

Policy: Converting a CACREP-accredited Community Counseling program to a CACREP-accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

Rationale

CACREP has accredited Community Counseling (CC) programs under the 2001 Standards whose current cycles run through 3/31/19. Although many of these programs ($\approx 50\%$) appear to have revised or begun to revise their curriculum in accordance with the current Transition Policies and to be in line with the requirements of the 2009 Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program area standards, but because they have not completed an accreditation review process under the 2009 Standards, the students who graduate from these “transitioned” 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. It is in the best interest of CACREP and our constituents if these programs can convert their current accreditation status as a CC program to that of a 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>.

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 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 CACREP as Community Counseling (CC) programs are eligible to convert their accreditation to Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) under the following conditions:

1. The current accreditation cycle of the CC program expires 10/31/14 or after.
2. The currently accredited CC program must require a minimum of 60 semester hours and all current students must be in the 60 credit program or be graduating prior to the Board’s rendering of an accreditation decision on the conversation . [See note below]
3. The program must be using a program title that clearly reflects its identity as a Clinical Mental Health Counseling program.
4. The currently accredited CC program must be in good standing with CACREP (i.e., no outstanding reports or fees).
5. The currently accredited CC program must submit documentation meeting the outlined requirements no later than July 1, 2015. (Note: CACREP will no longer review programs under this policy after its January 2016 board meeting).

Note: This condition must be met for a CC program to be eligible to apply for conversion to a CMHC program under CACREP’s “Policy to Convert a CC Program to a CMHC Program.”If a program desires to continue its existing CC program past the anticipated conversion accreditation decision date, it would not be eligible to apply under this policy but could choose to bring the CMHC version of the program forward for accreditation review under CACREP’s “Adding a Program during Accreditation Cycle” policy and fee structure.

Application Fee

The application fee for the conversion review process is \$1,000. 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
- I.AA1-6, including CACREP Transition Policy #5 on Assessment
- II.G.1.c, 1.d, 3.c, 3.d, 3.g, 5.g, 8.a
- III.E
- III.F.2, if applicable
- CMHC Program Area Standards

Review Process and Decisions

Once the application fee and abbreviated self-study documents are received in the CACREP office, a staff review of the materials will be conducted to determine if the Eligibility Conditions are met and if the electronic documents are readable.

Staff will then send the documents to a subcommittee of two (2) CACREP Board Members who will complete a paper review against the required Standards. The subcommittee can make the following decisions:

1. The program meets the requirements to convert its status to an accredited CMHC program. The application and subcommittee recommendation for approval of conversion would then be acted upon at the next available Board meeting.
2. While the program may meet the requirements to convert, additional information is required before a recommendation for approval of conversion can be made.
3. The program does not meet the requirements for conversion at this time.

Decision #1 - 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 - 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 will be notified that it is not recommended for converting to a CMHC program, but that it will simply remain a CC program under the 2001 Standards. 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 requires no further review. The program is informed of its deficiencies. The program does not convert, but remains a CC 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 July 1, 2015.

Maintaining the CMHC Status

Once a program has converted, the accreditation end date will remain the same as its former accreditation cycle end date. At that point in time, the CMHC program will undergo a full review and on-site visit process along with any other CACREP programs offered at the institution. The program will also be expected to adhere to all CACREP policies and pay the standard annual maintenance fee. In addition, Accreditation Process Policy #13 applies to students of the converted program.