

LPC Application Guidelines for JMU Counseling Students

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Over the decades, hundreds of our JMU Counseling graduates have successfully applied to become Licensed Professional Counselors in Virginia. Our CACREP-accredited, 60-credit-hour Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program is designed to meet all the coursework requirements for licensure. Also, many students in our accredited, 48-credit-hour School Counseling Program have decided to take the additional 12 credit hours to qualify. The School Counseling Program Handbook gives detailed information regarding the additional courses necessary to pursue the LPC.

Our graduates have an impressive and long history of becoming LPCs, but many have encountered delays during the past two years. The purpose of this guidebook is to help you not only become licensed, but to reduce the delays so that you can keep a positive momentum as you launch your counseling career.

General Strategies

As stressful and daunting as the licensing process is, please keep in mind that you will have graduated from an excellent training program with a strong curriculum that is filled entirely with courses that are counseling-focused. These general strategies outlined below can help you succeed in becoming an LPC:

- **Start preparing early.** Our first recommendation is to begin preparing for licensure while you are a student. In your portfolio, keep copies of your course syllabi, progress reviews, practicum logs, internship logs, and other counseling-related documents. This information can be invaluable when you begin to complete the license application forms.

- **Be fully involved in all facets of your training.** The best preparation for becoming an LPC is to be a successful trainee in the program. Therefore, make the most of all your learning experiences – introductory classes, skill development courses, practicum, and supervision.

- **Learn about the licensing process.** Throughout your training, you will be learning in general about licensing and other regulations regarding counseling. To familiarize yourself specifically with the Virginia Board of Counseling, which carries out the licensure process in this state, you need to visit regularly its web site at <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/counseling/>. The site provides information regarding recent changes in policies, minutes of meetings, and other details about procedures.

- **Keep a licensure folder.** We strongly recommend that, at least by the beginning of your internship, you start a folder for licensure. Include in the folder the current forms.

- **Once you have the diploma, immediately go for the license.** When you graduate, you want to keep your momentum for professional development by pursuing the license as soon as you have documentation of your graduation and have a counseling job that will fulfill your residency requirements.

- **Remember licensure in your job hunt.** When you begin to interview for a counseling job, inform every potential employer of your plans to pursue licensure. You need to ensure that your job involves providing counseling services under the supervision of a qualified, licensed mental health professional. The regulations are in the process of changing to require that your

supervisor be a qualified LPC, so keep this change of policy in mind for the future.

- **Stay connected to your cohort group.** It's great to keep in touch with your former classmates, but it's also tremendously helpful to share information and practical tips about the licensure process. You will find that it's reassuring to realize that you are not the only one to have doubts and worries about becoming an LPC.

- **Keep your relationships with your faculty.** Just because you have graduated does not mean that you should sever your ties with JMU Counseling faculty. We love to keep in touch with alumni and to hear updates on their professional careers and personal lives. We are also an important resource for providing documentation that the Board requires during the licensure process.

- **Rely on your residency supervisor.** Your residency supervisor is both a seasoned counselor who is guiding you along in your clinical work and a great resource for helping you through the licensure process. Check with your supervisor when you have questions or concerns.

- **Work long and hard.** There is no quick and dirty way to become licensed. It involves two years of intense preparation after you have graduated to complete your residency. It also takes hours of work to complete application materials, keep records of your supervision, and prepare for the examination.

- **Review previous course material.** When you begin preparing for the examination, you will find it helpful to review all the information, concepts and issues that you have covered in your classes.

- **Take care of yourself.** Take time to relax, rest, and enjoy your life! Yes, you are pursuing the dream of becoming an LPC, but you also want to keep your professional aspirations in perspective. Having a fulfilling personal life brings balance, meaning and joy—the best medicine for preventing professional burn-out.

Specific Steps of Licensure

The Board's descriptions of its policies and procedures include legalistic and bureaucratic terms that can seem confusing. Also, the Board's instructions are complicated because they include provisions for those who graduated in other states, went through unaccredited counselor education programs, or graduated from master's programs in related fields.

Both JMU Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Therefore, they are recognized as meeting the definition of graduate degree programs that prepare individuals to practice counseling and counseling treatment intervention as defined in §54.1-3500 of the Code of Virginia. However, the Board does not accept CACREP accreditation as automatically meeting the standards for specific coursework, so be careful to use the official titles of our Counseling Programs—Clinical Mental Health Counseling or School Counseling at all times in your material. For example, if you inadvertently use the term “Counseling Psychology” to describe your training program, a reviewer will automatically refer your application to the Credentials Committee of the Board, which will require additional documentation of the program's mission and descriptions of the credentials of faculty members. Remember—you have a degree from a CACREP-accredited *counselor education* program.

James Madison University is an institution of higher education that is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). For these and

many other reasons, as a graduate of a CACREP-accredited counselor education program, the licensing process is a little simpler for JMU alumni:

- Step 1. Register Your Supervision.
- Step 2. Submit LPC Application Materials.
- Step 3. Take the Examination.

The sections below describe each step in detail and include suggestions for you to follow in for successfully meeting the requirements of each step.

Step 1. Registration of Supervision

You can begin the first step of the licensure process only after you have fulfilled these two fundamental requirements:

1. You have graduated from the CMHC Program, or you have graduated from the SC Program and have completed all the required 60 credit-hours.
2. You have a counseling job that meets the requirements for a residency, including a qualified supervisor.

At this first step, it is crucial that you take care to provide all the required information, complete all the necessary forms, include all mandatory documentation, and sign at all the appropriate places on the forms. Unfortunately, you cannot begin to accumulate hours towards the supervised experience until you have received written approval from the Board, so delays at this point can be costly. You can obtain these forms at the Board of Counseling web site at <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/counseling/>. Currently, the most recent LPC Application Package is dated 09/05/2012 in the lower left-hand corner of the pages. The Board revises these forms and policies regularly, so be sure to check the website just before you submit your application to ensure that you are using the current forms.

In order to register your supervision, you need to submit the following materials:

1. **Registration of Supervision Form—LPC Form 1.** Both your supervisor and you have to complete this form, which is on pages 6 to 9 in the application package. You need to submit a supervisory contract stating the proposed plans for you to provide clinical services using recognized counseling and counseling treatment interventions while under the supervision of a qualified licensed practitioner with at least two years of post-licensure clinical experience. Your supervisor must be licensed as a professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, substance abuse treatment practitioner, school psychologist, clinical psychologist, clinical social worker or psychiatrist in the jurisdiction where you are being supervised. At the November, 2012 meeting the Board of Counseling recommended that the regulations be changed to include only qualified Licensed Professional Counselors as approved supervisors. So, you will need to review the policies to see how this will be implemented by the time you begin residency.

Your supervisor is required to assume full responsibility for your counseling activities and must verify and document your experience in the delivery of 2000 hours of face-to-face clinical counseling services utilizing counseling treatment interventions as defined in the Code of Virginia.

2. **Official Transcript.** Enclose your official transcript from the Registrar's Office of James Madison University in an unopened, sealed envelope. The transcript must document that James Madison University has awarded your degree and that you have completed at least 60 graduate credit hours of coursework. Therefore, you cannot begin the licensure process the day that you graduate. It usually takes several weeks for the Graduate School auditors to determine that you have passed all your courses and fulfilled all the requirements on your application for graduation. You can check your electronic transcript to see when it states that you have earned your degree.
3. **Supervision Registration Fee.** Include a check payable to the Treasurer of Virginia in the amount of \$50.00. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferable. If your supervisor changes, then you need to pay an additional \$25.00 and complete the form to register your new supervisor.
4. **Coursework Outline Form—LPC Form 2-CO.** Submit a completed coursework outline form, which is on pages 16 and 17, using Appendix A as an example. Be sure to provide complete information on the code, title, semester hours, and university for every course you have taken. The first page of the form lists 13 required content areas listed. The second page provides spaces in which you can identify the additional counseling courses you have taken to complete the entire 60 credits. This generic form has been submitted to the Board of Counseling, along with catalog descriptions and sample syllabi of the JMU counseling courses. Therefore, you do not need to include any syllabi to expedite the application process. Just follow our sample form carefully and, just to be sure that reviewers can see that the courses reflect the required coursework content areas, add the list of JMU counseling course descriptions in the Graduate Catalog (See Appendix B).
5. **Internship Verification Form—LPC Form 2-VI.** You must submit this completed form, which documents that you have completed your required internship hours, in a sealed envelope. It is located on page 20. Your supervised internship involves a minimum of 600 supervised hours, including 240 hours of face-to-face client contact. You fill out the top half of the form and send it to the JMU Counseling Programs director, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The program official then completes the bottom section, signs the form, seals the envelope, and signs across the flap. Provide the director with the details of your internship, including the starting date of your internship, the total hours of direct client contact, and the total number of your internship hours.

Don't confuse this form with the similar one that is required at Step 2. The later form, which is the Verification of Internship Hours Towards the Residency, is an option if you wish to apply the 900 hours of your CMHC internship or 600 hours of your SC internship to the 4,000 required residency hours. The form required at Step 1 only documents that your training involved an internship of at least 600 hours.

6. **Official Job Description and Additional Optional LPC Form 1-CD.** Finally, you need to enclose an official description of your counseling job and the completed Form 1-

CD. Your practice must include the following areas: counseling and psychotherapy techniques; appraisal, evaluation, and diagnostic procedures; treatment planning and implementation; and case management and record keeping. Your duties must emphasize your professional identity and function as a resident in counseling. The job should also reinforce professional ethics and standards of practice for counseling.

Use the Board's checklist to ensure that your package is complete. Then carefully review all your forms to make certain that you have completely filled out every item, signed on all required lines, and dated the forms. Remember—the Board will return all incomplete applications. Ask a trusted colleague to review your material. Once you're sure that all the forms are correct and complete, make copies of everything except the sealed documents. Send your application and payment to:

Virginia Board of Counseling
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300
Henrico, Virginia 23233

Step 2. Submit LPC Application Materials

When you have completed your 4,000 clock hours of residency, you can then complete Step 2, which includes submitting additional forms and documentation, along with your check or money order, payable to the Treasurer of Virginia, in the amount of \$140 for the application fee.

If you are working full-time, then your residency in counseling should take about two years. Most of our alumni take advantage of the option to apply their internship hours to the residency hours, so you can add up to 900 hours. As a result, you may finish your residency nearly six months earlier. Your residency should also involve at least 2,000 hours of direct client contact.

Another important component of your residency includes a minimum of 200 hours of supervisory sessions. That averages out to two hours a week if you are working full-time, but the Board requires that you have at least one hour of supervision every 40 hours of work. The Board also limits you to no more than 4 hours of supervision during any 40-hour work period. This upper limit prevents residents from piling on supervision hours during a short period of time merely to meet the requirement of 200 total hours. You can count group supervision as equivalent to individual supervision hours, but you are allowed to obtain only 100 hours of group supervision. As of now, at least half of your supervision hours must be with a qualified Licensed Professional Counselor, but as mentioned earlier, the Board of Counseling recently recommended that the regulations be changed to include only qualified Licensed Professional Counselors as approved supervisors. At this time, the recommendation has not been implemented, so the current policy is still in effect.

The Board's instructions for completing Step 2 are unnecessarily complicated for anyone who has been following the current policies for Step 1. For example, you already should have turned in at Step 1 an official transcript, coursework outline, and verification of internship, so you do not have to submit them again. Therefore, below are the only additional forms that you need to supply at this step of the process.

1. **Licensure Application—Form LPC 2.** You need to complete this form, located on pages 12 and 13, sign and date it, and have it notarized. The Board will return all incomplete applications, which will significantly delay your application.
2. **Verification of Supervision—Form LPC 2-VS.** You complete the first part of this form, which is on pages 14 and 15. Your supervisor then completes Part Two, signs, and dates it. You can help in this process by keeping logs of your residency and providing your supervisor with summaries of your hours of experience, direct client contact, individual supervision, and group supervision. Your supervisor also must document your competencies in the following areas: counseling and psychotherapy techniques; appraisal, evaluation, and diagnostic procedures; treatment planning and implementation; case management and record keeping; professional identity and function; and professional ethics and standards of practice. This form must be in a separate, sealed envelope with your supervisor's signature across the seal. If you have had more than one supervisor, then each must submit a completed form.
3. **Supervision Outline Form—Form LPC 2-SO.** This form, located on page 23, is designed to accommodate information for up to seven supervisors during your residency. We hope that you have only one or two supervisors during this time! The basic information includes: supervisor name, dates of supervision, hours you worked per week, total hours, hours of direct client contact, hours of individual supervision per 40-hour week, total hours of individual supervision, hours of group supervision per 40-hour week, and total hours of group supervision.
4. **Quarterly Evaluations—Form LPC 1-QE.** During your residency, your supervisor completes a quarterly evaluation form at the end of each three-month period. It's a great idea for you to begin your residency by noting in your calendar the dates for completing these evaluation forms. Throughout your residency, you need to collect these forms, located on page 10, in your licensure folder so that you can submit all of them at Step 2. Be sure that both your supervisor and you have signed and dated each quarterly form.
5. **Verification of Internship Hours Towards the Residency—Form LPC 2-IR.** Include this optional form, located on pages 18 and 19, only if you wish to have your internship hours considered towards your 4,000 hours of residency. You complete Part One of the form. The supervising faculty member completes Part Two, which includes a signature and date. Again, you can help in this process by using your internship log to provide your total number of internship hours, direct client contact hours, and supervision hours with the faculty supervisor. Finally, your on-site supervisor completes Part Three, signs and dates the form, puts it in an envelope, seals it, signs the back of the envelope across the seal, and returns it to you. Because you attended a CACREP program, you can apply up to 900 hours to the residency.
6. **LPC Application Fee.** Your \$140 fee is non-refundable and non-transferable. Please make check or money order payable to the "Treasurer of Virginia."

Just as you did at Step 1, carefully review all your forms for accuracy and completeness. Again, ask a detail-oriented friend to review your material. Then, make copies of everything except the sealed documents. Send your application and payment to the address given above.

Step 3. Take the Examination.

Your final step towards licensure is passing the National Clinical Mental Health Counselors Examination (NCMHCE). After the Board has approved your licensure application, it will submit your name to the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The Virginia Board then will send you an approval letter, an examination registration form, and a preparation handbook.

To register for the examination, which is administered each month, send your completed registration form and your payment of \$190 for the examination fee. The Board submits approved candidate lists about six weeks prior to the next available examination.

The NCMHCE consists of 10 simulated clinical mental health counseling cases that are designed to sample a broad area of competencies. The cases assess clinical problem-solving ability, including identifying, analyzing, diagnosing and treating clinical issues. Each case is divided into about five to eight sections that are classified as either information gathering or decision-making.

The content areas for the NCMHCE include:

Assessment and Diagnosis

- Integrate client assessment and observational data
- Identify precipitating problems or symptoms
- Identify individual and/or relationship functioning
- Identify relevant family issues

Counseling and Psychotherapy

- Inform client about ethical standards and practice
- Clarify counselor/client roles
- Implement individual counseling in relation to a plan of treatment
- Evaluate referral information

Administration, Consultation and Supervision:

- Maintain case notes, records, and/or files
- Determine if services meet client's needs
- Correspond orally with others to maintain professional communications
- Assist clients with obtaining social services

You can find detailed information regarding NCMHCE study materials and workshops at <http://www.nbcc.org/Exams/Study#NCMHCE>.

About four weeks after you have taken the examination, NBCC will forward your scores to the Board office. If you receive a passing score, the Board then will issue your license. Congratulations!

Appendix A



Commonwealth of Virginia
Board of Counseling

Licensure by Examination – Step Two
Licensure by Endorsement – Step One

LPC FORM 2-CO
Required For All Applicants

COURSEWORK OUTLINE FORM

Applicant's Name (Last, First, Middle)

All courses must be graduate level from a college or university approved by a regional accrediting agency. Do not list courses that are not directly related to counseling. If a course title is not clearly indicative of Board content areas attach college catalog description(s) or course syllabi.

DESIGNATE SEMESTER HOURS WITH AN "S" AND QUARTER HOURS WITH A "Q"

Effective April 12, 2002 all coursework must be a MINIMUM of 3 semester hours or 4 quarter hours.

CONTENT AREA	COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	S/Q HOURS	COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
1. Professional Identity, Functions and Ethics	PSYC 630	Clinical Mental Health Counseling	3S	James Madison University
2. Theories of Counseling & Psychotherapy	PSYC 660	Counseling Theories	3S	James Madison University
3. Counseling and Psychotherapy Techniques	PSYC 661	Counseling Techniques	3S	James Madison University
4. Human Growth and Development	PSYC 614	Advanced Developmental Psychology	3S	James Madison University
5. Group Counseling & Psychotherapy Theories and Techniques	PSYC 665	Group Counseling	3S	James Madison University
6. Career Counseling & Psychotherapy Theories and Techniques	PSYC 669	Career Development	3S	James Madison University
7. Evaluation & Appraisal Procedures	PSYC 607	Assessment Procedures in Counseling	3S	James Madison University
8. Abnormal Behavior & Psychopathology	PSYC 685	Psychopathology: Diagnosis and Intervention Planning	3S	James Madison University
9. Multicultural Counseling, Theories & Techniques	PSYC 749	Multicultural Perspectives of Intervention	3S	James Madison University
10. Research	PSYC 600	Introduction to Measurement and Statistics	3S	James Madison University
11. Diagnosis & Treatment of Addictive Disorders	PSYC 663	Substance Abuse Counseling	3S	James Madison University
12. Marriage & Family Systems	PSYC 668	Couple and Family Systems	3S	James Madison

Theory				University
13. Supervised Practicum and/or Internship (Form 2-VI required)	PSYC 790	Internship in Clinical Mental Health Counseling	6S	James Madison University

COURSEWORK OUTLINE – CONTINUED

Applicant's Name (Last, First, Middle)

“OTHER GRADUATE COURSEWORK”

(List here other courses noted on your transcript(s) to meet the minimum requirement of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours.) **All coursework listed must be counseling focused.**

Designate semester hours with an “S” and quarter hours with a “Q”

Course Code	Course Title	S/Q Hours	College or University
PSYC 664	Counseling Process	3S	James Madison University
PSYC 695	Practicum in Counseling	3S	James Madison University
PSYC 710	Counseling Strategies: Brief Counseling and Crisis Intervention	3S	James Madison University
PSYC 760	Supervision and Consultation for Counselors	3S	James Madison University
PSYC 800	Educational Specialist Research Project	3S	James Madison University
PSYC	Elective in Counseling	3S	James Madison University

Appendix B
James Madison University Catalog
CMHC Course Offerings

PSYC 600. Introduction to Measurement and Statistics. *3 credits.* An introduction to measurement and statistical tools used in conducting research. Specific topics include: reliability and validity; research methods and statistical analysis; quantitative and qualitative methods; needs assessment and program evaluation; use of technology; and legal and ethical issues of research.

PSYC 607. Assessment Procedures in Counseling. *3 credits.* A study of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation. Activities include administering, scoring, and interpreting tests of ability, interest, personality, and achievement for both children and adults. Students also assess case studies, perform a self-analysis, and review selected assessment procedures. Computer-assisted assessment and ethical issues are addressed. *Prerequisite: PSYC 600 or permission of instructor.*

PSYC 614. Advanced Developmental Psychology. *3 credits.* An overview of the theories, research, and applications relevant to the development of behavior and mental processes throughout the life span.

PSYC 630. Clinical Mental Health Counseling. *3 credits.* An introduction to the history, profession, and practice of clinical mental health counseling. Specific topics include: intervening with individuals, groups, families; developing and evaluating programs; consulting with other professional helpers; promoting personal and systemic well-being; dealing with diverse clients; and addressing legal, ethical, and professional identity issues.

PSYC 660. Counseling Theories. *3 credits.* A study of the philosophy and principles of various schools of counseling, and the techniques employed in the counseling process by practitioners in each of these schools.

PSYC 661. Counseling Techniques. *3 credits.* An opportunity to learn fundamental counseling skills that form the foundations of successful counseling practice. Students develop these skills through experiential learning activities, directed reading assignments, discussions and lectures, practice in small groups, and participation in critiques of videotaped microcounseling sessions. *Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.*

PSYC 663. Substance Abuse Counseling. *3 credits.* A study of substance abuse to include related personal, social and physiological factors, and methods of rehabilitation and counseling for the chemically dependent. *Prerequisite: PSYC 515 or equivalent.*

PSYC 664. Counseling Process. *3 credits.* An experiential study of the relationship between counselor and client. Explores the phases of relationship from initiation to termination, including predictable crises and issues which normally arise. Analysis of resistance, transference and counter transference, dependency, and termination issues will be discussed. Attention will also be given to gender and diversity issues. *Prerequisite: PSYC 660, PSYC 661 or permission of*

instructor.

PSYC 665. Group Counseling. *3 credits.* A study of the theories, techniques, dynamics, process and practice of group counseling. Students become members of a laboratory group and also conduct research into issues of group counseling. Each student pairs with a partner, creates an intervention plan, and facilitates the group process. *Prerequisites: PSYC 660 and PSYC 661 or permission of instructor.*

PSYC 668. Couple and Family Systems. *3 credits.* A study of the dynamics of couple and family living, focusing on social change, social stratification, mate selection, marriage, divorce, child rearing, sexuality and individual behavior, and its effect on the family structure. *Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.*

PSYC 669. Career Development. *3 credits.* The impact of career choice throughout the life span is explored. Vocational theories and a variety of approaches to career decision-making will be introduced. Several career-related assessment instruments will be used to help students develop skills in administration and interpretation.

PSYC 685. Psychopathology: Diagnosis and Intervention Planning. *3 credits.* Training and practice in the following: making reliable and valid diagnoses of mental disorders; appropriately addressing the ethical and cultural issues involved; performing collaborative diagnostic interviews; participating in effective case conferences; and planning interventions to achieve therapeutic goals. *Prerequisite: PSYC 600, PSYC 661 or permission of instructor.*

PSYC 695. Practicum. *1-6 credits.* Provides a variety of supervised field, laboratory or school experiences. Course will be graded on an S/U basis. *Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.*

PSYC 710. Counseling Strategies: Special Topics. *1-3 credits.* Training and practice in the use of a specific counseling method. *Prerequisite: PSYC 660, PSYC 661 or permission of instructor.*

PSYC 749. Multicultural Perspectives of Intervention. *3 credits.* Offers a cognitive and experiential study of sociological and psychological variables, such as race, gender and socioeconomic status, that influence the professional helping relationship. Culturally relevant models of counseling theory and practice are presented. *Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.*

PSYC 760. Supervision and Consultation for Counselors. *3 credits.* The course includes an introduction to concepts, processes, and styles of supervision. It offers students the opportunity to gain experience in providing supervision to other counselors in training. The course also provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in consultation, negotiation/mediation, and systems level intervention in mental health and education settings. *Prerequisite: PSYC 660, PSYC 661, PSYC 664 or permission of instructor.*

PSYC 768. Couple and Family Counseling. *3 credits.* A study of the various approaches to couple and family counseling, focusing on theory, techniques and research that relate to the counseling process. *Prerequisites: PSYC 661 and PSYC 668 or permission of instructor.*

PSYC 790. Internship. *3-6 credits.* Provides a student with a supervised field experience. Students should contact their program director for specifics concerning the internship experience. Course will be graded on an S/U basis. *Prerequisite: Permission of program director.*

PSYC 800. Educational Specialist Research Project. *1-3 credits.* Opportunity for advanced applied research in an area of special interest to a school psychology or community counseling student in an Educational Specialist program. Specific course requirements are listed in the separate research project guidelines for school psychology and community counseling students. Course is graded on an S/U basis. Successful completion of the research project fulfills the comprehensive examination requirement for the School of Psychology educational specialist degree. *Prerequisite: Permission of program director.*