acceptability only if they meet the above requirements, specific to the post-master's directed work experience. The agreement between the work site and practitioner should be akin to employment.

(III) If the Director, Supervisor or work experience location change, a new contract affidavit **MUST** be submitted to the Board for consideration **within thirty (30) days** of the change, or the accrued work experience and supervision shall not be accepted by the Board for licensure.

(IV) Practitioners may, at the discretion of the Board, be required to submit documentation substantiating:

I. The nature of the working relationship with the directed experience site.

II. The formal structure of the organization.

III. Whether any licensed or associate licensed individuals work on site to ensure compliance and understanding of these requirements.

(xi) **Supervision**

(I) Supervision shall be under a licensed professional as defined above in 135-5-.01(a)(5).

(II) It is the responsibility of the supervisee to assure the supervisor they choose and or contract with meets all eligibility requirements to provide supervision.

- (III) Clients recruited by the practitioner outside the agency must be approved by the supervisor prior to first session.
- (IV) Both supervisor and practitioner are required to maintain a contemporaneous record for each clinical supervision session and may be requested to submit this record to the Board upon request. At a minimum, this record shall contain the following:
  - I. The date, duration, and type (individual or group) of each supervision session including the name of the individual(s) receiving clinical supervision, the name and signature of the approved clinical supervisor and the date signed.
  - II. A summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to include a description of topics discussed in each supervision session and case review activities.
  - III. Summary of all periodic supervisor evaluations and any remediation of the practitioner's professional development, performance, including a final supervisory evaluation.
  - IV. Upon request, copies of contemporaneous records of both supervisors and practitioners, as well as copies of the periodic and final supervisory evaluations, shall be submitted to the Board.
- (V) For supervision entered into after **July 1, 2025**, the Board shall accept the supervision hours only when:
  - I. The hours are from a qualified supervisor as defined above in section 135-5-.01(a)(5).
  - II. For every month of directed work experience with direct client contact, the practitioner has obtained a minimum of three (3) concurrent hours of supervision. A minimum of 100 supervision hours must be obtained for licensure.

III. A minimum of four (4) hours annually are in individual supervision and involve the review of audio, video, or direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills.

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as an associate professional counselor, the practitioner must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board in rule 135-3-.03(2)(a)(2).

(c) **Restrictions on Practice.**

1. A person who holds an active license as an Associate Professional Counselor may only use the title “Associate Professional Counselor” or “Licensed Associate Professional Counselor.”
2. A person who holds an active license as an Associate Professional Counselor may engage in the practice of Professional Counseling, but only with direction and concurrent supervision, and only for a period not to exceed five years [Ref: OCGA 43-10A-11(c)] while obtaining the post-degree directed work experience with concurrent supervision required for licensure as a Professional Counselor. Directed work experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a) (6) above, to be accepted by the Board.
3. An APC must specify the associate level of practice is “under supervision” to clients, naming the supervisor and their credentials.

**Statutory Authority: O.C.G.A. § 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-7, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10 and 43-10A-11.**

## **Rule 135-5-.02 Professional Counselors**

Pursuant to Official Code of Georgia Annotated 43-10A-11 an applicant for a license in Professional Counseling must meet the following requirements.

### **(a) Definitions.**

1. **"The Practice of Professional Counseling"** means practice which utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate, diagnose and treat emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective. Professional Counseling is further defined in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-3(14).
2. **"Direction"** means the ongoing administrative oversight by an employer or superior of a practitioner's work in the practice of professional counseling.
3. **"Director"** means the employer of the practitioner, or the superior in the administrative chain of command, who provides non-clinical administrative oversight for all services rendered by the practitioner to include, but not be limited to, client assignment and fees. The director shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.
  - (i) All direction entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:
    - (I) Directors shall not provide direction to family members, nor shall they provide direction to any practitioner with whom they have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the director is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.
    - (II) Family Member means members of a practitioner's immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.
4. **"Supervision"** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching of the practitioner's interaction with clients as well as the development of the practitioner's professional identity, ethics, and clinical skills. Supervision

is separate from any managerial role of client care, and may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes, and direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision does not require the supervisor to be present at the work site with the practitioner and may be provided pro bono or for a fee. The supervision may be provided either face to face or by technology assisted media, in compliance with the telemental health rules, such as but not limited to videoconference or telephone.

- (i) Both **supervisors and supervisees** are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.
- (ii) **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees for no less than one clock hour (60 minutes). For one supervisee, supervision shall be no less than 30 minutes.
- (iii) **Group Supervision** means at least one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six individual supervisees for no less than one and a half (1.5) clock hours and all supervisees in attendance must be listed in the contemporaneous record.

5. **"Supervisor"** for post-master's work experience under supervision means a licensed Professional Counselor, who meets the specific requirements as outlined below. The required practicum or internship that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content may be supervised by a Licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist. In the education of rehabilitation counselors, an approved supervisor may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

- (i) A supervisor must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience.
- (ii) A supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold, in addition to meeting (i) above, either a National Board of Certified

Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential (ACS) or Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA), Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor Credential (CPCS). MFTs, CSWs, and CRCs may not supervise directed work experience.

- (iii) The Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor who is licensed and in good standing and whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein. Approval must be granted prior to the supervision beginning and must be approved through the Petition for Waiver of a Board rule (Reference OCGA 50-13-9.1).
- (iv) All supervision entered into after January 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:
  - (I) Supervisors shall not provide supervision to family members, nor shall they provide supervision to any practitioner with whom they have a boundary conflict or conflict of interest. In addition, the practitioner or any of that practitioner's family members shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the supervisor is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.
  - (II) Family Member means members of a practitioner's immediate family, by direct descent or by marriage.

6. **"Directed Work Experience"** means time spent under direction engaging in the practice of Professional Counseling.

- (i) "Direct work experience" means contact with one or more clients and includes diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, and may also include psychoeducation for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. **All direction entered into after July 1, 2025, shall be subject to the following:**
  - (I) A minimum of 40% percent of the required annual hours shall be direct clinical work experience.

- (II) Psychoeducation shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
  - (III) Assessment and referral activities shall not be more than 30% of the total direct work experience.
  - (IV) The practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members, shall not have an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity where the director is employed or where the practitioner provides professional counseling services.
- (ii) "Indirect Work Experience" means training for, and the performance of, the practice of professional counseling functions including, but not limited to, case consultation, case staffing, treatment teams, direction, or continuing education courses.
  - (iii) The practitioner receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule shall not engage in the independent practice of professional counseling. All clients must be assigned to the practitioner by the Director of the supervisee. Practitioners shall not directly recruit clients.
  - (iv) The practitioner while receiving directed work experience pursuant to this rule, shall not be directly compensated by clients.
  - (v) The directed work experience for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors shall be in a rehabilitation setting defined as a practice, or in a rehabilitation center, and is restricted to counseling those individuals who are seeking re-training for the work force.
  - (vi) Directed work experience for School Counselors may only be obtained while school is in session and students are present for the hours to be accepted toward those required for licensure.
  - (vii) All **work sites** must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling.
    - (I) Work sites acceptable to the Board may include, but are not limited to, education, rehabilitation, career development, mental health or community organizations.

- (II) Practice without direction is not considered a work setting acceptable to the Board.
- (III) Valid work sites shall employ and/or provide access to at least one licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist.
- (IV) Non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine acceptability only if they meet the above requirements, specific to the post-master's directed work experience. The agreement between the work site and practitioner should be akin to employment.

**7. "Years of Directed Experience with concurrent Supervision"**

- (i) "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience acquired in one year as defined below.
  - (I) "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience with 35 concurrent supervision hours, acquired within a period of not less than twelve months.
  - (II) "Two years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 2000 hours of directed experience with 70 concurrent supervision hours, acquired within a period of not less than twenty-four months.
- (ii) Directed Experience under Supervision, as defined above, must be obtained within a sixty (60) months period and further, shall be obtained within the ten (10) year period prior to the date of application.
- (iii) Directed work experience under supervision entered into on or after July 1, 2025, means:
  - (I) "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience with 50 concurrent supervision hours, acquired within a period of not less than twelve months.
  - (II) "Two years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 2000 hours of directed experience with 100 concurrent supervision

hours, acquired within a period of not less than twenty-four months.

(III) Directed Experience under Supervision, as defined above, must be obtained within a sixty (60) month period.

(iv) The sixty (60) months of directed work experience concurrent with supervision shall be obtained within the ten (10) year period prior to the date of application.

8. **“Certified Rehabilitation Counselor”** means a person who is certified as a rehabilitation counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

9. **“Program in Clinical Counseling or Counseling Psychology”** means degree or higher from a regionally accredited program that consists of at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours, with an approved supervised internship or practicum consisting of at least 600 hours, that is primarily the practice of professional counseling in content. The graduate level courses as specified in rule 135-5-.02(b)(1) below shall also be required either as part of the degree program or as additional course work completed prior to, during or after the degree program.

(i) A practicum or internship that is primarily counseling in content includes at least 40% client contact and documentation.

**(b) Requirements for Licensure**

1. **Education.** Effective July 1, 2024, the applicant must have earned a master’s degree or higher from a regionally accredited program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology that consists of at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours and that includes a supervised practicum or internship that is primarily counseling in content as part of the degree program of at least 600 hours. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily clinical counseling or counseling psychology in content. The degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education

(CORE) or be a program in a regionally accredited institution recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program.

- (i) In a supervised practicum or internship which is primarily counseling in content, and is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor as defined above in 135-5-.02(a)(5) or in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.
- (ii) Graduate coursework in the following ten (10) content areas shall be required. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.
  - (I) **Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory**, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.
  - (II) **Human Growth and Development**, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infancy to geriatric stages.
  - (III) **Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training**, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles, societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles, and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.
  - (IV) **Counseling Techniques or Skills**, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the facilitation of client change; Or **Advanced**

**Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory**, which includes the in-depth study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.

- (V) **Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy**, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other group approaches.
- (VI) **Lifestyle and Career Development**, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure counseling, guidance and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.
- (VII) **Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals**, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/ assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.
- (VIII) **Research Methods and Evaluation**, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation, needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research. OR **Research Statistics**, which includes an understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer-generated statistical measures.

(IX) **Professional Orientation and Ethics**, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles, responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.

(X) **Psychopathology** which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Coursework shall encompass psychopathology from infancy to geriatric stages.

(iii) If the degree program did not include all the above required courses, additional graduate level course work can be completed prior to, during, or after the degree program.

(iv) Applicants who have obtained their degrees from an educational degree program located outside of the United States shall have their educational credentials evaluated by a Board approved independent foreign credential service.

(v) Degrees received on or after **May 31, 2028**, must be a program accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

**(c) Educational Degrees**

1. Prior to May 31, 2028, an applicant who holds a master's degree or higher from a program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology primarily counseling in content that is either regionally accredited or (CACREP) accredited.
2. After May 31, 2028, an applicant who holds a master's degree or higher from a program in clinical counseling or counseling psychology primarily counseling

in content that is (CACREP) accredited must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.

- (i) A “Masters” degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master’s degree and indicated on the official transcript along with the date conferred.
- (ii) **Directed Experience with concurrent Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of two (2) years of post degree directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 600 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. The two (2) years of supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor. Directed experience sites must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of “Directed Experience”.
- (iii) Examination. To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

**Statutory Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10 and 43-10A-11.**

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE  
THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS, SOCIAL  
WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS  
BOARD RULE CHAPTER 135-5 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE, BOARD RULE  
135-5-.05 ASSOCIATE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS AND BOARD RULE  
135-5-.06 MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS  
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Rule 135-5-.05 Associate Marriage and Family Therapists  
Rule 135-5-.06 Marriage and Family Therapists

**TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:**

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the authority set forth below, the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists (hereinafter “Board”) proposes amendments to Rule 135-5-.05 Associate Marriage and Family Therapists and Rule 135-5-.06 Marriage and Family Therapists (herein after “proposed rules”).

This notice, an exact copy of the proposed rules, and a synopsis of the proposed rules are being sent to all persons who have requested, in writing, to be included on a notification list. This notice, an exact copy of the proposed rules, and a synopsis of the proposed rules may also be reviewed during normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except official State holidays, at the Office of the Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217. The documents will also be available for review on the Board’s website at <https://sos.ga.gov/board-professional-counselors-social-workers-and-marriage-family-therapists>. Copies may also be requested by contacting the Board office at (404) 424-9966.

The public will have an opportunity to comment upon and provide input into the proposed rules at a public hearing to be held **Friday, April 4, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.** The hearing will be held via teleconference. Please see Board’s website for information on how to join the meeting via teleconference.

Interested parties affected by the proposed rules may submit written comments to the Board no later than close of business on **Friday, March 28, 2025.** Written comments must be legible, signed, contain contact information from the maker (address, telephone number, email address), and addressed to Todd Zandrowicz, Division Director, Secretary of State, Professional Licensing Boards Division, Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217. Written comments may also be submitted via email to [ExamBoards-Healthcare@sos.ga.gov](mailto:ExamBoards-Healthcare@sos.ga.gov).

During the public hearing, anyone may present data, make a statement, comment, or offer a viewpoint or argument, whether orally or in writing. Lengthy statements or statements of a considerable technical or economic nature, as well as previously recorded messages, must be submitted for the official record. Oral statements will be limited to five (5) minutes per person.

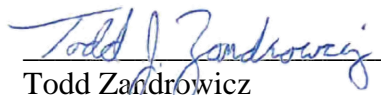
The Board voted to post this Notice of Intent at its meeting on July 12, 2024. The Board also voted that the formulation and adoption of these proposed rules does not impose an excessive regulatory cost on any licensee, and any cost to comply with the proposed rules cannot be reduced by a less expensive alternative that fully accomplishes the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-13. Additionally, the Board voted that it was neither legal nor feasible in meeting the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-13 to adopt or implement differing actions for businesses as listed in O.C.G.A. § 50-13-4(a)(3)(A), (B), (C) and (D). The formulation and adoption of these proposed rules will impact every licensee in the same manner and each licensee is independently licensed in the field of marriage and family therapy.

According to the Department of Law of the State of Georgia, the State of Georgia, the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists has the authority to adopt proposed Rules 135-5-.05 and 135-5-.06 pursuant to authority contained in O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-13. For further information, contact the Board office at (404) 424-9966.

For further information, contact the Board office at (404) 424-9966.

This notice is given in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 50-13-4.

This the 3rd day of March, 2025.



Todd Zandrowicz

Division Director

Professional Licensing Boards Division

Posted: March 3, 2025

**SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES OF TO THE  
THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS, SOCIAL  
WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS  
BOARD RULE CHAPTER 135-5 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE,  
BOARD RULE 135-5-.05 ASSOCIATE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the proposed changes is to amend the rule to reflect statutory updates.

**135-5-.05 Associate Marriage and Family Therapists**

**(1) ~~Definitions and Requirements:~~**

~~(a) Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor means a person who is licensed as a marriage and family therapist and who has been approved by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists to provide supervision of the practice of marriage and family therapy. To obtain such approval the person shall submit documentation of the following:~~

- ~~1. Three years of full time post licensure experience in the practice of marriage and family therapy;~~
- ~~2. 180 hours of experience providing marriage and family therapy supervision for at least two supervisees during a period of no less than two years and no more than five years;~~
- ~~3. 36 hours of supervision received from an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor or a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, specifically in the skill of providing marriage and family therapy supervision, minimum of 24 hours of which shall have been individual supervision of supervision;~~
- ~~4. A recommendation from each of the supervisors who provided supervision of supervision attesting to the applicant's competence as a supervisor; and,~~
- ~~5. The Board may, in its discretion, approve a supervisor who is licensed, in good standing, as a Marriage and Family Therapist and designated an approved marriage and family therapy supervisor in another jurisdiction.~~

~~(b)~~ (b) Contract for Post-graduate Experience and Supervision means a statement, on

forms provided by the Board, made by a person who has completed one of the degree programs required for licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist, specifying that person's plan for obtaining the remaining experience and supervision required for licensure as a marriage and family therapist. Such a statement, once reviewed and approved by the Board, shall be considered an approved contract. An approved contract may be amended, so long as any changes have been approved by the Board.

- (eb) ~~Course in Human Development means a graduate course in any aspect of human development across the life span, including but not limited to theories of individual development, theories of learning, theories of personality, theories of normal and abnormal behavior, gender, human sexuality, and either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions~~ Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in the foundations and critical epistemological issues of marriage and family therapy. These courses include the historical development of the marriage and family therapy relational /systemic philosophy, contemporary conceptual foundations of marriage and family therapy, and early and contemporary models of marriage and family therapy, including evidence-based practice and the biopsychosocial framework.
- (dc) ~~Course in Marriage and Family Studies means a graduate course in the principles, concepts or history of marriage and family life, family systems, family relations and family development~~ Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families means graduate coursework in treatment approaches specifically designed for use with a wide range of diverse individuals, couples, and families, including sex therapy, working with same-sex couples, young children, adolescents and elderly, interfaith couples, and includes a focus on evidence-based practice and crisis intervention.
- (ed) ~~Course in Marriage and Family Therapy means a graduate course in the theory and practice of various treatment modalities in marriage and family therapy~~ Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities means graduate coursework in understanding and applying knowledge of diversity, power,

privilege, and oppression as these relate to race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religious, spiritual and/or other beliefs, nation of origin, or other relevant social identities throughout the curriculum. It includes practice with diverse, international, multicultural, marginalized, and/or underserved communities, including developing competencies in working with sexual and gender minorities and their families, as well as anti-racist practices.

- (fe) ~~Course in Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics~~ means a graduate course in professional ethics, legal responsibilities and liabilities, standards of practice, licensure regulation, and professional socialization relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy Research and Evaluation means graduate coursework in the development of competencies in marriage and family therapy research and evaluation methods, and in evidence-based practice, including becoming an informed consumer of couples, marriage, and family therapy research.
- (gf) ~~Course in Research~~ means a graduate course in research design, methods and statistics Professional Identity, Law, Ethics and Social Responsibility means graduate coursework that addresses the development of a marriage and family therapy identity and socialization and facilitates the development of competencies in ethics in marriage and family therapy practice, including understanding and applying the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics and understanding legal responsibilities.
- (hg) ~~Direct Clinical Experience~~ means time spent in client contact as therapist or co-therapist, in supervision, in case staffing, or in case consultation. Course in Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span means graduate coursework that addresses individual and family development, human sexuality, and biopsychosocial health across the lifespan.
- (h) Course in Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in traditional psycho-diagnostic categories, psychopharmacology, the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of major mental health issues as well as a wide variety of common presenting problems including addiction, suicide, trauma, abuse,

intra-familial violence, and therapy for individuals, couples, and families managing acute chronic medical conditions, utilizing a marriage and family therapy relational/systemic philosophy.

- (i) Course in Contemporary Issues means graduate coursework facilitating the development of competencies in emerging and evolving contemporary challenges, problems, and or recent developments at the interface of Marriage and Family Therapy knowledge and practice, and the broader local, regional, and global context. This includes such issues as immigration, technology, same-sex marriage, violence in schools, and other contemporary issues.
- (j) Course in Community Intersections and Collaboration means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in the practice within defined contexts (e.g., healthcare settings, schools, military settings, private practice) and/or nontraditional marriage and family therapy professional practice (e.g., community advocacy, psycho- educational groups). This area also includes developing competency in multidisciplinary collaboration.
- (k) Course in Preparation for Teletherapy Practice means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in teletherapy. This may include such issues as emerging legal and ethical requirements, documentation response to crises, awareness of the therapeutic space, joining, appropriate individual and systemic interventions (couples, play therapy), or other topics of importance and with diverse populations.
- (l) Course in Advanced Research means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in:
  - 1. Advanced research, including demonstrated proficiency in quantitative methods and analysis techniques, qualitative methods and analysis techniques, or mixed methods and analysis techniques appropriate to carrying out relational research;
  - 2. Methodologies and analysis techniques outside of their proficiency area;
  - 3. Understanding the theoretical complexity of change within relationships and how this complexity informs research;
  - 4. Understanding and demonstrating sensitivity to and awareness of how

issues of diversity in terms of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, etc., play a role in their choice of research topics and their conduct of research activities; and

5. Preparing and disseminating research through a variety of activities (e.g., grants and grant writing, program evaluation, professional publications and presentations).

(m) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory means doctoral course that facilitates the development of advanced clinical competencies including:

1. Advanced understanding and application of multiple family and couple models and empirically supported interventions;

2. Skill in working with diverse populations across the lifespan through direct clinical work or in marriage and family relational/systemic supervision of the therapy of others;

3. Awareness of cultural issues, differences, and personal blind spots in their clinical and supervisory work; and

4. Development of a specialized clinical area that is grounded in research and is at a level of intervention and understanding.

(n) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of leading-edge professionals who are competent in relational/systemic innovations. This includes the application to controversial moral and advanced ethical dilemmas, international, cross cultural, and multicultural issues in marriage and family therapy professional roles, responsibilities, practices, and applications to other contemporary problems. This area also includes a focus on family policy and/or family law.

(o) Course in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, Marriage and Family Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and/or Leadership means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in relational/systemic teaching, marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision, and/or marriage and family therapy consultation. This may include educational/learning theories, relevant research, multicultural content, evaluation

and assessment methods, ethics and professional issues, and personal philosophy.

(p) Direct Clinical Contact Hours are defined as a therapeutic meeting of a therapist and client (individual, relational, or group) occurring in-person synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by technology. Assessments may be counted if they are in-person processes that are more than clerical in nature and focus. Therapy services delivered through interactive team modalities may provide direct client contact for specific team members who have in-person interaction with the client/system during the session. Therapy team members who engage in the therapeutic process only behind the mirror may not count the experience as direct client contact. Activities such as telephone contact, case planning, observation of therapy, record keeping, trainings, role-playing, travel, administrative activities, consultation with community members or professionals, and/or marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision are not considered direct client contact.

(iq) Direction means ongoing oversight by an employer or superior of the work of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner. ~~In order to~~ To be acceptable to the Marriage and Family Therapy Standards Committee of the Board, a director must attest to having performed the functions specified in this paragraph, and when not an employer must have entered into a contractual agreement with the practitioner to perform these functions.

1. Directors may not provide direction to family members. In addition, directors shall not provide direction for any practitioner when that practitioner has, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the director is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.
2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation

relationships.

- (jr) One Year Practicum means twelve months of supervised experience obtained while enrolled in graduate courses designated practicum at an educational institution which, at the time, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (ks) Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy means evaluating, diagnosing, and treating emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, affective, or behavioral, resolving intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, and changing perception, attitudes, and behavior; all within the context of marital and family systems. Marriage and family therapy includes, without being limited to, individual, group, couple, sexual, family and divorce therapy. Marriage and family therapy involves an applied understanding of the dynamics of marital and family therapy systems, including individual psychodynamics, the use of assessment instruments that evaluate marital and family functioning, designing, and recommending a course of treatment, and the use of psychotherapy and counseling.
- (t) Professional Identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist is demonstrated by publicly displayed and accessible indicators of commitment to the marriage and family therapy profession such as a graduate degree from a COAMFTE accredited program, marriage and family therapist licensure/registration, membership in a relationally-focused professional association dedicated to promoting the marriage and family therapy profession, advanced credentials in a practice area specific to the marriage and family therapy profession, or contributions specific to the marriage and family therapy profession such as leadership, training, or scholarly activities.
- (u) Program Clinical Supervisor is a supervisor who provides marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision within an approved practicum or internship program. Program Clinical Supervisor qualifications include the following:
1. Demonstration of professional identity as a marriage and family therapist, and
  2. Demonstration of training in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision by one of the following:
    - (i) A graduate course in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic

supervision equivalent to three semester-credit hours.

(ii) Postgraduate professional education in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision of at least 30 clock hours.

(iii) A state established marriage and family therapy supervisor designation that includes relational/systemic supervision training.

(iv) Designation as an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Approved Supervisor Candidate.

(iv) Program Equivalent to a Marriage and Family Therapy Degree Program means an organized course of study at an accredited educational institution consisting of a master's degree and additional post-master's degree coursework which includes: three courses in marriage and family studies; three courses in marriage and family therapy; three courses in human development, one of which must be a course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions; one course in marriage and family therapy ethics; and one course in research.

1. Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);

2. Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);

3. Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

4. Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

5. Professional Identity, Law, Ethics and Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

6. Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

7. Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

8. The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements

examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:

- (i) Contemporary Issues;
- (ii) Community Intersections and Collaboration; (iii) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

(mw) Program in Marriage and Family Therapy means a master's or doctoral degree program at an accredited educational institution which includes the following coursework: ~~three courses in marriage and family studies; three courses in marriage and family therapy; three courses in human development, one of which must be a course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions; one course in marriage and family therapy ethics; and one course in research.~~

1. Master's Degree Program

- (i) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (ii) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (iii) Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (iv) Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (v) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics and Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (vi) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (vii) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (viii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these

requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:

- (I) Contemporary Issues (No minimum credit/clock hour requirements, may be included as a topic in a course);
- (II) Community Intersections and Collaboration (No minimum credit/clock hour requirements, may be included as a topic in a course);
- (III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice (No minimum credit/clock hour requirements, may be included as a topic in a course).

2. Doctoral Degree Program

- (i) Advanced Research (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (ii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (iii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (iv) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, MFT Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and/or Leadership (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (v) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (vi) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (vii) Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (viii) Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (ix) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

(x) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span  
(Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

(xi) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and  
Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45  
clock hours);

(xii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though  
there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these  
requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours  
included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or  
specific trainings which address these areas:

(I) Contemporary Issues;

(II) Community Intersections and Collaboration;

(III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

~~(x)~~ Supervision means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of the interactions with clients of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audio tapes, video tapes, and direct observation in order to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

1. Supervisors may not provide supervision to family members. In addition, supervisors shall not provide supervision for any practitioner when that practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the supervisor is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.
2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or

cohabitation relationships.

(2) **Requirements for Licensure:**

- (a) Education. The applicant must have earned a master's or doctoral degree from a program in marriage and family therapy, from a program equivalent to a marriage and family therapy degree program, or from any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Such program shall be in an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (b) Practicum. The applicant must have completed a one-year practicum in the practice of marriage and family therapy before or after the granting of the master's degree.
  1. Such practicum shall include a minimum of ~~500~~ 300 ~~hours of direct clinical experience~~ clinical contact hours with individuals, couples, families, or other systems, at least 100 of which must be relational hours that occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice.
  2. Such practicum shall include 100 hours of supervision provided by a ~~licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist or psychologist, who was also an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision of supervision in order to qualify for either designation~~ program clinical supervisor.
- (c) Contract. The applicant must submit and obtain the Board's approval of a Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision.
  1. Applicants who have not yet secured employment or begun supervision at the time of submission of their application for licensure shall so indicate on the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision. The applicant shall submit an updated Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision to the Board for approval within thirty (30) days of securing post-graduate employment or beginning post-graduate

- supervision;
2. Once the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision is approved by the Board, any change in the contract must be submitted to the Board within thirty (30) days for approval;
  3. The Board, at its discretion, may request that the applicant and/or licensee submit verification of the information in the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision and, if necessary, submit a revised Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision; and,
  4. Any post-graduate experience or supervision obtained by an associate marriage and family therapist without Board approval may not be applied toward licensure as a marriage and family therapist.
- (d) Examination. The applicant shall register and sit for the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board review of his/her application for licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and approval to take the examination. Passing the examination is a requirement for licensure.

**(3) Restrictions on Practice:**

- (a) A person who holds a license as an associate marriage and family therapist may only use the title "associate marriage and family therapist."
- (b) A person who holds a license as an associate marriage and family therapist may engage in the practice of marriage and family therapy, but only while under direction and supervision, and only for a period not to exceed five years while obtaining the post-master's experience and supervision required for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

**Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-13.**

**SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED CHANGES OF TO THE  
THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS, SOCIAL  
WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS  
BOARD RULE CHAPTER 135-5 REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE,  
BOARD RULE 135-5-.06 MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the proposed changes is to amend the rule to reflect statutory updates.

**Rule 135-5-.06. Marriage and Family Therapists**

**(1) Definitions and Requirements:**

- (a) Approved Practicum or Internship Program means supervised experience obtained while enrolled in graduate level courses designated practicum or internship at an educational institution which, at the time, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (b) Board Approved Graduate Level Course means a course in Marriage and Family Studies, Marriage and Family Therapy, or Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics which is offered by a training institution, is comparable to a graduate level course offered by an accredited educational institution, and has received prior approval by the Board. No new requests or applications for Board approval of graduate courses offered by training institutes will be accepted as of the effective date of this rule amendment. Individuals enrolled in, or who plan to enroll in, prior approved courses must complete the courses by January 1, 2020, for the courses to be considered for licensure purposes.
- (c) Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor means a person who is licensed as a marriage and family therapist and who has been approved by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists to provide supervision of the practice of marriage and family therapy. To obtain such approval the person shall submit documentation of the following:
  - 1. Three years of full-time post-licensure experience in the practice of marriage and family therapy;

2. 180 hours of experience providing marriage and family therapy supervision for at least two supervisees during a period of no less than two years and no more than five years;
  3. 36 hours of supervision received from an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor or a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, specifically in the skill of providing marriage and family therapy supervision, minimum of 24 hours of which shall have been individual supervision-of-supervision;
  4. A recommendation from each of the supervisors who provided supervision-of-supervision attesting to the applicant's competence as a supervisor; and,
  5. The Board may, in its discretion, approve a supervisor who is licensed, in good standing, as a Marriage and Family Therapist and who is designated as an approved marriage and family therapy supervisor in another jurisdiction.
- (d) Course in Clinical Content Area means a graduate course in the etiology, dynamics, evaluation, assessment, diagnosis, or treatment of emotional or behavioral problems and conditions.
- (e) ~~Course in Marriage and Family Studies means a graduate level course in the principles, concepts or history of marriage and family life, family systems, family relations and family development~~ Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models means graduate coursework that facilitate the development of competencies in the foundations and critical epistemological issues of marriage and family therapy, These courses include the historical development of the marriage and family therapy relational/systemic philosophy, contemporary conceptual foundations of marriage and family therapy, and early and contemporary models of marriage and family therapy, including evidence-based practice and the biopsychosocial framework.
- (f) ~~Course in Marriage and Family Therapy means a graduate level course in the theory and practice of various treatment modalities in marriage and family~~ Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families means graduate

coursework in treatment approaches specifically designed for use with a wide range of diverse individuals, couples, and families, including sex therapy, working with same-sex couples, young children, adolescents and elderly, interfaith couples, and include a focus on evidence-based practice and crisis intervention.

- (g) Course in Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics means a graduate level course in professional ethics, legal responsibilities and liabilities, standards of practice, licensure regulation, and professional socialization relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility means graduate coursework that addresses the development of a marriage and family therapy identity and socialization and facilitates the development of competencies in ethics in marriage and family therapy practice, including understanding and applying the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics and understanding.
- (h) Course in Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities means graduate coursework in understanding and applying knowledge of diversity, power, privilege, and oppression as these relate to race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religious, spiritual and or other beliefs, nation of origin, or other relevant social identities throughout the curriculum. It includes practice with diverse, international, multicultural, marginalized, and/or underserved communities, including developing competencies in working with sexual and gender minorities and their families, as well as anti-racist practices.
- (i) Course in Research and Evaluation means graduate coursework in the development of competencies in marriage and family therapy research and evaluation methods, and in evidence-based practice, including becoming an informed consumer of couples, marriage, and family therapy research.
- (j) Course in Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span means graduate coursework that addresses individual and family development, human sexuality, and biopsychosocial health across the life span.

- (k) Course in Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in traditional psycho-diagnostic categories, psychopharmacology, the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of major mental health issues as well as a wide variety of common presenting problems including addiction, suicide, trauma, abuse, intra-familial violence, and therapy for individuals, couples, and families managing acute medical conditions, utilizing a marriage and family therapy relational/systemic philosophy.
- (l) Course in Contemporary Issues means graduate coursework facilitating the development of competencies in emerging and evolving contemporary challenges, problems, and or recent developments at the interface of Marriage and Family Therapy knowledge and practice, and the broader local, regional, and global context. This includes such issues as immigration, technology, same-sex marriage, violence in schools, and other contemporary issues.
- (m) Course in Community Intersections and Collaboration means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in the practice within defined contexts (e.g., healthcare settings, schools, military settings, private practice) and/or nontraditional marriage and family therapy professional practice (e.g., community advocacy, psycho-educational groups). This area also includes developing competency in multidisciplinary collaboration.
- (n) Course in Preparation for Teletherapy Practice means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in teletherapy. This may include such issues as emerging legal and ethical requirements, documentation response to crises, awareness of the therapeutic space, joining, appropriate individual and systemic interventions (couples, play therapy), or other topics of importance and with diverse populations.
- (o) Course in Advanced Research means a doctoral course that facilitates the development of competencies in:
1. advanced research, including demonstrated proficiency in quantitative methods and analysis techniques, qualitative methods and analysis

techniques, or mixed methods and analysis techniques appropriate to carrying out relational research;

2. methodologies and analysis techniques outside of their proficiency area;
3. understanding the theoretical complexity of change within relationships and how this complexity informs research;
4. understanding and demonstrating sensitivity to and awareness of how issues of diversity in terms of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, etc, play a role in their choice of research topics and their conduct of research activities; and
5. preparing and disseminating research through a variety of activities (e.g., grants and grant writing, program evaluation, professional publications and presentations).

(p) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory means a doctoral course that facilitates the development of advanced clinical competencies including:

1. advanced understanding and application of multiple family and couple models and empirically supported interventions;
2. skill in working with diverse populations across the lifespan through direct clinical work or in marriage and family relational/systemic supervision of the therapy of others;
3. awareness of cultural issues, differences, and personal blind spots in their clinical and supervisory work; and
4. development of a specialized clinical area that is grounded in research and is at a level of intervention and understanding.

(q) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges means a doctoral course that facilitates the development of leading-edge professionals who are competent in relational/systemic innovations. This includes the application to controversial moral and advanced ethical dilemmas, international, cross cultural, and multicultural issues in marriage and family therapy professional roles, responsibilities, practices, and applications to other contemporary problems. This area also includes a focus on family policy and/or family law.

- (r) Course in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, Marriage and Family Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and/or Leadership means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in relational/systemic teaching, marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision, and/or marriage and family therapy consultation. This may include educational/learning theories, relevant research, multicultural content, evaluation and assessment methods, ethics and professional issues, and personal philosophy.
- (hs) Direct Clinical Experience means time spent in therapeutic client contact as therapist or co-therapist, occurring in-person synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by technology ~~in supervision, in case staffing, or in case consultation.~~
- (it) Direction means ongoing oversight by an employer or superior of the work of a person practicing professional counseling, social work, or marriage and family therapy. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner. In order to be acceptable to the Marriage and Family Therapy Standards Committee of the Board, a director must attest to having performed the functions specified in this paragraph, and when not an employer must have entered into a contractual agreement with the practitioner to perform these functions.
1. Directors may not be family members of practitioners for whom they provide direction, nor may directors provide direction for any practitioner when the practitioner or any of the practitioner's family members own the business in which the director is employed.
  2. Family Member means members of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

- (ju) Full-time Experience means a minimum of 20 hours per week spent in direct clinical experience.
- (kv) Group Supervision means a maximum of six supervisees meeting with one supervisor.
- (lw) Individual Supervision means a maximum of two supervisees meeting with one supervisor.
- (mx) One Year means twelve months, or any periods of time which sum to twelve months.
- (ny) Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy means evaluating, diagnosing, and treating emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, affective or behavioral, resolving intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, and changing perception, attitudes and behavior; all within the context of marital and family systems. Marriage and family therapy includes, without being limited to, individual, group, couple, sexual, family and divorce therapy. Marriage and family therapy involves an applied understanding of the dynamics of marital and family therapy systems, including individual psychodynamics, the use of assessment instruments that evaluate marital and family functioning, designing and recommending a course of treatment, and the use of psychotherapy and counseling.
- (z) Professional Identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist is demonstrated by publicly displayed and accessible indicators of commitment to the marriage and family therapy profession such as a graduate degree from a COAMFTE accredited program, marriage and family therapist licensure/registration, membership in a relationally-focused professional association dedicated to promoting the marriage and family therapy profession, advanced credentials in a practice area specific to the marriage and family therapy profession, or contributions specific to the marriage and family therapy profession such as leadership, training, or scholarly activities.
- (aa) Program Clinical Supervisor is a supervisor who provides marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision within an approved practicum or

internship program. Program Clinical Supervisor qualifications include the following:

1. demonstration of professional identity as a marriage and family therapist, and
2. demonstration of training in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision by one of the following:
  - (i) A graduate course in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision equivalent to three semester-credit hours.
  - (ii) Postgraduate professional education in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision of at least 30 clock hours.
  - (iii) A state established marriage and family therapy supervisor designation that includes relational/systemic supervision training.
  - (iv) Designation as an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Approved Supervisor Candidate.

(bb) Program in Marriage and Family Therapy means a master's degree or doctoral degree program at an accredited educational institution which includes the following coursework:

1. Master's Degree Program:
  - (i) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours)
  - (ii) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours)
  - (iii) Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
  - (iv) Research and Evaluation (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
  - (v) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
  - (vi) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)

(vii) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

(viii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum in some way, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:

(I) Contemporary Issues

(II) Community Intersections and Collaboration

(III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

## 2. Doctoral Degree Program

(i) Advanced Research (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);

(ii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);

(iii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);

(iv) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, MFT Relational/Systemic

(v) Supervision, Consultation, and /or Leadership (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);

(vi) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);

(vii) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);

(viii) Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

(ix) Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

- (x) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility  
(Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (xi) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span  
(Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (xii) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (xiii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:
  - (I) Contemporary Issues;
  - (II) Community Intersections and Collaboration;
  - (III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

(ecc) Supervision means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of the interactions with clients of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audio tapes, video tapes, and direct observation in order to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

1. Supervisors may not be family members of supervisees for whom they provide supervision, nor may supervisors provide supervision for any supervisee when the supervisee or any of the supervisee's family members own the business in which the supervisor is employed.

2. Family Member means members of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

(2) **Requirements for Licensure:**

- (a) An applicant who holds a current license as an **Associate Marriage and Family Therapist** must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

1. Experience. The applicant must document two years of full-time post-master's experience or its equivalent, under direction and supervision.
  - (i) Such experience shall have been in the practice of marriage and family therapy; and shall include a minimum of ~~2,000~~ 1,500 hours of direct clinical experience.
  - (ii) For applicants who have worked less than full-time, equivalent experience may be accrued over a total of not less than two years and not more than five years.
2. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 100 hours of supervision, concurrent with his/her documented experience.
  - (i) Such supervision shall have been provided by:
    - (I) a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist, or psychologist who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years; or
    - (II) an American Association for Marriage and Family therapy (AAMFT) Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.
  - (ii) A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision and

- (iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience.
  - 3. Examination Waived. The applicant is not required to re-take the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board approval of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.
- (b) An applicant who holds a **Master's** Degree and does not have an active Associate Marriage and Family Therapist license must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:
- 1. Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree ~~in marriage and family therapy, counseling, social work, medicine, applied psychology, psychiatric nursing, pastoral counseling, applied child and family development, applied sociology, or from any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education. Such degree shall be from an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.~~from:
    - (i) A program in marriage and family therapy;
    - (ii) A program in clinical counseling, clinical social work, any allied profession, or applied sociology; provided, however, that, on and after July 1, 2025, any such degree program or additional post-master's degree coursework shall include courses equivalent to those of a marriage and family therapy degree program; or
    - (iii) Any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.
    - (iv) Such degree shall be from an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
  - (iv) For the purpose of licensure under this rule, a degree in psychology, child and family development or sociology shall be

considered an applied degree and a degree in divinity or in theology shall be considered a degree in pastoral counseling if the applicant has completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, either of the following two options:

- (I) Three courses in clinical content areas; or
  - (II) Two courses in clinical content areas, plus an approved practicum or internship, which shall include a minimum of ~~500-300~~ hours of direct clinical experience contact hours in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy; and
  - (III) The coursework required under this section shall be in addition to the ~~five~~ required courses coursework in ~~Marriage and Family Therapy, Marriage and Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics~~ Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), Theories and Models, and Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), and Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours).
- (vii) The applicant shall have completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, ~~at least two courses in Marriage and Family Therapy~~ Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), two courses in Marriage and Family Studies Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), one course in Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility

(minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours), and one course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions. These courses shall have been obtained from an educational institution accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation or, prior to January 1, 2019, from a training institute which offers Board approved graduate level courses.

2. Experience. The applicant must document three years of full-time post-master's experience or its equivalent, under direction and supervision, which shall include a minimum of ~~2,500~~ 1,800 hours of direct clinical experience.
  - (i) One year of such experience may have been in an approved practicum before or after the granting of the master's degree, which shall include a minimum of ~~500~~ 300 hours of direct clinical ~~experience~~ contact hours in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy with individuals, couples, families, or other systems, at least 100 of which must be relational hours that occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice.
  - (ii) At least two years of such experience shall have been in the practice of marriage and family therapy, which shall include a minimum of ~~2,000~~ 1,500 hours of direct clinical experience.
  - (iii) For applicants who have worked less than full-time, equivalent experience may be accrued over a total of not less than three years and not more than five years.
3. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 200 hours of supervision, concurrent with his/her documented experience.
  - (i) Such supervision shall have been provided by:
    - (I) a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist or

psychologist, who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years.

(II) an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation,

(ii) At least 100 hours of such supervision shall have been provided by an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation. A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision;

(iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience; and

(iv) Up to 100 hours of such supervision may have been obtained during an approved practicum before or after the granting of the master's degree.

4. Examination. The applicant shall ~~register and sit for~~ must pass the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board approval of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist, ~~and approval to take the examination. Passage of the exam is a requirement to issue a license.~~

(c) An applicant who holds a **Doctoral Degree** must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:

1. Education. The applicant must have earned a doctoral degree ~~in marriage and family therapy, counseling, social work, medicine, applied psychology, psychiatric nursing, pastoral counseling, applied child and~~

~~family development, applied sociology, or from any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.~~ from:

- (i) A program in marriage and family therapy;
- (ii) A program in clinical counseling, clinical social work, any allied profession, or applied sociology; provided, however, that, on and after July 1, 2025, any such degree program or additional post-master's degree coursework shall include courses equivalent to those of a marriage and family therapy degree program; or
- (iii) Any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.
- (iv) Such degree shall be from an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (v) For the purpose of licensure under this rule, a degree in psychology, child and family development or sociology shall be considered an applied degree and a degree in divinity or in theology shall be considered a degree in pastoral counseling if the applicant has completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, either of the following two options:
  - (I) Three courses in clinical content areas; or
  - (II) Two courses in clinical content areas, plus an approved practicum or internship, which shall include a minimum of ~~500~~300 hours of direct clinical ~~experience~~ contact hours in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy; and
  - (III) The coursework required under this section shall be in addition to the ~~five~~ required ~~courses~~ coursework in ~~Marriage and Family Therapy, Marriage and Family~~

~~Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics~~  
Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours),  
Clinical Treatment with Individuals Couples and Families  
(minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock  
hours), and Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social  
Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter  
credits/45 clock hours).

(vii) The applicant shall have completed, as part of a master's or doctoral degree program, or as additional post-graduate degree coursework, ~~at least two courses in Marriage and Family Therapy~~ Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), two courses in ~~Marriage and Family Studies~~ Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), one course in ~~Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics~~ Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours), and one course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions. These courses shall have been obtained from an educational institution accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or, prior to January 1, 2019, from a training institute which offers Board approved graduate level courses.

2. Experience. The applicant must document two years of full-time post-master's or post-doctorate experience in the practice of marriage and family therapy, under direction and supervision, which shall include a minimum of ~~1,500~~1,000 hours of direct clinical experience.

(i) One year of such experience may have been in an approved internship program before or after the granting of the doctoral degree, which shall include a minimum of ~~500~~300 hours of direct

clinical ~~experience~~ contact hours with individuals, couples, families, or other systems, at least 100 of which must be relational hours that occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice.

(ii) At least one year of such experience shall have been full-time post-master's or post-doctorate experience, which shall include a minimum of ~~1,000~~700 hours of direct clinical ~~experience~~ contact hours.

3. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 100 hours of supervision, concurrent with their documented experience.

(i) Such supervision shall have been provided by a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist or psychologist, who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years, and who was also an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation;

(ii) A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision;

(iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience; and

(iv) A maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been obtained during the applicant's doctoral degree or internship program.

4. Examination. The applicant must pass the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board approval of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

(d) An applicant who holds licensure in another state as a Marriage and Family Therapist must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:

1. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the board shall issue an expedited license by endorsement to any individual seeking licensure as a marriage and family therapist who:
  - (i) Completes an application for licensure and pays all applicable fees;
  - (ii) Holds a current, valid, and unrestricted license to practice as a marriage and family therapist issued by another state;
  - (iii) Is in good standing in such other state and is not the subject of an investigation or a disciplinary proceeding being conducted by a professional licensing board in such other state;
  - (iv) Does not have a disqualifying criminal record; and
  - (v) Has been verified to have a lawful presence in the United States pursuant to Code Section 50-36-1.
2. An expedited license by endorsement provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be issued no later than 30 days from the date of receipt of an application and information and documents that show that all of the requirements of paragraph (1) of this subsection have been met. Such application for an expedited license by endorsement shall only require such information and documentation necessary to verify that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in paragraph (1) of this subsection.

**Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-13.**

**RULES**  
**OF**  
**THE GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS, SOCIAL**  
**WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS**  
**CHAPTER 135-5**  
**REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE**

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**135-5-.06 Marriage and Family Therapists**

**Rule 135-5-.05 Associate Marriage and Family Therapists**

**(1) Definitions:**

- (a) Contract for Post-graduate Experience and Supervision means a statement, on forms provided by the Board, made by a person who has completed one of the degree programs required for licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist, specifying that person's plan for obtaining the remaining experience and supervision required for licensure as a marriage and family therapist. Such a statement, once reviewed and approved by the Board, shall be considered an approved contract. An approved contract may be amended, so long as any changes have been approved by the Board.
- (b) Course in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in the foundations and critical epistemological issues of marriage and family therapy. These courses include the historical development of the marriage and family therapy relational/systemic philosophy, contemporary conceptual foundations of marriage and family therapy, and early and contemporary models of marriage and family therapy, including evidence-based practice and the biopsychosocial framework.
- (c) Course in Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families means graduate coursework in treatment approaches specifically designed for use with a

wide range of diverse individuals, couples, and families, including sex therapy, working with same-sex couples, young children, adolescents and elderly, interfaith couples, and includes a focus on evidence-based practice and crisis intervention.

- (d) Course in Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities means graduate coursework in understanding and applying knowledge of diversity, power, privilege, and oppression as these relate to race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religious, spiritual and/or other beliefs, nation of origin, or other relevant social identities throughout the curriculum. It includes practice with diverse, international, multicultural, marginalized, and/or underserved communities, including developing competencies in working with sexual and gender minorities and their families, as well as anti-racist practices.
- (e) Course in Research and Evaluation means graduate coursework in the development of competencies in marriage and family therapy research and evaluation methods, and in evidence-based practice, including becoming an informed consumer of couples, marriage, and family therapy research.
- (f) Course in Professional Identity, Law, Ethics and Social Responsibility means graduate coursework that addresses the development of a marriage and family therapy identity and socialization and facilitates the development of competencies in ethics in marriage and family therapy practice, including understanding and applying the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics and understanding legal responsibilities.
- (g) Course in Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span means graduate coursework that addresses individual and family development, human sexuality, and biopsychosocial health across the lifespan.
- (h) Course in Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in traditional psycho-diagnostic categories, psychopharmacology, the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of major mental health issues as well as a wide variety of common presenting problems including addiction, suicide,

trauma, abuse, intra-familial violence, and therapy for individuals, couples, and families managing acute chronic medical conditions, utilizing a marriage and family therapy relational/systemic philosophy.

- (i) Course in Contemporary Issues means graduate coursework facilitating the development of competencies in emerging and evolving contemporary challenges, problems, and or recent developments at the interface of Marriage and Family Therapy knowledge and practice, and the broader local, regional, and global context. This includes such issues as immigration, technology, same-sex marriage, violence in schools, and other contemporary issues.
- (j) Course in Community Intersections and Collaboration means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in the practice within defined contexts (e.g., healthcare settings, schools, military settings, private practice) and/or nontraditional marriage and family therapy professional practice (e.g., community advocacy, psycho- educational groups). This area also includes developing competency in multidisciplinary collaboration.
- (k) Course in Preparation for Teletherapy Practice means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in teletherapy. This may include such issues as emerging legal and ethical requirements, documentation response to crises, awareness of the therapeutic space, joining, appropriate individual and systemic interventions (couples, play therapy), or other topics of importance and with diverse populations.
- (l) Course in Advanced Research means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in:
  - 1. Advanced research, including demonstrated proficiency in quantitative methods and analysis techniques, qualitative methods and analysis techniques, or mixed methods and analysis techniques appropriate to carrying out relational research;
  - 2. Methodologies and analysis techniques outside of their proficiency area;
  - 3. Understanding the theoretical complexity of change within relationships and how this complexity informs research;
  - 4. Understanding and demonstrating sensitivity to and awareness of how

issues of diversity in terms of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, etc., play a role in their choice of research topics and their conduct of research activities; and

5. Preparing and disseminating research through a variety of activities (e.g., grants and grant writing, program evaluation, professional publications and presentations).

(m) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory means doctoral course that facilitates the development of advanced clinical competencies including:

1. Advanced understanding and application of multiple family and couple models and empirically supported interventions;
2. Skill in working with diverse populations across the lifespan through direct clinical work or in marriage and family relational/systemic supervision of the therapy of others;
3. Awareness of cultural issues, differences, and personal blind spots in their clinical and supervisory work; and
4. Development of a specialized clinical area that is grounded in research and is at a level of intervention and understanding.

(n) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of leading-edge professionals who are competent in relational/systemic innovations. This includes the application to controversial moral and advanced ethical dilemmas, international, cross cultural, and multicultural issues in marriage and family therapy professional roles, responsibilities, practices, and applications to other contemporary problems. This area also includes a focus on family policy and/or family law.

(o) Course in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, Marriage and Family Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and/or Leadership means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in relational/systemic teaching, marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision, and/or marriage and family therapy consultation. This may include educational/learning theories, relevant research, multicultural content, evaluation

and assessment methods, ethics and professional issues, and personal philosophy.

- (p) Direct Clinical Contact Hours are defined as a therapeutic meeting of a therapist and client (individual, relational, or group) occurring in-person synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by technology. Assessments may be counted if they are in-person processes that are more than clerical in nature and focus. Therapy services delivered through interactive team modalities may provide direct client contact for specific team members who have in-person interaction with the client/system during the session. Therapy team members who engage in the therapeutic process only behind the mirror may not count the experience as direct client contact. Activities such as telephone contact, case planning, observation of therapy, record keeping, trainings, role-playing, travel, administrative activities, consultation with community members or professionals, and/or marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision are not considered direct client contact.
- (q) Direction means ongoing oversight by an employer or superior of the work of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner. In order To be acceptable to the Marriage and Family Therapy Standards Committee of the Board, a director must attest to having performed the functions specified in this paragraph, and when not an employer must have entered into a contractual agreement with the practitioner to perform these functions.
  1. Directors may not provide direction to family members. In addition, directors shall not provide direction for any practitioner when that practitioner has, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the director is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.
  2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended

family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

- (r) One Year Practicum means twelve months of supervised experience obtained while enrolled in graduate courses designated practicum at an educational institution which, at the time, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (s) Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy means evaluating, diagnosing, and treating emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, affective, or behavioral, resolving intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, and changing perception, attitudes, and behavior; all within the context of marital and family systems. Marriage and family therapy includes, without being limited to, individual, group, couple, sexual, family and divorce therapy. Marriage and family therapy involves an applied understanding of the dynamics of marital and family therapy systems, including individual psychodynamics, the use of assessment instruments that evaluate marital and family functioning, designing, and recommending a course of treatment, and the use of psychotherapy and counseling.
- (t) Professional Identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist is demonstrated by publicly displayed and accessible indicators of commitment to the marriage and family therapy profession such as a graduate degree from a COAMFTE accredited program, marriage and family therapist licensure/registration, membership in a relationally-focused professional association dedicated to promoting the marriage and family therapy profession, advanced credentials in a practice area specific to the marriage and family therapy profession, or contributions specific to the marriage and family therapy profession such as leadership, training, or scholarly activities.
- (u) Program Clinical Supervisor is a supervisor who provides marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision within an approved practicum or internship program. Program Clinical Supervisor qualifications include the following:
  1. Demonstration of professional identity as a marriage and family therapist,

and

2. Demonstration of training in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision by one of the following:
  - (i) A graduate course in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision equivalent to three semester-credit hours
  - (ii) Postgraduate professional education in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision of at least 30 clock hours
  - (iii) A state established marriage and family therapy supervisor designation that includes relational/systemic supervision training
  - (iv) Designation as an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Approved Supervisor Candidate
- (v) Program Equivalent to a Marriage and Family Therapy Degree Program means an organized course of study at an accredited educational institution consisting of a master's degree and additional post-master's degree coursework which includes:
  1. Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
  2. Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
  3. Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4quarter credits/45 clock hours);
  4. Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
  5. Professional Identity, Law, Ethics and Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
  6. Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
  7. Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
  8. The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though there are

no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:

- (i) Contemporary Issues;
- (ii) Community Intersections and Collaboration; (iii) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

(w) Program in Marriage and Family Therapy means a master's or doctoral degree program at an accredited educational institution which includes the following coursework:

1. Master's Degree Program

- (i) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (ii) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (iii) Diverse, Multicultural and/or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (iv) Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (v) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics and Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (vi) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (vii) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (viii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:

- (I) Contemporary Issues (No minimum credit/clock hour requirements, may be included as a topic in a course);
- (II) Community Intersections and Collaboration (No minimum credit/clock hour requirements, may be included as a topic in a course);
- (III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice (No minimum credit/clock hour requirements, may be included as a topic in a course).

2. Doctoral Degree Program

- (i) Advanced Research (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (ii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (iii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (iv) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, MFT Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and/or Leadership (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (v) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (vi) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (vii) Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (viii) Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (ix) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (x) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (xi) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and

Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);

(xii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:

(I) Contemporary Issues;

(II) Community Intersections and Collaboration;

(III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

(x) Supervision means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of the interactions with clients of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audio tapes, video tapes, and direct observation in order to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

1. Supervisors may not provide supervision to family members. In addition, supervisors shall not provide supervision for any practitioner when that practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the supervisor is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.

2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

(2) **Requirements for Licensure:**

(a) Education. The applicant must have earned a master's or doctoral degree from a

program in marriage and family therapy, from a program equivalent to a marriage and family therapy degree program, or from any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Such program shall be in an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

- (b) Practicum. The applicant must have completed a one-year practicum in the practice of marriage and family therapy before or after the granting of the master's degree.
  - 1. Such practicum shall include a minimum of 300 direct clinical contact hours with individuals, couples, families, or other systems, at least 100 of which must be relational hours that occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice.
  - 2. Such practicum shall include 100 hours of supervision provided by a program clinical supervisor.
- (c) Contract. The applicant must submit and obtain the Board's approval of a Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision.
  - 1. Applicants who have not yet secured employment or begun supervision at the time of submission of their application for licensure shall so indicate on the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision. The applicant shall submit an updated Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision to the Board for approval within thirty (30) days of securing post-graduate employment or beginning post-graduate supervision;
  - 2. Once the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision is approved by the Board, any change in the contract must be submitted to the Board within thirty (30) days for approval;
  - 3. The Board, at its discretion, may request that the applicant and/or licensee submit verification of the information in the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision and, if necessary, submit a revised Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision; and,

4. Any post-graduate experience or supervision obtained by an associate marriage and family therapist without Board approval may not be applied toward licensure as a marriage and family therapist.
- (d) Examination. The applicant shall register and sit for the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board review of his/her application for licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and approval to take the examination. Passing the examination is a requirement for licensure.
- (3) **Restrictions on Practice:**
  - (a) A person who holds a license as an associate marriage and family therapist may only use the title "associate marriage and family therapist."
  - (b) A person who holds a license as an associate marriage and family therapist may engage in the practice of marriage and family therapy, but only while under direction and supervision, and only for a period not to exceed five years while obtaining the post-master's experience and supervision required for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

**Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-13.**

## **Rule 135-5-.06 Marriage and Family Therapists**

### **(1) Definitions and Requirements:**

- (a) Approved Practicum or Internship Program means supervised experience obtained while enrolled in graduate level courses designated practicum or internship at an educational institution which, at the time, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (b) Board Approved Graduate Level Course means a course in Marriage and Family Studies, Marriage and Family Therapy, or Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics which is offered by a training institution, is comparable to a graduate level course offered by an accredited educational institution, and has received prior approval by the Board. No new requests or applications for Board approval of graduate courses offered by training institutes will be accepted as of the effective date of this rule amendment. Individuals enrolled in, or who plan to enroll in, prior approved courses must complete the courses by January 1, 2020, for the courses to be considered for licensure purposes.
- (c) Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor means a person who is licensed as a marriage and family therapist and who has been approved by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists to provide supervision of the practice of marriage and family therapy. To obtain such approval the person shall submit documentation of the following:
  - 1. Three years of full-time post-licensure experience in the practice of marriage and family therapy;
  - 2. 180 hours of experience providing marriage and family therapy supervision for at least two supervisees during a period of no less than two years and no more than five years;
  - 3. 36 hours of supervision received from an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor or a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, specifically in the skill of providing marriage and family therapy supervision, minimum of 24 hours of which shall have been individual supervision-of-supervision;

4. A recommendation from each of the supervisors who provided supervision-of-supervision attesting to the applicant's competence as a supervisor; and,
  5. The Board may, in its discretion, approve a supervisor who is licensed, in good standing, as a Marriage and Family Therapist and who is designated as an approved marriage and family therapy supervisor in another jurisdiction.
- (d) Course in Clinical Content Area means a graduate course in the etiology, dynamics, evaluation, assessment, diagnosis, or treatment of emotional or behavioral problems and conditions.
- (e) Coursework in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models means graduate coursework that facilitate the development of competencies in the foundations and critical epistemological issues of marriage and family therapy, These courses include the historical development of the marriage and family therapy relational/systemic philosophy, contemporary conceptual foundations of marriage and family therapy, and early and contemporary models of marriage and family therapy, including evidence-based practice and the biopsychosocial framework.
- (f) Course in Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families means graduate coursework in treatment approaches specifically designed for use with a wide range of diverse individuals, couples, and families, including sex therapy, working with same-sex couples, young children, adolescents and elderly, interfaith couples, and include a focus on evidence-based practice and crisis intervention.
- (g) Course in Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility means graduate coursework that addresses the development of a marriage and family therapy identity and socialization and facilitates the development of competencies in ethics in marriage and family therapy practice, including understanding and applying the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics and understanding.

- (h) Course in Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities means graduate coursework in understanding and applying knowledge of diversity, power, privilege, and oppression as these relate to race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religious, spiritual and or other beliefs, nation of origin, or other relevant social identities throughout the curriculum. It includes practice with diverse, international, multicultural, marginalized, and/or underserved communities, including developing competencies in working with sexual and gender minorities and their families, as well as anti-racist practices.
- (i) Course in Research and Evaluation means graduate coursework in the development of competencies in marriage and family therapy research and evaluation methods, and in evidence-based practice, including becoming an informed consumer of couples, marriage, and family therapy research.
- (j) Course in Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span means graduate coursework that addresses individual and family development, human sexuality, and biopsychosocial health across the life span.
- (k) Course in Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in traditional psycho-diagnostic categories, psychopharmacology, the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of major mental health issues as well as a wide variety of common presenting problems including addiction, suicide, trauma, abuse, intra-familial violence, and therapy for individuals, couples, and families managing acute medical conditions, utilizing a marriage and family therapy relational/systemic philosophy.
- (l) Course in Contemporary Issues means graduate coursework facilitating the development of competencies in emerging and evolving contemporary challenges, problems, and or recent developments at the interface of Marriage and Family Therapy knowledge and practice, and the broader local, regional, and global context. This includes such issues as immigration, technology, same-sex marriage, violence in schools, and other contemporary issues.

- (m) Course in Community Intersections and Collaboration means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in the practice within defined contexts (e.g., healthcare settings, schools, military settings, private practice) and/or nontraditional marriage and family therapy professional practice (e.g., community advocacy, psycho-educational groups). This area also includes developing competency in multidisciplinary collaboration.
- (n) Course in Preparation for Teletherapy Practice means graduate coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in teletherapy. This may include such issues as emerging legal and ethical requirements, documentation response to crises, awareness of the therapeutic space, joining, appropriate individual and systemic interventions (couples, play therapy), or other topics of importance and with diverse populations.
- (o) Course in Advanced Research means a doctoral course that facilitates the development of competencies in:
  - 1. advanced research, including demonstrated proficiency in quantitative methods and analysis techniques, qualitative methods and analysis techniques, or mixed methods and analysis techniques appropriate to carrying out relational research;
  - 2. methodologies and analysis techniques outside of their proficiency area;
  - 3. understanding the theoretical complexity of change within relationships and how this complexity informs research;
  - 4. understanding and demonstrating sensitivity to and awareness of how issues of diversity in terms of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, etc, play a role in their choice of research topics and their conduct of research activities; and
  - 5. preparing and disseminating research through a variety of activities (e.g., grants and grant writing, program evaluation, professional publications and presentations).
- (p) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory means a doctoral course that facilitates the development of advanced clinical competencies including:

1. advanced understanding and application of multiple family and couple models and empirically supported interventions;
  2. skill in working with diverse populations across the lifespan through direct clinical work or in marriage and family relational/systemic supervision of the therapy of others;
  3. awareness of cultural issues, differences, and personal blind spots in their clinical and supervisory work; and
  4. development of a specialized clinical area that is grounded in research and is at a level of intervention and understanding.
- (q) Course in Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges means a doctoral course that facilitates the development of leading-edge professionals who are competent in relational/systemic innovations. This includes the application to controversial moral and advanced ethical dilemmas, international, cross cultural, and multicultural issues in marriage and family therapy professional roles, responsibilities, practices, and applications to other contemporary problems. This area also includes a focus on family policy and/or family law.
- (r) Course in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, Marriage and Family Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and/or Leadership means doctoral coursework that facilitates the development of competencies in relational/systemic teaching, marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision, and/or marriage and family therapy consultation. This may include educational/learning theories, relevant research, multicultural content, evaluation and assessment methods, ethics and professional issues, and personal philosophy.
- (s) Direct Clinical Experience means time spent in therapeutic client contact as therapist or co-therapist, occurring in-person synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by technology.
- (t) Direction means ongoing oversight by an employer or superior of the work of a person practicing professional counseling, social work, or marriage and family therapy. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or

intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner. In order to be acceptable to the Marriage and Family Therapy Standards Committee of the Board, a director must attest to having performed the functions specified in this paragraph, and when not an employer must have entered into a contractual agreement with the practitioner to perform these functions.

1. Directors may not be family members of practitioners for whom they provide direction, nor may directors provide direction for any practitioner when the practitioner or any of the practitioner's family members own the business in which the director is employed.
  2. Family Member means members of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.
- (u) Full-time Experience means a minimum of 20 hours per week spent in direct clinical experience.
  - (v) Group Supervision means a maximum of six supervisees meeting with one supervisor.
  - (w) Individual Supervision means a maximum of two supervisees meeting with one supervisor.
  - (x) One Year means twelve months, or any periods of time which sum to twelve months.
  - (y) Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy means evaluating, diagnosing, and treating emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, affective or behavioral, resolving intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, and changing perception, attitudes and behavior; all within the context of marital and family systems. Marriage and family therapy includes, without being limited to, individual, group, couple, sexual, family and divorce therapy. Marriage and family therapy involves an applied understanding of the dynamics of marital and family therapy systems, including individual psychodynamics, the use of assessment instruments that evaluate marital and family functioning, designing

and recommending a course of treatment, and the use of psychotherapy and counseling.

- (z) Professional Identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist is demonstrated by publicly displayed and accessible indicators of commitment to the marriage and family therapy profession such as a graduate degree from a COAMFTE accredited program, marriage and family therapist licensure/registration, membership in a relationally-focused professional association dedicated to promoting the marriage and family therapy profession, advanced credentials in a practice area specific to the marriage and family therapy profession, or contributions specific to the marriage and family therapy profession such as leadership, training, or scholarly activities.
  
- (aa) Program Clinical Supervisor is a supervisor who provides marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision within an approved practicum or internship program. Program Clinical Supervisor qualifications include the following:
  - 1. demonstration of professional identity as a marriage and family therapist, and
  - 2. demonstration of training in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision by one of the following:
    - (i) A graduate course in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision equivalent to three semester-credit hours.
    - (ii) Postgraduate professional education in marriage and family therapy relational/systemic supervision of at least 30 clock hours.
    - (iii) A state established marriage and family therapy supervisor designation that includes relational/systemic supervision training.
    - (iv) Designation as an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Approved Supervisor Candidate.

(bb) Program in Marriage and Family Therapy means a master's degree or doctoral degree program at an accredited educational institution which includes the following coursework:

1. Master's Degree Program:

- (i) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models  
(minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours)
- (ii) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families  
(minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours)
- (iii) Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities  
(minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- (iv) Research and Evaluation (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- (v) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility  
(minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- (vi) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span  
(minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- (vii) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours)
- (viii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum in some way, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:
  - (I) Contemporary Issues;
  - (II) Community Intersections and Collaboration;
  - (III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

2. Doctoral Degree Program

- (i) Advanced Research (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);

- (ii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (iii) Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (iv) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, MFT Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and /or Leadership (No minimum credit/clock hours requirements);
- (v) Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (vi) Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (Minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours);
- (vii) Diverse, Multicultural and /or Underserved Communities (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (viii) Research and Evaluation (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (ix) Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (x) Biopsychosocial Health and Development Across the Life Span (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (xi) Systemic/Relational Assessment and Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment (Minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours);
- (xii) The following areas must be covered in the curriculum, though there are no minimum credit/clock hour requirements. To meet these requirements examples may include but are not limited to CE hours included as part of a course requirement, classes in courses or specific trainings which address these areas:
  - (I) Contemporary Issues;
  - (II) Community Intersections and Collaboration;
  - (III) Preparation for Teletherapy Practice.

- (cc) Supervision means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of the interactions with clients of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audio tapes, video tapes, and direct observation in order to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.
1. Supervisors may not be family members of supervisees for whom they provide supervision, nor may supervisors provide supervision for any supervisee when the supervisee or any of the supervisee's family members own the business in which the supervisor is employed.
  2. Family Member means members of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

**(2) Requirements for Licensure:**

- (a) An applicant who holds a current license as an **Associate Marriage and Family Therapist** must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.
1. Experience. The applicant must document two years of full-time post-master's experience or its equivalent, under direction and supervision.
    - (i) Such experience shall have been in the practice of marriage and family therapy and shall include a minimum of 1,500 hours of direct clinical experience.
    - (ii) For applicants who have worked less than full-time, equivalent experience may be accrued over a total of not less than two years and not more than five years.
  2. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 100 hours of supervision, concurrent with his/her documented experience.

- (i) Such supervision shall have been provided by:
    - (I) a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist, or psychologist who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years; or
    - (II) an American Association for Marriage and Family therapy (AAMFT) Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.
  - (ii) A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision and
  - (iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience.
3. Examination Waived. The applicant is not required to re-take the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board approval of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.
- (b) An applicant who holds a **Master's** Degree and does not have an active Associate Marriage and Family Therapist license must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:
- 1. Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree from:
    - (i) A program in marriage and family therapy;
    - (ii) A program in clinical counseling, clinical social work, any allied profession, or applied sociology; provided, however, that, on and after July 1,2025, any such degree program or additional post-master's degree coursework shall include courses equivalent to those of a marriage and family therapy degree program; or
    - (iii) Any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

- (iv) Such degree shall be from an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (v) For the purpose of licensure under this rule, a degree in psychology, child and family development or sociology shall be considered an applied degree and a degree in divinity or in theology shall be considered a degree in pastoral counseling if the applicant has completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, either of the following two options:
  - (I) three courses in clinical content areas; or
  - (II) two courses in clinical content areas, plus an approved practicum or internship, which shall include a minimum of 300 hours of direct clinical contact hours in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy; and
  - (III) The coursework required under this section shall be in addition to the required coursework in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), Theories and Models, and Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), and Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours).
- (vi) The applicant shall have completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice, Theories and Models (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (minimum of 6

semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours), and one course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions. These courses shall have been obtained from an educational institution accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation or, prior to January 1, 2019, from a training institute which offers Board approved graduate level courses.

2. Experience. The applicant must document three years of full-time post-master's experience or its equivalent, under direction and supervision, which shall include a minimum of 1,800 hours of direct clinical experience.
  - (i) One year of such experience may have been in an approved practicum before or after the granting of the master's degree, which shall include a minimum of 300 hours of direct clinical contact hours with individuals, couples, families, or other systems, at least 100 of which must be relational hours that occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice.
  - (ii) At least two years of such experience shall have been in the practice of marriage and family therapy, which shall include a minimum of 1,500 hours of direct clinical experience.
  - (iii) For applicants who have worked less than full-time, equivalent experience may be accrued over a total of not less than three years and not more than five years.
3. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 200 hours of supervision, concurrent with his/her documented experience.
  - (i) Such supervision shall have been provided by:
    - (I) a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist or

psychologist, who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years; or,

(II) an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.

(ii) At least 100 hours of such supervision shall have been provided by an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation. A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision;

(iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience; and

(iv) Up to 100 hours of such supervision may have been obtained during an approved practicum before or after the granting of the master's degree.

4. Examination. The applicant must pass the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board approval of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

(c) An applicant who holds a **Doctoral Degree** must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:

1. Education. The applicant must have earned a doctoral degree from;

(i) A program in marriage and family therapy;

(ii) A program in clinical counseling, clinical social work, any allied profession, or applied sociology; provided, however, that, on and after July 1, 2025, any such degree program or additional post-

master's degree coursework shall include courses equivalent to those of a marriage and family therapy degree program; or

- (iii) Any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.
- (iv) Such degree shall be from an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- (v) For the purpose of licensure under this rule, a degree in psychology, child and family development or sociology shall be considered an applied degree and a degree in divinity or in theology shall be considered a degree in pastoral counseling if the applicant has completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, either of the following two options:
  - (I) Three courses in clinical content areas; or
  - (II) Two courses in clinical content areas, plus an approved practicum or internship, which shall include a minimum of 300 hours of direct clinical contact hours in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy; and
  - (III) The coursework required under this section shall be in addition to the required coursework in Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), Clinical Treatment with Individuals Couples and Families (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), and Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours).

- (vi) The applicant shall have completed, as part of a master's or doctoral degree program, or as additional post-graduate degree coursework, Foundations of Relational/Systemic Practice (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), Clinical Treatment with Individuals, Couples and Families (minimum of 6 semester credits/8 quarter credits/90 clock hours), one course in Professional Identity, Law, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (minimum of 3 semester credits/4 quarter credits/45 clock hours), and one course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions. These courses shall have been obtained from an educational institution accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or, prior to January 1, 2019, from a training institute which offers Board approved graduate level courses.
2. Experience. The applicant must document two years of full-time post-master's or post-doctorate experience in the practice of marriage and family therapy, under direction and supervision, which shall include a minimum of 1,000 hours of direct clinical experience.
- (i) One year of such experience may have been in an approved internship program before or after the granting of the doctoral degree, which shall include a minimum of 300 hours of direct clinical contact hours with individuals, couples, families, or other systems, at least 100 of which must be relational hours that occur over a minimum of twelve months of clinical practice.
  - (ii) At least one year of such experience shall have been full-time post-master's or post-doctorate experience, which shall include a minimum of 700 hours of direct clinical contact hours.
3. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 100 hours of supervision, concurrent with their documented experience.

- (i) Such supervision shall have been provided by a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist or psychologist, who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years, and who was also an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation;
  - (ii) A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision;
  - (iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience; and
  - (iv) A maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been obtained during the applicant's doctoral degree or internship program.
4. Examination. The applicant must pass the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board approval of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.
- (d) An applicant who holds licensure in another state as a Marriage and Family Therapist must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:
  1. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the board shall issue an expedited license by endorsement to any individual seeking licensure as a marriage and family therapist who:
    - (i) Completes an application for licensure and pays all applicable fees;
    - (ii) Holds a current, valid, and unrestricted license to practice as a marriage and family therapist issued by another state;
    - (iii) Is in good standing in such other state and is not the subject of an investigation or a disciplinary proceeding being conducted by a professional licensing board in such other state;

- (iv) Does not have a disqualifying criminal record; and
  - (v) Has been verified to have a lawful presence in the United States pursuant to Code Section 50-36-1.
2. An expedited license by endorsement provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be issued no later than 30 days from the date of receipt of an application and information and documents that show that all of the requirements of paragraph (1) of this subsection have been met. Such application for an expedited license by endorsement shall only require such information and documentation necessary to verify that the applicant meets the requirements set forth in paragraph (1) of this subsection.

**Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-13.**