LICENSURE & CREDENTIALING GUIDEBOOK

Graduate School of Counseling & Psychology

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ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

This Guidebook is for prospective students, current students, and alumni of Naropa University’s graduate counseling degree programs. The Graduate School of Counseling & Psychology (GSCP) currently offers a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MA (CMHC)) with concentrations in:

- Contemplative Psychotherapy and Buddhist Psychology
- Somatic Body Psychotherapy
- Somatic Dance/Movement Therapy
- Mindfulness-based Transpersonal Counseling (on-campus and hybrid)
- Transpersonal Art Therapy, and
- Transpersonal Wilderness Therapy.

This Guidebook provides an introduction to the credentialing process and some of the counseling credentials that you may wish to pursue during or following graduate counseling studies. The majority of this guidebook pertains to the post-graduate credential of Professional Counselor Licensure in the United States (U.S.).

You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the Appendices and the MyNaropa GSCP Credentialing page before going through this Guidebook. It is also recommended you take your time going through the information presented here, and integrate relevant information with current studies, your personal process, and your professional path as a Counselor.

Alumni: The information and guidance here is given with respect to the current structure and content of Counseling programs in the GSCP, and will therefore be most directly applicable to current and future students, and more recent graduates.

Disclaimer: The information in this guidebook is accurate at time of print. Changes however, to credentialing processes and requirements can and do change, thus it is each individual’s responsibility to refer to the relevant credentialing board’s website to obtain the most up-to-date information. Note that many non-official websites detailing summaries of U.S. state licensure requirements contain information that is not up to date, thus always refer to the official website of regulatory boards.
QUICK REFERENCES

NAROPA RELATED

GSCP Credentialing Webpage  https://my.naropa.edu/ICS/Alumni2/Alumni_Resources/GSCP_Credentialing.jnz
GSCP Credentialing Coordinator  gscpcredentialing@naropa.edu
Naropa Online Course Catalog  For course descriptions - http://www.naropa.edu/registrar/course-catalogs.php
Course Syllabi  Online archive on the GSCP Credentialing webpage.
Official Graduate Transcripts  http://www.naropa.edu/alumni-relations/alumni-services/obtain-a-transcript.php
Change to Official Graduate Transcripts (see page 12)  registration@naropa.edu
Naropa Career Services  http://www.naropa.edu/alumni-relations/alumni-services/alumni-career-services.php

U.S. LICENSURE

State Counseling Board Listing  http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/licensure-requirements/state-professional-counselor-licensure-boards
Colorado Registered Psychotherapist, DORA  https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora/Psychotherapists
Colorado LPCC / LPC, DORA  https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora/Professional_Counselor
National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)  www.nbcc.org  (Counselor Examination information)
CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs)  www.cacrep.org
THE PROCESS OF CREDENTIALING

Credentialing refers to the process of reviewing the qualifications and current competence of an individual in relation to a field of work, in this case counseling. There are a number of state-based, nationwide, and modality-specific credentials commonly pursued by GSCP graduates. Graduates from the different GSCP concentrations have also pursued and successfully obtained counseling-related credentials internationally.

Importantly, in the U.S. not all credentials you can pursue give you legal permission to call yourself or practice as a Professional Counselor. In almost all cases you will be required to obtain Professional Licensure in order to work in the counseling field. Other credentials may certify you as proficient in a specialty area or with a particular population, but do not necessarily grant you legal permission to practice as a Professional Counselor.

WHY SHOULD I SEEK CREDENTIALS?

Following are some reasons for pursuing credentials in addition to a Master’s degree in Counseling. Credentials:

- Are one way to support the development of professional identity;
- Are a statement about your commitment to being a helping professional;
- Build credibility with peers and other professionals, potential clients, and the community at large;
- Can contribute to client’s sense of safety and confidence in you and therapeutic work;
- May lead to greater employment options and salary potential;
- Provide structure for post-graduate professional development;
- Are required for eligibility to some professional associations.

There are other considerations when deciding whether to pursue a particular credential, depending on the credential in question. The motivations and intentions for pursuing credentials are unique to each individual. Clarifying these factors for yourself is part of the personal process of credentialing.

GETTING CREDENTIALED AS A NAROPA GRADUATE

Graduating from a counseling-related Master’s degree program does not automatically grant you any type of certification or Professional Licensure. However, the Counseling degree you will receive or have received is necessary for Professional Licensure, as well as many counseling-related certifications.

You may need to complete extra educational or fieldwork experience in order to gain particular credentials, depending on the credential in question. Current and incoming students are encouraged to be aware of the credentialing process from the outset of studies in order to sufficiently prepare. See Appendix A: GSCP Student Credentialing Checklist for initial guidance.
OBTAINING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR APPLICATIONS

There are two main types of education-related documentation that applications for licensure or other credentials may require (1) an Academic Reference or (2) verification of your education.

Only a few of the applications for common credentials Counseling students pursue, ask for Academic References. To obtain an Academic Reference from a Faculty member or someone who supervised clinical field placement (i.e. practicum or internship) directly email the relevant Faculty, staff or supervisor you wish to obtain a reference from (use the Naropa Phone Directory on the left hand side of the MyNaropa Portal). Please note it is at their discretion whether they wish to provide you with a reference. In your email outline:

- What credential you are pursuing;
- The scope of the documentation you need or the form they need to provide the reference on;
- Instructions for how they need to send in the reference (sometimes credentialing bodies will ask for the reference to be sent directly to them).

Credentialing bodies, particularly national or out-of-state (i.e. not Colorado) may also ask for documents verifying your education, both coursework and/or practicum/internship experiences. Forms will typically ask for verification by, for example, a “University Official”, “Graduate School Representative”, “Chief Academic Officer” or “Authorized Designee”. In these instance the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator can complete these forms for you. Please email the same information and documents as listed above to the Credentialing Coordinator. If forms state they need verification by your Supervisor, you will need to contact them directly.

Alumni: For alumni who are no longer in contact with their supervisor from their graduate studies, contact the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator.

Please allow at least one to two weeks for any documentation you request.
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR LICENSURE

WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR LICENSURE?
Professional Counselor Licensure is one post-graduate credential counselors pursue. As with any credentialing process, the licensure process assesses whether an individual has received appropriate academic preparation and clinical experience to treat clients competently. Unlike some other credentials Professional Licensure is the credential that gives an individual legal permission to call oneself a Licensed Professional Counselor in the U.S. and to practice counseling.

THE STRUCTURE OF LICENSURE
Each U.S. state has their own requirements to obtain licensure and their own Board and legislation governing individuals who become licensed. The purpose of state licensure is to “protect the public by defining practitioners who can legally use the title of a licensed counselor and/or who can provide counseling services in a particular state” (NBCC.org). Some other countries also operate by a state/province-based credentialing structure.

LICENSURE TITLES IN THE U.S.
The names of licenses vary state-to-state. In Colorado, as well as a number of other states, the title you would receive with professional licensure is Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). Examples of equivalent titles in other states are Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), and Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). Furthermore, whilst an individual is completing licensure requirements, they may be registered under a different title reflecting, for example, their candidate or intern status. See the ACA State Licensure Requirements document for titles used in each state.

DO I NEED TO BECOME LICENSED?
In Colorado. The state of Colorado does not require individuals to pursue or have full licensure in order to practice in the counseling field. Colorado does require however that individuals, in the very least, be registered as a “Registered Psychotherapist” (previously “Unlicensed Psychotherapist”) with the Colorado State Board of Registered Psychotherapists Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA), if practicing in any counseling-related capacity. Practicing in Colorado without being registered or licensed makes one subject to criminal and/or regulatory sanctions. See Appendix C: Being a Registered Psychotherapist in Colorado for more information.

All Counseling students are required to register as a Registered Psychotherapist as part of Practicum/Internship Experience. See the GSCP Practicum and Internship Manual for more information.

One benefit of becoming a Registered Psychotherapist prior to graduation is that you will be prepared to legally start working in the field immediately upon graduation. Were you not yet registered at time of graduation, you would have to wait for your Registered
Psychotherapist or Licensed Professional Counselor Candidate (LPCC) application to be processed and approved, in order to start working.

Whilst you may practice without a Professional Licensure in Colorado, most places of employment, other than private practice, will require their employee to have obtained or be in the process of obtaining Professional Licensure. Most position descriptions will outline this requirement (e.g. “Must be eligible for licensure”), however it is best to check at time of first contact with a potential employer or volunteer site etc.

**In Other U.S. States & Countries.** The majority of other U.S. states do require individuals to seek and obtain licensure in order to practice in the counseling field and call oneself a Professional Counselor. Only a few states have non-license registration equivalent to Colorado’s Registered Psychotherapist that allows individuals to work in the field without having to pursue Professional Licensure. See the [ACA State Licensure Requirements document](#) for more information. Again, practicing in another state without being registered to complete post-graduate requirements, or fully licensed makes one subject to criminal and/or regulatory sanctions. Licensure requirements also vary internationally, and need to be investigated on a case-by-case basis.

**DO I NEED TO PURSUE LICENSURE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING GRADUATION?**

You do not need to pursue licensure immediately following graduation, and some alumni seek licensure many years following graduation. Given the growth and developments in regulatory bodies in counseling field however, and the impact of CACREP graduates are encouraged to seek licensure as soon as is feasible, in their given state. Any questions about eligibility for licensure based on older degrees should be directed to the relevant State Licensure Board. See the [ACA State Licensure Requirements document](#) for Board contact information.

**CONSIDERATIONS IN SEEKING LICENSURE**

Following are some points to consider when deciding if and when it is right time to pursue licensure:

- **Time commitments.** Short-term time commitments include going through the application process, including finding suitable work and a supervisor. Long-term time commitments include considering the location/s you are likely to be living and life/family commitments you may have in the years you will be completing licensure requirements, supervision hours, ongoing paperwork, and professional development hours.

- **Monetary considerations.** This refers to both fees (application fees and possibly for supervision), and income considerations in the immediate and future.

- **Continued professional development.** Maintaining licensure requires completion of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) / Continuing Education (CE) each year.

- **Other professional benefits.** Obtaining licensure may mean eligibility for particular professional associations, ease of transfer of license across some states, and allows access to benefits such as Colorado’s Peer Health Assistance Program.
• **Other qualifications and practice modalities.** Some individuals will possess existing professional licensure or certification in other modalities such as massage therapy or life coaching. Counseling licensure or other counseling-related credentials may not be wanted or needed to engage in the work you wish to undertake.

It is important to have some idea of those issues important to you with respect to seeking licensure. The GSCP Credentialing Coordinator and Naropa Career Services is available for consultation around these issues.
LICENSURE PROCESSES & REQUIREMENTS

State-to-state and country-to-country, there are some similarities in the licensure process. For most U.S. states you:

- **First apply for an intermediate status in order to legally complete post-graduate requirements.** Examples of such intermediary titles are candidate (e.g. LPCC in Colorado), intern (e.g. Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor Intern (PCI) in California), or associate (e.g. Mental Health Counselor Associate (MHCA) in Washington State).

- **When post-graduate requirements are completed** you would submit a second application for full licensure (e.g. LPC in Colorado, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC) in California, and Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) in Washington State).

See the [ACA State Licensure Requirements document](#) that details intermediary and full counselor titles by state.

Complete education requirements for relevant state (if not already complete).

Apply as Intern/Candidate/Temporary Permit etc. relevant to the state you are applying to.

Receive approval from state board.

Find work and a supervisor, start accruing hours, and complete examination requirements.

Apply for full Professional Licensure once all requirements are completed.

Common variations to this timeline to look out for in state rules and regulations, and policies and procedures are:

- State examination requirements need to be completed *before* applying as Intern etc.
- You can remedy educational gaps whilst accruing post-graduate supervised hours.
- You need to have found a qualified supervisor prior to applying as an Intern etc.; they need to be approved by the board.
- You may need to show evidence of your intended place of work when applying as an Intern etc.
Licensure Requirements: The Three E’s of Licensure

The requirements for obtaining licensure fall into three categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational requirements</th>
<th>Experience requirements</th>
<th>Examination requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate (&amp; post-graduate)</td>
<td>Graduate (practicum/internship supervised hours) &amp; post-graduate supervised hours</td>
<td>NCE or NCMPHE &amp; Jurisprudence (&amp; other)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Educational Requirements

Assessment of educational experience includes looking at graduate coursework. Each state lists core coursework that graduate studies must include. For the most part these align with CACREP core curricular areas, but some states may require other courses beyond these categories (e.g., coursework/training in addictions, spouse/couple work, human sexuality, crisis counseling, or psychopharmacology).

Graduates can take additional courses at or external to Naropa to fulfill these requirements for relevant states. In certain cases, it may also be possible to complete an Independent Study within your program (see your Academic Advisor). When you would need to complete additional courses depends on the application process of the credential you are pursuing.

Students are to research educational requirements while undertaking their studies. Contact the Credentialing Coordinator if you need assistance.

2. Experience Requirements

U.S. Licensure applications are interested in graduate and post-graduate clinical experience.

**Graduate Clinical Field Placement Experience: Practicum and Internship.** Licensure applications require a particular number of Practicum/Internship Placement hours and/or Practicum/Internship related coursework to have been completed as part of graduate studies. States will typically specify:

- Total number of Practicum/Internship hours (most states require 600 or 700 hours of Practicum/Internship).
- Minimum number of direct client contact hours, within the total hours.
- Type of work e.g. milieu work, conducting group therapy, private practice versus agency work, and the minimum or maximum number of hours of each.
- Minimum number of supervision hours.
- Type of supervision (individual or group).
- Supervisor qualifications.

Some states only ask for, for example, six credit/semester hours of Internship coursework with no stated hour requirements. The program has requirements around each of these...
areas, however these do not necessarily align with the state you are looking to gain licensure in, thus you are responsible for researching that state’s requirements and completing their requirements within your Practicum/Internship placement. Seek support from your Advisor and the Clinical Placement Team around this.

**Post-Graduate Experience.** For full licensure, you are then required to complete a particular number of post-graduate supervised hours. The number of hours varies state-to-state, commonly 2000 or 3000 hours over a minimum of 2 or 3 years, respectively, are required; some states do require 4000 hours. There are conditions and limits on these hours as listed above; these conditions, again, vary state-to-state. You are encouraged to research requirements for each state you are interested in pursuing licensure. See the [ACA State Licensure Requirements document](#) for details.

**FAQ: When can I start counting hours towards licensure?** You can start counting hours towards licensure from the date your Master’s degree is conferred; the conferral date is the date that is documented on your Official Naropa Transcript. Note however, that your conferral date on your Official Transcript, and the date you receive your Official Transcript can be one to two months after the date you finish classes and walk at Commencement Ceremony; this is due to administrative processes that take time. Going by this date, you cannot count any relevant hours obtained between Commencement and that date on your transcript towards licensure.

An exception to this rule in Colorado is if the alum can provide a letter from the school registrar stating that all degree requirements were completed on (date), and that due to whatever processes, the degree could not be conferred until (date). This letter would be submitted with your final licensure application (Original Licensure by Examination). In other U.S. states and countries, inquire with the relevant counseling boards to ask how they work with this situation.

**Requesting a Letter from Naropa’s Registrar.** Email the Registrar at [registration@naropa.edu](mailto:registration@naropa.edu), and include the following information:

- A statement about your current need with respect to pursuing Professional Counselor Licensure and your wish to count hours between finishing classes and the conferral date on your transcript.
- Request for a statement declaring that all degree requirements were completed on [include date you finished classes/all degree requirements], and that due to administrative processes, the degree could not be conferred until [conferral date on Official Transcript].
- The program you graduated from and the year you graduated.
- Your full name, at time of study/graduation.

If you contact another U.S. state and they require other documentation to be completed, or statement to be written by the university, please forward detailed instruction of what is needed and any forms to the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar’s Office is aware of this need.
of some Counseling alumni. Prepare ahead of time when nearing submission of final licensure application, and please be patient with your request.

**FAQ: What if I have gaps in my graduate education?** If you have identified courses you need to take to fulfill a state’s licensure requirement that is not covered in your Naropa coursework, first meet with your Advisor to see whether the course/s is/are available to take as Electives or additions to your course load, through Naropa. If you are unable to find suitable coursework at Naropa research external online or on-campus providers. You may also consult with the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator to find alternative paths to completing these requirements.

*For alumni with gaps in education*, most states allow some coursework deficiencies to be made up post-graduation. Please note that having gaps in education or experience does not automatically mean older graduates cannot gain licensure; licensing boards take into account changes to requirements of the field in general, and consider individual’s entire application. Additionally, for those who graduated a significant number of years ago, licensing boards may have alternate requirements and application processes.

### 3. Examination Requirements

Finally, for full licensure, each U.S. state requires you to take and pass: the [National Counselor Examination (NCE)](https://www.ncse.com) or the [National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE)](https://www.cmhc.org) and a state Jurisprudence (i.e. ethics) exam. When you need to take these exams (i.e. before or after applying), differs state-to-state. Connect with the relevant Board for details; Board contact details available in the [ACA State Licensure Requirements document](https://www.aca.net/doc1.aspx?1398).

**FAQ: What does the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) have to do with this?** All students are required to take the [CPCE](https://www.cmhc.org) in their third year of study (optional for third year students in 2016-17). The CPCE functions as a practice exam – not a substitute - for the NCE. Study guides available for the CPCE are also used by individuals to study for the NCE. Well known guides are authored by: Helwig, Rosenthal, Erford, and NCE Exam Secrets Test Prep Team.

**FAQ: What is I have gaps in graduate experience?** If there are Practicum and/or Internship requirements that are more than what is required of your during studies plan ahead by first speaking with your Advisor and/or the Clinical Placement Team.

*For alumni with gaps in experience*. For those who graduated a significant time ago, first contact the relevant state board for guidance. The GSCP Credentialing Coordinator is also available to provide support following this.
TRANSFERRING POST-GRADUATE SUPERVISED HOURS BETWEEN U.S. STATES

If you have acquired some post-graduate supervised hours in one state and then wish to move states it is possible to transfer these hours between states, you must however ensure the type of work and supervision meets the requirements of the state you are moving to.

Keep detailed records of your supervised hours, including the contact details and qualifications of your supervisor, to assist in this process.

TRANSFERRING LICENSURE BETWEEN U.S. STATES: ENDORSEMENT & RECIPROCITY

In general, if you are licensed and moving interstate you will still have to apply for Professional Licensure in the state you are going to reside and work in. Such applications are termed Licensure by Endorsement or Licensure by Reciprocity. With respect to reciprocity, each U.S. state typically has reciprocity agreements with a few, often neighboring states, or those with similar requirements and standards.

In either instance however, these applications will often still require you to document the three E’s (education, experience, examination). You may also be required to meet that state’s education, experience, and examination requirements. If, for example, you gained licensure in a state that only asked for 2000 hours of post-graduate supervised experience, and the state you are moving to requires 3000 hours for licensure you may be required to do some supervised hours in-state or work under a provisional license before being granted full licensure. Individuals are encouraged to research endorsement and reciprocity within the states they may be interested to move to in the future, if and when known.

LICENSURE & SCREENING FOR LEGALLY DOCUMENTED EVENTS AND SIGNIFICANT HEALTH DIAGNOSES

Licensure applications, along with many other credential applications ask about past or currently active legally documented difficulties with past certification/licensure, other non-counseling related events/offenses, or mental or physical health conditions that have or could significantly impact practicing as a counselor. Such questions are sometimes referred to as “YES questions”; licensing boards on the lookout for “yes” answers from applicants.

Having such a history or active charge or condition does not definitively prevent an individual from obtaining licensure or other counseling-related certification. The relevant board will consider each case on a case-by-case basis. If you have such a background you will need to provide documentation with your application; the documentation required may differ slightly across U.S. states. The Colorado applications for both Registered Psychotherapist and Licensure state the following:
You must provide the following for each “YES” response to the screening questions below: An explanation, signed and dated by you, of your behavior or practice that led to the occurrence, including:

- Date(s) of event/offense
- Description of event/offense
- Location/court, and
- Current status/outcome.

You may be required to provide the following: Copies of legal documents relating to the event/offense and copies of legal documents indicating your compliance with any requirements imposed upon you. You may also be asked to, for example, meet with Board Officials or take a mental health examination or drug test, depending on the charges or condition.

When familiarizing yourself with application forms, if you answer “YES” to any such screening question pay particular attention to the documentation you will be required to submit and consider speaking with the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator to gain support and guidance around this part of the application process. Individuals are encouraged to be prepared, and to file applications as soon as possible.
OBTAINING CREDENTIALS & WORKING OVERSEAS

The requirements and processes for obtaining credentials and working as a Professional Counselor overseas must be researched on a case-by-case basis. Some considerations when researching the counseling profession in other countries are:

- Does the country have some regulating body that oversees counselors or, what may be termed, allied mental health professionals? If there is some regulation over the field, is there a national body that oversees this, or is it state-by-state, as in the U.S.?
- Is there a path equivalent to that of Professional Licensure, or do they only require registration with no further post-graduate requirements?
- Are you a foreigner or citizen/resident of the country you wish to work in? If you are a foreigner does the country require a work VISA? Are there limitations on what type of work you can engage in (e.g. private practice, agency work)?
- Are you looking to travel, live and work independently, or is there possibility of gaining employment with a U.S.-based agency/organization/practice that operates in other countries? In this case they would provide support and guidance, and have structure around permitting you to work overseas.
- What is the length of time you wish to stay and work in the country? Are you looking to live somewhere long-term or are you looking for short-term opportunities to work overseas?

It is your responsibility as a student or alum to do initial research of the counseling profession in countries of interest to you, this may involve contacting the relevant counseling/mental health board/organization, and looking into work VISA requirements for the country of interest. The GSCP Credentialing Coordinator is then available to assist you to clarify and confirm any findings and application processes. Naropa Career Services is also available for consultation, and may be able to provide information around volunteering and working overseas, and organizations and bodies that may offer such opportunities.

TRANSFERRING CREDENTIALS OVERSEAS

There is no set process or ruling about transferring any credential overseas. You would need to research the country in question, as with looking to work overseas, and follow any application processes the country may have.
TRANSFERRING OVERSEAS CREDENTIALS TO THE U.S.

For alumni who have obtained credentials overseas and wish to obtain or reinstate licensure in the U.S., as above, there is no set process or ruling about directly transferring credentials in this way. You will need to contact the appropriate Professional Counseling State Board for information about whether this is possible and the process for this.

In all overseas scenarios, you are encouraged to keep detailed documentation of your educational, Field Placement experience, examination results, and any other relevant work/volunteer experience you have engaged in, in the U.S. or overseas.

OBTAINING CREDENTIALS IN THE U.S. AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OR INTERNATIONAL ALUM

International Students and International Alum are able to pursue Professional Licensure or other credential in the U.S., as long as you possess the necessary work VISA to stay and work in the U.S. in order to complete any post-graduate requirements to obtain the credential in question. Things to consider for International Students:

- If you are on a F-1 Student VISA you are eligible to undertake Optional Practicum Training (OPT) once you have completed studies. If your application is approved, you then have a maximum of 12 months to obtain work experience within the field. These experiences can count towards any credential permitting that your work aligns with the requirements of the credential in question, and OPT requirements.

- To obtain Professional Licensure in the U.S. however, it would take a minimum of two to three years (depending on the state in question) to complete post-graduate requirements. This means that you would need to find employment that would allow you to obtain a work VISA (e.g. H-1B, E-3), following your OPT year. Part of this process is finding an employer who would be willing to sponsor you in order to obtain a work VISA (sponsorship, amongst other things, requires the employer to pay a number of fees in order to employ the foreign individual).

One suggestion for International Students: If you are considering staying in the U.S. and pursuing credentials, particularly licensure, plan ahead. Network and establish connections with agencies, organizations, and individuals where there may be a possibility of employment and sponsorship post-graduation or following OPT year. Some internship sites are known to offer employment to interns post-placement. Your Advisor and the Clinical Placement Team can assist you in selecting appropriate sites with this in mind.
If you have queries or concerns about OPT speak to Naropa’s International Student Advisor. The GSCP Credentialing Coordinator is also available to consult around these issues, and assist you in planning and preparing for pursuing credentials post-graduation.

For alumni situated overseas, who are not U.S. nationals looking to return to work and pursue credentials in the U.S: You need to find employment and obtain the appropriate work VISA. Once legally admitted to the U.S., you are permitted to pursue licensure and other credentials.

**OTHER CREDENTIALS AND REGISTRATION**

Other credentials and registration are sometimes required to work in a particular modality or with particular populations. An additional benefit of obtaining other credentials and professional registration is that it connects you to professional community with same interests and professional development opportunities. The most commonly inquired about U.S. credentials from students and graduates are:

- [National Certified Counselor](#) (NCC)
- [Certified Addictions Counselor](#) (CAC, Colorado)
- [Art Therapy](#) (ATR, ATR-BC)
- [Dance/Movement Therapy](#) (R-DMT, BC-DMT)
- [Mindfulness Instructor](#)

As with licensure, other credentials and registration are subject to educational, experience, and examination requirements in relation to specific modality/field. Graduate coursework (including Practicum and Internship) can be used towards some credentials whilst also being used towards Professional Licensure. See the relevant credentialing board’s website for more information.

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BECOMING A CCOUNSELOR VS MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST VS PSYCHOLOGIST VS SOCIAL WORKER?**

Professional Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT), Psychology, and Social Work are distinct professional fields that are regulated by distinct regulatory boards within each state and nationally. Each of these professional paths involves particular education that differs in focus in relation to theory and technique and often target populations or work settings. In practice however, individuals within each of these fields may work in similar roles on some level. Currently in the majority of states, individuals with Counseling degrees can often apply for MFT licensure and vice versa, as the coursework is most similar. If you are wishing to work with Couples and Families in a particular state it is important to check the counseling and MFT regulations to see who you are legally allowed and prohibited from working with with in that state under the coverage of those regulatory boards. Individuals with counseling degrees cannot pursue professional certification/licensure in areas of psychology or social work.
CREDENTIALING RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

A number of resources exist for students and alumni of GSCP programs at Naropa in relation to pursuing Professional Licensure and other credentials.

- **GSCP Credentialing MyNaropa web page.** Houses documents and direct links to relevant/important websites and online resources, as well as commonly requested applications. [MyNaropa > Alumni tab > Under Alumni Resources: GSCP Credentialing](http://www.naropa.edu)

- **GSCP Credentialing Coordinator.** Available to students and alumni for consultation. The GSCP Credentialing Coordinator, along with your Academic Advisor, can help you establish an individualized plan to work towards aligning with particular state licensure or other credential requirements. They can also provide any official Naropa support, advocacy, and documentation needed for applications. See Appendix B: Before Meeting with the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator.

- **Course Syllabi.** Available from the online archive on MyNaropa GSCP Credentialing page.

- **Course Descriptions in Catalog Copy.** Course catalogs (from 1977 till current) are available on Naropa.edu. [http://www.naropa.edu/registrar/course-catalogs.php](http://www.naropa.edu/registrar/course-catalogs.php)

- **Professional Development coursework.** All students in the MA in CMHC program take Professional Counseling Orientation courses that discuss licensure issues.

- **Academic Advisors & Clinical Placement Team.** Your Academic Advisor and the Clinical Placement Team can also provide assistance with determining which classes you should take, and the most appropriate Practicum and Internship placement for you, in order to meet requirements for any credentials you are looking to pursue. You will need to have researched those credentials or states for licensure you are interested in, prior to meeting with your Advisor and/or Clinical Placement Team to gain such assistance.

- **Career Services.** The [Naropa Career Services and Community Engagement (CSCE) Center](http://www.naropa.edu) provides career counseling and coaching services to both students and alumni. With respect to licensure they can provide a place to explore and plan what your future may look like post-graduation. For those interested in counseling-related work and/or volunteer experiences overseas, CSCE is a good place to gain some guidance around this.

- **Alumni network.** The [Alumni network](http://www.naropa.edu) with respect to licensure is one portal where GSCP Credentialing news is communicated. The network also provides opportunities for alums to connect with others who are familiar with or undertaking credentialing process.

- **Social media.** For those students and alumni on social media sites such as Facebook, unofficial groups are usually formed by program or for all graduates from GSCP counseling programs. This also offers a place to connect and gain support around credentialing issues. Please note that information shared on these forums is however, not necessarily accurate. The Alumni Relations and Career Services have Official
Facebook pages where GSCP credentialing news may appear periodically. Be on the look out!
APPENDIX A: STUDENT CREDENTIALING CHECKLIST

FIRST-YEAR CHECKLIST

☐ Review the Credentialing Guidebook.

☐ Familiarize yourself with the GSCP Credentialing page at MyNaropa.

☐ Keep an unmarked, i.e. “clean”, electronic or hard copy of the syllabus for each course. Syllabi are required for some credentialing application processes.

☐ Consider which state/s or country you may wish to pursue licensure in, take note of particular licensure requirements. Review the ACA State Licensure Requirements document (available on MyNaropa).

☐ Consider other specialist credentials you may wish to pursue e.g. Certified Addictions Counselor (CAC), and research requirements.

☐ Select any state licensure application form (try Colorado’s Licensed Professional Counselor Candidate Registration (Temporary Permit) (LPCC) application as default) and familiarize yourself with what this looks like and entails. It is a good idea to have this as an accessible reference whilst going through this guidebook.

☐ When familiarizing yourself with the application form, if you answer “YES” to any screening question (i.e., questions regarding difficulties with past certification/licensure, criminal history, or mental or physical health issues) pay particular attention to the documentation you will be required to submit. Consider speaking with the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator to gain support and guidance around this area.

SECOND-YEAR CHECKLIST

☐ See First-Year Checklist.

☐ Keep a copy or record of your final Practicum hours (particularly direct client content hours and supervision hours), dates of Practicum, and site supervisor information. This information will be required for most Professional Counselor License applications, and other credential applications.

THIRD-YEAR CHECKLIST

☐ See First- and Second-Year Checklists.

☐ Keep a copy or record of your final Internship hours (particularly direct client content hours and supervision hours), as with Second Year Practicum.

POST-GRADUATION CHECKLIST

☐ Ensure you have all syllabi from the courses you took. Download from Syllabi Archive on MyNaropa GSCP Credentialing page.

☐ Look out for credentialing related news and events via the Alumni e-newsletter and communications, and on MyNaropa.
APPENDIX B: BEFORE MEETING WITH THE GSCP CREDENTIALING COORDINATOR

FOR CURRENT STUDENTS

The GSCP Credentialing Coordinator is available to collaborate with students to research and plan for pursuing and obtaining credentials, most prominently Professional Licensure. Naropa Career Services is also a good contact for general guidance and discussion around career planning. Before meeting with the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator students ideally have:

- Reviewed the GSCP Credentialing Guidebook & ACA State Licensure Requirements document.
- Reviewed the resources and information available at the MyNaropa GSCP Credentialing page.
- Worked through relevant steps on Appendix A: GSCP Student Credentialing Checklist.
- Consulted with relevant Professional Counselor Licensure State Boards or credentialing bodies concerning your areas of interest.
- Consulted with your Academic Advisor and/or Clinical Placement Team where appropriate.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Documentation that you have been utilizing and reviewing (the GSCP Credentialing Coordinator has access to transcripts, course catalog information, and syllabi).

FOR ALUMNI

As with current students, alumni are asked to have consulted the Credentialing Guidebook, ACA State Licensure Requirements document and other resources on the MyNaropa Credentialing page prior to meeting.

WHAT TO BRING:

- A copy of your transcript (particularly for those who graduated prior to 2005).
- Information or any documentation related to any current licensure or relevant credentials, and work experience you have acquired.

FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

The GSCP Credentialing Coordinator is available to speak with prospective students regarding licensure. Naropa’s Graduate Admissions (admissions@naropa.edu) is also available to answer questions about the CMHC program.
APPENDIX C: BEING A REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPIST IN COLORADO

WHAT IS THE “REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPIST” TITLE?

And, what is the difference to the Licensed Professional Counselor Candidate (LPCC)?

Registered Psychotherapist is a title specific to Colorado that permits individuals to legally practice counseling. The database of individuals who are registered is unregulated, in that it does not have significant structure, monitoring, or laws governing those individuals. Any individual practicing in some therapeutic capacity can apply, for example, individuals practicing massage therapy, life coaching, or allied health professionals can register as a Registered Psychotherapist; it is not limited to those with counseling backgrounds or training. In the past, to obtain licensure, individuals would have to register as a Registered Psychotherapist in order to work and complete licensure requirements.

The LPCC track was created to distinguish individuals with formal training in counseling from all other individuals working in a therapeutic capacity that would be registered as a psychotherapist. The LPCC was part of efforts to develop the counseling profession as a whole, providing recognition, regulation, and support for counselors in particular.

CAN I COMPLETE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS AS A REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPIST? Or do I have to apply for LPCC status?

You can complete post-graduate licensure requirements as either Registered Psychotherapist or LPCC; you do not need to switch over to LPCC if you are a Registered Psychotherapist, although you can if you wish. The benefit of LPCC is mostly in relation to credibility and obtaining employment, in that it indicates to employers and prospective clients that you are working towards full licensure, and already have significant training in counseling, which is not necessarily indicated by the Registered Psychotherapist title. Some jobs may want someone that is fully licensed but will hire someone working towards licensure; often job postings will state “Must be eligible for licensure”. LPCC status indicates you are working towards this, the Registered Psychotherapist title does not, on the surface, assure potential employers of this.