



Colorado Division of Registrations
Office of Licensing — Mental Health Programs
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www.dora.state.co.us/registrations

Mental Health Licensing FAQs

ADDICTION COUNSELORS

Q: What does it take to become a Certified or Licensed Addiction Counselor?

A: The two basic components to the requirements are:

- Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) (formerly the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, ADAD) approved training and education
- Appropriately supervised work/field experience. The amount of training and field experience necessary to become a CACI, CACII, CACIII or LAC depends on the application level of certification or licensure.

Q: Where do I find the Addiction Counselor Certification and Licensure Standards and Rules, that include the requirements for certification as a CAC I, II, III, and LAC?

A: Go to www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/cac/licensing and click on the links for the Statute, Rules/Regulations and Policies.

Q: What qualifies as work experience hours for certification?

A: See the [Addiction Counselor Certification and Licensure Standards/Rules](#). Work experience is defined as paid or unpaid, clinically supervised, alcohol and drug specific counseling and related activities. This experience does not have to be from a DBH licensed program, but the nature of your work experience must fit the description of addiction counselor duties and you must receive the required number of hours per month of direct clinical supervision. In cases where your position was not specifically in an addiction treatment setting, yet a significant percentage of your work dealt with substance abuse issues, that percentage of your hours may count towards the work requirement providing it meets the above criteria.

Q: What if I am not working full time, how many supervision hours do I need per month?

A: See the [Addiction Counselor Certification and Licensure Standards/Rules](#). Supervision hours may be prorated according to the number of hours worked, but may not be less than one hour per month.

Examples:

- A counselor-in-training needs 3 hours of supervision per month for full time work for a 40-hour week.
- The same person would need 1.5 hours per month for a 20-hour week.
- The same person would need 1 hour per month for a 13-hour week.
- The same person would need 1 hour per month for a 3-hour week.

Q: Can work hours from another state count towards my CAC hours?

A: Yes, if those hours are documented on the DORA Work Verification Form and the hours were supervised by someone with a credential that is the equivalent of a CAC III or LAC.

Q: How do I document my work experience hours and the hours of supervision that have been provided to me by a qualified supervisor?

A: See [Addiction Counselor Certification and Licensure Standards/Rules](#). Also, see Work Verification Form Instructions in the application packet for a CAC

Q: When I first apply, must I apply for CAC I even if I know I meet the requirements for a CAC II?

A: No. You may apply for any level for which you are eligible.

Q: How do I receive a certification packet?

A: You can obtain/print your application packet from the DORA website: www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/cac.

Q: How do I sign up for required or elective CAC trainings?

A: See the list of training facilities on the DORA website at: www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/cac/licensing.

Q: Are college courses acceptable in lieu of DBH approved class requirements?

A: See Addiction Counselor Certification and Licensure Standards/Rules. Yes, but only for some DBH required classes. See the College Equivalency information on the DORA website at: www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/cac/licensing for further information.

Q: Do you provide a pre-evaluation of college course requirements so that I know what courses will be accepted for CAC certification or licensing?

A: DORA will NOT conduct pre-approval. The evaluation will be done when the application and fee are received at DORA. See above for information concerning equivalency of non-DBH approved courses or classes.

Q: Where can I find an approved CAC supervisor?

A: You may find a supervisor in the phone book, or contact any DBH approved treatment program. The Division of Registrations does not keep an approved supervisor list. If you are unable to find a supervisor, please contact the Clinical Training Coordinator at DBH, by telephone at 303-866-7480.

Q: I just paid for my certification and now I have to pay a renewal fee. Why?

A: Your application fee for certification is separate from the renewal fee of that certification. Fees cannot be commingled or pro-rated under Colorado law. The application fee is a one-time fee paid at the time of application for a license or certification or upgrade to a new level of certification. All licenses, certifications, and registrations expire on August 31st of odd-numbered years. However, new applicants who are issued a license within 120 days of the upcoming renewal expiration date will be issued a license with the subsequent expiration date.

Q: Do I need to complete the Jurisprudence Exam with every application?

A: Each time you submit an application to DORA, you must take and pass the most current Jurisprudence Exam. If you have previously taken and passed the exam, AND you have your certification, you do not need to provide a Jurisprudence exam with your upgrade application PROVIDING that the current version of the exam is the same version you took and passed previously. Please see the bottom of the exam to find the version numbers and check it against the most current version posted on the DORA website.

Q: How many times can I take the Jurisprudence Examination?

A: The Jurisprudence Examination may be taken as often as you need for a passing score. The Examination is designed to test your knowledge about routine and complex practice scenarios. Each question has one correct

answer. It is "open-book" to encourage the development of personal resources to address practice questions. The purpose of the exam is to acquaint the applicant with the law that regulates the practice of psychotherapy in Colorado and encourage ethical practice.

Access the most recent Jurisprudence Examination at: www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/JurisExam.pdf

Q: What resources do I need to complete the Jurisprudence Examination?

A: To complete the open-book Jurisprudence Exam, you will need the current Colorado Mental Health Statute, the Addiction Counselor Certification and Licensure Standards, the NAADAC (Association for Addiction Professionals) Code of Ethics, and standards of practice as set forth in a free publication from SAMHSA (The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, TAP 21). The CAC I required class in ethics includes jurisprudence and is a good overview of information needed for successfully taking the exam.

Access a list of resources located on the DORA website for the exam at: www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/jurisresources.

Q: What are NAADAC and SACC?

A: NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, is the largest membership organization serving addiction counselors, educators, and other addiction-focused health care professionals who specialize in addiction prevention, treatment, recovery support and education. For more information, visit www.naadac.org.

SACC, the Society of Addiction Counselors of Colorado, is an affiliate of NAADAC. SACC is an association of concerned professionals seeking to improve the quality of substance abuse and other addiction treatment services through education, training, and advocacy in Colorado. When you join NAADAC in Colorado you automatically become a member of SACC. For more information, visit www.sacc.cc.

Q: What are the NAADAC NCAC II and MAC exams?

A: The NCAC II and MAC are two of NAADAC's national exams. The NCAC II exam is offered to those individuals who hold a Bachelor's degree and the MAC exam is offered to those individuals who hold a Master's degree.

Q: How do I apply to take the NAADAC NCACI, NCAC II, or MAC exam?

A: Call the Society of Addiction Counselors of Colorado (SACC) at (303) 763-7198 to speak with a representative regarding how to receive an application and information concerning the NCAC II and MAC or go to their website at www.sacc.cc and click on "National Testing Information."

Q: Is national certification automatically gained when taking and passing the NAADAC NCACI, NCAC II or MAC exams?

A: No, you can take the exam only, or take the exam and request credentialing. The fees are different for these two actions. For questions regarding national certification call NAADAC at 800-548-0497 or visit their website at www.naadac.org.

Q: I let my CAC lapse; what do I need to do to reinstate it?

A: See Addiction Counselor Certification and Licensure Standards/Rules. Obtain the reinstatement application at: www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/cac/CACreinstatement.pdf