

**North Carolina Board of Examiners of Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselors**  
**P.O. Box 447**  
**Kernersville, North Carolina 27285-0447**

The following is a summary of requirements for certification as a North Carolina Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselor and North Carolina Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counseling Associate, as outlined in Article 26, the North Carolina legislature's Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselor Act of 1991. **The Board is eager to support candidates through the certification process, but the Board does not have the authority to change the requirements spelled out by the legislature.**

Requirements for certificate to practice as a **Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselor:**

- At least 21 years of age;
- Of good moral character;
- At least three years of full-time work as a rabbi, priest, minister, or religious leader;
- Ordained, or an equivalent as determined by the applicant's faith group, and endorsed to function as a pastoral counselor;
- Completed a masters of divinity, or its equivalent, from an accredited educational institution;
- Completed a masters or doctoral degree in pastoral counseling, or its equivalent, from an accredited educational institution;
- Completed at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education;
- Provided at least 1375 hours of pastoral counseling;
- Received at least 250 hours of supervision of pastoral counseling, supervision to be provided by (1) a North Carolina Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselor, (2) a Diplomate in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, or (3) a Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors who is under supervision of a Diplomate;
- Passes the Board's examination in pastoral counseling.

Requirements for certificate to practice as a **Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counseling Associate:**

- At least 21 years of age;
- Of good moral character;
- At least three years of full-time work as a rabbi, priest, minister, or religious leader;
- Ordained, or an equivalent as determined by the applicant's faith group, and endorsed to function as a pastoral counselor;
- Completed a masters of divinity, or its equivalent, from an accredited educational institution;
- Completed at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education;
- Provided at least 375 hours of pastoral counseling;
- Received at least 125 hours of supervision of pastoral counseling, supervision to be provided by (1) a North Carolina Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselor, (2)

- a Diplomate in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, or (3) a Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors who is under supervision of a Diplomate;
- Passes the Board's examination in pastoral counseling.
- (Note that the Pastoral Counseling Associate certification does not require the degree in pastoral counseling beyond the M.Div. and that the required hours of counseling and supervision are lesser. Persons certified at the Associate level are required by law to document ongoing supervision in an annual report to the board.)

### **Equivalencies**

The Board is allowed to consider requests for equivalencies for the following requirements:

- The masters of divinity requirement;
- The masters or doctorate in pastoral counseling requirement for full certification.

The Board is not allowed to grant equivalencies for:

- The experience and supervision requirements (e.g., other ministry experience, while valuable, is not sufficient to meet the standard set by the legislature);
- The Clinical Pastoral Education requirement.

Candidates who wish to make a case for equivalencies should put that request in writing to the Board. The Board shall assign a Board member to meet with the candidate and review the request, or shall refer the candidate to an independent consultant to review the request. The request shall then be taken to the Board for review. Should equivalency not be granted, the candidate shall be given consultation regarding how to fulfill the particular standard.

### **Written Exam**

The written exam consists of (1) a multiple choice section covering the AAPC Code of Ethics and the North Carolina legislature's Article 26 (the Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselor Certification Act); and (2) an essay section covering psychological theory and its application to the practice of pastoral counseling with individuals, couples, families, or groups; theology and its application to the practice of pastoral counseling; and ethics in the practice of pastoral counseling. The essay section offers candidates some flexibility in choosing which questions to answer. Successful candidates will be able to demonstrate thorough knowledge of the psychological and theological foundations of their clinical work and the ability to integrate those foundations in the practice of pastoral counseling.

Candidates bring with them to the written exam two case reports (one of work with an individual, the other of work with a couple, family, or group). Some questions on the exam ask the candidate to illustrate with reference to the case reports. The format for the case reports is described elsewhere in the application materials packet.

Candidates have three hours to complete the written exam. Candidates hand write their exams, leave a copy with the exam proctor, take the original home, transcribe it

(without editing), and mail seven copies of the typed exam to the Board office no later than the following Saturday.

Candidates for full certification and associate certification take the same exam.

### **Oral Exam**

The oral exam involves the candidate meeting with members of the Board to discuss his/her exam and case reports, as well as other issues related to the candidate's practice of pastoral counseling. This meeting lasts for one hour.