

# **M.A./BC Program**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

(Last Update: March 2012)

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Some of the information provided is based on or directly quoted from the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors website, which is located at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm>. We strongly encourage students to check this website frequently for answers to their questions regarding Texas State Licensure.

## **WHAT MAKES DTS DIFFERENT – “INTEGRATION”**

***Question:*** How does Dallas Theological Seminary's Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling Program honor the sufficiency of the Scripture?

**M.A./BC Response:** Dallas Theological Seminary believes in an integrated model of counseling, which integrates Theology, Spiritual Formation, and Psychology. DTS does not subscribe to the Nouthetic viewpoint. In addition to counseling courses, students are trained in Theology, Bible Exposition, and Pastoral Ministries during the course of their studies at DTS. The M.A./BC Program offers courses that are taught by professors who agree with the DTS doctrinal statement and teach to the mission of the seminary. All courses include devotion, prayer, and a significant degree of biblically relevant counseling expertise, as all the professors on faculty also have worked, or currently work, as private counselors or on church staff as counselors.

## **PRIOR TO BEGINNING CLASSES**

***Question:*** What do you recommend for students to do the year(s) prior to seminary, either ministry-related or in the way of general preparation?

**M.A./BC Response:** First of all, we encourage incoming students considering the DTS Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling (M.A./BC) Program to be praying for clarity, wisdom, and strength both with regard to coming, but also with regard to if you are certain this is your calling, to pray for strength to endure the difficulties and spiritual warfare you will face when you are here.

Furthermore, begin building relationships with organizations (even if they are not in the Dallas area) whose mission is exactly what you wish to be involved in. Volunteer! Do whatever you can to immerse yourself in the environment in which you feel God calling you to serve. He will speak loudly through the experience you gain from these opportunities.

Lastly, begin considering the curriculum that you will be taking. Contact the State Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors. Carefully review their website. Call and ask them questions about the curriculum requirements and additional face-to-face hours. In sum, do your homework so that nothing is a surprise to you once you dive in to the program itself. All Texas Master's in Counseling Programs have the same core curriculum requirements because they are mandated and/or governed by the afore mentioned body of examiners.

## **CURRICULUM**

***Question:*** Is there a set Biblical Counseling class rotation? If so, what is it?

**M.A./BC Response:** There isn't one for elective classes. There is a tentative rotation for required classes, but it will not be given out to students, because it is not final. If a student is attending DTS full-time, they will be able to graduate in

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3 years. Every required course will be offered once a year. It is recommended that a student follow the plan in the DTS catalog.

**Question: When I take Practicum I, I know that I have to take 20 sessions of counseling, so can I start on those sessions before class starts? Or what if I don't get them all in on time?**

**M.A./BC Response:** You can definitely start taking your counseling sessions early. Ideally you would be able to finish your counseling by the time you finish your class, but if you don't, just know that you will not be able to be a candidate for graduation until you have your paperwork claiming that you have completed all 20 sessions.

**Question: What kinds of things are considered in the interview to shift from an M.A./BC-1 status to an M.A./BC-2 status during the second year of study?**

**M.A./BC Response:** Basically, the faculty want to be involved in each of the M.A./BC student's lives as they journey through the Counseling Program here at DTS. Counseling is a unique field, and the interview enables them to sit one-on-one with the students who have taken a few of the core Counseling courses and ask them about their experiences so far and whether they still feel God is calling them to counseling after they graduate. There are many options for an individual with a Master's in Counseling, and they want to make sure that you know and understand your options. They want to be encouragers to you as you embark on the critical training that God has marked out for you at this point in your life. It is not an interview to be afraid of, but rather to look forward to and take advantage of when the time arrives.

**Question: What does M.A./BC-1 status and M.A./BC-2 status mean?**

**M.A./BC Response:** The Biblical Counseling student enters DTS with "M.A./BC-1 status". During the same semester as the student is enrolled in Practicum I (usually his/her 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semester), he/she will be interviewed by a faculty member based on your interview with that faculty member (and your previous interaction with BC faculty)—if you pass—you will be reclassified with "M.A./BC-2 status", which is the status under which you will graduate. If you do not pass, you will either :

- be given aspects to work on to make you eligible to pass to status 2, and then the following semester/year you will go through another interview process
- or, be asked to withdraw from the Biblical Counseling program (only in very extreme cases)

**Question: Which classes do I take next to satisfy prerequisites for future BC courses?**

**M.A./BC Response:** All prerequisites are listed in the catalog.

**Question: How many Counseling classes will I have to take?**

**M.A./BC Response:**

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A total of 48 hours are required for Texas State Licensure. Applicants are responsible for obtaining course work in and demonstrating competency in the following specific areas:

- Normal Human Growth and Development
- Abnormal Human Behavior
- Appraisal or Assessment Techniques
- Counseling Theory
- Counseling Methods and Techniques
- Research Methods and Statistics
- Lifestyle and Career Development
- Social and Cultural Foundations
- Professional Orientation
- Group Counseling
- Other Counseling Electives

Make sure you check with your state requirements and take the appropriate hours before you graduate.

**Question:** I need to know whether I need to take a course for additional credit hours, such as taking Professional Orientation for three credit hours, rather than two. How can I learn whether this is necessary, and what do I need to do in order to have the extra hour approved?

**M.A./BC Response:** DTS designs its M.A./BC curriculum to meet the requirements of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors (see below for contact information). However, each state differs on course and credit hours required of a Master of Arts in Counseling programs. For instance, while the Texas State Board requires that "Social and Cultural Foundations" only be offered as a 2-credit hour course, another state may require that the course be offered for 3-credit hours.

Students considering applying for state licensure outside of Texas are wise to research the state(s) in which they plan to practice and determine the courses and credit-hours required by the state *before their second year of study*. The BC Department Administrative Assistant has a list of the contact information of the respective states' State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors.

**Question:** If I am planning on starting Practicum II in the fall and Practicum III in the spring, could I do a Practicum Elective one hour independent study this summer?

**M.A./BC Response:** You can register for BC325 Counseling Practicum Elective class, as long as a faculty member is willing to supervise you.

**Question:** If I need to take a class at another school and transfer it in, what should I know? What is the process?

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**M.A./BC Response:** You can transfer up to 12 hours of counseling classes from another institution. First, you need to check with the BC department chair to make sure that you are allowed to transfer in the class you would like because there are only certain classes the department allows in. Also, the school must first be approved by the Registrar's office.

Then you need to get one Course Transfer Approval Form from the Biblical Counseling office for each class that you plan to transfer in, and fill it/them out completely. Turn that/those form(s) in to the Biblical Counseling office, where they will either be approved or denied.

You will receive an email telling you if you are approved or denied. If you are approved, you may then register for the classes at the other school, and after you are done with the class (assuming you pass), you may ask the other school to transfer in the class(es) to our Registrar's office.

*\*Note: Although Dallas Theological Seminary allows 30 hours to be transferred in, the Biblical Counseling Department only allows in 12 hours specifically of counseling classes.*

### **ACCREDITATION**

**Question: Is this program a fully accredited counseling program?**

**M.A./BC Response:** DTS is accredited with SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and ATS (Association of Theological Schools) , but the M.A./BC Program has no counseling-related accreditations.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Question: How do I apply for the M.A./BC Program?**

**M.A./BC Response:** You simply apply for DTS, and indicate on your application that you wish to major in Biblical Counseling.

### **ADVISING**

**Question: What is an advisor, and how do I find someone who understands the Biblical Counseling Program?**

**M.A./BC Response:** DTS essentially provides two forms of student advising, and for the purpose of explanation, we will refer to them as academic and pastoral advising. *ACADEMIC ADVISING* is a means of helping students with course and degree planning and graduation assessments. Faculty members within the students' intended degree program and the Registrar's Office assist students with academic advising.

DTS is honored to have on its faculty individuals who care deeply for students' spiritual development as well as their academic success. Therefore, *PASTORAL ADVISING* provides students mentoring, spiritual and vocational counseling, as

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well as the life-changing opportunity to develop a personal relationship with a DTS faculty member.

Students are assigned advisors by the Registrar's Office, but a common frustration for Biblical Counseling students has been receiving an advisor who is not familiar with issues such as state licensure or Practicum requirements. Therefore, *M.A./BC students are encouraged to meet with their assigned advisor for the pastoral element of advising.*

If academic guidance is necessary, M.A./BC students should contact the administrative assistant in the Biblical Counseling office who will assign students to a Biblical Counseling faculty member for academic advising. Students may contact the administrative assistant at (214)874-4406.

### **SPECIALITIES**

#### ***Question: How can I focus on specializing in eating disorders?***

**M.A./BC Response:** Basically, because the State Board of Examination REQUIRES students to complete a large number of specific courses, students are limited in terms of what electives they can take. However the department offers some classes in specialized areas that students may take.

Students who desire to specialize in a particular area, such as eating disorders, should begin "specializing" early in their academic career by attending seminars in their area of interest (Eating Disorder seminars are plentiful! SMU has them often.) Additionally, I would encourage the students to utilize their practicum opportunities to work directly with individuals in their area of desired specialty, such as with those who are struggling with eating disorders. By doing so, they could actually work (e.g. in a practicum) with a place such as Remuda Ranch ([www.remudaranch.com](http://www.remudaranch.com)) with that situation and see if it is really a good fit.

### **PRACTICUM**

#### ***Question: What is the BC Practicum sequence?***

**M.A./BC Response:** Answer: Students usually take Practicum I in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> semester. This is completely classroom-based, with no outside counseling practice; however, you are also required to go through counseling yourself. The department provides a counselor for you. If you do not want to use the provided counselors, you may use another one, but you must pay for all costs.

Practicum II must be taken after Practicum I and Counseling Theory. This Practicum consists of classroom meetings, plus 150 hours of practice on an outside practicum site, under the supervision of a Practicum site supervisor. You will need to tape record most or all of your face-to-face sessions, some of which you will show and discuss in class.

Practicum III must be taken after Practicum II, Abnormal Psychology, and Methods & Techniques. Because this is a separate class, you may choose a

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different practicum site than in your Practicum II, but you don't have to. You may use the same site. The outside practicum experience requirements are the same as Practicum II, giving you a total of 300 hours experience by the time you graduate. Of these 300 hours, 100 of them must be actual face-to-face counseling practice, and the other 200 can be administrative hours (i.e. answering phones, filing papers) at your site.

**Question: What does "Practicum hours" mean, how do I earn them, and how do they compare to the hours I must earn for state licensure?**

**M.A./BC Response:** *DTS REQUIRES students to complete a minimum of 300 hours of counseling prior to graduating from the M.A./BC Program. Students may only record the number of hours they earn while enrolled in a Practicum II, III, or the Practicum Elective. The 300 hours include 200 hours in administrative work and 100 hours of direct counseling. Typically, students earn 150 hours during Practicum II and 150 hours during Practicum III.*

*Note:* Practicum Elective is the only means by which students may continue to accumulate hours without otherwise being enrolled in another Practicum course.

Anything **after** the 300 hours you earn (up to 400 total) hours may be counted toward the 3000 hours that the state of Texas requires to receive your license.

**Question: Where can I do my Practicum/Internship?**

**M.A./BC Response:** Mental health clinics, private practices, hospitals, and churches offer internships. Some sites are better than others. Be sure to speak with others that have done their hours at the site and get their opinion and whether they can give you the hours you need.

The BC Administrative Assistant has a list of Practicum sites (currently about 100 sites) with a detailed summary of the organization and what kind of counseling they perform. It also shows whether the practicum is paid, how many (if any) past students have worked there (that we know of), and a contact name, number, email address, mailing address, and web site (if applicable). In the list, some are sites that past students have used, some are sites that the department has established a connection with, but no students have used, and some are fresh sites that we haven't even contacted yet. Whichever the case, they are merely suggestions to help you, not the only places you can go. However, if you choose a place on the list that has not yet been contacted, or find your own place, the department administrative assistant has some forms that the site supervisor will have to fill out. The site must be approved by the department first.

There are some sites that we have recently learned will not allow you to video tape your sessions, and for class you need to be able to video tape at least 3 sessions. As we learn of these sites, we are removing them from the practicum site list. If you, as a student, find out a practicum site is not allowing students to video, please let the Counseling department know, and also understand that you may not use that site. The ones that we know about, we have listed on the practicum site list as "unavailable."

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***Question:* Can a student work at multiple practicum sites and receive credit during one practicum?**

**M.A./BC Response:** There is nothing in the Title 22, Texas Administrative Code Chapter 681: Rules of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors stating that a student must only work at 2 different practicum sites.

Our decision as a school is that students typically make arrangements with one site per semester. The student must fulfill that commitment. They may not decide on their own to terminate from one site, and then pick another.

Also, practicum courses are intended to be taken in sequence (BC305, BC310, BC315), not concurrently. The intention is not simply to accrue hours, but also professional and personal development which only happens over time.

***Question:* What is the Practicum Elective, and how do I enroll for it?**

**M.A./BC Response:**

BC325 Practicum Elective is offered to students who meet the following criteria:

- Have satisfactorily completed Practicum I, II, and III
- Will be working during the semester to complete the required hours for LPC state licensure.

Before you enroll for this class you must find a BC professor to supervise you throughout the class. Once someone has agreed, you may then enroll for this class as an independent study course. Fill out the Independent Study Request Form available in the Registrar's office—and turn it in to them. They will register you for the class. Meet with your professor to find out specifics of how they want to arrange your meeting times, etc.

***Question:* The person who is supposed to start as my site supervisor is not licensed. Is it ok for him/her to be my supervisor still?**

**M.A./BC Response:** Although it is not preferable, we allow it. Under these circumstances, we will consider each person on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Biblical Counseling Department's administrative desk to begin the approval process.

Generally, we hope that the site supervisor will be licensed either in counseling or in some related field (ie. social work, psychology, etc.)

FYI: While you are in school getting your master's, the state of Texas views the school as your ultimate supervisor, leaving the decision of your actual site supervisor up to the school/program.

***Question:* Can I take any Practicum hours/classes elsewhere and transfer them in?**

**M.A./BC Response:** No.

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**Question:** I am scheduled to take Practicum II (or III) this summer, but my practicum site wants me to continue working from the end of the spring semester until my summer session starts. Can I get credit for those hours in between?

**M.A./BC Response:** Yes! The main goal is to have all 150 hours completed by the end of the course, so it's definitely okay to get a head start on those hours, provided the site is approved by the Counseling Department.

**Question:** I am scheduled to take Practicum II this spring and Practicum III in the fall, but my practicum site wants me to continue working through the summer. Can I get credit for those hours in between?

**M.A./BC Response:** You can gain credit for additional hours toward your Practicum credit as a Practicum Elective class (BC325) under the supervision of a BC Faculty member.

**Question:** When should I start planning for my Practicum Internship?

**M.A./BC Response:** Students who plan to take Practicum II or Practicum III should start looking and making contacts as soon as possible. The Biblical Counseling Program is working to make this process easier for students in the future, such as planning a Practicum Day, a day on which representatives from counseling sites will come to DTS to discuss internship and Practicum opportunities within their respective site location.

**Question:** What paperwork do I need for my Practicum course(s)?

**M.A./BC Response:** M.A./BC Practicum students who are enrolled in Practicum courses are required to submit required documentation to the professor or M.A./BC office (the second desk on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Walvoord Student Center). Students must submit the originals to the M.A./BC office *and should also keep a copy for themselves.*

### **Practicum I Documentation**

- Week 1. A 20-session schedule request (to M.A./BC counseling interns)
- Week 2. Counseling Contract
  - M.A./BC Rights Agreement
  - M.A./BC Ethics Agreement
  - If you use an outside counselor:
    - Practicum Release Form-Student
    - Practicum Release Form-Counselor
- Week 15. Counseling Session Log (attached to Counseling Contract)  
Counselor Intern Evaluation Form

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### **Practicum II, III, and Elective Documentation**

- Week 1. Proof of liability insurance (to M.A./BC front desk)  
Client Video Consent Form  
Practicum Site Application\* (to M.A./BC front desk)  
Practicum Site Supervisor Application\* (to M.A./BC front desk)
- Week 15. Practicum Site Evaluation  
Student Skills Evaluation-On Site  
Practicum Hours Log

\*Only if the M.A./BC department does not already have this paperwork

## **AFTER GRADUATION**

***Question:* What specific ministry paths have other students taken after graduating?**

**M.A./BC Response:** Some graduates are working as counselors in churches, schools, camps, crisis pregnancy centers/rape centers, and clinical settings. Others have chosen chaplaincy careers, and some are private counselors. The field is lucrative for many reasons, so I would encourage you to speak to counselors that you know and ask them what options are out there. Undoubtedly, they will have friends and colleagues in the counseling field doing things other than face-to-face counseling.

***Question:* Does DTS have an after graduation placement program to help recent grads get a job?**

**M.A./BC Response:** Regarding graduation and placement, because students build relationships and network with counseling sites while earning the 3000 hours, they generally do not return to DTS for placement. Instead, they work in their practicum and after graduation in places that will lead them to a job, once licensed.

However, we are building relationships with various places so that we could recommend students, should the need arise. Also, the Alumni office on the Dallas campus runs a successful placement service.

***Question:* What happens after I graduate?**

**M.A./BC Response:** You can request a temporary license as an LPC-Intern. At that time you can build the required hours at an approved site under an approved supervisor. Supervisors must be approved by the state and have certifications that they must obtain.

## **STATE LICENSURE**

***Question:* I also read that I would have to take some extra hours to receive state licensure. What is the purpose of these hours?**

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**M.A./BC Response:** The term “hours” probably referred to the number of hours of direct counseling that you must complete to become an LPC. During the program, you will be required (while taking Practicum courses) to work as a counselor and be involved in the administration of a counseling site, or location, as well as direct counseling with clients. The “hours” that you are required to complete for DTS graduation equals 300. However, if you exceed this number, you can count up to 400 of these excess hours toward the 3000 hours required for Texas state licensure.

Of the 3000 hours required for licensure, 1500 hours must be administrative, and 1500 hours must be direct.

For more information on Texas State Board Policies and Procedures go to [www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm)

*IMPORTANT* → Therefore, while the M.A./BC Program prepares students to become LPCs, *students will not graduate from DTS as an LPC*. For many states, including Texas, a Master’s degree in counseling is required to be licensed, but students must also earn additional hours and take a state licensure exam *after* graduating with a Master’s in counseling.

**Question: If I want to move to another state and be licensed there, are the requirements the same?**

No. Each state’s requirements are different. Students pursuing state licensure in states other than Texas must contact the respective state’s State Board of Examiners to ensure that DTS provides the necessary courses with appropriate credit hours that are required by the state. Again, DTS meets Texas state requirements, but while DTS has contact information for states other than Texas, *the student is responsible to ensure that their course work and Practicum hours meet other state’s requirements*. Securing these details is at the discretion of the student and should be done early in the plan of study because the state may have a different number of direct counseling hours required (e.g. internship) that the student must earn prior to licensure approval.

*Note: Every state has a different number of hours required for state licensure, and it is up to the student to research this if s/he plans to practice in a state other than Texas.*

**Question: If I am doing counseling as a part of my current job, can I count the hours toward graduation or state licensure?**

**M.A./BC Response:** Only if you are enrolled in Practicum II, III, or the Practicum Elective, and the site has been approved by the M.A./BC department.

M.A./BC students are eligible to accrue hours for graduation and state licensure after completing Practicum I. However, students must be enrolled in Practicum II, III, or Practicum Elective in order to fulfill the mandated supervisory requirements.

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If you have graduated, as soon as you receive your temporary license you may begin to count your hours toward your state license.

### ***Question: How do I apply for a LPC temporary license?***

**M.A./BC Response:** To apply for a temporary license, the following must be completed and submitted to the Texas State Board of Examiners

1. Application for Licensure...Include notarized signature and recent full-face wallet-size photograph
2. Application Fee in form of money order or cashier's check
3. Practicum Documentation Form

In Texas, you are required to have 3000 hours of supervised counseling. At least half of these hours must be face to face counseling and up to half of these hours can be administrative (paperwork, etc.). The 3000 hours of your internship can be built in a minimum of a year and a half (40 hours/week over 18 months). A temporary license is good for two and a half years. You can file for an extension if more time is needed. Before licensure, you must pass the LPC exam, which you may take at any time during your temporary licensure.

### ***Question: Can you take the LPC exam before you complete your hours?***

**M.A./BC Response:** Yes! An applicant who is an LPC intern may sit for the Licensed Professional Counselor Examination at any time during the effective dates of the applicant's temporary license. (from Title 22, Texas Administrative Code Chapter 681: Rules of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors, Subchapter G. Licensure Examinations, §681.101 Examination., (e))

### ***Question: What is asked on the counseling state board examination?***

**M.A./BC Response:** The LPC exam is a comprehensive exam that must be passed with at least a 75% before licensure. It must be completed within 4 hours. You can take the exam anytime between graduation and licensure, after you have received your temporary license, however, if you have not completed your required 3000 hours, you must write a letter to the board asking that you be given permission to sit for the exam. Further instructions are on the LPC State Board website.

There are two companies that offer prep courses and materials to take the Texas exam (IPGA and Wellspring). They recommend you study an hour a night for 3 months before taking the exam.

### ***Question: What if I fail the LPC exam the first time I take it?***

You can try and fail the exam twice. After the second failure you are required to either take 9 hours of counseling classes or wait two years before you take the exam again. Any time someone reapplies, they must do so under the current rules at that time. You can find the rules regarding the examination in §681.101 of the board rules.

### ***Question: When and where can I take the LPC exam?***

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**M.A./BC Response:** The exam is offered in Arlington, Austin, Houston... throughout the week at 8 a.m. and 1p.m.

**Question: When am I qualified to be a Licensed Professional Counselor?**

### **Qualifications for Texas State Licensure**

- is at least 18 years old;
- has a master's or doctoral degree in counseling or a related field;
- has successfully completed a graduate degree at a regionally accredited institution of higher education and a planned graduate program of 48 graduate semester hours, including 300 clock hours of supervised practicum that:
  - is primarily counseling in nature
  - meets the specific academic course content and training standards established by the board
- has completed 36 months or 3,000 hours of supervised experience working in a counseling setting that meets the requirements established by the board after the completion of the graduate program described by Subdivision (3);
- except as provided by Subsection (b), passes the license examination required by this chapter;
- submits an application as required by the board, accompanied by the required application fee; and
- meets any other requirement prescribed by the board.

A person may complete not more than six of the 48 graduate semester hours required under Subsection (a)(3) during or after the time the person completes the 3,000 hours of supervised work experience required under Subsection (a)(4) if, at the time the person began the work experience, the person possessed a graduate degree and fewer hours of supervised work experience were required by the law of this state or of the jurisdiction in which the work experience was performed.

In establishing the standards described by Subsection (a)(3)(B), the board shall review and consider the standards as developed by the appropriate professional association.

The board may require the statements on a license application to be made under oath.

**Question: How do I get in touch with the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors?**

**M.A./BC Response:**

Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors

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Texas Department of Health  
1100 West 49th Street  
Austin, Texas 78756-3183, USA  
Website: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/counselor/default.shtm)  
Email: [lpc@tdh.state.tx.us](mailto:lpc@tdh.state.tx.us)  
Telephone: (512) 834-6658  
Fax: (512) 834-6789

**COUNSELING ORGANIZATIONS**

***Question:* Do you know of any biblical counseling organizations that give some sort of backing or certification of biblical counselors?**

***M.A./BC Response:*** CAPS and AACC are two organizations that I would suggest.