



Upcoming change to NBCC Educational Requirements

Beginning
January 1,
2024, NBCC
will require
a master's
degree or
higher from
a CACREP-
accredited
counseling
program.

Timing of This Announcement

In recognition of those counselors who have contributed to the profession, NBCC has created a transition plan that allows time for institutions and professionals to prepare for this important change.

Effect on Current National Certified Counselors

This decision will not affect current NCCs or counselors who become certified by December 31, 2023. Any individual certified prior to January 2024 can hold the certification as long as they continue to adhere to NBCC policies and procedures. Current NCCs will still be able to apply for specialty certifications.

Effect on Current Students in Counseling Programs

Students graduating from programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) are not affected. Beginning January 2024, any student graduating from a program not accredited by CACREP will not be eligible to apply for the National Certified Counselor (NCC). These students must apply prior to January 2024 in order to be considered for national certification.

Purpose of the Change

The NBCC Board of Directors listened over many years as counselors described difficulty obtaining licensure, relocating to other states, and obtaining employment through federal programs. These concerns compelled NBCC to consider how we could help position the counseling profession for continued growth and recognition. We strongly believe that we owe it to future counselors to refine the profession so that they have increased opportunities.

Relevant Background

Professional advocacy efforts have included discussions with legislative leaders who have shared important concerns regarding how counselors may serve their constituents. In reality, we all share the common goal of providing quality services to those in need. Federal legislators have clearly communicated that inconsistent educational standards represent an impediment to inclusion in federal programs. They further indicated that state licensure in its variety of forms does not address the need for a uniform method for recognizing qualified professionals.

Support for Counselor Education Programs

NBCC created a unique assistance initiative for regionally accredited institutions seeking first-time CACREP accreditation for master's-level counseling programs. Funds are awarded to university programs in three phases.

Expected Outcome: Enhanced Portability

NBCC believes that requiring a degree from a CACREP-accredited program will provide greater portability. The lack of uniformity in academic requirements in state licensure laws negatively affects counselors' ability to relocate. Establishing a high baseline degree requirement can provide a consistent educational foundation that may facilitate improved options when moving to another state.