Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC)
Requirements and Application Process

The FCB is pleased to offer the Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) credential.

The CAC is an intermediate practice credential for people who work in collaboration with clinical staff to develop and implement client treatment plans, as well as provide specified substance abuse treatment services under supervision.

All CACs have demonstrated competency through training, experience and supervision in the performance domains of:

- Scientific Principles of Substance Use and Co-occurring Disorders

- Evidence Based Screening and Assessment

- Evidence Based Treatment, Counseling, and Referral

- Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities

Disclaimer: The CAC credential does not permit independent practice; CACs are authorized to provide services in community mental health centers and licensed inpatient or outpatient mental health treatment settings.

Note: The CAC is the FCB's reciprocal credential, which means that people who hold the CAC are issued the This document outlines CAC standards, requirements, application policies, and procedures. Additional policies can be found on the FCB website and in the FCB Candidate Guides.

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Reciprocity

The Florida Certification Board is a member of the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC). Professionals holding an eligible certification or license in another state may be able to transfer their credentials. To transfer an ADC credential into Florida, please contact your issuing board to initiate the reciprocity process. The FCB will contact you once we receive the required paperwork from the IC&RC.

The CAC is the reciprocal-level credential for individuals transferring into Florida with the IC&RC Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC) credential. All CAC applicants will automatically earn the IC&RC Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC) credential at no extra cost.

The Application Process

Step 1: Creating and Accessing Your FCB Account

Before applying for the CAC credential, you must have an FCB online account. You can create or access your FCB account and find the CAC credential applications on the website flcertificationboard.org.

Step 2: Understanding the Credentialing Process

The process of applying for the CAC credential involves several steps:

Create or Access an FCB Account: You need an FCB account to access the CAC online applications.

Complete an Online Application: Start by filling out the online application to provide initial information about yourself; note that this does not constitute the complete application.

Upload Training Verification Documents: Attach all required documents to your application.

Download and Distribute Required Forms: Obtain necessary forms from the FCB website and distribute them to the appropriate individuals who must complete and submit them on your behalf.

Monitor Your Email and FCB Account: Regularly check for emails from your assigned Certification Specialist and for automatically generated system emails. Log in to your FCB account frequently and respond promptly to any inquiries or required actions to move your application process forward.

After your account, online application, and supporting documents are approved by FCB, you will be eligible to take the ICADC examination. Upon passing the exam, FCB will issue your CAC credential.

Step 3: Connecting with Your Certification Specialist

After you submit the online application and fee, a Certification Specialist will be assigned to you. This specialist will serve as your primary point of contact throughout the credentialing process.

You should receive an email from your assigned Certification Specialist within 30 business days after your application submission and approval. Email is the primary means of communication; make sure to regularly check your inbox for messages from your Certification Specialist and for automatically generated system emails. These emails will instruct you to log into your account, view updates, and perform any necessary actions.

If you need immediate assistance or prefer to speak directly, you may also call the office to speak with your Certification Specialist.

Timeframes

Certification Specialists will notify applicants of the results of the initial application review within 30 days of receiving a complete, paid application. The time needed to process an application varies based on the current workload and the quality of the supporting documents submitted. Applicants have up to 12 months from the date of application acceptance to obtain their credential, including passing any required exams. If needed, a continuation fee can be paid to extend the processing period by an additional 12 months.

CAC APPLICATION Requirements

Table 1 outlines the full requirements to earn the Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) credential under the standard application pathway. Table 2 describes the necessary supporting documentation requirements.

Table 1: CAC Requirements

Topic	Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) Requirements
Background Screening	Applicants are required to pass a Level 2 employment background screening as specified by section 397.417(4) F.S. The FCB does not perform these background checks; instead, it verifies the applicant's eligibility to work with the credential's target population through access to the state's Background Clearinghouse. The Certification Specialist will guide the applicant on the necessary steps to take.
Formal Education	Applicants are required to hold a minimum of a high school diploma or GED. Individuals holding a higher degree in a related field have prorated work experience requirements as detailed in the Related Work Experience section below.
	High School Diplomas or General Equivalence Degrees must be eligible for acceptance by colleges or universities holding nationally recognized accreditation through the United States Department of Education and/or Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
	Eligible higher education degrees are issued by educational institutions holding United States Department of Education and/or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognized accreditation at the time of degree award.
	Related fields are:
	Addiction Studies/Counseling; Art/Dance Therapy; Behavioral Healthcare; Child Development/Family Relations; Criminal Justice; Counseling/Guidance; Divinity/Religion/Theology (only with a concentration in counseling); Drama/Expressive Arts Therapy; Gerontology; Health Education; Health Sciences; Human Services; Marriage and Family Counseling; Medicine; Mental Health Counseling; Music Therapy; Nursing; Occupational Therapy; Pastoral Counseling; Pharmacy/Pharmaceutical Sciences; Psychology; Public Health; Recreational Therapy/Counseling; Social Work; Sociology; Vocational Counseling.
Content Specific Training	Applicants are required to complete and document 300 hours of content-specific training that took place within the 10 years prior to the application date. However, coursework from a degree does not expire.

Training Topic	Training Hours
Scientific Principles of Substance Use and Co-occurring Disorders	50
Evidence Based Screening and Assessment	50
Evidence Based Treatment, Counseling, and Referral	50
Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities	50*
Electives	100

Topic	Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) Requirements	
	Total Training Hours	**300**

6 hours must be specific to counselor ethics and responsibilities

Eligible training must be taken within the last 10 years (no time limit on college coursework taken as part of a degree program). FCB Eligible Training Providers are listed online at http://flcertificationboard.org/resources/approved-education-providers/

Topic	Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) Requirements
Related Work Experience	Applicants must complete hours of relevant work experience, depending on the degree they hold. To qualify, the experience must (1) have occurred within the 10 years preceding the application and (2) be verified by current or former employers. Work experience hours are prorated as follows: • 6,000 hours **-** High School Diploma/GED • 5,000 hours – Related Associate of Arts Degree • 4,000 hours - Bachelor's Degree in a related field • 2,000 hours – Master's Degree or Higher in a related field **Cross-over Work Experience:** • Up to **2,000 hours as a case manager** can be credited to a CAC application. The remaining hours must be spent providing CAC-level addiction counseling in the domains of clinical evaluation, treatment planning and counseling. • Up to **2,000 hours as a BHT** can be credited to a CAC application. The remaining hours must be spent providing CAC-level addiction services across all performance domains. • Up to **2,000 hours as a CRSS** can be credited to a CAC application. The remaining hours must be spent providing CAC-level addiction services as an adjunct to clinical staff across all performance domains. • No work hours as a CRRA, CRPS or other credential can be applied to a CAC application.
On-the-Job Supervision	Applicants must complete hours of direct supervision. To qualify, the supervision must (1) have occurred within the 10 years prior to the application, (2) not exceed 3 hours per week or 156 hours per year, and (3) be documented by current or former qualified supervisors. Supervision is prorated depending on the applicant's highest level of formal education. • 300 hours – High School Diploma/GED • 250 hours – Related Associate of Arts Degree • 200 hours – Bachelor's Degree in a related field • 100 hours – Master's Degree or higher in a related field
Recommendations for Certification	Applicants must submit three professional letters of recommendation for certification. These recommendations should be (1) written by individuals familiar with the applicant's work history and job performance, (2) completed using an FCB recommendation form, and (3) sent directly to the FCB on the applicant's behalf. Eligible recommenders must know the applicant in a professional capacity and should not be subordinates, relatives, or anyone else who might have a conflict of interest.

Topic	Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) Requirements
Exam	Achieve a passing score on a 150-item multiple-choice exam. The exam blueprint, available online, details the performance domains and core competencies for the credential. It specifies the number of questions per domain and further breaks down the number of questions for each competency within those domains. The passing score is 500.
Credential Award	The credential is awarded upon achieving a passing score on the exam. To maintain certification, individuals must: 1. Adhere to the FCB Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct. 2. Complete 20 hours of continuing education annually. 3. Renew their credential every year by June 30. For more detailed information, please refer to Table 3: Credential Award and Maintenance Requirements.

CAC APPLICATION Documents and Submission Protocols

Overview

As a CAC applicant, you are required to submit documentation for each credential requirement. Some documents must be submitted by **you directly**, while others must be submitted **by third parties** on your behalf. These supporting materials are critical for verifying your eligibility and must be submitted in accordance with FCB policies.

Required Documentation

The following documentation must be provided as part of your application:

Education

- A copy of your highest level of education.

Training

- Content-specific training certificates.

Work Experience

- Verification of related work experience.

Supervision

- Verification of on-the-job supervision.

Recommendations

- Letters of recommendation in support of your certification.

Application Forms

The documents listed above must be submitted **with or on the appropriate FCB forms**, all of which are available on the FCB website. The following forms are **required** for the CAC application process:

□ **CAC Training Verification Form**

□ **CAC Work Experience Verification Form**

□ **CAC On-the-Job Supervision Verification Form**

□ **Recommendation for Certification Form**

Each form must be **accurately completed** and accompanied by the relevant documentation. Incomplete or incorrectly submitted forms may delay your application review.

Third-Party Submission Requirements

Please be aware that the following documents **must not be submitted by the applicant directly**. Instead, they **must be submitted by appropriate third parties** (e.g., supervisors, employers, professional contacts) **directly to the FCB**:

- Verifications of work experience

- Verifications of on-the-job supervision

- Letters of recommendation

The FCB will not accept these documents if they are submitted by the applicant. Ensuring that third parties submit these materials on your behalf is your responsibility.

Final Reminders

- All documentation should be uploaded or attached to the appropriate application forms.

- Verify submission requirements and methods with each third-party contributor early in the process.

- Maintain personal copies of all submitted documents.

Table 2: CAC Application – Supporting Documents Requirements

Topic	Documentation Requirements
Formal Education	Applicants are required to document their formal education in the online application by filling out the necessary data fields and uploading a copy of their high school diploma or an unofficial copy of their transcript. Applicants with a related bachelor's degree or higher must request to have official transcripts submitted directly to the FCB.
Content-Specific Training	Applicants must document their content-specific training within the online application. They should complete the CAC Training Verification Form, available online, and upload both the

Topic	Documentation Requirements
	completed form and the supporting documentation for each event listed on the form to the online application.
Related Work Experience	Applicants are required to enter details of their work experience in the online application. They must provide their employers with the CAC Work Experience Verification Form, which is available online. Employers are then responsible for completing this form and submitting it to the FCB on the applicant's behalf, along with an attached position description for the role they are verifying.
On-the-Job Supervision	Applicants must record details about their on-the-job supervision and supervisors in the online application. They should provide their supervisors with the CAC Supervision Verification Form, available online, to be filled out and submitted directly to the FCB on the applicant's behalf.
Recommendations	Applicants must list individuals who will provide recommendations for certification in the online application. They should give each reference an FCB Recommendation for Certification form, available online, to complete and submit directly to the FCB on the applicant's behalf.

ICADC EXAM Registration, Exam Overview, Scoring, and Retesting

Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) candidates must take the IC&RC Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ICADC) exam. If you pass, you will earn both the FCB's Certified Addiction Counselor (CAC) credential and the IC&RC Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ICADC) credential.

For step-by-step instructions and study information, download and review the ***Candidate Guide for the IC&RC Alcohol and Drug Counselor Exam***. The guide is available on the CAC section of the website.

Registration Process

You may register for the ICADC exam only after the Board has approved all components of your application and supporting documentation. Once approved, you will receive a system-generated email confirming that you are eligible to register for the exam.

Your assigned Certification Specialist will assist you throughout the registration process. They will provide you with two important documents:

- **Exam Confidentiality Agreement**

- **Exam Pre-Registration Form**

After you complete these documents, they will be uploaded to your application record. The Exam Pre-Registration Form will also be sent to the Board's Testing Unit.

Next, you will receive an email from the ***IC&RC's testing vendor*** with instructions on how to complete your exam registration online.

If you need to reschedule your exam, contact the Board at least **three business days** before your scheduled test date. The Board will assist you with the rescheduling process.

Retesting Guidelines

- Contact your Certification Specialist to schedule a retest.

  o Retests require payment of the **exam fee**.

  o There is a **90-day waiting period** between test attempts.

  o You must request a retest **before the 12-month application period expires**. If you do not, your record will be closed, and a continuation fee will be required to reopen it.

CAC Credential Award, Maintenance, and Renewal

The CAC credential is awarded when a passing score on the ICADC exam is entered into the certification database. To maintain certification, you must meet the maintenance and renewal requirements detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: Credential Award, Maintenance, and Renewal Requirements

Topic	Minimum Requirement
Credential Award	The CAC credential is issued for a one-year period. Since credentials are issued throughout the year, the initial expiration date may be slightly more or less than a full year from the issue date. After the first renewal, the credential will expire annually on June 30.
Ethical Conduct	Uphold the FCB Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct and comply with reporting, investigation, and disciplinary procedures.
Continuing Education	Twenty hours (20) of continuing education are required each renewal and must be submitted to the FCB during the renewal period. The training must be relevant to at least one of the CAC performance domains. CE credits or hours must be non-repetitive, meaning the same course cannot be counted more than once during each credentialing period, even if it is taken annually.
Renewal	Timely renewal requires submitting an online renewal application, paying the renewal fee, and confirming compliance with continuing education requirements. The credential expires annually on June 30. A 30-day grace period is allowed for late payments, but any renewal submitted in July must include CE documentation. Credentials not renewed by August 1 will be placed in inactive status. To reactivate or reinstate an inactive credential, applicants must contact the FCB directly.

Certification Application Process Checklist

Account & Application

- ❑ Create an online FCB account.
- ❑ Create an online CAC application.

Documentation

- ❑ Identify the highest level of education you have completed and request an official copy of college transcript.
- ❑ Upload completed Training Verification Form(s) and supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the content-specific training requirements.
- ❑ Identify current and/or past employers who will verify your work experience. Download the CAC Work Experience Verification Form, provide it to each employer, and have them complete and submit it to the FCB on your behalf.
- ❑ Identify current and/or past supervisors who will verify your direct supervision. Download the CAC On-the-Job Supervision Verification Form, provide it to each supervisor, and have them complete and submit it to the FCB on your behalf.
- ❑ Identify individuals who will submit a letter of recommendation in support of your CAC certification application. Download the Recommendation for Certification Form, provide it to each reference, and have them complete and submit it to the FCB on your behalf.

Fee Payment

- ❑ Pay the non-refundable application fee. This is the final step in the online application process. Applications that remain unpaid for 30 days will be automatically deleted, requiring the applicant to start the process over. The application will enter the work queue once the online payment is completed.

Monitor Email

- ❑ Within 30 days, you will receive an email from your assigned Certification Specialist with the status of your application, indicating whether the requirements are approved, pending, or denied.
- ❑ Continue to monitor your email for updates and information from your Certification Specialist. Applicants have 12 months to resolve any deficiencies and pass the exam.

Examination

- ❑ Receive approval to register for the examination.
- ❑ Follow exam pre-registration and registration procedures (directions are given after application approval).
- ❑ Take the examination.

Certification Application Process Flowchart

START

Do you have a personal, online FCB account?
- Yes → Login to your FCB Online Account → Select "Create Application" → Select "Behavioral Health" link. → Select "Certified Addiction Counselor" link.
- No → Create FCB Online Account → https://online-flcb.elicense.tylerapp.com/ → Click REGISTER link; complete data fields; verify email address
- Unsure → CALL the FCB for assistance.

Complete all sections of the online application.

FCB Policy Agreements

Formal Education → Upload Unofficial Degree File

Current Employer

Current Supervisor

Training → Upload Training Form & Documents

Attestations & Affirmations

Fee Payment

Review and Submit the online application.

ALSO → Download and Distribute CAC Application Forms
- Training Verification Form — Applicant Completes & Submits
- Work Verification Form — Employer(s) Complete & Submit
- Supervision Verification Form — Supervisor(s) Complete & Submit
- Recommend-ation Form — References Complete & Submit

Monitor email for processing updates from FCB.

Respond to FCB until application is approved

Application Approved?
- No → Respond to FCB until application is approved
- Yes → Monitor email for exam pre-registration directions

Complete exam pre-registration form/pay exam fee

Monitor email for exam registration directions/register for exam

Take the ICADC exam

Exam Passed?
- Yes → CAC Issued
- No → Retest?
  - Yes → Complete exam pre-registration form/pay exam fee
  - No → End