Rule: 681.140. Requirements for Continuing Education

Action: Proposed Amendment

Comment: The proposed amendments will clarify the nature of professional development a licensee must receive related to maintaining competency when providing services to unique populations.

§681.140. Requirements for Continuing Education.

(a) Minimum Continuing Education Hours Required.

(1) An LPC must complete 24 hours of continuing education during each renewal period that they hold a license. The 24 hours of continuing education must include 6 hours in ethics and 3 hours designed to ensure competency when providing services to a distinct population, defined as a group of people who share a common attribute, trait, or defining characteristic of the licensee’s choice. ~~in cultural diversity or competency~~

(2) A licensee may carry forward to the next renewal period, a maximum of 10 hours accrued during the current renewal period if those hours are not needed for renewal.

(b) Special Continuing Education Requirements.

(1) A licensee with supervisory status must complete 6 hours of continuing education in supervision.

(2) A licensee must successfully complete the Texas jurisprudence examination each renewal period. Licensees who pass the Texas jurisprudence examination may claim 1 hour of continuing education in ethics.

(3) The special continuing education requirements set out in this subsection may be counted toward the minimum continuing education hours required under subsection (a) of this section.

(c) Acceptable ethics hours include, but are not limited to continuing education on:

(1) state or federal laws, including agency rules, relevant to the practice of professional counseling;

(2) practice guidelines established by local, regional, state, national, or international professional organizations;

(3) training or education designed to demonstrate or affirm the ideals and responsibilities of the profession; and

(4) training or education intended to assist licensees in determining appropriate decision-making and behavior, improve consistency in or enhance the professional delivery of services, and provide a minimum acceptable level of practice.

~~(d)~~ ~~Acceptable cultural diversity or competency hours include, but are not limited to continuing education regarding age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, national origin, race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.~~

(d)~~(e)~~ Acceptable Continuing Education Activities.

(1) All continuing education hours must have been received during the renewal period unless allowed under subsection (a)(2) of this section, and be directly related to the practice of professional counseling;

(2) The Council shall make the determination as to whether the activity claimed by the licensee is directly related to the practice of professional counseling;

(3) Except for hours claimed under subsection (g) ~~(h)~~ of this section, all continuing education hours obtained must be designated by the provider in a letter, email, certificate, or transcript that displays the licensee's name, topic covered, date(s) of training, and hours of credit earned; and

(4) Multiple instances or occurrences of a continuing education activity may not be claimed for the same renewal period.

(e)~~(f)~~ Licensees must obtain at least fifty percent of their continuing education hours from one or more of the following providers:

(1) an international, national, regional, state, or local association of medical, mental, or behavioral health professionals;

(2) public school districts, charter schools, or education service centers;

(3) city, county, state, or federal governmental entities;

(4) an institution of higher education accredited by a regional accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the United States Department of Education;

(5) religious or charitable organizations devoted to improving the mental or behavioral health of individuals;

(6) a licensee with supervisor status;

(7) a hospital or hospital system, including any clinic, division, or department within a hospital or hospital system; or

(8) any provider approved or endorsed by a provider listed herein.

(f)~~(g)~~ Licensees shall receive credit for continuing education activities according to the number of hours designated by the provider, or if no such designation, on a one-for-one basis with one credit hour for each hour spent in the continuing education activity.

(g)~~(h)~~ Notwithstanding subsection (e) ~~(f)~~ of this section, licensees may claim continuing education credit for each of the following activities:

(1) Preparing and giving a presentation at a continuing education activity. The maximum number of hours that may be claimed for this activity is 5 hours.

(2) Authoring a book or peer reviewed article. The maximum number of hours that may be claimed for this activity is 5 hours.

(3) Teaching or attending a graduate level course. The maximum number of hours that may be claimed for this activity is 5 hours.

(4) Self-study. The maximum number of hours that may be claimed for this activity is 1 hour. Self-study is credit that is obtained from any type of activity that is performed by an individual licensee acting alone. Such activities include, but are not limited to, reading materials directly related to the practice of professional counseling. Time spent individually viewing or listening to audio, video, digital, or print media as part of an organized continuing education activity, program, or offering from a third-party is not subject to this self-study limitation and may count as acceptable education under other parts of this rule.

(5) Successful completion of a training course on human trafficking prevention described by §116.002 of the Occupations Code. Licensees who complete this training may claim 1 hour of continuing education credit.

(h)~~(i)~~ The Council does not pre-evaluate or pre-approve continuing education providers or hours.

(i)~~(j)~~ Licensees shall maintain proof of continuing education compliance for a minimum of 3 years after the applicable renewal period.

~~(k) Subsection (f) of this rule is effective January 1, 2024.~~