

Policy Document

Converting a CORE-accredited Rehabilitation Counseling program to a dually accredited Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling program

Rationale

CORE currently accredits Rehabilitation Counseling (RC) programs under the 2009 CORE Standards. Some of these programs ($\approx 20\%$) appear to have revised or begun to revise their curriculum to include clinical preparation requirements in line with the requirements of the 2009 CACREP Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program area standards; however, because these programs have not completed a CACREP accreditation review process under the 2009 Standards, the students who graduate from these “transitioned” or “transitioning” programs are not considered graduates of a CACREP accredited CMHC program. Graduation from a CACREP accredited CMHC program is one of the requirements for independent practice within TRICARE and employment as a mental health counseling practitioner within a growing number of Federal agencies, such as the VA and U.S. Army Substance Abuse Program.

It is, therefore, in the best interest of both CACREP’s and CORE’s constituents, as well as the public served by graduates of our accredited programs, if RC programs currently accredited by CORE can convert their current accreditation status to that of a CACREP accredited CMHC program prior to their current cycle expiration date both in terms of TRICARE eligibility and in ensuring greater continuity of requirements across programs. (For more information on the TRICARE regulations, which were released in the Federal Register on December 27, 2011, visit <http://www.gpo.gov:80/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-12-27/pdf/2011-33109.pdf>.)

To assist in this process, CORE and CACREP have entered into a new relationship with CORE becoming a corporate affiliate of CACREP. As part of this agreement, CACREP and CORE have further agreed to develop a joint process that will allow RC programs to become dually accredited as both a Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling (CIRC) program and a CMHC program. As part of the process, CORE will implement CACREP’s Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Standards and determine which currently accredited RC programs meet these standards as a pre-requisite for seeking dual accreditation as a CACREP-accredited CMHC program. Programs that successfully complete the conversion process will be dually accredited as both Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs.

Procedures for Applying and the Review Process

Overview

Programs must document that the eligibility conditions for converting are met, pay a conversion application fee, and submit an abbreviated self-study against the specified criteria. An initial review of the application and self-study materials by CORE will occur, with opportunity for feedback, prior to the materials being sent to the CACREP Board which will then render an accreditation decision on the conversion.

Eligibility Conditions

Programs currently accredited by CORE as Rehabilitation Counseling (RC) programs are eligible to convert their accreditation and become dually accredited as both a Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and a Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program under the following conditions:

1. The current accreditation cycle of the RC program expires 4/30/15 or after.
2. The currently accredited RC program must require a minimum of 60 semester hours and **all** current students must be in the 60 semester hour program or be graduating prior to the Board's rendering of an accreditation decision on the conversion.
3. The program must use a program title that clearly reflects its combined identity as a Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling program (reference 2009 CACREP Policy Document, Accreditation Process Policy #4 -*Use of Program and Degree Titles*,).
4. The currently accredited RC program must be in good standing with CORE (i.e., no outstanding reports or fees).
5. The currently accredited RC program has been reviewed by CORE and found to be in substantial compliance with the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program area standards.

The currently accredited RC program must submit documentation meeting the outlined requirements by the following deadline dates: February 28 for a decision at CACREP's July board meetings or September 30 for a decision at CACREP's January meetings. (Note: CACREP will only review programs under this policy through its July 2015 board meeting).

Application Fee

The application fee for the conversion review process is \$1,500. The fee is due at the time of application.

Abbreviated Self-Study

An abbreviated self-study document must be submitted in accordance with CACREP's policy guidelines for "Electronic Submission of Accreditation Documents." The abbreviated self-study will include an application form with signatures of key decision-making administrators at the institution and documentation of compliance with the Eligibility Conditions cited above.

In addition, the program must address with both narrative and supporting documents how it meets the following 2009 CACREP Standards:

- I.M
- I.W.1-6, including the joint CORE-CACREP grandparenting provision (see * below)
- I.AA1-6, including CACREP Transition Policy #5 on Assessment
- II.G.1.c; 1.d; 3.c; 3.d; 3.e; 3.g; 5.g; 6.e; 7.a; 8.a
- III.B (if applicable) and C
- III.E
- III.F.2, if applicable
- CMHC Program Area Standards

*CACREP will extend a grandfathering period until January 1, 2018, whereby graduates of rehabilitation counselor education programs prior to this date will be eligible to teach in CACREP accredited programs for life, including programs dually accredited by CORE and CACREP

Review Process and Decisions

Once the application fee and abbreviated self-study documents are received in the CORE office, a committee consisting of two members of the Commission on Graduate Standards and Accreditation will

review the application and supporting documentation to determine if the program is in substantial compliance with the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program standards and eligibility conditions.

The following recommendations may be made by CORE:

Recommendation #1 – The program will be informed that it is in substantial compliance with the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Standards and the application is being forwarded to CACREP for review.

Recommendation #2 – The program will be notified that the reviewers have remaining questions and that additional information is requested to be submitted in an Addendum within a 30 day period. A secondary review will occur after the Addendum is received.

Recommendations #3 – The program is informed that CORE cannot recommend it for conversion to a dually accredited program.

If CORE determines that the program is in substantial compliance with the CIRC Standards, the CORE staff will then send the documents to CACREP. A subcommittee of two (2) CACREP Board Members will be assigned to the applicant program to complete a paper review against the required Standards. The subcommittee can make the following decisions:

Decision #1 – The program meets the requirements to convert its status to a dually accredited CIRC and CMHC program. The application and subcommittee recommendation for approval of conversion would then be acted upon at the next available Board meeting. The program will be informed that it is being placed on the agenda for final board approval at the next available board meeting.

Decision #2 – While the program may meet the requirements to convert, additional information is required by CACREP before a recommendation for approval of conversion can be made. The program will be notified that the reviewers have remaining questions and that additional information is requested to be submitted in an Addendum within a 30 day period. A secondary review will occur after the Addendum is received. If the addendum response does not satisfactorily clarify the concerns, the program and CORE staff will be notified that it is not recommended for converting to a dually accredited CIRC and CMHC program at this time, but can remain as CORE-accredited RC program. However, if the necessary clarifications are deemed sufficient to meet the requirements to convert, then the program will be notified that its application is being placed on the agenda for final board approval at the next available meeting.

Decision #3 – The program does not meet the requirements for conversion at this time and requires no further review. The program is informed of its deficiencies. The program does not convert, but remains a CORE-accredited RC program. There is no appeal process for this decision. The program may choose to apply again at any point prior to the cut-off date of February 28, 2015.

Maintaining Accreditation

Once a program has converted, the accreditation end date will remain the same as its former accreditation cycle end date. Prior to the end of the accreditation cycle, the program faculty will need to apply for a full review of its program.