Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia

Department 135 RULES OF GEORGIA COMPOSITE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS

Current through Rules and Regulations filed through November 6, 2026

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ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

The **Administrative History** following each Rule gives the date on which the Rule was originally filed and its effective date, as well as the date on which any amendment or repeal was filed and its effective date. Principal abbreviations used in the Administrative History are as follow:

f. - filed

eff. - effective

R. - Rule (Abbreviated only at the beginning of the control number)

Ch. - Chapter (Abbreviated only at the beginning of the control number)

ER. - Emergency Rule

Rev. - Revised

Note: Emergency Rules are listed in each Rule's Administrative History by Emergency Rule number, date filed and effective date. The Emergency Rule will be in effect for 120 days or until the effective date of a permanent Rule covering the same subject matter superseding this Emergency Rule is adopted, as specified by the Agency.

Chapters 135-1 entitled "Organization", 135-2 entitled "Fees", and 135-4 entitled "Procedural Rules" have been adopted. Filed January 14, 1986; effective February 3, 1986.

Chapter 135-3 entitled "Application for Licensure" has been adopted. Filed February 26, 1986; effective March 18, 1986.

Chapter 135-5 entitled "Requirements for Licensure" has been adopted. Filed March 10, 1986; effective March 30, 1986.e

Rules 135-5-.02 to .04 have been adopted. Filed May 23, 1986; effective June 12, 1986.

Rule 135-1-.04 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Rule 135-1-.05 has been adopted. Rules 135-5-.01 to .03, 135-5-.01, .03, and .04 have been amended. Filed November 7, 1986; effective November 27, 1986.

Rule 135-5-.01 has been amended. Filed December 18, 1986; effective January 7, 1987.

Rule 135-5-.02 has been amended. Filed March 18, 1987; effective April 7, 1987.

Rule 135-5-.03 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed June 26, 1987; effective July 16, 1987.

Rule 135-5-.02 has been amended. Filed July 24, 1987; effective August 13, 1987.

Rule 135-5-.01 has been amended. Filed September 8, 1987; effective September 28, 1987.

Chapter 135-7 entitled "Code of Ethics" has been adopted. Filed October 19, 1987; effective November 8, 1987.

Rules 135-5-.01 and .02 have been amended. Filed November 18, 1987; effective December 8, 1987.

Rule 135-5-.04 has been amended. Chapter 135-6 entitled "Regulation of Licenses" has been adopted. Filed January 20, 1988; effective February 9, 1988.

Rules 135-5-.01 and .02 have been amended. Filed February 16, 1988; effective March 7, 1988.

Chapter 135-8 entitled "Disciplinary Actions and Procedures" has been adopted. Filed. March 25, 1988; effective April 14, 1988.

Chapter 135-9 entitled "Continuing Education" has been adopted. Filed July 27, 1988; effective August 16, 1988.

Rule 135-5-.01 has been amended. Filed October 26, 1988; effective November 15, 1988.

Rules 135-3-.01, .02, and .04 have been amended. Filed December 20, 1988; effective January 9, 1989.

Rule 135-9-.01 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Rule 135-9-.02 has been amended. Filed September 5, 1989; effective September 25, 1989.

Rule 135-3-.01 has been amended. Filed February 21, 1990; effective March 13, 1990.

Rules 135-3-.03 and 135-9-.03 have been repealed and new Rules adopted. Rule 135-3-.04 has been repealed. Rule 135-6-.06 has been adopted. Chapter 135-10 entitled "Advertising" has been adopted. Filed August 21, 1990; effective September 10, 1990.

Rule 135-5-.02 has been amended. Filed June 27, 1991; effective July 17, 1991.

Chapter 135-10 has been amended. Filed October 10, 1991; effective October 30, 1991.

Rule 135-3-.02 has been amended. Filed October 28, 1991; effective November 17, 1991.

Rule 135-5-.03 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed December 3, 1991; effective December 23, 1991.

Rule 135-5-.04 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed February 4, 1992; effective February 24, 1992.

Rule 135-5-.04 has been amended. Filed May 29, 1992; effective June 18, 1992.

Rule 135-5-.034 has been amended. Filed July 17, 1992; effective August 6, 1992.

Chapter 135-9 has been repealed and a new Chapter adopted. Filed August 10, 1992; effective August 30, 1992.

Rule 135-3-.02 has been amended. Filed September 1, 1992; effective September 21, 1992.

Rule 135-3-.01 has been amended. Filed November 2, 1992; effective November 22, 1992.

Rule 135-9-.01 has been amended. Filed December 3, 1992; effective December 23, 1992.

Rules 135-3-.02 and .03 have been renumbered to 135-3-.03 and .04 and a new Rule 135-3-.02 entitled "Americans With Disabilities Act" has been adopted. Filed March 29, 1993; effective April 18, 1993.

Rule 135-5-.024 has been amended. Filed May 10, 1993; effective May 30, 1993.

Emergency Rule 135-5-0.1-.02 was filed October 4, 1993, effective September 27, 1993, to remain in effect for 120 days or until the effective date of a permanent Rule covering the same subject matter superseding this Emergency Rule is adopted, as specified by the Agency. Said Emergency Rule was adopted due to "the new law that went into effect July 1, 1993 . . ." (Said Emergency Rule will not be published; copies may be obtained from the Agency.)

Emergency Rule 135-5-0.2-.02 was filed February 2, 1994, effective January 28, 1994, to remain in effect for 120 days or until the effective date of a permanent Rule covering the same subject matter superseding this Emergency Rule is adopted, as specified by the Agency. Said Emergency Rule was adopted due to "the new law that went into effect July 1, 1993 . . ." (Said Emergency Rule will not be published; copies may be obtained from the Agency.)

Rule 135-1-.04 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed April 22, 1994; effective May 12, 1994.

Rule 135-5-.01 has been amended. Filed May 12, 1994; effective June 1, 1994.

Rule 135-5-.02 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed May 27, 1994; effective June 16, 1994.

Rule 135-5-.01 has been amended. Filed November 2, 1994; effective November 22, 1994.

Rules 135-5-.03, .04, 135-6-.03, .06 have been amended. Filed June 27, 1995; effective July 17, 1995.

Rules 135-5-.01 and .04 have been amended. Filed January 30, 1996; effective February 19, 1996.

Rule 135-9-.01 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed April 10, 1996; effective April 30, 1996.

Rule 135-5-.04 has been amended and Rule 135-5-.05 has been adopted. Filed October 8, 1996; effective October 28, 1996.

Rule 135-5-.02 has been amended. Filed November 21, 1996; effective December 11, 1996.

Rule 135-5-.06 has been adopted and Rule 135-5-.01 has been repealed. Filed January 13, 1997; effective February 2, 1997.

Rules 135-5-.05 and .06 have been amended. Filed August 29, 1997; effective September 18, 1997.

Rule 135-9-.01 has been amended. Filed December 9, 1997; effective December 29, 1997.

Rules 135-5-.05, .06 have been amended. Filed July 6, 1998; effective July 26, 1998.

Rule 135-5-.01 has been adopted. Chapter 135-7 has been repealed and a new Chapter adopted. Filed February 28, 2000; effective March 19, 2000.

Rule 135-6-.04 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed June 22, 2000; effective July 12, 2000.

Rule 135-9-.01 has been amended. Filed January 5, 2001; effective January 25, 2001.

Rule 135-5-.02 has been amended. Filed April 20, 2001; effective May 10, 2001.

Rule 135-9-.01 has been amended. Filed May 18, 2001; effective June 7, 2001.

Rule 135-6-.03 has been amended. Filed June 28, 2001; effective July 18, 2001.

Chapter 135-1 Preamble has been repealed and a new Preamble adopted. Rules 135-1-.05, 135-4-.01, 135-8-.03 have been repealed and new Rules adopted. Rules 135-8-.01, .02 have been amended. Filed August 16, 2001; effective September 5, 2001.

Rule 135-3-.03 has been amended. Filed May 2, 2002; effective May 22, 2002.

Rules 135-5-.05 and .06 have been amended. Filed October 11, 2002; effective October 31, 2002.

Rules 135-6-.03 and .04 have been amended. Rule 135-6-.05 has been repealed. Filed October 22, 2002; effective November 11, 2002.

Rules 135-5-.01 and .02 have been repealed and new Rules adopted. Filed August 13, 2003; effective September 2, 2003.

Rule 135-5-.05 has been amended. Filed July 12, 2005; effective August 1, 2005.

Rules 135-5-.01, .02, .05, and .06 have been amended. Filed March 21, 2006; effective April 10, 2006.

Rule 135-5-.02 has been repealed and a new Rule adopted. Filed July 24, 2006; effective August 13, 2006.

Rule 135-5-.01 has been amended. Filed March 14, 2007; effective April 3, 2007.

Rules 135-5-.02, 135-5-.04 and 135-5-.06 have been amended. Filed March 16, 2007; effective April 5, 2007.

Rule 135-5-.05 has been amended. Filed August 2, 2007; effective August 22, 2007.

Rule 135-5-.06 has been amended. Filed May 30, 2008; effective June 19, 2008.

Rules 135-6-.03 and .04 have been repealed and new Rules adopted. Filed May 19, 2010; effective June 8, 2010.

Rules 135-3-.04 and 135-9-.01 repealed and readopted. F. Aug. 10, 2011; eff. Aug. 30, 2011.

Rules 135-6-.04, 135-6-.06 repealed and readopted. F. Jun. 18, 2012; eff. Jul. 8, 2012.

Rule 135-5-.05 amended. F. Jul. 24, 2012; eff. Aug. 13, 2012.

Rule 135-9-.01 amended. F. Jan. 14, 2014; eff. Feb. 3, 2014.

Rule 135-6-.04 amended. F. Nov. 5, 2014; eff. Nov. 25, 2014.

Rules 135-5-.01 and .02 amended. F. Feb. 25, 2015; eff. Mar. 17, 2015.

Chapter 135-11 entitled "TeleMental Health" adopted. F. Sep. 17, 2015; eff. Oct. 7, 2015.

Rules 135-5-.01 and .02 amended. F. Feb. 8, 2016; eff. Feb. 28, 2016.

Chapter 135-12 entitled "Testing and Assessment" adopted. F. Sep. 1, 2017; eff. Sep. 21, 2017.

Note: Rule 135-7-.02, correction of non-substantive typographical error on SOS Rules and Regulations website, as requested by the Agency on Oct. 18, 2017. Subparagraph (2)(b), "whiabbcle" corrected to "while"; as originally adopted and published in the *Official Compilation Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia*, eff. Mar. 19, 2000. Effective October 18, 2017.

Chapter 135-13 entitled "Military Spouses and Transitioning Service Members" adopted. F. Nov. 8, 2017; eff. Nov. 28, 2017.

Rule 135-3-.01 amended. F. Mar. 13, 2018; eff. Apr. 2, 2018.

Rule 135-5-.06 amended. F. June 10, 2019; eff. June 30, 2019. (**Note:***The originally removed word "Level" in paragraph (1) (b) was added, not removed, by the Board at the hearing. The Notice of Hearing posting incorrectly indicated the word "Level" was proposed to be removed.* "Note" submitted with APA filing on June 10, 2019.)

Rule 135-5-.05 amended. F. June 27, 2019; eff. July 17, 2019.

Rule 135-5-.05 amended. F. Oct. 8, 2019; eff. Oct. 28, 2019.

ER. 135-9-0.3-.01 adopted. F. Apr. 3, 2020; eff. Apr. 2, 2020, to remain in effect for a period of 120 days or until the effective date of permanent Rule covering the same subject matter superseding the Emergency Rule is adopted, as specified by the Agency.

ER. 135-11-0.4-.01 adopted. F. Apr. 17, 2020; eff. Apr. 17, 2020, to remain in effect for a period of 120 days or until the effective date of permanent Rule covering the same subject matter superseding the Emergency Rule is adopted, as specified by the Agency.

Rule 135-9-.01 amended; Rule 135-9-.02 repealed. F. Sep. 30, 2020; eff. Oct. 20, 2020.

ER. 135-14-0.5-.01 adopted. F. Mar. 5, 2021; eff. Feb. 24, 2021, to remain in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 State of Emergency, and for a period of not more than 120 days thereafter, as specified by the Agency.

Rules 135-6-.03, .04 amended. F. Nov. 4, 2022; eff. Nov. 24, 2022.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. dept. 135, ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Chapter 135-1. ORGANIZATION.

Rule 135-1-.01. Organization of Board.

The Board is composed of ten (10) members who are appointed by the Governor. The ten (10) members shall be constituted as follows: three (3) members licensed as Professional Counselors, three (3) members licensed as Social Workers, three (3) members licensed as Marriage and Family Therapists and one (1) member representing the public at large. The three (3) members of the Board from each specialty shall constitute a separate Standards Committee for their respective specialty.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-1-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. Sec. 43-7A-4.
History. Original Rule entitled "Organization of Board" adopted. F. Jan. 14, 1986; eff. Feb. 3, 1986.

Rule 135-1-.02. Officers.

The Board shall elect from its members a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson in January of odd numbered years. Each shall serve a term of two years, or until their successor has been elected. Neither the Chairperson nor the Vice-Chairperson may succeed themselves in that office.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-1-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. Sec. 43-7A-4.
History. Original Rule entitled "Officers" adopted F. Jan. 14, 1986; eff. Feb. 3, 1986.

Rule 135-1-.03. Meetings.

Each year the full Board shall hold at least two meetings. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson or may be held upon the written request of any four members of the Board. A majority shall constitute a quorum, so long as at least one (1) member of each specialty is present, provided that no decision of the Board regarding a particular specialty shall become effective without the approval of at least two (2) of the members of the Standards Committee for that specialty. A majority of the members of a Standards Committee shall constitute a quorum for a Standards Committee meeting.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-1-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. Sec. 43-7A-4.
History. Original Rule entitled "Meetings" adopted. F. Jan. 14, 1986; eff. Feb. 3, 1986.

Rule 135-1-.04. Restrictions on Board Members' Activities.

(1) After a person has submitted a completed application for licensure to the Board, no member of the Board may supervise or direct such applicant for a fee until such time as that applicant becomes licensed by the Board.

(2) No Board member shall participate in the deliberation or the vote on licensure of any applicant who was previously supervised or directed by that Board member.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-1-.04
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-5(f), 43-7A-4.
History. Original Rule entitled "Public Information" was filed on January 14, 1986; effective February 3, 1986.
Amended: Rule renumbered aa Rule 135-1-.05 and a new Rule entitled "Restrictions on Board Members' Activities" adopted. Filed November 7, 1986; effective November 27, 1986.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Apr. 22, 1994; eff. May 12, 1994.

Rule 135-1-.05. Public Information.

The Public may obtain information from the Board by contacting the Board office at 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-1-.05
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-4, 43-10A-5.
History. Original Rule entitled "Public Information" adopted. F. Nov. 7, 1986; eff. Nov. 27, 1986.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Aug. 16, 2001; eff. Sept. 5, 2001.

Chapter 135-2. FEES.

Rule 135-2-.01. Fees.

Refer to fee schedule for appropriate fees payable to the Board. Fees may be reviewed and changed at the discretion of the Board. Any request for refund must be submitted in writing. An indebtedness to the Board caused by a returned check will be dealt with in accordance with Code Section 16-9-20 of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-2-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. 43-7A-14.
History. Original Rule entitled "Fees" was filed on January 14, 1986; effective February 3, 1986.

Chapter 135-3. APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE.

Rule 135-3-.01. General Procedure.

(1) A person who seeks licensure as a Professional Counselor, Social Worker or Marriage and Family Therapist shall submit the appropriate application to the Board. The most current versions of applications and other forms are available on the Board website.

(2) A person who seeks licensure in more than one profession regulated by this Board shall submit a separate application, separate supporting documentation, and separate non-refundable application fee for each type of license.

(3) The Board will only review complete applications that contain all supporting documents and required information.

(a) All documents must be received at least fourteen (14) days prior to the next scheduled Board meeting to be considered for Board review.

(b) An application for licensure is only valid for one year from the date the application was received by the Board, or one year from date of correspondence approving applicant registration to take the required licensure exam, if applicable.

1. The passage, or verification thereof, of the Board approved licensure exam for the profession licensure is being applied for is required.

2. Extensions of the one year exam approval by the Board may be considered by the Board only through the "Petition for a Rule Variance or Waiver" process (OCGA § 50-13-9.1)

(c) Any application not completed within the one-year period expires and will be administratively closed, unless the Board determines that valid extenuating circumstances exist. Once an application expires, to be considered for licensure the applicant shall be required to submit a new application, all new supporting documents (except for the official transcript if available, and any official exam score report already on file), and the appropriate fee.

(4) If an application for licensure is denied by the Board, the applicant will be notified in writing. Within 30 days of the date of the letter of denial, the applicant may request an appearance before the Board. This request must be in writing and should include any new, additional supporting documents that have not been previously submitted.

(5) If after the applicant's appearance, the Board upholds the denial of the application, the applicant may reapply at any time by submitting a new application, all new supporting documents (except for the official transcript if available, and any official exam score report already on file) and the appropriate fee.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-3-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25; 43-10A-5; 43-10A-8; 43-10A-9; 43-10A-10; 43-10A-11; 43-10A-12; 43-10A-13.
History. Original Rule entitled "General Procedure" adopted. F. Feb. 26, 1986; eff. Mar. 18, 1986.
Amended: F. Nov. 7, 1986; eff. Nov. 27, 1986.
Amended: F. Nov. 18, 1987; eff. Dec. 8, 1987.

Amended: F. Dec. 20, 1988; eff. Jan. 9, 1989.
Amended: F. Feb. 21, 1990; eff. Mar. 13, 1990.
Amended: F. Nov. 2, 1992; eff. Nov. 22, 1992.
Amended: F. Mar. 13, 2018; eff. Apr. 2, 2018.

Rule 135-3-.02. Americans With Disabilities Act.

The Board will provide reasonable accommodation to a qualified applicant with a disability in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. The request for an accommodation by an individual with a disability must be made in writing on a form provided by the Board and received in the Board office by the application deadline along with appropriate documentation, as indicated in the Request for Disability Accommodation Guidelines.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-3-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-7A-5, 43-7A-9, 43-7A-10, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-9.
History. Original Rule entitled "Licensure by Examination" adopted. F. Feb. 26, 1986; eff. Mar. 18, 1986.
Amended: F. Nov. 7, 1986; eff. Nov. 27, 1986.
Amended: F. Nov. 18, 1987; eff. Dec. 8, 1987.
Amended: F. Dec. 20, 1988; eff. Jan. 9, 1989.
Amended: F. Oct. 28, 1991; eff. Nov. 17, 1991.
Amended: F. Sept. 1, 1992; eff. Sept. 21, 1992.
Repealed: New Rule entitled "Americans With Disabilities Act" adopted. F. Mar. 29, 1993; eff. Apr. 18, 1993.

Rule 135-3-.03. Licensure by Examination.

(1) **General Provisions. All Applicants**.

(a) An applicant who has met the education and training requirements for licensure must file an application for licensure by examination for approval by the Board. An application is active for one year after which a new application and fee are required. Once approved by the Board, the applicant may take the examination required for that specialty.

1. The applicant shall request the educational institution to submit an official transcript directly to the Board which bears the institution's stamp/seal, the date of graduation and the degree conferred.

2. The applicant shall submit at least two personal references from supervisors, teachers, or any combination thereof on forms furnished by the Board.

3. The applicant shall submit the appropriate application fee. Fees are delineated on a separate fee schedule. The application fee is non-refundable.

4. Applicants who have previously taken the required examination shall instruct the testing authority to report their score to the Board.

5. The applicant shall treat the contents of the examination as confidential. No portion of the examination may be disclosed, reused, copied or reproduced.

6. The applicant may not review the examination, or any portion of the examination, after it has been completed and submitted to the testing authority.

(2) **Provisions Applicable to License Type.**

(a) **Associate Professional Counselor**

1. Applicants for licensure as an Associate Professional Counselor shall submit a proposed contract for obtaining the postmaster's experience and supervision required for licensure as a Professional Counselor, on forms furnished by the Board.

2. Applicants for licensure as an Associate Professional Counselor shall apply to the Board to take the examination, submit the appropriate examination fee, and may take the examination following approval by the Board. A request for a refund of an examination fee must be in writing.

(b) **Professional Counselor**

1. Applicants for licensure as a Professional Counselor shall apply to the Board to take the examination, shall submit the appropriate examination fee to the Board, and may take the examination following approval by the Board. A request for a refund of an examination fee must be in writing.

2. Applicants who hold a current license as an Associate Professional Counselor are not required to re-take the examination in Professional Counseling when applying for licensure as a Professional Counselor.

(c) **Master's Social Worker**

1. Applicants for licensure as a Master's Social Worker must pass the required licensure examination prior to applying for licensure. The applicant shall instruct the testing authority to report scores to the Board. Instructions will be furnished upon request.

(d) **Clinical Social Worker**

1. Applicants for licensure as a Clinical Social Worker shall apply, and upon approval by the Board schedule themselves to take the examination directly with the testing authority, and submit the appropriate examination fee to the testing authority.

(e) **Associate Marriage and Family Therapist**

1. Applicants for licensure as an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist shall submit a proposed contract for obtaining the postmaster's experience and supervision required for licensure as an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist, on forms furnished by the Board.

2. Applicants for licensure as an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist shall apply, and upon approval by the Board schedule themselves to take the examination directly with the testing authority, and submit the appropriate examination fee to the testing authority.

(f) **Marriage and Family Therapist**

1. Applicants for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist, shall apply, and upon approval by the Board schedule themselves to take the examination directly with the testing authority, and submit the appropriate examination fee to the testing authority.

2. Applicants who hold a current license as an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist are not required to re-take the examination in Marital and Family Therapy when applying for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-3-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-7A-8, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-8, 43-10A-10.
History. Original Rule entitled "Licensure Without Examination (Grandparenting)" adopted. F. Feb. 26, 1986; eff. Mar. 18, 1986.
Amended: F. Nov. 7, 1986; eff. Nov. 27, 1986.
Repealed: New Rule entitled "Licensure by Endorsement" adopted. F. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.
Repealed: New rule entitled "Licensure by Examination" adopted. F. Mar. 29, 1993; eff. Apr. 18, 1993.
Amended: F. May 2, 2002; eff. May 22, 2002.

Rule 135-3-.04. Licensure by Endorsement.

(1) The Board may license without examination any Professional Counselor or Marriage and Family Therapist currently licensed in another state or jurisdiction, so long as that other state or jurisdiction's requirements for the license in question are substantially equal to or greater than those in Georgia.

(2) The applicant must file a written application, and the non-refundable fee, for licensure by endorsement on Board approved forms available on the website: www.sos.ga.gov/plb/counselors.

(3) The applicant shall direct the licensure regulatory entity of the state or jurisdiction in which the license is held to complete and submit Form N of the application which indicates that such license is in effect and in good standing.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-3-.04
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-7A-5, 43-7A-9, 43-7A-10, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-10.
History. Original Rule entitled "Licensure by Exam Waiver (Reciprocity)" adopted. F. Feb. 26, 1986; eff. Mar. 18, 1986.
Amended: F. Dec. 20, 1988; eff. Jan. 9, 1989.
Repealed: F. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.
Amended: New Rule entitled "Licensure by Endorsement" adopted. F. Mar. 29, 1993; eff. Apr. 18, 1993.
Amended: F. Aug. 10, 2011; eff. Aug. 30, 2011.

Chapter 135-4. PROCEDURAL RULES.

Rule 135-4-.01. Procedural Rules.

The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists hereby adopts by reference as its permanent rules Chapters 295-3 through 295-13 and any future amendments thereto, of the Rules and Regulations of the Office of the Division Director, Professional Licensing Boards Division.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-4-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-5, 43-10A-5.
History. Original Rule entitled "Procedural Rules" adopted. F. Jan. 14, 1986; eff. Feb. 3, 1986.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Aug. 16, 2001; eff. Sept. 5, 2001.

Chapter 135-5. REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE.

Rule 135-5-.01. Associate Professional Counselors.

Pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 43-10A-11, the requirements for licensure and the restrictions on practice for Associate Professional Counselors are as follows:

(a) **Definitions.**

1. **"The Practice of Professional Counseling"** means practice in that specialty which utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate and treat emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective. The practice is further defined in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-3(10).

2. **"Direction"** means the ongoing administrative overseeing by an employer or superior of a Professional Counselor's work in the practice of professional

counseling as defined by 135-5-.01(a)(1) by a director. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of the services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations, which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.

3. **"Director"** means the person who provides direction and who is either the employer of the person who receives direction or is the superior in the administrative chain of command to the person who receives direction.

4. **"Supervision"** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of a Professional Counselor's interaction with their client(s). The purpose of supervision is to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes, and direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision does not require the supervisor to be present at the work site with the supervisee. Supervision may be provided pro bono or for a fee. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

   (i) **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees.

   (ii) **Group Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six supervisees.

5. **"Supervisor"** means a licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist who complies with the ethical standards of practice of their profession with particular attention being paid to prohibited dual relationships. In addition,

   (i) a supervisor who holds a master's degree must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience; and

   (ii) a supervisor who holds a specialist degree must have two (2) years of post-licensure experience; and

   (iii) a supervisor who holds a doctoral degree must have one (1) year of post-licensure experience; and

   (iv) for supervision entered into after **September 30, 2018**, a supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential or a

Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA) Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor credential.

(v) however, the Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein.

(vi) in a supervised practicum or internship which is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor OR, in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

6. **"Directed Experience"** means time spent under direction engaging in the practice of Professional Counseling as defined in 135-5-.01(a)(1).

(i) all work sites must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling as defined in Rule 135-5-.01(a)(1). Valid work sites should have measurable detailed documentation for every candidate, to include a signed contractual agreement that outlines the job description, office hours, performance review procedures and dismissal policies.

(ii) non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine acceptability in defining the working relationship for the purposes of obtainment of the required post-master's directed work experience only if they meet these requirements. The agreement between the work site and the candidate should be akin to employment.

(iii) applicants may, at the discretion of the Board, be required to submit documentation substantiating (a) the nature of the working relationship with the directed experience site, (b) the formal structure of the organization, and (c) whether any licensed or associate licensed individuals work there to ensure compliance and understanding of these requirements.

7. **"Directed Experience Under Supervision Contract"** is a document, obtained from the Board, that defines the working relationship for the purposes of obtaining the required post-masters directed experience under supervision. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

8. **"Program Primarily Counseling in Content" and "Program in Applied Psychology"** means a course of study at an accredited educational institution consisting of a master's degree which includes either as part of the degree program or as additional course work completed prior to, during or after the degree program, the following graduate level courses. After **September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education

(CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.

(i) **Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory**, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.

(ii) **A Counseling or Applied Psychology Practicum or Internship** as part of the graduate degree program.

(iii) **Courses in six (6) of the following nine (9) content areas, after September 30, 2018, all 9 content areas of the following course work are required:**

(I) **Human Growth and Development**, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infantile to geriatric stages.

(II) **Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training**, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles, societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles; and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.

(III) **Counseling Techniques or Skills**, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the facilitation of client change; OR Advanced Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory, which includes the in-depth study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.

(IV) **Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy**, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other groupapproaches.

(V) **Lifestyle and Career Development**, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure counseling, guidance and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.

(VI) **Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals**, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/ assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.

(VII) **Research Methods and Evaluation**, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation, needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research; OR Research Statistics, which includes an understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer generated statistical measures.

(VIII) **Professional Orientation and Ethics**, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles, responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.

(IX) **Psychopathology**, which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

(b) **Requirements for Licensure.**

1. Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree in a program primarily counseling in content or in a program of applied psychology, which degree includes a supervised practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the degree program, from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on

Higher Education Accreditation. **After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required. After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is either primarily counseling in content or a program of applied psychology.

2. **Registration of a contract for obtaining postmaster's directed experience under supervision**. The applicant shall register with the Board an acceptable contract, the Directed Experience Under Supervision Contract, for obtaining the post-master's experience required for licensure as a Professional Counselor. The applicant is responsible for notifying the Board of any changes in the contract, by submitting a new contract within fourteen (14) days of the change. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

3. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as an associate professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board in rule 135-3-.03(2)(a)(2).

(c) **Restrictions on Practice.**

1. A person who holds a license as an Associate Professional Counselor may only use the title "Associate Professional Counselor."

2. A person who holds a license as an Associate Professional Counselor may engage in the practice of Professional Counseling, but only under direction and supervision, and only for a period not to exceed five years while obtaining the post-master's experience and supervision required for licensure as a Professional Counselor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.01(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-5-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-l 0A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10, 43-10A-11.
History. Original Rule entitled "Marriage and Family Therapists" adopted. F. Mar. 10, 1986; eff. Mar. 30, 1986.
Amended: F. Nov. 7, 1986; eff. Nov. 27, 1986.
Amended: F. Dec. 18, 1986; eff. Jan. 7, 1987.
Amended: F. Sept. 8, 1987; eff. Sept. 28, 1987.
Amended: F. Feb. 16, 1988; eff. Mar. 7, 1988.
Amended: F. Oct. 26, 1988; eff. Nov. 15, 1988.
Amended: F. May 12, 1994; eff. June 1, 1994.
Amended: F. Nov. 2, 1994; eff. Nov. 22, 1994.

Amended: F. Jan. 30, 1996; eff. Feb. 19, 1996.
Repealed: F. Jan. 13, 1997; eff. Feb. 2, 1997.
Amended: New Rule entitled "Associate Professional Counselors" adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Aug. 13, 2003; eff. Sept. 2, 2003.
Amended: F. Mar. 21, 2006; eff. Apr. 10, 2006.
Amended: F. Mar. 14, 2007; eff. Apr. 3, 2007.
Amended: F. Feb. 25, 2015; eff. Mar. 17, 2015.
Amended: F. Feb. 8, 2016; eff. Feb. 28, 2016.

Rule 135-5-.02. Professional Counselors.

Pursuant to Official Code of Georgia Annotated 43-10A-11 an applicant for a license in Professional Counseling must meet the following requirements.

(a) **Definitions.**

1. **"The Practice of Professional Counseling"** means practice in that specialty which utilizes counseling and psychotherapy to evaluate and treat emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral, or affective. The practice is further defined in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-3(10).

2. **"Direction"** means the ongoing administrative overseeing by an employer or superior of a Professional Counselor's work in the practice of professional counseling as defined by 135-5-.02(a)(1) by a director. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of the services rendered by that practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.

3. **"Director"** means the person who provides direction and who is either the employer of the person who receives direction or is the supervisor in the administrative chain of command to the person who receives direction.

4. **"Supervision"** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of a Professional Counselor's interaction with their client(s). The purpose of supervision is to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes, and direct observation of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision does not require the supervisor to be present at the work site with the supervisee. Supervision may be provided pro bono or for a fee. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

(i) **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees.

(ii) **Group Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six supervisees.

5. **"Supervisor"** means a licensed Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist, who complies with the ethical standards of practice of their profession with particular attention being paid to prohibited dual relationships. In addition,

   (i) a supervisor who holds a master's degree must have three (3) years of post-licensure experience; and

   (ii) a supervisor who holds a specialist degree must have two (2) years of post-licensure experience; and

   (iii) a supervisor who holds a doctoral degree must have one (1) year of post-licensure experience; and

   (iv) for supervision entered into **after September 30, 2018**, a supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor must hold either a National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Clinical Supervisor credential or a Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCAGA) Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor credential.

   (v) however, the Board in its discretion may approve a supervisor whose experience is substantially similar to those stated herein.

   (vi) in a supervised practicum or internship which is part of the graduate degree program, either the course instructor of record or the on-site clinical instructor must be a qualified supervisor OR, in the education of rehabilitation counselors, may be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

6. **"Directed Experience"** means time spent under direction engaging in the practice of Professional Counseling as defined in 135-5-.02(a)(1).

   (i) all work sites must include a formal structure related to the practice of professional counseling as defined in Rule 135-5-.01(a)(1). Valid work sites should have measurable detailed documentation for every candidate, to include a signed contractual agreement that outlines the job description, office hours, performance review procedures and dismissal policies.

   (ii) non-compensated experiences or services will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine acceptability in defining the working relationship for the

purposes of obtainment of the required post-master's directed work experience only if they meet these requirements. The agreement between the work site and the candidate should be akin to employment.

(iii) applicants may, at the discretion of the Board, be required to submit documentation substantiating (a) the nature of the working relationship with the directed experience site, (b) the formal structure of the organization, and (c) whether any licensed or associate licensed individuals work there to ensure compliance and understanding of these requirements.

7. **"Years of Directed Experience"**

(i) "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 600 hours of directed experience acquired within a period of not less than twelve months and not more than twenty months.

(ii) "Two years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1200 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than twenty-four months and not more than 60 months.

(iii) "Three years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1800 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than thirty-six months and not more than 60 months.

(iv) "Four years of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 2400 hours of directed experience under supervision acquired within a period of not less than forty-eight months and not more than 60 months.

(v) **After September 30, 2018** "One year of Directed Experience" means a minimum of 1000 hours of directed experience acquired in not less than a twelve (12) month period. The number of required years of Directed Experience is based on the applicant's educational credentials as defined in Rule 135-5-.02 (b, c, d, e and f).

(vi) **After September 30, 2018**, all Directed Experience must be obtained within the sixty (60) months prior to the date of application. Endorsement applications will be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Board.

8. **"Years of Supervision"**

(i) "One year of Supervision" means a minimum of 30 hours of supervision obtained during one year of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).

(ii) "Two years of Supervision" means a minimum of 60 hours of supervision obtained during two years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).

(iii) "Three years of Supervision" means a minimum of 90 hours of s supervision obtained during three years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).

(iv) "Four years of Supervision" means a minimum of 120 hours of supervision obtained during four years of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).

(v) **After September 30, 2018**, "One year of Supervision" means a minimum of thirty five (35) hours of supervision obtained during one twelve (12) month period of Directed Experience as defined in Rule 135-5-.02(7).

(vi) **After September 30, 2018**, all Supervision must be obtained within the sixty (60) months prior to the date of application. Endorsement applications will be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Board.

9. **"Work settings acceptable to the Board"** means a directed work settings in which the practice of Professional Counseling takes place and may include, but is not limited to, education, rehabilitation, career development, mental health, community, or industrial organizations. Practice without direction is not a work setting acceptable to the Board. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

10. **"Certified Rehabilitation Counselor"** means a person who is certified as a rehabilitation counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

11. **"Program Primarily Counseling in Content"** and **"Program in Applied Psychology"** means a course of study at an accredited educational institution consisting of a master's, specialist or doctoral degree which includes either as part of the degree program or as additional course work completed prior to, during or after the degree program, the following graduate level courses. **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. An individual course may not be used to fulfill the requirement in more than one content area.

(i) **Counseling/Psychotherapy Theory**, which includes the principles, concepts, and practice of counseling/psychotherapy and the major models of counseling/psychotherapy.

(ii) **A Counseling or Applied Psychology Practicum or Internship** as part of the graduate degree program.

(iii) **Courses in six (6) of the following nine (9) content areas: After September 30, 2018**, all 9 content areas of the following course work are required:

(I) **Human Growth and Development**, which includes an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, personality theory, and learning theory, and which may provide a comprehensive overview of the factors, determinants, and stages that pertain to physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development and adaptation from infantile to geriatric stages.

(II) **Multicultural Counseling or Diversity Training**, which includes an understanding of societal changes and trends, human roles, societal subgroups, diversity, social mores and interaction patterns, and differing lifestyles and competency in counseling a diverse clientele.

(III) **Counseling Techniques or Skills**, which includes an understanding of the philosophic bases of helping processes, helper self-understanding and self-development, and the facilitation of client change; OR **Advanced Psychotherapy/Intervention Theory**, which includes the in-depth study of the major theories, principles, methods and techniques of psychotherapy with individuals, groups or families, focusing on the treatment or prevention of behavior disorders, adjustment problems, psychopathology, or other psychological disturbance.

(IV) **Group Dynamics and Group Counseling/Psychotherapy**, which includes an understanding of group development, dynamics, and counseling/psychotherapy theories; group leadership styles; group counseling/psychotherapy methods and skills; and other group approaches.

(V) **Lifestyle and Career Development**, which includes an understanding of career development theories; occupational educational information sources and systems; career and leisure

counseling, guidance and education; lifestyle and career decision making; and career development program planning, resources, and evaluation.

(VI) **Appraisal/Assessment of Individuals**, which includes an understanding of psychometric theories and approaches to appraisal/assessment; validity and reliability; psychometric statistics; the selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of various assessment instruments; and the use of appraisal/assessment results in the counseling/psychotherapy process.

(VII) **Research Methods and Evaluation**, which includes an understanding of types of research, statistics, research report development, research implementation, program evaluation, needs assessment, and ethical and legal considerations in research; OR Research Statistics, which includes an understanding of the theory, analysis and interpretation of manual or computer generated statistical measures.

(VIII) **Professional Orientation and Ethics**, which includes an understanding of ethical and legal standards, professional roles, responsibilities, and functions; professional goals and objectives; professional organizations and associations; professional history and trends; professional preparation standards; and professional credentialing.

(IX) **Psychopathology**, which includes theories, research, descriptive characteristics, categories, dynamics, and etiology of mental, behavioral, cognitive and personality disorders, with a focus on utilization of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

(b) **An applicant who holds a master's degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**

1. Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program

recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.

2. A "Masters" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master's degree and indicated on the official transcript.

3. **Directed Experience under Supervision**. The applicant must present evidence of four (4) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board OR three (3) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. **After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required.** A minimum of two (2) years of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)5, except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

(c) **An applicant who holds a specialist degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**

1. **Education.** The applicant must have earned a specialist degree from an institution, which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.

2. A "Specialist" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the specialist degree and indicated on the official transcript.

3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of two (2) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions at 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program OR three (3) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board. **After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required**. A minimum of one (1) year of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)5, except that if the supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

(d) **An applicant who holds a doctoral degree from a program primarily counseling in content must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**

1. **Education.** The applicant must have earned a doctoral degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.

2. A "Doctoral" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the doctoral degree and indicated on the official transcript.

3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of one (1) year of supervised counseling internship of at least seven hundred fifty (750) hours during the doctorate degree program in a work setting acceptable to the Board OR one (1) year of post master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board. A minimum of half of the one year of supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)5, except that if the

supervision was acquired prior to September 23, 1993, such supervision may have been provided by any qualified supervisor. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

(e) **An applicant who is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**

1. **Education.** The applicant must have earned a master's degree from a rehabilitation counseling program which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education OR a master's degree from an institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation with documented graduate level coursework demonstrating that the degree program is primarily counseling in content and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.**After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program.

2. A "masters" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master's degree and indicated on the official transcript.

3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of three (3) years of post-master's directed experience providing rehabilitation services in a rehabilitation setting acceptable to the Board under the supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] of a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified supervisor OR two (2) years of post- master's directed experience providing rehabilitation services in a rehabilitation setting acceptable to the Board under the supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] of a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified supervisor and a supervised counseling practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. **After September 30, 2018, 600 practicum or internship hours will be required.** A minimum of one (1) year of the supervision must be provided by a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor and meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)5. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Certification.** The applicant must hold the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor designation.

5. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

(f) **An applicant who holds a master's degree in psychology must meet the following requirements for licensure as a Professional Counselor.**

1. **Education.** The applicant must have earned a master's degree in a program of applied psychology from an institution, which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. **After September 30, 2018** the degree program must be accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) or a regionally accredited program recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The approved program must be substantially similar in coursework and content to a CACREP or CORE accredited program. The applicant must document graduate level coursework from such an accredited institution in order to demonstrate that the degree program is a program of applied psychology. The degree program must meet the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)11.

2. A "Masters" degree must be so designated by the educational institution awarding the master's degree and indicated on the official transcript.

3. **Directed Experience under Supervision.** The applicant must present evidence of four (4) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision [see definitions in Rule 135-5-.02(a)] in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board OR three (3) years of post-master's directed experience under supervision in the practice of Professional Counseling in a work setting acceptable to the Board and a supervised counseling or applied psychology practicum or internship of at least 300 hours which was part of the graduate degree program. A minimum of two (2) years of the supervision must be provided by a supervisor who is a licensed Professional Counselor who meets the requirements in Rule 135-5-.02(a)5, or a licensed Psychologist, except that if the supervision was acquired prior to January 1, 2004, such supervision may have been provided by a person with a master's degree from an accredited educational institution in a program of applied psychology. Directed experience sites in the contract must meet the requirements of rule 135-5-.02(a)(6) above, the definition of "Directed Experience".

4. **Examination.** To qualify for licensure as a professional counselor, applicant must pass the required competency examination for licensure prescribed by the Board.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-5-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-l 0A-8, 43-10A-9, 43-10A-10, 43-10A-11.
History. Original Rule entitled "Professional Counselors" adopted. F. May 23, 1986; eff. June 12, 1986.
Amended: F. Mar. 18, 1987; eff. Apr. 7, 1987.

Amended: F. July 24, 1987; eff. August 13, 1987.
Amended: F. Feb. 16, 1988; eff. Mar. 7, 1988.
Amended: F. June 27, 1991; eff. July 17, 1991.
Amended: F. May 10, 1993; eff. May 30, 1993.
Amended: ER. 135-5-0.1-.02 adopted. F. Oct. 4, 1993; eff. Sept. 27, 1993, as specified by the Agency.
Amended: ER. 135-5-0.2-.02 adopted. F. Feb. 2, 1994; eff. Jan. 28, 1994, as specified by the Agency.
Amended: Permanent Rule adopted. F. May 27, 1994; eff. June 16, 1994.
Amended: F. Nov. 21, 1996; eff. Dec. 11, 1996.
Amended: F. Apr. 20, 2001; eff. May 10, 2001.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Aug. 13, 2003; eff. Sept. 2, 2003.
Amended: F. Mar. 21, 2006; eff. Apr. 10, 2006.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. July 24, 2006; eff. August 13, 2006.
Amended: F. Mar. 16, 2007; eff. Apr. 5, 2007.
Amended: F. Feb. 25, 2015; eff. Mar. 17, 2015.
Amended: F. Feb. 8, 2016; eff. Feb. 28, 2016.

Rule 135-5-.03. Master's Social Workers.

(1) **The Practice of Licensed Master's Social Workers.**

(a) **The Practice of Licensed Master's Social Work.** A licensed Master's Social Worker may render or offer to render to individuals, marriages, couples, families, groups, organizations, governmental units, or the general public, service which is guided by knowledge of social resources, social systems, and human behavior. The licensee may provide evaluation, prevention and intervention services which include but are not restricted to community organization, counseling techniques, and supportive services such as administration, direction, supervision of bachelor's level social workers, consultation, research or education.

(b) **First Two Years of Practice.** The first two years of practice after the issuance of the Master of Social Work license shall be under direction and supervision.

(c) **Practice After Two Years of Experience.** After two years of Social Work practice under direction and supervision, **the licensee** may engage in private practice however, a master's licensee whose practice includes counseling or psychotherapeutic techniques may only engage in such practice under supervision and only for such period of time as is prescribed for qualification to take the clinical social work licensing examination.

(d) **Private Practice by a Licensed Master Social Worker After Qualifying for Clinical Social Work Licensure.** In order to continue in the private practice of social work that includes counseling or psychotherapy, a licensed master's social worker must apply for a Clinical Social Work license within 60 days of meeting the experience and supervision requirements for that license. The licensee must then take the first scheduled examination for which he/she qualifies, unless good cause is shown for postponement, in which case the licensee shall take the next scheduled examination. Upon receipt of notification that the licensee has passed

the Clinical Social Work licensing examination and after meeting all requirements as prescribed in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-8 and 43-10A-72, the Board will issue a Clinical Social Work license. If the Licensee fails the examination, the Board shall require that the licensee's work remain supervised until the applicant has taken and passed the examination. The exam must be taken at the next scheduled exam date unless the Board, in its sole discretion, approves the postponement for good cause. The exam may be taken a total of three times. If the licensee fails the examination three times the licensee shall not engage in the private practice of counseling or psychotherapy in the State of Georgia until such time as he/she has taken and passed the examination, absent a statutory exemption.

2) **Licensure Process-**(Please refer to the section entitled "Definitions" for clarification of terms).

(a) **Education.** An applicant for licensure as a Master's Social Worker must have earned a master's degree in Social Work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Candidacy, conditional or accreditation status must have been in effect at the school when the degree was awarded.

(b) **Practice while Preparing to Take the Licensing Examination.** Persons who have obtained a master's degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and who are practicing social work under direction and supervision while preparing to take the master's social work licensing examination, may practice for a period of up to one year following the granting of such degree.

(c) **Examination.** Within one year of graduating from a social work graduate program the individual practicing social work in the State of Georgia must apply to take the licensing examination. If the applicant fails the exam the first time it is taken, then the applicant is required to take the examination at the next scheduled exam date, unless good cause is shown for postponement. The applicant mays it for the examination a total of three times. An applicant who fails the examination three times, shall not continue to engage in the practice of social work in the state of Georgia, until such time as the applicant has taken and passed the exam absent of statutory exemption. [Certain exemptions may apply, these are designated in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-7(b)].

(3) **Definitions.**

(a) **Direction** means the ongoing administrative oversight by a director of the work of a Social Worker. The person providing direction shall be responsible for assuring the quality of the services rendered by the practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.

(b) **Director** means the person who provides direction and who is either the employer of the person who receives direction or is the superior in the employment chain of command to the person who receives direction.

(c) **Supervision** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of a Social Worker's interaction with clients. The purpose of supervision shall be to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes and direct observation. For supervision to enable the applicant to qualify for Clinical Social Work licensure, it must comply with requirements specified in Rule 135-5-.04.

(d) **Supervisor** means an individual who promotes the development of the Social Worker's clinical skills and who is a licensed Clinical Social Worker, Professional Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist or Psychiatrist and has met the requirements to be considered a supervisor in their particular discipline. Supervision provided for an individual seeking licensure as a clinical social worker must be in compliance with Rule 135-5-04. A supervisor of a bachelor level social worker must meet the requirements specified in O.C.G.A. 43-10A-7(b)(14).

(e) For Experience acquired prior to 7/1/96, one year means 800 hours acquired in no less than 12 months and no more than 36 months.

(f) For Experience acquired on or after 7/1/96, one year means 1000 hours acquired in no less than 12 months and no more than 36 months.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-5-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-12(a)(1), 43-10A-12, 43-10-12(a)(1), 43-10A-12(a)(1); 43-10A-12 b, S.B. 137, p. 14.
History. Original Rule entitled "Master's Social Workers" was filed on May 23, 1986; effective June 12, 1986.
Amended: Filed November 7, 1986; effective November 27, 1986.
Amended: Rule repealed and a new Rule of same title adopted. Filed June 26, 1987; effective July 16, 1987.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Dec. 3, 1991; eff. Dec. 23, 1991.
Amended: F. Jul. 17, 1992; eff. Aug. 6, 1992.
Amended: F. Jun. 27, 1995; eff. July 17, 1995.

Rule 135-5-.04. Clinical Social Workers.

(1) **The Practice of Clinical Social Work.** A Licensed Clinical Social Worker may practice all authorized services of licensed master's social workers and may provide: supervision; direction; psychosocial evaluation through data collection and analyses to determine the nature of an individual's mental, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal problems or conditions; counseling, and psychotherapy to individuals, marriages, couples, families and groups; interpretation of the psychosocial dynamics of a situation and

recommend and implement a course of action to individuals, marriages, couples, families, or groups. This practice may occur in such settings as private practice, family service and counseling agencies, health care facilities and schools and may provide direct evaluation, casework, social work advocacy, education, training, prevention and intervention services in situations threatened or affected by social, intrapersonal stress, interpersonal stress or health impairment.

(2) **Licensure Process** (Please refer to the section entitled "Definitions" for clarification of terms).

(a) **Education** The applicant must have earned a master's degree in Social Work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in which candidacy, conditional or accreditation status was in effect when the degree was awarded.

(b) **Experience - Masters Degree in Social Work.** The applicant with a master's degree must have completed three years' full-time supervised experience in the practice of social work following granting of the master's degree. Of the three years of supervised experience, only the first two must be under direction.

1. The applicant must present evidence of having practiced clinical social work for a minimum of 3000 hours post social work master's degree supervised experience acquired over a period of no less than 36 months or more than 108 months, the first 2000 hours of experience must be under supervision and direction in the practice of clinical social work. Applicant must submit documentation of having acquired 120 hours of supervision during this time, no more than 50% of which may be group supervision and at least 50% must be provided by a licensed clinical social worker who meets requirements to be a duly qualified supervisor.

2. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

(c) **Experience - Masters Degree in Social Work and a Doctoral Degree.** An applicant who holds a master's degree in social work and holds a doctoral degree in Professional Counseling; Social Work; Marriage and Family Therapy; Medicine; Psychiatric Nursing; Applied Psychology; Pastoral Counseling; or Applied Child and Family Development and whose degree program included a supervised clinical internship may substitute this for one year of experience.

1. An individual who holds a master's degree in Social Work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and holds a doctoral degree in Professional Counseling; Social Work; Marriage and Family

Therapy; Medicine, Psychiatric Nursing; Applied Psychology; Pastoral Counseling; or Applied Child and Family Development must also present evidence of two years full time supervised post master's degree experience (defined as 2000 hours) under direction in the practice of Clinical Social Work obtained in no less than 24 months or no more than 72 months. Such applicant must also submit evidence of 80 hours of supervision provided by a duly qualified supervisor, 50% of which may be group supervision. Fifty percent of the supervision must be provided by a licensed Clinical Social Worker.

2. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

(3) **Extension.** The Board, in its sole discretion, may extend the period of time in which the applicant must have acquired supervision and/or experience with adequate showing of hardship or good cause.

(4) **Examination.** After having completed the above experience requirements the applicant must submit an application to the board for licensure and upon approval the applicant must take the first scheduled examination for which he/she qualifies, unless good cause is shown for postponement, in which case the applicant shall take the next scheduled examination. [Upon receipt of notification that the applicant has passed the Clinical Social Work licensing examination, the Board will issue a Clinical Social Work license.] If the applicant fails the examination, the Board shall require that the applicant's work remain supervised until the applicant has taken and passed the examination. The exam must be taken at the next scheduled exam date unless good cause is shown for postponement. The exam may be taken a total of three times. An applicant who fails the examination three times, applicant shall not engage in the private practice of counseling or psychotherapy in the State of Georgia until such time as he/she has taken and passed the examination, absent a statutory exemption.

(5) **Definitions.**

(a) **Direction** means the ongoing administrative oversight by an employer or superior of a Social Worker. The person providing direction shall be responsible for assuring the quality of the services rendered by the practitioner and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner.

(b) **Director** means the person who provides direction and who is either the employer of the person who receives direction or is the superior in the employment chain of command to the person who receives direction.

(c) **Directed Experience** in the practice of Clinical Social Work means time spent under direction engaging in the activities defined as Clinical Social Work in Rule 135-5-.04(1).

(d) **Supervision** means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of a Social Worker's interaction with clients. The purpose of supervision shall be to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Supervision may include without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audiotapes, videotapes and direct observation.

1. **Individual Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of two supervisees.

2. **Group Supervision** means one supervisor meeting with a maximum of six supervisees.

(e) **Supervisor** means a person who is licensed as a Clinical Social Worker, Professional Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist and must have practiced in their specialty for at least 2000 clock hours over a minimum of 2 years following licensure.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-5-.04
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-12.
History. Original Rule entitled "Clinical Social Workers" was filed on May 23, 1986; effective June 12, 1986.
Amended: Filed November 7, 1986; effective November 27, 1986.
Amended: Filed January 20, 1988; effective February 9, 1988.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 4, 1992; eff. Feb. 24, 1992.
Amended: F. May 29, 1992; eff. June 18, 1992.
Amended: F. Jun. 27, 1995; eff. July 17, 1995.
Amended: F. Jan. 30, 1996; eff. Feb. 19, 1996.
Amended: F. Oct. 8, 1996; eff. Oct. 28, 1996.
Amended: F. Mar. 16, 2007; eff. Apr. 5, 2007.
Amended: F. Nov. 9, 2011; eff. Nov. 29, 2011.

Rule 135-5-.05. Associate Marriage and Family Therapists.

(1) **Definitions and Requirements:**

(a) Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor means a person who is licensed as a marriage and family therapist and who has been approved by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and

Marriage and Family Therapists to provide supervision of the practice of marriage and family therapy. To obtain such approval the person shall submit documentation of the following:

1. Three years of full-time post-licensure experience in the practice of marriage and family therapy;

2. 180 hours of experience providing marriage and family therapy supervision for at least two supervisees during a period of no less than two years and no more than five years;

3. 36 hours of supervision received from an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor or a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, specifically in the skill of providing marriage and family therapy supervision, minimum of 24 hours of which shall have been individual supervision-of-supervision;

4. A recommendation from each of the supervisors who provided supervision-of-supervision attesting to the applicant's competence as a supervisor; and,

5. The Board may, in its discretion, approve a supervisor who is licensed, in good standing, as a Marriage and Family Therapist and designated an approved marriage and family therapy supervisor in another jurisdiction.

(b) Contract for Post-graduate Experience and Supervision means a statement, on forms provided by the Board, made by a person who has completed one of the degree programs required for licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist, specifying that person's plan for obtaining the remaining experience and supervision required for licensure as a marriage and family therapist. Such a statement, once reviewed and approved by the Board, shall be considered an approved contract. An approved contract may be amended, so long as any changes have been approved by the Board.

(c) Course in Human Development means a graduate course in any aspect of human development across the life span, including but not limited to theories of individual development, theories of learning, theories of personality, theories of normal and abnormal behavior, gender, human sexuality, and either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions.

(d) Course in Marriage and Family Studies means a graduate course in the principles, concepts or history of marriage and family life, family systems, family relations and family development.

(e) Course in Marriage and Family Therapy means a graduate course in the theory and practice of various treatment modalities in marriage and family therapy.

(f) Course in Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics means a graduate course in professional ethics, legal responsibilities and liabilities, standards of practice, licensure regulation, and professional socialization relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy.

(g) Course in Research means a graduate course in research design, methods and statistics.

(h) Direct Clinical Experience means time spent in client contact as therapist or co-therapist, in supervision, in case staffing, or in case consultation.

(i) Direction means ongoing oversight by an employer or superior of the work of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of services rendered by that practitioner, and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner. In order to be acceptable to the Marriage and Family Therapy Standards Committee of the Board, a director must attest to having performed the functions specified in this paragraph, and when not an employer must have entered into a contractual agreement with the practitioner to perform these functions.

1. Directors may not provide direction to family members. In addition, directors shall not provide direction for any practitioner when that practitioner has, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the director is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.

2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

(j) One Year Practicum means twelve months of supervised experience obtained while enrolled in graduate courses designated practicum at an educational institution which, at the time, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

(k) Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy means evaluating, diagnosing, and treating emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, affective or behavioral, resolving intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, and changing perception, attitudes and behavior; all within the context of marital and family systems. Marriage and family therapy includes, without being limited to, individual, group, couple, sexual, family and divorce therapy. Marriage and family therapy involves an applied understanding of the dynamics of marital and family therapy systems, including individual psychodynamics, the use of assessment instruments that evaluate marital and family functioning, designing and

recommending a course of treatment, and the use of psychotherapy and counseling.

(l) Program Equivalent to a Marriage and Family Therapy Degree Program means an organized course of study at an accredited educational institution consisting of a master's degree and additional post-master's degree coursework which includes three courses in marriage and family studies; three courses in marriage and family therapy; three courses in human development, one of which must be a course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions; one course in marriage and family therapy ethics; and one course in research.

(m) Program in Marriage and Family Therapy means a master's degree program at an accredited educational institution which includes three courses in marriage and family studies; three courses in marriage and family therapy; three courses in human development, one of which must be a course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions; one course in marriage and family therapy ethics; and one course in research.

(n) Supervision means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of the interactions with clients of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audio tapes, video tapes, and direct observation in order to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

1. Supervisors may not provide supervision to family members. In addition, supervisors shall not provide supervision for any practitioner when that practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the supervisor is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.

2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

(2) **Requirements for Licensure:**

(a) Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree from a program in marriage and family therapy, from a program equivalent to a marriage and family therapy degree program, or from any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Such

program shall be in an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

(b) Practicum. The applicant must have completed a one year practicum in the practice of marriage and family therapy before or after the granting of the master's degree.

1. Such practicum shall include a minimum of 500 hours of direct clinical experience.

2. Such practicum shall include 100 hours of supervision provided by a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist or psychologist, who was also an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.

(c) Contract. The applicant must submit and obtain the Board's approval of a Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision.

1. Applicants who have not yet secured employment or begun supervision at the time of submission of their application for licensure shall so indicate on the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision. The applicant shall submit an updated Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision to the Board for approval within thirty (30) days of securing post-graduate employment or beginning post-graduate supervision;

2. Once the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision is approved by the Board, any change in the contract must be submitted to the Board within thirty (30) days for approval;

3. The Board, at its discretion, may request that the applicant and/or licensee submit verification of the information in the Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision and, if necessary, submit a revised Contract for Post-Graduate Experience and Supervision; and,

4. Any post-graduate experience or supervision obtained by an associate marriage and family therapist without Board approval may not be applied toward licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

(d) Examination. The applicant shall register and sit for the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board review of his/her application for licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist and approval to take the examination. Passing the examination is a requirement for licensure.

(3) **Restrictions on Practice:**

(a) A person who holds a license as an associate marriage and family therapist may only use the title "associate marriage and family therapist."

(b) A person who holds a license as an associate marriage and family therapist may engage in the practice of marriage and family therapy, but only while under direction and supervision, and only for a period not to exceed five years while obtaining the post-master's experience and supervision required for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-5-.05
Authority: O.C.G.A.§§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-3(5), 43-10A-3(8), 43-10A-3(15), 43-10A-3(16), 43-10A-5(c)(1), 43-10A-8(b), 43-10A-13(a)(1) and (2), 43-10A-13(b) and 43-10A-13(c).
History. Original Rule entitled "Associate Marriage and Family Therapists" adopted. F. Oct. 8, 1996; eff. Oct. 28, 1996.
Amended: F. Aug. 29, 1997; eff. Sept. 18, 1997.
Amended: F. July 6, 1998; eff. July 26, 1998.
Amended: F. Oct. 11, 2002; eff. Oct. 31, 2002.
Amended: F. July 12, 2005; eff. August 1, 2005.
Amended: F. Mar. 21, 2006; eff. Apr. 10, 2006.
Amended: F. Aug. 2, 2007; eff. Aug. 22, 2007.
Amended: F. Nov. 9, 2011; eff. Nov. 29, 2011.
Amended: F. Jul. 24, 2012; eff. Aug. 13, 2012.
Amended: F. June 27, 2019; eff. July 17, 2019.
Amended: F. Oct. 8, 2019; eff. Oct. 28, 2019.

Rule 135-5-.06. Marriage and Family Therapists.

(1) **Definitions and Requirements:**

(a) Approved Practicum or Internship Program means supervised experience obtained while enrolled in graduate courses designated practicum or internship at an educational institution which, at the time, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

(b) Board Approved Graduate Level Course means a course in Marriage and Family Studies, Marriage and Family Therapy, or Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics which is offered by a training institute, is comparable to a graduate course offered by an accredited educational institution, and has received prior approval by the Board. No new requests or applications for Board approval of graduate courses offered by training institutes will be accepted as of the effective date of this rule amendment. Individuals enrolled in, or who plan to enroll in, prior approved courses must complete the courses by January 1, 2020 for the courses to be considered for licensure purposes.

(c) Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor means a person who is licensed as a marriage and family therapist and who has been approved by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists to provide supervision of the practice of marriage and family therapy. To obtain such approval the person shall submit documentation of the following:

1. Three years of full-time post-licensure experience in the practice of marriage and family therapy;

2. 180 hours of experience providing marriage and family therapy supervision for at least two supervisees during a period of no less than two years and no more than five years;

3. 36 hours of supervision received from an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor or a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, specifically in the skill of providing marriage and family therapy supervision, minimum of 24 hours of which shall have been individual supervision-of-supervision;

4. A recommendation from each of the supervisors who provided supervision-of-supervision attesting to the applicant's competence as a supervisor; and,

5. The Board may, in its discretion, approve a supervisor who is licensed, in good standing, as a Marriage and Family Therapist and who is designated as an approved marriage and family therapy supervisor in another jurisdiction.

(d) Course in Clinical Content Area means a graduate course in the etiology, dynamics, evaluation, assessment, diagnosis, or treatment of emotional or behavioral problems and conditions.

(e) Course in Marriage and Family Studies means a graduate course in the principles, concepts or history of marriage and family life, family systems, family relations and family development.

(f) Course in Marriage and Family Therapy means a graduate course in the theory and practice of various treatment modalities in marriage and family therapy.

(g) Course in Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics means a graduate course in professional ethics, legal responsibilities and liabilities, standards of practice, licensure regulation, and professional socialization relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy.

(h) Direct Clinical Experience means time spent in client contact as therapist or co-therapist, in supervision, in case staffing, or in case consultation.

(i) Direction means ongoing oversight by an employer or superior of the work of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. The director shall be responsible for assuring the quality of services rendered by that practitioner, and shall ensure that qualified supervision or intervention occurs in situations which require expertise beyond that of the practitioner. In order to be acceptable to the Marriage and Family Therapy Standards Committee of the Board, a director must attest to having performed the functions specified in this paragraph, and when not an employer must have entered into a contractual agreement with the practitioner to perform these functions.

1. Directors may not provide direction to family members. In addition, directors shall not provide direction for any practitioner when that practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the director is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.

2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

(j) Full-time Experience means a minimum of 20 hours per week spent in direct clinical experience.

(k) Group Supervision means a maximum of six supervisees meeting with one supervisor.

(l) Individual Supervision means a maximum of two supervisees meeting with one supervisor.

(m) One Year means twelve months, or any periods of time which sum to twelve months.

(n) Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy means evaluating, diagnosing, and treating emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, affective or behavioral, resolving intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, and changing perception, attitudes and behavior; all within the context of marital and family systems. Marriage and family therapy includes, without being limited to, individual, group, couple, sexual, family and divorce therapy. Marriage and family therapy involves an applied understanding of the dynamics of marital and family therapy systems, including individual psychodynamics, the use of assessment instruments that evaluate marital and family functioning, designing and recommending a course of treatment, and the use of psychotherapy and counseling.

(o) Supervision means the direct clinical review, for the purpose of training or teaching, by a supervisor of the interactions with clients of a person practicing professional counseling, social work or marriage and family therapy. Supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentations, audio tapes, video tapes, and direct observation in order to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills. Both supervisors and supervisees are required to maintain a contemporaneous record of the date, duration, type (individual, paired, or group), and a brief summary of the pertinent activity for each supervision session to be submitted to the Board upon request. If there are any discrepancies in hours, contemporaneous documentation of supervision will be requested.

1. Supervisors may not provide supervision to family members. In addition, supervisors shall not provide supervision for any practitioner when that practitioner, or any of that practitioner's family members have, an ownership interest in, operate, or manage the business entity in which the supervisor is employed and/or where the professional marriage and family therapy services are to be provided by that practitioner.

2. Family member means a member of a person's immediate or extended family, by direct descent or by marriage, including intimate or cohabitation relationships.

(2) **Requirements for Licensure:**

(a) An applicant who holds a current license as an **Associate Marriage and Family Therapist** must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:

1. Experience. The applicant must document two years of full-time post-master's experience or its equivalent, under direction and supervision.

(i) Such experience shall have been in the practice of marriage and family therapy, and shall include a minimum of 2,000 hours of direct clinical experience.

(ii) For applicants who have worked less than full-time, equivalent experience may be accrued over a total of not less than two years and not more than five years.

2. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 100 hours of supervision, concurrent with his/her documented experience.

(i) Such supervision shall have been provided by:

(I) a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist, or psychologist

who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years; or

(II) an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.

(ii) A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision; and

(iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience.

3. Examination Waived. The applicant is not required to re-take the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board approval of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

(b) An applicant who holds a **Master's** Degree and does not have an active Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (AMFT) license must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:

1. Education. The applicant must have earned a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, counseling, social work, medicine, applied psychology, psychiatric nursing, pastoral counseling, applied child and family development, applied sociology, or from any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Such degree shall be from an educational institution which, at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

(i) For the purpose of licensure under this rule, a degree in psychology, child and family development or sociology shall be considered an applied degree and a degree in divinity or in theology shall be considered a degree in pastoral counseling if the applicant has completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, either of the following two options:

(I) Three courses in clinical content areas; or

(II) Two courses in clinical content areas, plus an approved practicum or internship, which shall include a minimum of 500 hours of direct clinical experience in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy.

(III) The coursework required under this section shall be in addition to the five required courses in Marriage and Family Therapy, Marriage and Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics.

(ii) The applicant shall have completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, at least two courses in Marriage and Family Therapy, two courses in Marriage and Family Studies, one course in Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics, and one course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions. These courses shall have been obtained from an educational institution accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or, prior to January 1, 2020, from a training institute which offers Board approved graduate courses.

2. Experience. The applicant must document three years of full-time post-master experience, or its equivalent, under direction and supervision, which shall include a minimum of 2,500 hours of direct clinical experience.

(i) One year of such experience may have been in an approved practicum before or after the granting of the master's degree, which shall include a minimum of 500 hours of direct clinical experience in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy.

(ii) At least two years of such experience shall have been in the practice of marriage and family therapy, which shall include a minimum of 2,000 hours of direct clinical experience.

(iii) For applicants who have worked less than full-time, equivalent experience may be accrued over a total of not less than three years and not more than five years.

3. Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 200 hours of supervision, concurrent with his/her documented experience.

(i) Such supervision shall have been provided by:

(I) a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist, or psychologist who shall have been licensed and in good standing for a minimum of three years; or,

(II) an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.

(ii) At least 100 hours of such supervision shall have been provided by an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation. A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision;

(iii) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience; and

(iv) Up to 100 hours of such supervision may have been obtained during an approved practicum before or after the granting of the master's degree.

4. Examination. The applicant shall register and sit for the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board review of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist and approval to take the examination. Passage of the exam is a requirement to issue a license.

(c) An applicant who holds a **Doctoral Degree** must meet the following requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist:

(i) Education. The applicant must have earned a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy, counseling, social work, medicine, applied psychology, psychiatric nursing, pastoral counseling, applied child and family development, applied sociology, or from any program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Such degree shall be from an educational institution which,

at the time the degree was awarded, was accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

(I) For the purpose of licensure under this rule, a degree in psychology, child and family development or sociology shall be considered an applied degree and a degree in divinity or in theology shall be considered a degree in pastoral counseling if the applicant has completed, as part of the degree program or as additional post-master's coursework, either of the following two options:

I. Three courses in clinical content areas; or

II. Two courses in clinical content areas, plus an approved practicum or internship, which shall include a minimum of 500 hours of direct clinical experience in the practice of professional counseling, clinical social work or marriage and family therapy.

III. The coursework required under this section shall be in addition to the five required courses in Marriage and Family Therapy, Marriage and Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics.

(II) The applicant shall have completed, as part of a master or doctoral degree program, or as additional post-graduate degree coursework, at least two courses in Marriage and Family Therapy, two courses in Marriage and Family Studies, one course in Marriage and Family Therapy Ethics, and one course in either psychopathology or the diagnosis of mental problems and conditions. These courses shall have been obtained from an educational institution accredited by a regional body recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or, prior to January 1, 2020, from a training institute which offers Board approved graduate courses.

(ii) Experience. The applicant must document two years of full-time post-master or post-doctorate experience, in the practice of marriage and family therapy, under direction and supervision, which shall include a minimum of 1,500 hours of direct clinical experience.

(I) One year of such experience may have been in an approved internship program before or after the granting of the doctoral degree, which shall include a minimum of 500 hours of direct clinical experience.

(II) At least one year of such experience shall have been full-time post-master or post-doctorate experience, which shall include a minimum of 1,000 hours of direct clinical experience.

(iii) Supervision. The applicant must have obtained 100 hours of supervision, concurrent with their documented experience.

(I) Such supervision shall have been provided by a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist, or psychologist, who was also an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.

(II) A minimum of 50 of these 100 hours must have been in individual supervision, and a maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been in group supervision;

(III) A minimum of 5 hours of such supervision must have been obtained concurrent with each 100 hours of direct clinical experience; and

(IV) A maximum of 50 of these 100 hours may have been obtained during the applicant's doctoral degree or internship program.

(iv) Examination. The applicant shall register and sit for the Examination in Marital and Family Therapy following Board review of his/her application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist and approval to take the examination. Passing the examination is a requirement for licensure.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-5-.06
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-3(5), 43-10A-3(8), 43-10A-3(15), 43-10A-3(16), 43-10A-5(c)(1), 43-10A-8(b), 43-10A-13(a)(2), 43-10A-13(a)(2)(B),(C).
History. Original Rule entitled "Marriage and Family Therapists" adopted. F. Jan. 13, 1997; eff. Feb. 2, 1997.
Amended: F. Aug. 29, 1997; eff. Sept. 18, 1997.
Amended: F. July 6, 1998; eff. July 26, 1998.
Amended: F. Oct. 11, 2002; eff. Oct. 31, 2002.
Amended: F. Mar. 21, 2006; eff. Apr. 10, 2006.
Amended: F. Mar. 16, 2007; eff; Apr. 5, 2007.
Amended: F. May 30, 2008; eff. June 19, 2008.
Amended: F. Nov. 9, 2011; eff. Nov. 29, 2011.
Amended: F. June 10, 2019; eff. June 30, 2019.

Chapter 135-6. REGULATION OF LICENSES.

Rule 135-6-.01. Display of Licenses.

Licensed Professional Counselors, Master's Social Workers, Clinical Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists shall display their license and evidence of renewal in a conspicuous place in their office or place of business or employment.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-6-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-19, 43-7A-5, 43-7A-15, 43-7A-16.
History. Original Rule entitled "Display of Licenses" adopted. F. Jan. 20, 1988; eff. Feb. 9, 1988.

Rule 135-6-.02. Change of Name or Address.

It is the duty of each licensee to notify the Board in writing of any change of name or address from that previously filed with the Board. A notice of change of name must be accompanied by a certified copy of a marriage certificate, court order or other legal document.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-6-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-19, 43-7A-5, 43-7A-15, 43-7A-16.
History. Original Rule entitled "Change of Name or Address" adopted. F. Jan. 20, 1988; eff. Feb. 9, 1988.

Rule 135-6-.03. Biennial Renewal Cycle.

(1) All licenses shall expire on September 30th of even numbered years.

(2) Renewal notices, mailed or e-mailed, are only sent as an accommodation. The responsibility of license renewal remains with the license holder.

(3) The applicant for renewal shall submit to the Board, on or before September 30th of even numbered years:

(a) A completed application for renewal; and

(b) The biennial renewal fee (See Fee Schedule); and

(c) Proof of having satisfied the continuing education requirement, as set forth in Rule 135-9-.01.

(4) Renewal applications submitted during the late renewal period shall be required to pay a late renewal penalty fee in addition to the renewal fee (See Fee Schedule). Failure to renew a license by the end of the established late renewal penalty period, which is October 31st of the renewal year, shall have the same effect as a revocation subject to reinstatement in the discretion of the Board.

(5) Unless the license is renewed on or before October 31st of even numbered years, continued practice after such date shall constitute unlawful practice and is grounds for discipline.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-6-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-4, 43-1-7, 43-1-19, 43-1-25, 43-10A-5(c), 43-10A-14, 43-10A-15, 43-10A-16, 43-10A-17.
History. Original Rule entitled "Biennial Renewal Cycle" adopted. F. Jan. 20, 1988; eff. Feb. 9, 1988.
Amended: F. June 27, 1995; eff. July 17, 1995.
Amended: F. June 28, 2001; eff. July 18, 2001.
Amended: F. Oct. 22, 2002; eff. Nov. 11, 2002.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. May 19, 2010; eff. June 8, 2010.
Amended: F. Nov. 4, 2022; eff. Nov. 24, 2022.

Rule 135-6-.04. Revocation of Expired Licenses and Reinstatement of Expired Licenses.

(1) Failure to renew a license by the end of the established late renewal penalty period, October 31st of even numbered years, shall have the same effect as a revocation of said license and reinstatement of the license shall be in the discretion of the Board. If an application for reinstatement is submitted to the Board within five (5) years of the expiration date of the license, the Board shall require documentation of thirty five (35) hours of continuing education activities for EACH renewal cycle missed, a minimum of thirty five (35) of which must have been completed within two years of the date the reinstatement application is received by the Board, and payment of a late renewal penalty fee as set by the Board (See Fee Schedule). At its discretion, the Board may require additional information.

(2) If an application for reinstatement is submitted to the Board more than five (5) years after the expiration of a license, an applicant must provide the following with their application:

(a) A completed application for reinstatement, the required fee and documentation of thirty-five (35) hours of continuing education activities that were completed within two years of the date the reinstatement application is received. In addition, the applicant must (re)take and pass the required licensing examination. However, the (re)taking of the exam is not required if an applicant for reinstatement is currently, and has continuously been, licensed and practicing in another state/jurisdiction whose licensure requirements meet or exceed the current Georgia licensure requirements. All other provisions apply.

(b) In order to meet the requirements listed above (2), the applicant may use any qualifying education, experience, and supervision, including any which were applied toward his/her previous application for licensure.

(3) Associate level licenses (Associate Professional Counselor and Associate Marriage and Family Therapist) that lapse for failure to renew by the end of the established late renewal penalty period may be reinstated only once, and reinstatement is at the discretion of the Board. All other provisions apply.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-6-.04
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-4, 43-1-19, 43-1-25, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-15, 43-10A-17
History. Original Rule entitled "Reinstatement of Expired Licenses" adopted. F. Jan. 20, 1988; eff. Feb. 9, 1988.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. June 22, 2000; eff. July 12, 2000.
Amended: Rule retitled "Revocation of Expired Licenses and Reinstatement of Revoked Licenses". F. Oct. 22, 2002; eff. Nov. 11, 2002.
Repealed: New Rule entitled "Revocation of Expired Licenses and Reinstatement of Expired Licenses" adopted. F. May 19, 2010; eff. June 8, 2010.
Repealed: Rule of same title adopted. F. Jun. 18, 2012; eff. July 8, 2012.
Amended: F. Nov. 5, 2014; eff. Nov. 25, 2014.
Amended: F. Nov. 4, 2022; eff. Nov. 24, 2022.

Rule 135-6-.05. Repealed.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-6-.05
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-4, 43-1-19, 43-7A-5, 43-7A-15, 43-7A-16, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-16.
History. Original Rule entitled "Revocation for Failure to Renew" adopted. F. Jan. 20, 1988; eff. Feb. 9, 1988.
Repealed: F. Oct. 22, 2002; eff. Nov. 11, 2002.

Rule 135-6-.06. Inactive Status.

(1) Inactive licensure status is not available for Associate Professional Counselors or Associate Marriage and Family Therapist licensees.

(2) A licensee who does not intend to practice in Georgia and who therefore does not intend to practice or to use the title Professional Counselor, Social Worker, or Marriage and Family Therapist may apply to convert an active license to inactive status. An individual who holds an inactive license will not be required to renew their license or to satisfy the biennial renewal requirements.

(3) A license may remain inactive for no more than five (5) years from the date the status is converted to inactive by the administrative staff. If a licensee has not applied to reactivate their license before the five (5) year deadline, the license will be revoked for failure to reactivate.

(4) A person who holds an active license may apply for inactive status in the following manner:

(a) Submit a completed, signed, notarized "Request for Inactive Status" application to the Board. There is no fee to apply for inactive status;

(b) Submit the license pocket card with the application.

(5) A person who holds an inactive license may apply to reactivate their license within five (5) years or less from date active status was converted to inactive status by the administrative staff in the following manner:

(a) Submit an Application for Reactivation;

(b) Submit the reactivation fee (see fee schedule); and

(c) Submit evidence that the licensee has obtained thirty five (35) hours of continuing education pursuant to Board rule 135-9 within two (2) years of the date of the application for reactivation.

(d) Upon receipt of the application, the fee and continuing education documents, and upon approval by the Board, the license will be reactivated.

(6) After five (5) years of inactive status, an Application for **Reinstatement** must be filed pursuant to Board rule 135-6-.04.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-6-.06
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-19, 43-1-22, 43-1-25, 43-10A-2.
History. Original Rule entitled "Inactive Status" adopted. F. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.
Amended: F. June 27, 1995; eff. July 17, 1995.
Repealed: Rule with same title adopted. F. Jun. 18, 2012; eff. July 8, 2012.

Chapter 135-7. CODE OF ETHICS.

Rule 135-7-.01. Responsibility to Clients.

(1) A licensee's primary professional responsibility is to the client. The licensee shall make every reasonable effort to promote the welfare, autonomy and best interests of families and individuals, including respecting the rights of those persons seeking assistance, obtaining informed consent, and making reasonable efforts to ensure that the licensee's services are used appropriately.

(2) Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) exploiting relationships with clients for personal or financial advantages;

(b) using any confidence of a client to the client's disadvantage;

(c) participating in dual relationships with clients that create a conflict of interest which could impair the licensee's professional judgment, harm the client, or compromise the therapy;

(d) undertaking a course of treatment when the client, or the client's representative, does not understand and agree with the treatment goals;

(e) knowingly withholding information about accepted and prevailing treatment alternatives that differ from those provided by the licensee;

(f) failing to inform the client of any contractual obligations, limitations, or requirements resulting from an agreement between the licensee and a third party payer which could influence the course of the client's treatment;

(g) when there are clear and established risks to the client, failing to provide the client with a description of any foreseeable negative consequences of the proposed treatment;

(h) charging a fee for anything without having informed the client in advance of the fee;

(i) taking any action for nonpayment of fees without first advising the client of the intended action and providing the client with an opportunity to settle the debt;

(j) when termination or interruption of service to the client is anticipated, failing to notify the client promptly and failing to assist the client in seeking alternative services consistent with the client's needs and preferences;

(k) failing to terminate a client relationship when it is reasonably clear that the treatment no longer serves the client's needs or interest;

(l) delegating professional responsibilities to another person when the licensee delegating the responsibilities knows or has reason to know that such person is not qualified by training, by experience, or by licensure to perform them; and

(m) failing to provide information regarding a client's evaluation or treatment, in a timely fashion and to the extent deemed prudent and clinically appropriate by the licensee, when that information has been requested and released by the client.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-7-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-5(d).
History. Original Rule entitled "Responsibility to Clients" was F.Oct. 19, 1987 eff. Nov. 8, 1987.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.

Rule 135-7-.02. Integrity.

(1) The licensee shall act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity and competence. The licensee is honest in dealing with clients, students, trainees, colleagues, and the public. The licensee seeks to eliminate incompetence or dishonesty from the profession.

(2) Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to:

(a) practicing inhumane or discriminatory treatment toward any person or group of persons;

(b) engaging in dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation while performing professional activities;

(c) engaging in sexual activities or sexual advances with any client, trainee, or student;

(d) practicing while under the influence of alcohol or drugs not prescribed by a licensed physician;

(e) practicing in an area in which the licensee has not obtained university level graduate training or substantially equivalent supervised experience;

(f) failing either to obtain supervision or consultation, or to refer the client to a qualified practitioner, who faced with treatment, assessment or evaluation issues beyond the licensee's competence;

(g) accepting or giving a fee or anything of value for making or receiving a referral;

(h) using an institutional affiliation to solicit clients for the licensee's private practice; and

(i) allowing an individual or agency that is paying for the professional services to exert undue influence over the licensee's evaluation or treatment of a client.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-7-.02
History. Original Rule entitled "Integrity" was filed on October 19, 1987; effective November 8, 1987.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.
Note: Correction of non-substantive typographical error on SOS Rules and Regulations website, as requested by the Agency on Oct. 18, 2017. Subparagraph (2)(b),"whiabbcle" corrected to "while"; as originally adopted and published in the Official Compilation Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia, eff. Mar. 19, 2000. Effective October 18, 2017.

Rule 135-7-.03. Confidentiality.

(1) The licensee holds in confidence all information obtained at any time during the course of a professional relationship, beginning with the first professional contact. The licensee safeguards clients' confidences as permitted by law.

(2) Unprofessional conduct includes but is not limited to the following:

(a) revealing a confidence of a client, whether living or deceased, to anyone except:

1. as required by law;

2. after obtaining the consent of the client, when the client is a legally competent adult, or the legal custodian, when the client is a minor or a mentally incapacitated adult. The licensee shall provide a description of the information to be revealed and the persons to whom the information will be revealed prior to obtaining such consent. When more than one client has participated in the therapy, the licensee may reveal information regarding only those clients who have consented to the disclosure;

3. where the licensee is a defendant in a civil, criminal, or disciplinary action arising from the therapy, in which case client confidences may be disclosed in the course of that action;

4. where there is clear and imminent danger to the client or others, in which case the licensee shall take whatever reasonable steps are necessary to protect those at risk including, but not limited to, warning any identified victims and informing the responsible authorities; and

5. when discussing case material with a professional colleague for the purpose of consultation or supervision;

(b) failing to obtain written, informed consent from each client before electronically recording sessions with that client or before permitting third party observation of their sessions;

(c) failing to store or dispose of client records in a way that maintains confidentiality, and when providing any client with access to that client's records, failing to protect the confidences of other persons contained in that record;

(d) failing to protect the confidences of the client from disclosure by employees, associates, and others whose services are utilized by the licensee; and

(e) failing to disguise adequately the identity of a client when using material derived from a counseling relationship for purposes of training or research.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-7-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. 43-7A-5(d).
History. Original Rule entitled "Confidentiality" was filed on October 19, 1987; effective November 8, 1987.

Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.

Rule 135-7-.04. Responsibility to Colleagues.

(1) The licensee respects the rights and responsibilities of professional colleagues and, as the employee of an organization, remains accountable as an individual to the ethical principles of the profession. The licensee treats colleagues with respect and good faith, and relates to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

(2) Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to:

(a) soliciting the clients of colleagues or assuming professional responsibility for clients of another agency or colleague without appropriate communication with that agency or colleague;

(b) failing to maintain the confidences shared by colleagues and supervisees in the course of professional relationships and transactions;

(c) when a supervisee is unlicensed, failing to inform the supervisee of the legal limitations on unlicensed practice;

(d) when a supervisor is aware that a supervisee is engaging in any unethical, unprofessional or deleterious conduct, failing to provide the supervisee with a forthright evaluation and appropriate recommendations regarding such practice; and

(e) taking credit for work not personally performed, whether by giving inaccurate information or failing to give accurate information.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-7-.04
Authority: O.C.G.A. Sec. 43-7A-5(d).
History. Original Rule entitled "Responsibility to Colleagues" was filed on Oct. 19, 1987; eff. Nov. 8, 1987.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.

Rule 135-7-.05. Assessment Instruments.

(1) When using assessment instruments or techniques, the licensee shall make every effort to promote the welfare and best interests of the client. The licensee guards against the misuse of assessment results, and respects the client's right to know the results, the interpretations and the basis for any conclusions or recommendations.

(2) Unprofessional conduct, includes but is not limited to the following:

(a) failing to provide the client with an orientation to the purpose of testing or the proposed use of the test results prior to administration of assessment instruments or techniques;

(b) failing to consider the specific validity, reliability, and appropriateness of test measures for use in a given situation or with a particular client;

(c) using unsupervised or inadequately supervised test-taking techniques with clients, such as testing through the mail, unless the test is specifically self-administered or self-scored;

(d) administering test instruments either beyond the licensee's competence for scoring and interpretation or outside of the licensee's scope of practice, as defined by law; and

(e) failing to make available to the client, upon request, copies of documents in the possession of the licensee which have been prepared for and paid for by the client.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-7-.05
Authority: O.C.G.A. Sec. 43-7A-5(d).
History. Original Rule entitled "Assessment Instruments" was filed on Oct. 19, 1987; eff. Nov. 8, 1987.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.

Rule 135-7-.06. Research.

(1) The licensee recognizes that research activities must be conducted with full respect for the rights and dignity of participants and with full concern for their welfare. Participation in research must be voluntary unless it can be demonstrated that involuntary participation will have no harmful effects on the subjects and is essential to the investigation.

(2) Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to:

(a) failing to consider carefully the possible consequences for human beings participating in the research;

(b) failing to protect each research participant from unwarranted physical and mental harm;

(c) failing to ascertain that the consent of the research participant is voluntary and informed;

(d) failing to treat information obtained through research as confidential;

(e) knowingly reporting distorted, erroneous, or misleading information.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-7-.06
Authority: O.C.G.A. Sec. 43-7A-5(d).
History. Original Rule entitled "Research" was filed on Oct. 19, 1987; eff. Nov. 8, 1987.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.

Rule 135-7-.07. Advertising and Professional Representation.

(1) The licensee adheres to professional rather than commercial standards when making known their availability for professional services. The licensee may provide information that accurately informs the public of the professional services, expertise, and techniques available.

(2) Unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to:

(a) intentionally misrepresenting the licensee's professional competence, education, training, and experience, or knowingly failing to correct any misrepresentations provided by others;

(b) using as a credential an academic degree in a manner which is intentionally misleading or deceiving to the public;

(c) intentionally providing information that contains false, inaccurate, misleading, partial, out-of-context, or otherwise deceptive statements about the licensee's professional services, or knowingly failing to correct inaccurate information provided by others; and

(d) making claims or guarantees which promise more than the licensee can realistically provide.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-7-.07
Authority: O.C.G.A. Sec. 43-7A-5(d).
History. Original Rule entitled "Advertising and Professional Representation" was filed on Oct. 19, 1987; eff. Nov. 8, 1987.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Feb. 28, 2000; eff. Mar. 19, 2000.

Chapter 135-8. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND PROCEDURES.

Rule 135-8-.01. Complaints.

(1) A complaint may be filed by any person by submitting a written statement to the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists at 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217.

(2) The compliant shall include the complainant's name, address, and phone number, shall be signed by the complainant, and shall give the name and address of the person or business entity against whom the complaint is being filed.

(3) The complaint must specifically state the circumstances which led to the complaint being filed.

(4) While a complaint is under investigation, the name of the person or business entity against whom the complaint is being filed shall be treated as confidential, as provided in O.C.G.A. 43-1-19(h)(2). However, the name of the person or business entity will no longer be treated as confidential once the Board takes an official action which places it into the public record.

(5) Once a Board member becomes aware of the identity of a person who is the subject of a complaint, and the Board member has a personal relationship with that person which would affect the Board member's judgment, or has prior knowledge of the person's practice which would affect the Board member's judgment, the Board member shall immediately disclose to the Board such relationship or knowledge, and shall not participate in the deliberation or the vote on the complaint; however, nothing herein shall preclude any Board member from giving testimony in the matter.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-8-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. 43-7A-17; 43-7A-5, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-17.
History. Original Rule entitled "Complaints" adopted. F. Mar. 25, 1988; eff; Apr. 14, 1988.
Amended: F. Aug. 16, 2001; eff. Sept. 5, 2001.

Rule 135-8-.02. Investigation of Complaints.

(1) The Board or its duly appointed representative will review each complaint and initiate whatever investigative action is appropriate.

(2) All investigations shall be conducted as provided by the laws of the State of Georgia, including but not limited to the Administrative Procedures Act (O.C.G.A. 50-13-1*et seq.*); O.C.G.A. 43-1-1*et seq.*; the Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists Licensing Law (O.C.G.A. 43-10A-1*et seq.*); the Rules of the Division Director, Professional Licensing Boards Division; and the Rules of the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-8-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-5, 43-7A-17, 43-10A-17.
History. Original Rule entitled "Investigation of Complaints" adopted. F. Mar. 25, 1988; eff. Apr. 14, 1988.
Amended: F. Aug. 16, 2001; eff. Sept. 5, 2001.

Rule 135-8-.03. Disciplinary Proceedings.

All disciplinary proceedings, including hearings in contested cases, shall be conducted as provided by the laws of the State of Georgia, including but not limited to the Administrative Procedures Act (O.C.G.A. 50-13-1*et seq.*); O.C.G.A. 43-1-1*et seq.*; the Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists Licensing Laws (O.C.G.A. 43-10-A-1 *et seq.*); the Rules of the Division Director, Professional Licensing Boards Division; and the Rules of Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-8-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-5, 43-7A-17, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-17.
History. Original Rule entitled "Disciplinary Proceedings" adopted. F. Mar. 25, 1988; eff. Apr. 14, 1988.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Aug. 16, 2001; eff. Sept. 5, 2001

Chapter 135-9. CONTINUING EDUCATION.

Rule 135-9-.01. Requirements - Beginning October 01, 2020.

(1) **Definitions:**

(a) Synchronous activities require participants and instructors to be present at the same time. These activities can be face-to-face or online. Lectures, discussions, and presentations must occur at a specific time at which all participants are present. It may be a virtual classroom, but must allow participants to ask and teachers to answer questions instantly, either face-to-face or through instant messaging. Synchronous activities may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. In-person (live): Participants are physically present at the location where the presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar is being held and are present for the entire length of the activity;

2. Webinars: A presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar that is transmitted via the internet and allows full participation between the participants and the presenter(s); or,

3. Video conferencing: Participants are in two or more locations in a virtual conference room and communicate as if they were sitting right next to each other.

(b) Asynchronous activities are online courses or a recording of a previously held program that one can access on one's own schedule.

(c) Independent Study means a variety of self-directed professional study activities including, but not limited to, writing papers or books for presentation or publication; making presentations on major professional issues or programs; reading professional journals and books; preparing for initial consultation, teaching, or training assignments; and engaging in independent study, research, or tutorial projects.

(d) Academic Hour means one (1) academic semester hour of graduate level coursework shall be equivalent to fifteen (15) clock hours of continuing education. One (1) academic quarter hour of course credit shall be equivalent to ten (10) clock hours of continuing education.

(e) Core hours mean continuing education hours acquired in activities in the specialty in which the license is held; e.g. professional counseling core hours must reflect professional counseling content, social work core hours must reflect social work content, and marriage and family therapy core hours must reflect marriage and family therapy content.

(f) Related hours mean continuing education hours acquired in activities in a specialty other than the one in which the license is held or in the allied professions of psychiatry, psychiatric nursing or psychology.

(2) **Continuing Education Requirements:**

(a) Thirty-five (35) hours of continuing education are required to be obtained within the two (2) year biennial licensure cycle to renew each license, including associate level licenses. The biennial licensure cycle is the two (2) year period beginning October 1st of each even numbered year, and ending on September 30th of every subsequent even numbered year.

1. When the license is initially issued during the second year of the licensure cycle, on or after October 1st of each odd numbered year, no continuing education is required for the initial, first renewal of the license.

2. At the next renewal cycle the licensee must comply with all continuing education requirements.

3. When a master social worker, associate professional counselor, or an associate marriage and family therapist level license is superseded by the issuance of a clinical social worker, a professional counselor or a marriage and family therapist license, Rule 135-9-.01(2)(a)(1) above does not apply, and the licensee is required to meet continuing education hours required for license renewal as set forth in Chapter 135-9.

(b) A minimum of five (5) of the thirty-five (35) hours shall be specifically designated as continuing education in professional ethics relating to any of the specialties of

professional counseling, social work, or marriage and family therapy. Ethics hours shall be obtained through synchronous activities only.

(c) Of the remaining thirty (30) hours, a minimum of fifteen (15) shall be core hours and not more than fifteen (15) shall be related hours.

(d) A maximum of ten (10) hours of continuing education may be obtained asynchronously for each two-year renewal period.

(e) Core hours shall be obtained through synchronous or asynchronous activities sponsored, co-sponsored, or approved by:

1. A professional association in the specialty in which the license is held.

2. An academic department in the specialty in which the license is held:

   (i) Graduate level coursework will meet continuing education requirements only when offered by an academic department in the specialty in which the license is held and when the department is in an education institution accredited by a body acceptable to the Boardset forth in Chapter 135-5.

   (ii) One (1) academic semester hour of graduate level coursework shall be equivalent to fifteen (15) hours of continuing education, and one (1) academic quarter hour of course credit shall be equivalent to ten (10) hours of continuing education, up to a maximum of twenty (20) hours.

3. A licensing or certification board in another jurisdiction which regulates the specialty in which the license is held. If the board is a composite board, the activity must be specifically approved for continuing education in the specialty in which the license is held.

(f) Related hours are continuing education hours acquired in activities in a specialty other than the one in which the license is held or in the allied professions of psychiatry, psychiatric nursing or psychology. Related hours may be obtained from:

1. Activities sponsored, co-sponsored, or approved by professional associations in the specialties of professional counseling, social work, marriage and family therapy or the allied professions for psychiatry, psychiatric nursing or psychology or allied health specialties.

2. Activities sponsored, co-sponsored, or approved by an academic department in the specialties of professional counseling, social work, marriage and

family therapy or the allied professions of psychiatry, psychiatric nursing, or psychology.

(i) Graduate level coursework will meet continuing education requirements only when offered by an academic department in the specialty in which the license is held and when the department is in an education institution accredited by a body acceptable to the Board as set forth in Chapter 135-5.

(ii) One (1) academic semester hour of graduate level coursework shall be equivalent of fifteen (15) hours of continuing education, and one (1) academic quarter hour of course credit shall be equivalent to ten (10) hours of continuing education.

3. Activities sponsored, co-sponsored, or approved by a licensing or certification board in another jurisdiction which regulates the specialties of professional counseling, social work, marriage and family therapy or the allied professions of psychiatry, psychiatric nursing or psychology.

4. Activities sponsored by federal, state, or local government agencies and licensed hospitals.

(g) Independent Study is limited to five (5) hours. Neither ethics nor core hours may be obtained through independent study. If selected for a continuing education audit at renewal, the licensee shall submit a notarized affidavit attesting to number of hours of independent study completed.

(h) The professional association, academic department, licensing or certification board, state, or local government agency, or licensed hospital that sponsors, co-sponsors or approves the continuing education activity shall certify the number of clock hours of education content in each activity. The certificate of attendance for the continuing education hours should include whether the activity was synchronous or asynchronous.

(i) A Standards Committee may, in its discretion, accept continuing education hours obtained from sources substantially similar to those listed in (e) and (f) above.

(j) No more than twenty (20) hours of continuing education shall be from any one continuing education or academic coursework, workshop, or presentation. This limit does not apply to professional conferences which offer multiple presentations.

(k) Any continuing education hour may be applied towards the renewal of a license in more than one specialty, provided that the continuing education hour meets the requirements set out in (e) or (f) above.

(l) Continuing education hours earned in professional ethics exceeding the five (5) required for renewal may be applied to meet requirements for core or related hours when they meet the requirements set out in (e) or (f) above.

(m) If, at the Board's request, a licensee completes a peer review of an alleged violation of the law or the Board's Rules, the licensee shall satisfy the five (5) hours of continuing education required in professional ethics. Such a review must be submitted as a written report to the Board.

(3) **Continuing Education (CE) Board Audit**

(a) For those selected for a Board continuing education audit, the **CE Audit Reporting Form** is required to be submitted to the Board in addition to the certificates of attendance or other supporting documents. The Board will not review any CE documentation without the required audit form being included with the submission.

(b) If, following a continuing education audit, the Board disqualifies any of the documented continuing education hours and the licensee no longer meets the requirements set out in this Rule, 135-9-.01, the license will be renewed under the condition that the licensee obtains the required continuing education hours within six months of the notice of deficiency.

(c) If the licensee does not cure the deficiency within this six-month period, the license may be subject to discipline for failure to meet the requirements for renewal.

(4) **Documentation**

(a) Each licensee shall, for a period of four (4) years, maintain documentation of completion of continuing education hours. Licensees may utilize a data bank service. The Board will not maintain continuing education files for licensees.

(b) Licensees shall attest, on their biennial license renewal application, that they have satisfied the continuing education requirements as set forth in Chapter 135-9. False attestation of satisfaction of the continuing education requirements shall subject the licensee to disciplinary action, including revocation.

(c) Each renewal cycle, the Board shall audit a fixed percentage of the renewal applications' continuing education hours. Licensees whose renewal applications are audited will be required to submit documentation of their continuing education activities. Except for independent study, such documents must be in the form of a certificate of attendance verifying whether activity is synchronous or asynchronous, a statement signed by the provider verifying participation in the activity, or an official transcript. Documentation of independent study shall be in

the form of a notarized affidavit which includes a description of the activity, the subject material covered, the dates and numbers of hours involved.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-9-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25, 43-10A-5(c)(1), 43-10A-7(b)(9) through (11) for religious exemptions, 43-10A-16.
History. Original Rule entitled "Requirements" adopted. F. July 27, 1988; eff. August 16, 1988.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Sept. 5, 1989; eff. Sept. 25, 1989.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Aug. 10, 1992; eff. Aug. 30, 1992.
Amended: F. Dec. 3, 1992; eff. Dec. 23, 1992.
Repealed: New Rule, same title, adopted. F. Apr. 10, 1996; eff. Apr. 30, 1996.
Amended: F. Dec. 9, 1997; eff. Dec. 29, 1997.
Amended: F. Jan. 5, 2001; eff. Jan. 25, 2001.
Amended: F. May 18, 2001; eff. June 7, 2001.
Amended: F. Aug 10, 2011; eff. August 30, 2011.
Amended: F. Jan. 14, 2014; eff. Feb. 3, 2014.
Amended: New title "Requirements - Beginnings October 01, 2020." F. Sep. 30, 2020; eff. Oct. 20, 2020.

Rule 135-9-.02. Repealed.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-9-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. § 43-10A-5(c)(1).
History. Original Rule entitled "Sources" adopted. F. July 27, 1988; eff. August 16, 1988.
Amended: F. Sept. 5, 1989; eff. Sept. 25, 1989.
Repealed: New Rule entitled "Documentation" adopted. F. Aug. 10, 1992; eff. Aug. 30, 1992.
Repealed: F. Sep. 30, 2020; eff. Oct. 20, 2020.

Rule 135-9-.03. Repealed.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-9-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-7A-26, 43-1-25, 43-10A-16.
History. Original Rule entitled "Documentation" adopted. F. July 27, 1988; eff. August 16, 1988.
Repealed: New Rule of same title adopted. F. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.
Repealed: F. Aug. 10, 1992; eff. Aug. 30, 1992.

Chapter 135-10. ADVERTISING.

Rule 135-10-.01. Licensees.

The title Professional Counselor, Master's Social Worker, Clinical Social Worker or Marriage and Family Therapist may be used only by a person who holds such license.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-10-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-10A-21.
History. Original Rule entitled "Without Any License" was F. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.

Amended: Rule retitled "Licenses", F. Oct. 10, 1991; eff. Oct. 30, 1991.

Rule 135-10-.02. Without Any License.

Persons who do not hold any valid license issued by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists:

(a) may not advertise that they are licensed by the Board;

(b) may not use any words, letters, titles, or figures indicating or implying that they are licensed by the Board;

(c) may not use any words, letters, titles or figures indicating or implying that they are a Professional Counselor, Social Worker, or Marriage and Family Therapist, including but not limited to the following:

Professional Counselor	Professional Counseling
Professional Career Counselor	Professional Career Counseling
Professional College Counselor	Professional College Counseling
Professional EAP Counselor	Professional EAP Counseling
Professional Group Counselor	Professional Group Counseling
Professional Military Counselor	Professional Military Counseling
Professional School Counselor	Professional School Counseling
Professional Correctional Counselor	Professional Correctional Counseling
Professional Educational Counselor	Professional Educational Counseling
Professional Employment Counselor	Professional Employment Counseling
Professional Mental Health Counselor	Professional Mental Health Counseling
Professional Public Offender Counselor	Professional Public Offender Counseling
Professional Rehabilitation Counselor	Professional Rehabilitation Counseling
Social Worker	Social Work
Clinical Social Worker	Clinical Social Work
Master's Social Worker	Master's Social Work
Professional Social Worker	Professional Social Work
Psychiatric Social Worker	Psychiatric Social Work
Medical Social Worker	Medical Social Work
Group Social Worker	Group Social Work
Marriage (Marital) and Family Therapist	Marriage (Marital) and Family Therapy
Marriage (Marital) and Family Counselor	Marriage (Marital) and Family Counseling
Marriage (Marital) Therapist	Marriage (Marital) Therapy
Marriage (Marital) Counselor	Marriage (Marital) Counseling

Family Therapist	Family Therapy
Family Counselor	Family Counseling

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-10-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-10A-21.
History. Original Rule entitled "Practice in Business Entities" was f. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.
Amended: Rule retitled "Without Any License". F. Oct. 10, 1991; eff. Oct. 30, 1991.

Rule 135-10-.03. Practice in Business Entities.

Persons who do not hold any valid license issued by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists may not practice Professional Counseling, Social Work, or Marriage and Family Therapy for any corporation, partnership, association, or business entity which uses in its name any of the words, letters, titles, or figures enumerated in Rule 135-10-.02.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-10-.03
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-10A-21.
History. Original Rule entitled "Exceptions" was f. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.
Amended: Rule retitled "Practice in Business Entities". F. Oct. 10, 1991; eff. Oct. 30, 1991.

Rule 135-10-.04. Exceptions.

The prohibitions set out in Rule 135-10-.02 shall not apply to persons exempt under O.C.G.A. 43-10A-7(b). The prohibitions set out in Rule 135-10-.03 shall not apply to persons exempt under O.C.G.A. 43-10A-7(c).

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-10-.04
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-10A-21.
History. Original Rule entitled "Business Entities" was f. Aug. 21, 1990; eff. Sept. 10, 1990.
Amended: Rule retitled "Exceptions". F. Oct. 10, 1991; eff. Oct. 30, 1991.

Rule 135-10-.05. Business Entities.

If any employee, officer or agent of a corporation, partnership, association or business entity is practicing Professional Counseling, Social Work, or Marriage and Family Therapy, but does not hold any valid license issued by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists, that business entity may not use in its name any of the words, letters, titles or figures enumerated in Rule 135-10-.02. However, this prohibition shall not apply if that employee, officer, or agent is exempt from licensure under O.C.G.A. 43-10A-21(a).

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-10-.05
Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 43-1-25, 43-10A-21.

History. Original Rule was f. as Rule 135-10-.04.
Amended: Rule renumbered. F. Oct. 10, 1991; eff. Oct. 30, 1991.

Chapter 135-11. TELEMENTAL HEALTH.

Rule 135-11-.01. TeleMental Health.

Purpose: The purpose of this rule is to define TeleMental Health and to establish minimum standards for the delivery of services by a licensed Professional Counselor, Social Worker, or Marriage and Family Therapist using technology-assisted media.

(a) Definitions:

1. Asynchronous store and forward - means the transmission of a client's information from an originating site to a licensee at a distant site without the presence of the client.

2. Distant site - means a site or location from which services are delivered by a licensee via a technology-assisted media.

3. Licensee - means a person licensed in the state of Georgia as a Professional Counselor, Social Worker or Marriage and Family Therapist, including Associate licensees.

4. Originating site - means a site where a client is located at the time TeleMental Health services are provided via technology-assisted media or where the asynchronous store and forward services originates.

5. Synchronous interaction - means a real-time interaction between a client and a licensee located at a distant site.

6. TeleMental Health - means the mode of delivering services via technology-assisted media, such as but not limited to, a telephone, video, internet, a smartphone, tablet, PC desktop system or other electronic means using appropriate encryption technology for electronic health information. TeleMental Health facilitates client self-management and support for clients and includes synchronous interactions and asynchronous store and forward transfers.

7. TeleMental Health Supervision - means the delivery of supervision via technology-assisted media by a supervisor at one site while the supervisee is located at a distant site. Telemental health supervision may include, without being limited to, the review of case presentation, audio tapes, video tapes, and observation in order to promote the development of the practitioner's clinical skills.

(b) Provisions

1. Training for Licensee:

   (i) Prior to the delivery of clinical TeleMental Health, the licensee shall have obtained a minimum of six (6) continuing education hours. The continuing education hours may include but are not limited to the following, in the discretion of the Board:

      (I) Internet use dependency and psychological problems - an overview of how Internet users become dependent upon the Internet to such an extent that their Internet use is causing serious problems in their lives.

      (II) Research in Telemental Health - review of evidence base for mental health practice conducted using telemental health.

      (III) Intake and Assessment- initial intake and assessment necessary to determine a client's suitability for telemental health, including informed consent.

      (IV) Delivery Methods - recognize appropriate use of telecounseling, asynchronous email/message posting, synchronous digital chat, video-assisted therapy and other electronically supported modes of delivery.

      (V) Theory Integration - understand how to adapt counseling/therapy theory and effective in-person techniques to telemental health.

      (VI) Termination - recognize similarities and differences between in-person and telemental health closure while providing technology-assisted strategies for reestablishing contact if and/or when necessary.

      (VII) Risk Management - understanding privacy and security standards of applicable laws such as Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ensuring high quality practices and procedures that are legally sound and ethically protect clients and safeguard against litigation, including protection of electronic information.

      (VIII) Business of Telemental Health - review of ethically sound ways to advertise and incorporate telemental health into an existing suite of therapeutic/clinical services.

   (ii) If the licensee has taken the hours required in this section within the last 5 years, those hours do not need to be repeated in order to meet requirements in this section.

2. Supervision:

(i) Training of the TeleMental Health Supervisor: Prior to the delivery of supervision via telemental health, the supervisor shall have obtained a minimum of nine (9) hours of continuing education. The continuing education hours may include the same eight (8) categories identified under "Training for Licensee", rule section (b)(1)(i)(I-VIII) above, **plus**, must also include three (3) hours in the category of: Supervising TeleMental Health Therapy - understanding the key components necessary to supervise effective, and efficient delivery of telemental health therapy.

(ii) If the supervisor has taken the hours required in this section within the last 5 years, those hours do not need to be repeated in order to meet requirements in this section.

(iii) Board rules 135-5 define the acceptable requirements for a Board recognized supervisor and supervision for the Counselor, Social Work and Marriage and Family Therapy professions. Supervisors and supervision must meet the requirements of the specialty found in the applicable section of Board rules 135-5 that define supervisor and supervision for the Counselor, Social Work and Marriage and Family Therapy professions.

(iv) Informed Consent: Prior to the delivery of supervision via TeleMental Health, the supervisor at the distant site shall inform the supervisee that TeleMental Health will be used and obtain verbal and written consent from the supervisee for this use.

3. Informed Consent - Prior to the delivery of TeleMental Health services by a licensee via technology-assisted media, the licensee at the distant site shall inform the client that TeleMental Health services via technology-assisted media will be used, and the licensee shall obtain verbal and written consent from the client for this use. The verbal and written consent shall be documented in the client's record. Consent must include disclosure of the use of any third party vendor such as a record keeping, billing service or legal counsel.

4. Client Assessment - Careful assessment using assessment instruments referenced in Rule 135.-7-.05 as appropriate is required in order to determine whether an individual may be properly assessed and/or treated via TeleMental Health services through technology-assisted media. Clients who cannot be treated properly via TeleMental Health services should be treated in person, or else they should not be accepted as clients or, if already accepted, properly terminated with appropriate referrals.

5. Code of Ethics -The failure of a licensee to comply with these requirements shall constitute unprofessional conduct under the Code of Ethics as described in Board rule 135-7. A licensee delivering health care services via TeleMental Health shall comply with all Code of Ethics requirements as described in Board rule 135-7.

6. Scope of Practice - This rule shall not be construed to alter the scope of practice of any licensee or authorize the delivery of services in a setting, or in a manner, not otherwise authorized by law.

7. Out-of-State Clients - Licensees who want to offer TeleMental Health services outside the state are advised to check with the state board in which the client resides for information about telemental health regulations outside of Georgia.

(c) Continuing education hours obtained pursuant to this rule within a two year licensure cycle may be applied to the required thirty-five (35) hours for that licensure cycles renewal/expiration date.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-11-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-19, 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-2, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-16, 43-10A-17.
History. Original Rule entitled "TeleMental Health" adopted. F. Sep. 17, 2015; eff. Oct. 7, 2015.

Chapter 135-12. TESTING AND ASSESSMENT.

Rule 135-12-.01. Testing and Assessment Instruments.

(1) Persons licensed as Professional Counselors, Social Workers or Marriage and Family Therapists are not authorized to perform psychological testing, or represent their use of any testing or assessment instrument as psychological testing, unless he or she is also licensed to practice psychology under O.C.G.A. 43-39.

(2) Persons licensed as Professional Counselors may:

(a) Administer and interpret assessment instruments to evaluate emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, behavioral or affective;

(b) Administer and interpret educational and vocational assessment instruments;

(c) Administer and interpret any other assessments or tests which he or she is qualified to employ by virtue of his or her education, training or experience.

(3) Persons licensed as Social Workers may:

(a) Administer and interpret assessment instruments to provide psychosocial evaluations;

(b) Administer and interpret assessment instruments to provide in-depth analyses and determinations of the nature and status of emotional, cognitive, mental, behavioral, and interpersonal problems or conditions.

(4) Persons licensed as Marriage and Family Therapists may:

(a) Administer and interpret assessment instruments to evaluate emotional and mental problems and conditions, whether cognitive, affective or behavioral;

(b) Administer and interpret assessment instruments that evaluate marital and family functioning.

(5) The use of these testing and assessment instruments:

(a) By persons licensed as Professional Counselors, Social Workers, or Marriage and Family Therapists may include, but is not limited to, administering and interpreting educational and vocational tests; functional assessments; interest inventories; tests that evaluate marital and family functioning; and mental health symptom screening and assessment instruments that evaluate emotional, mental, behavioral, and interpersonal problems or conditions including substance abuse, health, and disability, provided that the use of these assessment instruments does not include rendering a diagnosis of a mental and nervous disorder or illness, including but not limited to organic brain disorders, brain damage, or other neuropsychological functioning or conditions, and provided that the licensee has obtained university level graduate training or substantially equivalent supervised experience in the use of the test or assessment instrument.

(b) By persons licensed as Professional Counselors may also include other assessments or tests which the licensee is qualified to employ by virtue of his or her education, training, or experience, provided that the use of these assessment instruments does not include rendering a diagnosis of a mental or nervous disorder or illness, including but not limited to organic brain disorders, brain damage, or other neuropsychological functioning or conditions.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-12-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-7, 43-10A-12, 43-10A-13, 43-10A-16, 43-10A-22.
History. Original Rule entitled "Testing and Assessment Instruments" adopted. F. Sep. 1, 2017; eff. Sept. 21, 2017.

Rule 135-12-.02. Diagnosis.

(1) Persons licensed under this chapter as a professional counselor, clinical social worker or marriage and family therapist who comply with this section shall be authorized to diagnose and treat mental, emotional and behavioral disorders through the use of current classification systems such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and/or the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD).

(2) On or before January 1, 2018, any person licensed under O.C.G.A. 43-10A working with people with mental illness, developmental disabilities, or substance abuse shall complete a curriculum of education relating to diagnosing mental disorders, as reflected on an official transcript, to be submitted to the Board upon request. Existing licensees whose transcripts demonstrate completion of an acceptable three semester hours or five quarter hours (forty-five clock hours) graduate level course or an organized training program recognized by the Board shall be deemed to have met this requirement of training and education. A graduate level course, such as psychopathology, DSM or other course with similar content, by a regionally accredited university or an organized training program recognized and/or approved by the Board in mental disorders and diagnosing mental disorders consisting of a minimum of three semester hours or five quarter hours (forty-five clock hours) may satisfy this requirement. The Board recognizes courses may have a variety of names depending on the course provider; the Board may request additional information to determine course or program approval. The Board will recognize training programs that are approved by the Georgia chapters of the Licensed Professional Counselors Association (LPCA-GA), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Georgia Society of Clinical Social Work (GSCSW) and/or Georgia Marriage and Family Therapist Association (GAMFT).

(3) As of April 26, 2016, persons licensed under this chapter with at least ten years of experience as a professional counselor, clinical social worker, or marriage and family therapist working with people with mental illness, developmental disabilities, or substance abuse and in good standing with the Board are exempt from this requirement.

(4) Licensees who complete an acceptable graduate level course consisting of three semester hours or five quarter hours (forty-five clock hours), or an organized training program recognized by the Board, relating to diagnosing mental disorders as defined in (2) above, and which was completed between October 1, 2016 and January 1, 2018 will satisfy the required 35 continuing education hours for the renewal ending September 30, 2018.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-12-.02
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-24, 43-1-25, 43-10A-3, 43-10A-5, 43-10A-6, 43-10A-7, 43-10A-12, 43-10A-13, 43-10A-16, 43-10A-22.
History. Original Rule entitled "Diagnosis" adopted. F. Sep. 1, 2017; eff. Sept. 21, 2017.

Chapter 135-13. MILITARY SPOUSES AND TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS.

Rule 135-13-.01. Military Spouses and Transitioning Service Members.

(1) As used in this rule, the following terms shall mean:

(a) "Military" means the United States armed forces, including the National Guard.

(b) "Military spouse" means a spouse of a service member or transitioning service member.

(c) "Service member" means an active or reserve member of the armed forces, including the National Guard.

(d) "Transitioning service member" means a member of the military on active duty status or on separation leave who is within 24 months of retirement or 12 months of separation.

(2) Effective July 1, 2017, military spouses and transitioning service members may qualify for expedited processing of the license application by showing that the applicant is a military spouse or transitioning service member and that the applicant has paid the fee and meets the requirements for a license under the laws and rules for the type of license for which the applicant has applied.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 135-13-.01
Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-25; 43-1-34; 43-10A-5; 43-10A-8; 43-10A-11; 43-10A-12; 43-10A-13.
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