



# CACREP Special Announcement

## **CACREP Board of Directors Delays on Implementation of 60 Semester Credit Hour Requirement**

The CACREP Board of Directors takes seriously its responsibility to support excellence in counselor education programs, in part through the promulgation of accreditation standards. The development of policies, procedures, and criteria for accreditation is an ongoing, iterative process, guided by the Board's desire to help counselor education programs keep pace with the changing conditions and needs in the field. Continuous, active engagement of all stakeholders is essential to the profession's ability to effectively address our common professional challenges.

Recent successes for the counseling profession include:

- Development of a consensus definition of counseling (ACA 2020 Task Force)
- Unification of training standards through a single accreditation body for all counseling specializations, accomplished through the 2017 merger of CACREP and CORE
- Passage of counselor licensure laws in all 50 states, achieved in 2009 when California became the 50<sup>th</sup> state to pass a counselor licensure law
- Establishment of CACREP-accredited counselor education programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, achieved in 2018 when Alaska became the 50<sup>th</sup> state with a CACREP-accredited program
- Expansion of the International Registry of Counselor Education Programs (IRCEP) globally
- Adoption of a collaborative licensure portability plan
- Increased recognition by governmental agencies and managed care providers

Each of these milestones represents a further step for our profession in moving toward a united voice with which to represent and advocate for counselors, regardless of specialization.

This same goal of promoting professional unity informed the development of the CACREP 2016 Standards. With these standards, CACREP established a requirement that all entry-level counselor preparation programs, regardless of specialty area, consist of a minimum of 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours (CACREP 2016 Standard 1.J). The deadline for implementation of this 60 credit hour requirement was July 1, 2020 (CACREP Policy H). When CACREP and CORE merged, CACREP determined that rehabilitation counseling programs would have until July 1, 2022 to meet this 60 credit hour requirement (CACREP Policy I).

Since the adoption of the 2016 Standards, some stakeholders have expressed considerable concerns about the requirement to move to a 60 credit program by 2020. These concerns have been raised not only by counselor educators within CACREP-accredited programs, but also by counselor educators in programs aspiring toward CACREP accreditation.

The CACREP Board of Directors is profoundly invested in promoting both excellence and unity within the counseling profession and deeply values the feedback it has received from its stakeholders. As the 2020 implementation deadline approaches, it has become clear that this requirement is posing significant challenges for many programs. Although CACREP's adoption of the 60 credit hour requirement was and continues to be a response to calls for professional unification of counselor preparation, the Board of Directors recognizes that this requirement has resulted in unforeseen difficulties for many stakeholders.

Therefore, to reflect CACREP's commitment to collaboration and in recognition of accreditation as an iterative process, the Board of Directors has extended the deadline from 2020 to 2023 for the implementation of the 60 credit hour requirement (2016 Standard 1.J). The CACREP Board has done so through the adoption of the following policy:

**Policy H: Meeting New Standards. Programs that are currently accredited under the 2001, 2009, or 2016 Standards must comply with 2016 Standard 1.J by July 1, 2023. The move to 60 credit hours applies to students entering programs after July 1, 2023.**

Note: This policy supersedes and replaces previous Policy I (which established a 2022 deadline only for rehabilitation counselor preparation programs) and previous Policy H (which established the 2020 deadline for all other counselor preparation programs).

Please note that this change is the result of a new policy and is not a revision to the 2016 Standards. Although some programs are actively moving toward implementing the 60 credit hour requirement, this new deadline will allow career counseling, college counseling and student affairs, rehabilitation counseling, and school counseling programs additional time to address current barriers and make intentional, informed decisions about how to meet the CACREP Standards. Although CACREP cautions that the deadline extension is not a change to the Standards, nor is it a commitment to changing this standard in the future, the Board has established a special task force to re-examine this issue and provide continued information and recommendations to the Board. The Board of Directors encourages the active involvement of all counseling students, faculty, programs, and professional organizations in providing input on this issue.

The CACREP Board of Directors believes that widespread involvement of its stakeholders in these decisions is essential to building the framework in which the counseling profession can continue to strengthen and grow to ultimately best serve today's society. CACREP is committed to the unification of counseling as a single profession, to the promotion of excellence in counselor preparation, and to the support of counselor education programs.

The Board of Directors values its collaborative partnerships and has confidence that, together, we can continue uniting as a profession to ultimately support counselors in their work to empower diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. The CACREP Board looks forward to continued collaboration with programs, professional associations, certification bodies, and counselors.

Although the Board will not be responding to individual inquiries on this topic, all feedback received by May 4, 2018 will be utilized to inform the Board's continued discussion about this issue. All stakeholders are invited to offer feedback regarding this issue. Please share your thoughts about the 2016 Standard 1.J requiring all entry-level degree programs to require 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours by emailing:

[cacrep@cacrep.org](mailto:cacrep@cacrep.org)

Subject: Move to 60 Credits

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### **About the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs**

Since 1981, CACREP has served as the premier accrediting organization of the Counseling profession, currently accrediting over 870 graduate programs in counseling and its specialty areas at over 400 institutions in the United States and throughout the world. CACREP's mission is to promote the professional competence of counseling and related practitioners which is accomplished, in part, through the development of preparation standards. The CACREP standards were developed and have been maintained by professional counselor educators and practitioners. The standards represent the Counseling profession's minimum knowledge and skill areas required to enter the profession. Recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as a quality assurance provider, CACREP is a national partner in public protection.

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs

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