

COUNSELING CREDENTIALS

The Board offers two levels of counseling credentials: a more “experience-based” certification and an advanced licensure for those meeting the higher education requirements.

CERTIFIED SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELOR (CSAC)

Scope of Practice: The practice of a certified substance abuse counselor consists of the Twelve Core Functions, including screening, intake, orientation, assessment, treatment planning, counseling, case management, crisis intervention, client education, report and record keeping, consultation with other professionals in regard to client treatment and services, and referral to treat addictive disorder or disease and help prevent relapse.

Education: The applicant has, at a minimum, a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate. (This credential applies to those with associate’s and bachelor’s degrees as well as to those with master’s degrees that do not meet the LCAS requirements).

Conduct: All applicants should not have engaged in any practice or conduct that would be grounds for disciplinary action under G.S. 90-113.44.

Intern Status: Applicants for CSAC who have met registration requirements but have not completed all of the required supervised experience hours may apply for intern status if they have completed an approved 300-hour **Supervised Practical Training** (Practicum) (see below, passed the appropriate **examination** and have **contracted** with a **clinical supervisor** (CCS or CSI).

Reciprocity: This certification offers reciprocity through the IC&RC/AODA Inc.

REGISTRATION PROCESS:

FIRST: Go the [NCSAPPB website](#) Create an account in *LearningBuilder* (see APPLICATION PROCESS in the Credential Manual Overview for detailed information to aid application) Applicants will be asked to pay an application fee (\$25) before choosing the credential for which they wish to register.

Applicants will be asked to provide documentation through scanned and uploaded forms (see *LearningBuilder* information for acceptable file formats and credit cards). As sections are completed the applicant will receive continuous feedback by email from the Board.

Documentation is required in the following areas:

❖ **REGISTRATION FORMS**

- **Resume:** Upload a current resume.
- **Ethics attestation:** Agree to adhere to the ethical standards adopted by the Board.
- **Job Description:** Enter a job description that demonstrates that applicant is practicing under the scope of practice for the credential (CSAC).
- **Fee:** Pay \$125 (non-refundable) registration fee.

❖ **300 HOUR SUPERVISED PRACTICUM**

- Click IDENTIFY SUPERVISOR and provide the name and email address; name of their agency; whether they are credentialed (Y/N); and the number of supervised hours that are planned (up to 300). (You may add an additional supervisor if planning to acquire supervised experience by more than one supervisor). A button will appear stating “Pending Contract”.

REGISTRATION PROCESS - 300 HOUR SUPERVISED PRACTICUM – continued

- i. The supervisor will be notified that they have been requested to verify the supervision contract with the applicant on *LearningBuilder*. The supervisor will utilize a special link to verify that they have a contract to supervise the applicant. When completed the Button color will change to indicate this step is completed.
- ii. Upon completion of the 300 supervised hours the applicant should request an evaluation from their supervisor in their Learning Plan of *LearningBuilder*. The supervisor will receive an email asking them to verify through written evaluation the 300 hours of practice, including 30 hours of supervision. The supervisor will use the link to complete the evaluation for their supervisee. (Note: The supervisor will not be able to access their supervisee's Learning Plan by logging into their own *LearningBuilder* account).

❖ **BACKGROUND CHECK FEE:** Pay the (non-refundable) fee (\$38 in 2015).

❖ **BACKGROUND CHECK FORMS:** Complete the following:

- Download the Release of Information and Fingerprint Information forms.
- Take printed forms to the Law Enforcement Agency, complete and get electronic fingerprints taken and Release form signed by LE official taking fingerprints. You must also sign the form. The fingerprints will be transmitted electronically.
- Return to *LearningBuilder* and **UPLOAD SIGNED RELEASE FORM**.
- **Click SUBMIT**.

******IMPORTANT NOTE****: You MUST UPLOAD SIGNED RELEASE form before being allowed to continue the Registration Process!!!!**

❖ **EDUCATION:**

- Click ADD SCHOOL and type in the information into box (type degree, name of school, start date, completion/graduation date, graduation y/n, location).
- If highest degree attained is high school or GED, upload a scan of the diploma/GED.
- If degree is from college or university, applicant will need to contact the school to request official transcripts be sent directly to the Board. (Schools may now process requests digitally).

❖ **QUESTIONS:**

- Criminal history: if ever convicted you will need to provide a statement listing details of conviction(s) including dates and disposition. Indicate if you are currently on probation or have any pending charges.
- Professional license history: Acknowledge if you ever held, denied or were revoked legal certification/licensure.

❖ **ETHICS TRAINING:**

- A 3-hour Ethics training must be completed to register. Click SELECT to bring up box into which you enter information about the course, completion date, approval code (if any; if none, type NA and enter # hours).
- Upload scanned certificate or course transcript to document completed training.

- ❖ **COMPLETING REGISTRATION:** Once all required documentation has been uploaded, THE **SUBMIT APPLICATION** button **will TURN ORANGE**.
 - Click **SUBMIT APPLICATION** when orange and attestation box will open.
 - Answer the question and **CLICK SUBMIT APPLICATION AGAIN**.

Once all documentation has been submitted and Board staff have reviewed and approved the documentation, the applicant will be notified through email that they have been granted **REGISTERED STATUS***. Applicants can go to the Board website to verify their status and print documentation, if desired. Registrants may **retain this status up to five years** while pursuing the required supervised practice hours and substance abuse-specific training.

(*NOTE: Registered *Intern Status* is not achieved until the 300 hour Practicum is completed and the Written Exam is taken and passed).

SUPERVISED PRACTICUM

Registrants will need to practice their skills in the field under supervision (either paid or volunteer).

Initially, 300 hours of Supervised Practice (Practicum) at a ratio of 1 hour supervision for every 10 hours of practice in each of the twelve core functions is required. (see **Supervised Practice** description below).

Once the Practicum has successfully been completed, the Registrant must return to the *LearningBuilder* Plan and click **REQUESTS EVALUATION** from the supervisor. (**Note:** if Registrant completed the 300-hour practicum under more than one supervisor, he/she will need to request evaluation from each identified supervisor and note the number of hours completed with each supervisor).

The Clinical Supervisor (CCS or CSI) will receive an email to complete an evaluation in *LearningBuilder* of 300 hours of supervised practice in the 12 core functions and the candidate's suitability for credentialing. for the Registrant.

EXAMINATION:

When ready to demonstrate knowledge of substance abuse counseling the registrant will apply to take the online computer-based exam. (Upon successful completion of the exam and other Registrant requirements (see above), the Registrant will achieve *Intern Status*. To apply to take the exam the Registrant completes the following:

1. **Log** into *LearningBuilder* – CSAC. With the registration process completed, the status will state that the application is “Awaiting Exam/Final Docs”.
2. **Select** the Orange “Continue” button.
3. The second box, “Exam Forms” should be **selected**.
4. **Pay** the (non-refundable) exam fee of \$125.
5. **Request** to take the exam. (If accommodations are needed under the ADA, follow instructions on the *LearningBuilder* site to request them). The Board staff will contact the Registrant by email when all the documentation has been approved (~ 1 week).
6. **From the email registrant will click on the test link** to register for the exam.
7. **Take and pass** the exam.
8. **Exam results** will appear in the next box within 1 -2 weeks after exam is completed.

Upon completion of all requirements, the Registrant will be granted CSAC-Intern status, informed by email.

RE-TESTING

An applicant may request a reexamination and pay a non-refundable reexamination fee of \$125 for the written exam if a passing score was not achieved and at least three months have passed from the date of failed test.

SUPERVISED PRACTICE AND INTERN STATUS

In order to practice in the Intern Status while seeking full certification, interns must practice under supervision for 6,000 hours (in no fewer than 3 years) at a ratio of 1 hour of supervision for every 40 hours of practice;

Once successfully completed the Intern must request supervisor evaluation through *LearningBuilder*. Log into the site, select the CSAC credential and the button to “Request Evaluation” within the 6,000 hour block. The identified Clinical Supervisor(s) (CCS or CSI) will be sent a link by email to verify completion and describe Intern’s job duties in *LearningBuilder*.

NOTE: **Continuous supervision is required to legally practice.** If registrants change supervisors they must immediately inform the Board and provide name and address of their new supervisor within 30 days of ending prior supervision to avoid suspension of credentialing status.

CERTIFIED SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELOR (CSAC)

To become fully certified, Interns have up to 5 years to complete:

- ❖ **EDUCATION:** 270 hours of Board-approved education and training. (see description below)
 - **Registrant- Interns will upload** documentation of training events into *LearningBuilder* as they are completed.
Note: look for specific dropdown boxes related to the type of training received.
- ❖ **REFERENCES:** Provide the names and email addresses of two (2) co-workers or colleagues who will be asked to provide professional references.

When all documentation has been completed, reviewed and approved the “Request Credential” button will turn orange. The registrant will receive an email that he/she will be **granted Certification as a Substance Abuse Counselor**. The Board will mail a certificate within a month.

CERTIFICATION PERIOD and RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATE

Certification is for a period of **two years**. To retain certification past two years counselors must submit a completed renewal Learning Plan. Counselors must log into their *LearningBuilder* profile, click the Learning Plans tab and submit the following:

- ❖ **Documentation** of completion at least **60 hours of Board-approved** education *within* the two years of certified practice prior to the requested renewal. (see *Continuing Education* below for specifics)
- ❖ **Application** for renewal of certification within a reasonable time from the end of the 2-year cycle and no later than the last day of the last month of the certification period.
NOTE: It is the responsibility of the certified professional to know and keep up with the dates of the credentialing period.
- ❖ **Pay** the (non-refundable) renewal fee of \$125. (continued on next page)

CERTIFICATION PERIOD and RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATE - *continued*

- ❖ Establish a **supervision contract** with a clinical practice supervisor at [the required ratios](#).
 - One hour of supervision for every 40 hours for the first 4,000 hours of practice;
 - One hour of supervision for every 80 hours for the second 4,000 hours of practice;
 - One hour of supervision for every 160 hours of practice for all subsequent practice.
- ❖ Agree to adhere to the **ethical standards** adopted by the Board.

REMEMBER: Failure to renew certification or licensure by the due date *and continuing to practice in that area is illegal. Those who practice or aid or abet another to practice with a lapsed credential may be found guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.* (G.S. 90.113.43-.44)

Therefore, it is imperative for credentialed professionals to seek continuing education throughout the time period and to apply in advance of the end of a credentialing cycle.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR RENEWAL

By the end of a 2-year period of certification and *before* renewing the Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) credential, all those who wish to renew their credentials need to have completed a minimum of **60 hours** of continuing education (CE), **30 hours** of which need to have been “substance-abuse specific”. Of the 60 hours, the following topics must be included:

1. Three (3) hours of HIV/AIDS/STDS/TB/Blood-borne pathogens training and education;
2. Three (3) hours professional ethics education;
3. Three (3) hours of education to be selected from the following:

Nicotine Dependence

Substance Abuse Issues In Older Adults

Psychopathology

Substance Abuse Issues Affecting Veterans

Evidence-Based Treatment Approaches

The following limitations apply regarding acceptable formats and percentages:

- 50% maximum may be acquired in “independent” or “self” study
- 25% maximum may be acquired through “in-service” events
- 25% maximum may be acquired through “workshop presentation”

REMEMBER: Failure to renew certification or licensure by the due date *and continuing to practice in that area is illegal. Those who practice or aid or abet another to practice with a lapsed credential may be found guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.* (G.S. 90.113.43-.44)

Therefore, it is imperative for credentialed professionals to seek continuing education throughout the time period and to apply in advance of the end of a credentialing cycle.

DEFINITIONS

SUPERVISED PRACTICE (PRACTICUM) for CSAC

All applicants for the certified substance abuse counselor credential shall complete a 300 hour practicum supervised by an applicant supervisor and the practicum shall cover all **12 core functions of counseling (defined below)**. The applicant is to practice *at least* 10 hours in each of the core functions (120 hours), receiving one hour of supervision for every 10 hours of practice in each function. The remaining 180 hours of this practicum shall be practiced in the core function areas.

The supervisor will verify through written evaluation the 300 hours of practice, including 30 hours of supervision, when the applicant, upon completion of the 300 hours, accesses their Learning Plan in *LearningBuilder* and requests an evaluation from their supervisor. An email is generated to the supervisor inviting the supervisor to access the supervisee's Learning Plan through a special link. The supervisor will use the link to complete the evaluation for their supervisee. (Note: The supervisor will *not* be able to access their supervisee's Learning Plan by logging into their own *LearningBuilder* account).

The practicum may be completed as part of an academic course of study in a regionally accredited college or university or it may be developed in the work setting as long as it is supervised by an applicant supervisor (CCS or CSI).

TWELVE (12) CORE FUNCTIONS of COUNSELING

1. **Screening:** The process by which a client is determined appropriate and eligible for admission to a particular program.
2. **Intake:** The administrative and initial assessment procedures for admission to a program.
3. **Orientation:** Describing to the client the following: general nature and goals of the program; rules governing client conduct and infractions that can lead to disciplinary action or discharge from the program; in a non-residential program, the hours during which services are available; treatment costs to be borne by the client, if any; and, client rights.
4. **Assessment:** The procedures by which a counselor/program identifies and evaluates an individual's strengths, weaknesses, problems and needs for the development of a treatment plan.
5. **Treatment Planning:** Process by which the counselor and client identify and rank problems needing resolution; establish agreed upon immediate and long term goals; and decide upon a treatment process and the resources to be utilized.
6. **Counseling:** (Individual, Group, and Significant Others): The utilization of special skills to assist individuals, families, or groups in achieving objectives through exploration of a problem and its ramifications; examination of attitudes and feelings; consideration of alternative solutions; and, decision making.
7. **Case Management:** Activities which bring services, agencies, resources or people together within a planned framework of action toward the achievement of established goals. It may involve liaison activities and collateral contracts.
8. **Crisis Intervention:** Those services which respond to an alcohol and/or other drug abuser's needs during acute emotional and/or physical distress.
9. **Client Education:** Provision of information to individuals and groups concerning alcohol and other drug abuse and the available services and resources.
10. **Referral:** Identifying the needs of a client that cannot be met by the counselor or agency and assisting the client to utilize the support systems and community resources available.
11. **Report and Recordkeeping:** Charting the results of the assessment and treatment plan, writing reports, progress notes, discharge summaries and other client-related data.
12. **Consultation with Other Professionals In Regard To Client Treatment/Services:** Relating with in-house staff or outside professionals to assure comprehensive, quality care for the client.

EDUCATION and TRAINING - defined

Each registrant must complete and document 270 (clock) hours of Board-approved education and training. 190 of the hours must be substance-abuse specific in the **core competencies (see below)**. Applicants must also acquire and document education in special topic areas at the specified rates:

1. Six (6) hours of HIV/AIDS/STDS/TB/Blood-borne pathogens training and education;
2. Six (6) hours professional ethics education;
3. Six (6) hours of education to be selected from the following:

Nicotine Dependence

Psychopathology

Evidence-Based Treatment Approaches

Substance Abuse Issues In Older Adults

Substance Abuse Issues Affecting
Veterans

The other 80 hours may be directed toward general professional skill building to enhance counselor development.

Some restrictions apply regarding the types of education allowed:

- No more than 25% of the 270 hours (67.5 hours) may be in-service education received within your organization by staff of the same employment.
- No more than 50% of the 270 hours (135 hours) may be in independent study.

CORE COMPETENCIES (Counseling) - DEFINED

1. Basic alcoholism and drug addiction knowledge;
2. Screening, intake, orientation and assessment;
3. Individual, group and family counseling and intervention techniques;
4. Case management, treatment planning, reporting and record keeping;
5. Crisis intervention skills;
6. Prevention and education;
7. Consultation, referral and networking that utilizes community resources;
8. Ethics, legal issues, and confidentiality;
9. Special populations which include but are not limited to individuals or groups with specific ethnic, cultural, sexual orientation, and gender characteristics as well as persons dealing with HIV, co-occurring disabilities, persons with criminal justice related issues and perinatal issues;
10. Physiology and pharmacology of alcohol and other drugs that include the licit and illicit drugs, inhalants and nicotine;
11. Psychological, emotional, personality and developmental issues; and
12. Traditions and philosophies of 12-step and other recovery support groups.