

**THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF
SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELOR CERTIFICATION**

P.O. Box 1801
New Bedford, MA 02741-1801
(508) 842-8707

CAC CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The following is information pertaining to the **CERTIFIED ALCOHOLISM COUNSELOR (CAC)**. Please pay particular attention to the attached **Continuing Education Credit Guidelines**. Once an applicant can meet all of the requirements, application for CAC Certification can be made. Applicants may download the CAC Certification Application, the Clinical Supervisor Evaluation Form, and the corresponding CAC Certification Application Instructions. Approved CAC applicants must take and pass the IC&RC International Certification Examination.

TESTING:

All applicants for CAC Certification must take and pass the IC&RC International Examination for Alcohol & Drug Counselors (ADC). Testing will be computer-based.

Once an application is reviewed and approved, the applicant will be sent a Certification Test Reservation Form, which must be completed and returned to the Certification Office along with the test fee (\$300.00). The information supplied on the reservation form by the applicant will be provided to the testing company (SMT). The testing company will notify the applicant **via email** of the instructions for taking the computer-based test along with information on the locations of testing centers. The applicant will have six months from notification by the testing company in which to schedule and take the exam at a testing center. Failure to appear at the scheduled testing will result in the forfeiture of the test fee. The testing company will provide additional information on cancellation policies.

Test results will be provided to the applicant via email by the testing company. If an applicant fails the exam, s/he will have to wait for a period of 90 days before re-scheduling an exam.

The supervisor(s) who will be completing the Work Verification Form(s) must be made aware that they must mail the form(s) directly back to MBSACC. Any verification form that is submitted to us by the applicant with the application will render the application void. The verification form(s) **must** be returned to us directly by the supervisor.

IMPORTANT: DO NOT send anything to the letterhead address via a delivery service such as UPS or FedEx, etc., to meet a deadline date, or for any other reason. Delivery services such as these cannot deliver to a post office box at a postal station. Doing so will only cause a delay in the receipt of your submittal. The best method for mailing submittals is through the United States Postal Service.

MBSACC will not be responsible for any information regarding certification that you obtain outside this office. If you have any questions, please call the Certification Office at (508) 842-8707.

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDIT GUIDELINES

The alcohol/drug specific education and the ethics training must have been completed within the past ten (10) years. For trainings and non-credit courses in the categories of counseling techniques and behavioral sciences, the applicant may go back as much as twenty (20) years. For academic (credit-bearing) courses in counseling techniques and behavioral sciences there is no time limit provided a grade of C (or higher) was received.

In addition to transcripts, the applicant may be asked to provide an official course description for all academic courses which are being submitted for consideration. Transcripts must be official; transcripts downloaded from the internet will not be accepted.

For initial Certification, MBSACC limits Distance Learning (i.e., online courses/programs or correspondence/home study courses) to no more than 30% of the total education hours required. Distance Learning accrued prior to January 1, 2017 is not admissible. MBSACC does not accept academic credit which is awarded for:

- 1) "prior learning experience,"*
- 2) courses certified by use of a challenge examination,*
- 3) courses for auditing purposes, or*
- 4) courses of independent study/research.*

Academic courses must be alcohol/drug specific or counseling techniques specific to the category requirements as delineated in the certification criteria. No partial credit is given. Also, no credit is given for term and/or research papers.

MBSACC allows 15 hours per academic credit (that is, 45 hours per 3-credit course) for academic courses specific to the certification education requirements. For graded courses, a grade of C (or higher) must be received in order to be admissible for Certification.

Documentation for workshops, conferences, etc. must be provided or the training will not be considered. The participant's name must be officially recorded on the certificate by the sponsoring agency. The participant may **not** affix his/her own name to any certificate, either by hand or by typing. Only an authorized agent of the sponsor of the training may fill in the participant's name by hand, and then only by printing his/her own name (initials will not suffice) **and** the date in parentheses **beside** the participant's name. The offering title, specific dates attended, the location of the training, and the number of approved training hours must appear on the certificate as well. Brochures, registration forms, canceled checks, sign-in sheets, etc. do **not** constitute proper documentation.

For programs that have not received official MBSACC approval, the following information must be provided:

- * training description*
- * name and credentials of instructor(s)*
- * location of training*
- * sponsor(s) of training*
- * program agenda, complete with beginning and ending times for each training segment*

Continuing education hours exclude non-program time such as registration, coffee breaks, meals, etc. The minimum acceptable unit of credit for any single training experience is one clock hour (i.e., one clock hour = 60 minutes). Please be advised that MBSACC is under no obligation to accept training hours approved by other organizations.

Continuing education credit is not admissible in the following situations: where the applicant has provided the training and/or teaching; in-service or on-the-job training; hours accrued by taking exam preparation workshops or trainings. There may be other items that are not admissible which are not specifically listed here. If you have a specific instance which is not addressed in these guidelines, do not assume its acceptability. You should contact the Certification Office at the letterhead phone number to see if it is admissible.

IMPORTANT - TO ALL CERTIFICATION APPLICANTS

1. The **51% Rule** states that a candidate must be working and/or living in this state at least 51% of their time when application for Certification is made.
2. The eligibility requirements for Certification must be completed before applying for Certification. Please refer to "Continuing Education Credit Guidelines" in this packet.
3. Applications must include all supporting documentation **and** the review fee or it will be considered incomplete.
4. If a Certification Application is denied, the applicant may appeal the decision, but it must be done in writing within thirty (30) days of notification that the application was denied.
5. All applicants must sign an Authorization and Release Form.
6. All applicants must sign a Professional Code of Ethics attesting to their agreement to adhere to same. Any individual who feels that they have the basis for a meritorious complaint should contact the MBSACC Certification Office to obtain detailed information regarding the Grievance/ Complaint Process.

FEE SCHEDULE

The fees for the Certification process are as follows:

\$125.00 - Application Review Fee - this fee **must** mailed in with your Certification Application.

\$300.00 - Exam Fee – to be paid upon notification.

\$ 60.00 - Certification Fee – to be paid upon notice prior to the issuance of the Certification certificate.

All fees are **non-refundable** and are subject to change without notice. It is best to check with the Certification Office prior to submitting a fee to be sure it has not changed. Again, sending in the wrong fee with your submittal can cause serious delays. MBSACC charges a \$20.00 fee for checks returned to us (for **any** reason) by our bank.

CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO MCVAC.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CAC

In order to qualify for the Certified Alcoholism Counselor (CAC) level, a counselor must meet the following criteria:

A. WORK EXPERIENCE

In order to meet the work experience requirement, the applicant must document 4,000 hours (equal to 2 years full time) providing alcohol/drug counseling services under clinical supervision. Supervised work experience may be paid or voluntary experience working as a counselor who provides direct counseling services to clients with a diagnosis of alcohol abuse or dependency. A minimum of six (6) months must be obtained in one facility, under one supervisor.

Practicum experience, in order to be considered eligible for the experience requirement, must be of such nature that the counselor have his/her own clients and case load and be responsible for maintenance of case records. No more than 1,000 hours of practicum/internship experience can be used to meet the work experience requirement.

B. EDUCATION

The applicant must have a minimum of 180 clock hours of continuing education training related to the substance abuse field. The 180 clock hours must be comprised of a minimum of 70 hours in counseling techniques training, a minimum of 70 hours of alcohol/drug specific studies, and 6 hours of ethics training pertaining to the substance abuse field. The remaining hours can fall within the behavioral sciences area.

(NOTE: Practicums/Field Placements are not considered in meeting the Education requirement; however, they will be considered under the sections of Experience and Supervision.

MBSACC recommends that training in the following areas could be helpful in taking the exam:

*In Alcohol/Drug Specific - Nicotine dependence trainings
In Counseling Techniques - Cross-cultural counseling
In Behavioral Sciences - AIDS/HIV trainings*

The alcohol/drug specific education and the ethics training must have been completed within the past ten (10) years. For trainings and non-credit courses in the categories of counseling techniques and behavioral sciences, the applicant may go back as much as twenty (20) years. For academic (credit-bearing) courses in counseling techniques and behavioral sciences there is no time limit provided a grade of C (or higher) was received.

NOTE: See Continuing Education Credit Guidelines for specific criteria regarding documentation of education/training.

C. SUPERVISION

The applicant must submit documentation of having received at least 220 clock hours of supervision specific to the domains with a minimum of ten (10) hours in each domain. The Domains are: 1.) Screening, Assessment, and Engagement; 2.) Treatment Planning, Collaboration, and Referral; 3.) Counseling; 4.) Professional and Ethical Responsibilities.

TAP 21 Competencies and the 12 Core Functions are contained within the Domains.

*This section requires documentation of the time spent in face-to-face supervision, **not the time spent performing the function**. Individual, group/team supervision and formal case presentations all apply.*

D. INTERNATIONAL ADC EXAMINATION

CAC Certification is contingent upon passing the IC&RC International Examination for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (ADC). Additional information on the exam is provided to the applicant once the official application has been reviewed and approved. After being notified of having passed the exam, CAC Certification is issued upon submittal of the Certification Fee by the applicant.

The CAC Certification is not a reciprocal level certification. In order to pursue a higher (reciprocal) level of Certification after becoming CAC Certified, the counselor must meet the Upgrade Requirements in effect at that time. Please be cautioned that certain CEU restrictions may apply when upgrading to a higher level and are described in more detail in the Upgrade Requirements information packet. This information packet is available upon request from the MBSACC Certification Office.

E. RECERTIFICATION

Recertification consists of 40 hours of continuing education accrued every two years. Detailed Recertification information is provided to each individual who attains Certification.