Chapter 246-809 WAC

LICENSURE FOR MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS

WAC 246-809-010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Associate" means a prelicensure candidate who is working towards full licensure in their profession, has a graduate degree in a mental health field under RCW 18.225.090 and is gaining the supervision and supervised experience necessary to become a licensed independent clinical social worker, a licensed advanced social worker, a licensed mental health counselor, or a licensed marriage and family therapist. Associates may not independently provide social work, mental health counseling, or marriage and family therapy for a fee, monetary or otherwise. Associates must work under the supervision of an approved supervisor.

(2) “Department” means the department of health.
(2) "Independent social work, mental health counseling, or marriage and family therapy" means the practice of these disciplines without being under the supervision of an approved supervisor.

(3) "Licensed counselor" means a licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed mental health counselor, licensed advanced social worker, or licensed independent clinical social worker regulated under chapter 18.225 RCW. Licensed counselor does not mean an associate-level credential.

(4) “Out-of-state” means any state or territory of the United States.

(5) “Probationary license” means a temporary license issued to out-of-state licensees qualifying for licensure reciprocity in Washington state under the restrictions and conditions of RCW 18.225.140 and this chapter.

(6) “Reciprocity” means licensure of out-of-state licensed counselors based on substantial equivalence between Washington state scope of practice and the scope of practice of the other state or territory, subject to a probationary licensure period.
to complete outstanding Washington state licensure requirements as determined necessary by the secretary to gain full licensure.

(7) “Secretary” means the secretary of the department of health.


NEW SECTION

WAC 246-809-090 Co-occurring disorder enhancement specialist eligibility. Licensed counselors licensed under chapter 18.225 RCW and this chapter are eligible to apply for a co-occurring disorder specialist enhancement to their existing license according to the conditions of RCW 18.205.105 and chapter 246-806 WAC.

NEW SECTION

WAC 246-809-095 Probationary license.
(1) The department shall issue a probationary license to out-of-state applicants seeking licensure in Washington state for an advanced social worker, independent clinical social worker, mental health counselor, or marriage and family therapist according to the conditions and restrictions of the reciprocity program established RCW 18.225.140 and this chapter.

(2) The out-of-state license must be from a state or territory identified on a list published by the department as eligible for reciprocity for the purposes of a probationary license for the particular behavioral health profession.

(3) Initial license. To receive an initial probationary license, the applicant must submit to the department:
   (a) A completed application;
   (b) Verification of their out-of-state license; and
   (c) The fee according to WAC 246-809-990;

(4) Renewals. If necessary, a probationary license may be renewed a single time within one year of the initial license being issued and payment of the fee in WAC 246-809-990. A renewal is valid for one year after the date of renewal. To maintain a probationary licensee, the licensee must be able to demonstrate completion of suicide assessment, treatment, and management according to WAC 246-809-615(1), and AIDS education according to WAC 246-809-080 as a condition for renewal.

(5) Continuing education. With the exception of the requirements of this section, continuing education requirements
will apply once a probationary licensee transitions to a full license.

(6) Approved Supervision. If the department determines a probationary licensee must complete supervised hours of experience as a condition for full licensure, the licensee must complete the stated hours under an approved supervisor according to the conditions of this chapter.

LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS AND LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY ASSOCIATES

WAC 246-809-110 Definitions. The following terms apply to the licensure of marriage and family therapists and marriage and family therapist associates.

(1) "Approved educational program" means:

(a) Any college or university accredited by a national or regional accrediting body recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation or its successor; or
(b) A program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), at the time the applicant completed the required education.

(2) "Approved supervisor" means a licensed marriage and family therapist, or an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner.

(3) "Equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner" means a licensed mental health counselor, licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychologist, licensed physician practicing as a psychiatrist, or licensed psychiatric nurse practitioner, who has completed:

(a) Three hundred clock hours in graduate or postgraduate marriage and family education, or continuing education in marriage and family therapy or supervision by an approved marriage and family therapist supervisor in marriage and family therapy or any combination of these; and

(b) Five years of clinical practice that includes the equivalent of one year of clinical practice working with couples and families.
(4) "Group supervision" means face-to-face supervision with an approved supervisor, involving one supervisor and no more than six licensure candidates.

(5) "Licensure candidate" means an individual who is accruing supervised clinical experience required for licensure.

(6) "One-on-one supervision" means face-to-face supervision with an approved supervisor, involving one supervisor and no more than two licensure candidates.

(7) "Peer" means a co-worker who is not the licensure candidate's employer or supervisor.

(8) "Supervised experience requirement" means experience that is obtained under an approved supervisor who meets the requirements described in WAC 246-809-134.

(9) "Supervision of supervision" means supervision by an approved supervisor for the purpose of training and qualifying a license holder to act as an approved supervisor for purposes of chapter 18.225 RCW and WAC 246-809-134.

WAC 246-809-130  Supervised postgraduate experience. The experience requirements for the marriage and family therapist applicant's practice area include successful completion of a supervised experience requirement. Applicants who have held an active marriage and family therapy license for five consecutive years or more in another state or territory, without a disciplinary record or disqualifying criminal history, are deemed to have met the supervised experience requirements for Washington state licensure in subsection (3) of this section.

(2) In accordance with RCW 18.225.090 and 18.225.095, for applicants who can demonstrate they have practiced as a substance use disorder professional for at least three years within ten years from the date their application for a marriage and family therapist license is submitted to the department, the department shall reduce the total required supervised hours from 3,000 hours to 2,700 hours. The requirements in subsection (3)(a) through (3)(d) of this section shall apply regardless of the reduction of total required hours.
(3) The experience requirement consists of a minimum of two calendar years of full-time marriage and family therapy. Total experience requirements include a minimum of three thousand hours, to include the following:

(a1) A minimum of three thousand hours of experience that includes one thousand hours of direct client contact with at least five hundred hours gained in diagnosing and treating couples and families;

(b2) At least two hundred hours of qualified supervision with an approved supervisor.

(ai) Of the two hundred hours, one hundred hours must be with a licensed marriage and family therapist with at least five years of clinical experience; the other one hundred hours may be with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner;

(bii) At least one hundred of the two hundred hours must be one-on-one supervision; and

(eiii) The remaining hours may be in one-on-one or group supervision.

(c4) Applicants who have completed a master's program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and
Family Therapy Education of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy boards will be credited with five hundred hours of direct client contact and one hundred hours of qualified supervision with an approved supervisor:

(d4) Licensed marriage and family therapist associate applicants are not required to have supervised postgraduate experience prior to becoming an associate;

(e5) Licensed marriage and family therapist associate applicants must declare they are working towards full licensure.

WAC 246-809-230  Supervised postgraduate experience.  (1)  
The experience requirements for the mental health counselor applicant's practice area include successful completion of a supervised experience requirement. Applicants who have held an active mental health counselor license for five consecutive years or more in another state or territory, without a disciplinary record or disqualifying criminal history, are deemed to have met the supervised experience requirements for Washington state licensure in subsection (3) of this section.  
(2) In accordance with RCW 18.225.090 and 18.225.095, for applicants who can demonstrate they have practiced as a substance use disorder professional for at least three years within ten years from the date their application for mental health counselor license is submitted to the department, the department shall reduce the minimum total required supervised hours from 3,000 hours to 2,700 hours. The requirements in subsection (3)(b)(i) and (3)(b)(ii) of this section shall apply regardless of the reduction of total required hours.  
(3)(a) The experience requirement consists of a minimum of thirty-six months full-time counseling or three thousand hours
of postgraduate mental health counseling under the supervision of a qualified licensed mental health counselor or equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner in an approved setting.

(b) Of the three thousand hours:

(ai) One hundred hours spent in immediate supervision with the qualified licensed mental health counselor or equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner; and

(bii) At least one thousand two hundred hours must be direct counseling with individuals, couples, families, or groups.

(42) Applicants who have completed a master's or doctoral program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) will be credited with fifty hours of postgraduate supervision and five hundred hours of postgraduate experience.

(35) Applicants for licensed mental health counselor associate are not required to have supervised postgraduate experience prior to becoming an associate.
Licensed mental health counselor associate applicants must declare they are working toward full licensure.


LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS AND LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER ASSOCIATES

WAC 246-809-330 Supervised postgraduate experience requirements. (1) Licensed advanced social worker. 

(a) Applicants who have held an active advanced social worker license for five consecutive years or more in another state or territory, without a disciplinary record or disqualifying criminal history, are deemed to have met the supervised experience requirements for Washington state licensure in subsection (1)(c) of this section.
(b) In accordance with RCW 18.225.090 and 18.225.095, for applicants who can demonstrate they have practiced as a substance use disorder professional for at least three years within ten years from the date their application for an advanced social worker license is submitted to the department, the department shall reduce the total required supervised hours from 3,200 hours to 2,880 hours. The requirements in subsection (3)(c)(i) through (3)(c)(iii) of this section shall apply regardless of the reduction of total required hours.

(c) The supervised experience requirement consists of a minimum of three thousand two hundred hours with ninety hours of supervision by a licensed independent clinical social worker or a licensed advanced social worker who has been licensed or certified for at least two years. Of those hours:

(a_i) Eight hundred hours must be in direct client contact;

(b_i_i) Ninety hours must be in direct supervision as follows:

(A_i) Fifty hours must include direct supervision by a licensed advanced social worker or licensed independent clinical
social worker; these hours may be in one-to-one supervision or group supervision; and

(Biii) Forty hours may be with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner as defined in WAC 246-809-310(3). These hours must be in one-to-one supervision; and -

(iiiie) Distance supervision is limited to forty supervision hours.

(2) Licensed independent clinical social worker:

(a) Applicants who have held an active independent clinical social worker license for five consecutive years or more in another state or territory, without a disciplinary record or disqualifying criminal history, are deemed to have met the supervised experience requirements for Washington state licensure in subsection (2)(c) of this section.

(b) In accordance with RCW 18.225.090 and 18.225.095, for applicants who can demonstrate they have practiced as a substance use disorder professional for at least three years within ten years from the date their application for an independent clinical social worker license is submitted to the department, the department shall reduce the total required
supervised hours from 4,000 hours to 3,600 hours. The requirements in subsection (2)(c)(i) through (2)(c)(iii) of this section shall apply regardless of the reduction of total required hours.

(c) The experience requirement consists of a minimum of four thousand hours of experience, over a period of not less than three years. Of those four thousand hours:

(i) One thousand hours must be direct client contact supervised by a licensed independent clinical social worker;

(ii) One hundred thirty hours of direct supervision as follows:

(iA) Seventy hours must be with an independent clinical social worker;

(iB) Sixty hours may be with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner as defined in WAC 246-809-310(3);

(iii) Sixty hours of the one hundred thirty hours of direct supervision must be in one-to-one supervision. The remaining seventy hours may be in one-to-one supervision or group supervision; and
(ivE) Distance supervision is limited to sixty supervision hours.

(3) Licensed social worker associate-advanced and licensed social worker associate-independent clinical applicants are not required to have supervised postgraduate experience prior to becoming an associate.

(4) Licensed social worker associate-advanced and licensed social worker associate-independent clinical applicants must declare they are working toward full licensure.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.225.040. WSR 17-13-082, § 246-809-330, filed 6/16/17, effective 7/17/17.]

CONTINUING EDUCATION

WAC 246-809-615 Training standards for suicide assessment, treatment, and management. (1) A licensed counselor must complete training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management. The training must be provided by a single provider and must be at least six hours in length, which may be provided in one or more sessions.
(a) Until July 1, 2017, the training must be approved by an industry-recognized local, state, national, international organizations or institutions of higher learning listed in WAC 246-809-620 or an equivalent organization, educational institution or association which approves training based on observation and experience or best available practices;

(b) Beginning July 1, 2017, the training must be on the department's model list of training programs in suicide assessment, treatment and management. The model list is developed in accordance with rules adopted by the department that establish minimum standards for training programs. The establishment of the model list does not affect the validity of training completed prior to July 1, 2017; and

(c) An associate applying for initial licensure may delay completion of the first training required by this section for six years after initial licensure if he or she can demonstrate successful completion of the training required in (a) or (b) of this subsection no more than six years prior to the application for initial licensure.
(2) A licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed mental health counselor, licensed social worker, or licensed social worker associate who is a state or local government employee is exempt from the requirements of this section if he or she receives a total of at least six hours of training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management from his or her employer every six years. For purposes of this subsection, the training may be provided in one six-hour block or may be spread among shorter training sessions at the employer's discretion.

(3) A licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed mental health counselor, licensed social worker, or licensed social worker associate who is an employee of a community mental health agency licensed under chapter 71.24 RCW or a chemical dependency program certified under chapter 70.96A RCW licensed or certified behavioral health agency licensed under chapters 71.05 or 71.24 RCW is exempt from the requirements of this section if he or she receives a total of at least six hours of training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management from his or her employer every six years. For purposes of this subsection, the
training may be provided in one six-hour block or may be spread among shorter training sessions at the employer's discretion.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.225.040. WSR 17-13-082, § 246-809-615, filed 6/16/17, effective 7/17/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.70.442(7). WSR 14-09-102, § 246-809-615, filed 4/22/14, effective 4/22/14.]