



**ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN COUNSELING**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**ABOUT LICENSURE ENDORSEMENT**  
**FOR PERSONS HOLDING CURRENT LICENSE IN ANOTHER**  
**STATE**

***1. How is counselor licensure granted in Alabama?***

The authority for counselor licensure is based on the actions of a state legislature, which establishes statutes to govern licensure of professional counselors. Statutes are interpreted, either by licensure boards or a governmental office, to create administrative rules for the issuance and oversight of licensure. Counselor licensure in Alabama is administered by the Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling (ABEC), which has established administrative rules to fulfill its primary mission: the protection of public consumers of counseling services provided by licensees.

***2. What is the general procedure for endorsement? Isn't this reciprocity or is it a different procedure?***

“Endorsement” differs from “reciprocity.” Endorsement involves a case-by-case review of an applicant with an existing license. Reciprocity is an agreement between states that any licensee from one state can interchangeably be licensed in the other state.

Endorsement concerns establishing the equivalency of one’s license in another state (known as the “original license”) with the requirements in the state for which an applicant is seeking a “new license.”

***3. How does the process of endorsement work in Alabama?***

The ABEC views the endorsement process as a matter of public protection and with the same level of scrutiny that is required for an original license in Alabama. However, the key element of equity and equivalency in endorsement of an original license by the ABEC is the requirements in the administrative rules for securing Alabama licensure *on the issuance date of the original license* held by the applicant seeking endorsement. In this way, the scrutiny of the era is *exactly the same as that employed by the ABEC to license an Alabama applicant on that date*. This approach offers consistency as the measure of public protection for competent practice as a licensee. The equivalency review process is established in 255-X-10-.02 of the Administrative Code.

**4. So if the rules have changed, which rules apply to me?**

For Alabama, there are three (3) distinct eras of counselor licensure relevant for endorsement of an original license (See page 4 of the LPC application):

- (a) EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY ONE – 1/1/80 – 8/31/94
- (b) EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY TWO – 9/1/94 – 8/31/03
- (c) EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY THREE – 9/1/03 - Present

As an applicant for endorsement, you should locate the EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY corresponding to the date of your original licensure.

**5. What happened to change EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY ONE?**

A very significant aspect of Alabama licensure is the era of scrutiny that began on 9/1/94, the beginning date of EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY TWO. Prior to that date, EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY ONE was in place and applicant scrutiny for licensure involved a *topical* review of courses completed in the graduate program. Specifically, the ABEC verified that an applicant completed required course work by examining course titles on official transcripts.

**6. So how are the other EQUIVALENCY CATEGORIES different? What is EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY TWO?**

EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY TWO began on 9/1/94. Beginning on that date, the ABEC verified that an applicant completed required course work by examining *course content*. This process was accomplished by *either* verifying the applicant graduated from a CACREP or CORE accredited graduate program *or* verifying that the applicant completed courses that met the content requirement specified in the Administrative Code. Such an approach involves the scrutiny of *course syllabi corresponding to the transcript entry date* for an applicant's graduate course work. The content for such course work is noted in section 255-X-3-.01(b)(1-11) of the Administrative Code.

**7. And what about EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY THREE?**

EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY THREE has all the features of EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY TWO except the increase from 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours to 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours as the minimum educational requirements for licensure.

**8. Does this mean the Alabama board is evaluating the ability of the board/agency that has licensed me?**

No. It means the ABEC is evaluating the equivalency of the rules used by the board/agency that granted your original license with the EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY in place in Alabama at that time.

A very significant aspect of endorsement review by the ABEC concerns the rigor and approach utilized by the board/agency that issued the original license. The ABEC respects the work of its peer boards/bodies in terms of scrutiny of an applicant for licensure. The statutory authority for Alabama licensure, as well as the administrative rules, allows the ABEC to recognize *equivalent reviews* by peer boards/bodies charged with public protection.

**9. How could they not be equivalent? Aren't they both counselor licenses?**

An original license issued on the basis of a *content review* of graduate course work often results in a relatively simple outcome of establishing equivalence. An original license issued on the basis of a *topical review* of graduate course work (after 9/1/94) results in a significantly different task of establishing equivalency. In this situation, many applicants for endorsement find the review process to be unwieldy and complicated.

**10. Does this mean the Alabama board is evaluating the quality of my graduate program and course work?**

No. It means the ABEC is evaluating the equivalency of the rules used by the board/agency that granted your original license with the EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY in place in Alabama at that time.

**11. How can you tell if the rules used to grant my original license fit the EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY date in Alabama?**

All applicants for endorsement of an original license are required to secure a copy of the administrative rules employed by their licensure board/agency on the date of their original licensure for purposes of comparison with EQUIVALENCY CATEGORIES ONE, TWO, or THREE. (See LPC application Page 3, Item 15)

***12. What if the Alabama board determines that the rules for my license in another state are equivalent to the Alabama rules?***

Then your original license is eligible for endorsement.

***13. What if the Alabama board determines that the rules for my license in another state are not equivalent to the Alabama rules?***

Then your original license is ineligible for endorsement based on a review of the rules under which it was granted. No authority exists in the state statute or Administrative Code that allows endorsement of a license that does not meet the elements of the EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY at the time of the original license.

***14. So I can't be licensed in Alabama even though I'm already licensed elsewhere?***

This does not mean an applicant cannot be licensed by the ABEC. Rather, it means that the scrutiny of content review that was *not applied in the issuance of your original license will now be employed in the review of your endorsement application.* Also, so far this discussion has only addressed the academic requirements for licensure. The examination requirements and post-graduate supervision requirements for your original license may be equivalent. However, the content review of academic course work is often the most difficult aspect of endorsement.

***15. I completed my graduate degree many years ago and I don't have the syllabi from my classes. What are my options?***

In instances where a comparison of rules and scrutiny reveals a lack of equivalency, the applicant for endorsement must verify the content of academic work. Some applicants for endorsement of an original license report difficulty in locating syllabi from course work completed many years prior to their application for endorsement by the ABEC. For this reason, the ABEC has established the "POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES." This document, which follows the "Frequently Asked Questions", summarizes the options an endorsement applicant may consider regarding academic prerequisites for licensure by the ABEC. *No statutory authority exists to allow the ABEC to waive or amend the requirements established in the administrative rules as minimum academic requirements for licensure, including experience or longevity in licensure status.*

***16. What if I can't accomplish any of those options?***

Some applicants for endorsement discover that their graduate studies did not include specific content noted in section 255-X-3-.01(b)(1-11) of the Administrative Code. This does not mean the applicant cannot be licensed. Rather, it means that the applicant must complete the minimum graduate course work required by the EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY for their original license. An applicant may complete this course work and verify compliance with the requirements through an official graduate transcript (note: no statutory authority exists for the ABEC to accept continuing education or other activities not completed through enrollment in a regionally accredited college or university as the equivalent of graduate course work).

***17. I may have to return to graduate school? Why? I'm already licensed.***

The issue for the ABEC is equivalency of rules for licensure in Alabama. An inequity of scrutiny for public protection can emerge if the ABEC does not uniformly apply the rules and requirements established for licensure. Again, no authority exists for waiver of these rules unless the ABEC can establish they were addressed by a peer licensure board/agency at the time of the original licensure. Some have found this means additional graduate study is required for Alabama licensure.

***18. So I can't practice as a licensed counselor?***

An applicant for endorsement may also apply for Provisional Licensure under section 255-X-10-.03 of the Administrative Code. If granted, Provisional Licensure allows an endorsement applicant to engage in the practice of counseling while completing academic requirements to meet the EQUIVALENCY CATEGORY.

***19. How long may I practice with Provisional Licensure?***

The Administrative Code allows for a one-year provisional license, which may be renewed by the ABEC if the applicant is demonstrating progress in meeting the provisions of licensure. Such a determination is based on the scrutiny of the ABEC.

***20. May I discuss this whole process with the Board?***

Yes. Any applicant for original licensure or endorsement of an existing license may appear before the ABEC. Additionally, applicants for complicated endorsement procedures may actually be encouraged to appear before the ABEC to clarify their options and understanding of the endorsement process. For an appointment to address the Board, contact the ABEC office.

## ***POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES***

### Introduction

Beginning September 1, 1994, the ABEC regulations specified the content of academic Areas (I-XI) rather than simple topics or course title. For applicants completing academic prerequisites in programs accredited by CACREP or CORE, verification of accreditation status during the time when the applicant secured their degree is adequate documentation of academic content. For applicants completing academic prerequisites in non-accredited programs, verification is **typically completed using a syllabus for each academic Area.**

### Alternative

For applicants unable to provide syllabi to document the content of their academic work, due to the passage of time or similar obstacles, the following document is required:

1. A letter from current chair of the program from which the applicant graduated verifying that course syllabi for the period of applicant's study are not currently available, AND
2. At least one (1) from each of the following areas (Institutional Materials and Applicant Materials) PLUS one (1) additional document from these listings for a total of at least three (3) types of documentation:

#### Institutional Materials (at least one required)

- a. A syllabus no older than four (4) years prior to the transcript date of courses specified for the academic Areas and the newest available syllabus for that academic Area.
- b. Letters from previous course instructors describing the content of the course(s) completed during the period of the applicant's graduate study.
- c. A copy of the Graduate Catalog Bulletin with abbreviated description of content of the course(s) completed during the period of the applicant's graduate study, OR
- d. Syllabi from graduate courses completed subsequent to graduation that would require knowledge from ABEC academic Area(s) for successful performance in the more recently completed course(s).

#### Applicant Materials (at least one required)

- a. Copies of course materials from courses for each academic Area (e.g., exams, term papers, text, assignments, reading lists, etc.)
- b. Notarized letters from current LPCs who were contemporary graduates of the applicant (a person who took the same academic course in the same calendar year, at the same university as the applicant) and whose usage of courses completed during that time were found acceptable for meeting the academic prerequisites for licensure in Alabama, OR
- c. Other documentation to assist in verification of the content for each academic area.

### Implementation

All materials must be provided by the applicant using forms and procedures approved by the ABEC. All materials are subject to scrutiny of the ABEC regarding their suitability, completeness, and detail for documenting the content of academic work.

RE: 255-x-3-.01

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