



Certified Training Center Manual

Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
for Institutional Certification

Version 1.2
Spring 2020

Table of Contents

Section 1 Introduction	2
Section 2 Benefits of Institutional Certification	3
Section 3 Institutional Certification Process	4
Section 4 Maintaining Certified Status	12
Section 5 General Accrediting Matters	15
Section 6 Counseling Specializations	20
Section 7 International Training Centers	25
Section 8 Marketing & Branding	26
<hr/>	
Appendix 1 Fundamental Training Course	36
Appendix 2 Marriage Specialization Template	50
Appendix 3 Reconciliation Specialization Template	52
Appendix 4 Addictions Specialization Template	54
Appendix 5 Institutional Membership Covenant	56

Section 1 | Introduction

For over 40 years, the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) has been certifying biblical counselors to ensure doctrinal integrity and to promote excellence in biblical counseling. It is crucial that future counselors receive the highest quality training in biblical counseling available. To help meet this educational need, ACBC certifies institutions. Upon examination and approval by the ACBC Board of Trustees, these institutions will become an ACBC Certified Training Center. Among other things, Certified Training Centers (CTC) perform two essential functions:

1. Provide biblical counseling training
2. Provide biblical counseling services

By partnering with ACBC you are contributing to the advancement of the biblical counseling movement. As an ACBC CTC, you will equip counselors for ACBC certification and persuade those in your region that God's Word has the solutions to the most difficult problems people face. We believe God is moving in His church, calling us back to the sufficiency of Scripture for the counseling task. When you pursue ACBC certification, you are joining a unique movement that was founded upon and is growing out of the superiority and sufficiency of Christ and His Word for Christian faith and practice.

The purpose of this manual is to serve as a helpful resource for you as you prayerfully consider joining the mission of ACBC as a CTC. The following pages will provide more details concerning the benefits of becoming a certified institution, walk you through the process, and provide clear expectations for institutions that become formally affiliated with ACBC. I look forward to working with and serving you.

God Bless,

Samuel E. Stephens, Ph.D.
Director of Training Center Certification
sstephens@biblicalcounseling.com
(816) 282-2835 x. 7012

Section 2 | Benefits of Institutional Certification

There are five (5) central benefits to your organization becoming an ACBC Certified Training Center:

1. Advance the cause, mission, and purposes of biblical counseling through offering quality training that satisfies requirements for ACBC certification.
2. Join an expanding network of carefully vetted, likeminded, and qualified biblical counselors. This network exists to promote the sufficiency and superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word over man's theories and interventions for solving life's problems. ACBC is made up of individuals who want nothing less than the full restoration of the Scripture's sufficiency for the discipline of counseling, as a ministry of the local church.
3. Receive guidance, encouragement, and resources directly from ACBC staff. This will include involvement with other directors of Certified Training Centers in regional director cohorts. These smaller groups function as a think-tank for issues in counseling and discipleship and facilitate discussion among various centers on topics ranging from best practices to the theology of counseling.
4. Promote upcoming training center events on ACBC's website and social media platforms. This exposure will make your organization more accessible to those searching for training and counseling.
5. Improve quality of training and services through the theological and methodological rigors that come with becoming an ACBC Certified Training Center. ACBC serves to encourage, acknowledge, and promote the essential methods and theology of biblical counseling. ACBC certification communicates that your center is complying with, contributing to, and promoting standards of excellence and ethics that adhere to a well-established and time-tested organization.

Section 3 | Institutional Certification Process

There are six (6) phases of the institutional certification process from initial contact to orientation and on-boarding. This section will provide an overview of the entire process along with a detailed explanation of each phase.

- Phases 1-4 include the preliminary assessment, application, program evaluation, and report of findings related to the institutional certification process. An organization within any one of these phases is considered a **Prospective Training Center**.
 - **Phase 1 | Pre-Application Assessment**
 - **Phase 2 | Application**
 - **Phase 3 | Evaluation**
 - **Phase 4 | Report and Committee Referral**

- Phase 5 comes as the Committee votes to recommend the Prospective Training Center for a full vote of the Board of Trustees. An organization within this phase is considered a **Candidate Training Center**.
 - **Phase 5 | Board Decision**

- Phase 6 comes at the successful completion of the institutional certification process and culminates in the organization becoming a **Certified Training Center**.
 - **Phase 6 | Orientation and Operational Requirements**

PROSPECTIVE TRAINING CENTER

Phase 1: Pre-Application Assessment

From initial contact, interested centers are considered **Prospective Training Centers**.¹ The initial phase is conducted through an interview with the Director of Training Center Certification in the early stages of inquiry. In order to receive the *Application of Training Center Certification*, the prospective center must be able to demonstrate a “two-year record of full operation” in accordance with each of pre-application requirements outlined below.²

- **ACBC Guiding Documents**

Prospective training centers “must be organized in accordance with, and subscribe to, the principles and practices contained” in the ACBC guiding documents. These documents include the following.³

- a. *Standards of Doctrine*
- b. *Standards of Conduct*
- c. *Constitution and Bylaws*
- d. *Policies and Procedures*

- **Ecclesiastical Authority**

Prospective training centers must show a “responsibility to, and working relationship with, a duly recognized ecclesiastical authority such as a church, group of churches, and/or denomination subscribing to the Christian values.”

¹ *Prospective Training Centers* are not yet formally affiliated with ACBC. This means that no part of their training program is counted toward the fulfillment of ACBC certification.

² For each of these requirements, see *Policies and Procedures* under the heading “Institutional Certification Procedures: Pre-Application” and in the *By-Laws* under the heading “Article IV. Institutional Membership”

³ Institutions formally affiliated with ACBC must teach “in accordance with and not contrary to” the doctrine and standards as expressed within these particular documents. These are available in full [online](#). Prospects must also affirm statements made in conjunction with the ACBC Board of Trustees including the *Statement on Mental Illness and Medicine* and the *Statement on Gender*.

NOTE: Centers may have multiple sponsoring institutions that provide resources (e.g. facilities, monies, staffing), but there must be only one (1) identifiable ecclesiastical entity that has direct authority and oversight of the center.

- **Counseling Services**

Prospective training centers are required to demonstrate excellence in providing biblical “counseling services.”

NOTE: ACBC requires that a system of counseling services should be in place for not only intake purposes, but also for quality biblical counseling training leading to certification. Training centers in good standing are expected to provide opportunities for their students to observe and participate in counseling relationships under the guidance of certified members, directors, and instructors.

- **Quality Training**

Prospective training centers must demonstrate excellence in biblical counseling training, curriculum, and instruction. This substantive training program must be offered for at least two (2) years prior to application, ideally with at least one full cycle of a complete curriculum being offered during that period.⁴

Phase 2: Application

Upon meeting all of the Phase 1 requirements, and upon the discretion of the Director of Training Center Certification, the *Application for Training Center Certification* will be released to the prospective training center. This application serves as the basis for the evaluation and is an important part of the overall certification process.

At this point, the prospective center enters Phase 2. The subsequent steps are outline below.

⁴ Adherence to the *ACBC Fundamental Training Course* is not a pre-application requirement; however, prospective centers that do not have a curriculum that corresponds to this template typically do not advance through the application process.

- The Director of Training Center Certification will send an e-mail to the prospective training center asking them to complete the *Application for Training Center Certification* and submit it, along with all requested materials.⁵
- Once all required documentation has been received and processed, the Director of Training Center Certification will send a subsequent e-mail that provides instructions for the payment of a one-time, non-refundable application fee of \$500.00.
- After the fee has been paid, the Director of Training Center Certification will work with the applying center in order to create an institutional profile for membership and record-keeping processes.

After these steps have been completed, the applying center will move into the next phase of the process.

Phase 3: Evaluation

Upon meeting all of the requirements and expectations set out in Phase 2, the Director of Training Center Certification will be cleared to begin a thorough examination of the prospective training center.

Due to the multifaceted nature of this phase, ACBC will refrain from providing an estimated timeframe for the completion of the evaluation. At any point in this phase, ACBC reserves the right to request revisions for sub-standard materials or supplemental items.

This examination will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Review the application and document any questions, concerns, and observations for further follow-up.

⁵ A link to the on-line application will be sent to the applicant in an e-mail with more detailed instructions.

- Evaluate course lectures (e.g. instructor notes, student handouts, visual presentations, etc.), listen to audio of course instruction, and review any other course information that is pertinent.⁶
- Evaluating counseling practices
- Conduct interviews for the purpose of gathering data from center leaders, authority holders, instructors, counselors, students, and ACBC Board Members and Fellows.
- Visit the center, if deemed necessary by the ACBC Training Center Certification Committee (TCCC) or the ACBC Board of Trustees.⁷

After the entire evaluation process has been completed, the applying center will move into the next phase of the process.

Phase 4: Report and Committee Referral

Upon the completion of the curriculum evaluation, interviews, and necessary follow-up related to data gathering, the Director of Training Center Certification will prepare a comprehensive report of the findings from the Phase 3 evaluation process.

ACBC will refrain from guaranteeing or estimating a timeline for when a prospective training center will reach this point of the process.

- A comprehensive report of the prospective center will be compiled and presented to the TCCC for evaluation.⁸ This committee is comprised of members of the ACBC Board of Trustees.

⁶ Requested materials are listed in the application.

⁷ If deemed necessary, the Director of Training Center Certification and/or other appointed person(s) will visit the applying center for evaluation. All expenses, including transportation, meals and housing for the review team and an appropriate fee for the team's time will be the sole responsibility of the applying center.

⁸ Depending upon current demand and workload, Training Center Certification Committee meetings are called to review reports for at least 3-4 prospective centers at a time. These meetings will be scheduled as these numbers of evaluations and reports are completed.

- The TCCC will then respond in one (1) of the following ways:
 1. Recommend the center to the full ACBC Board of Trustees who will then vote on the applying center at one of their Quarterly Meetings or the Annual Meeting in October.⁹
 2. Ask the Director of Training Center Certification to gather more information and perform a follow-up presentation to the TCCC at a later date.
 3. Deny the application of the prospective center.

The prospective center will receive an official decision (in the form of an e-mail and/or official letter) communicating the decision of the TCCC by the Director of Training Center Certification.

After prospective centers have been recommended by the TCCC to move to a final vote by the Board of Trustees, that center will move to the next phase of the process.

⁹ Certification is granted upon a 2/3 majority vote by the ACBC Board of Trustees. The annual Board of Trustee meeting takes place prior to the ACBC Annual Conference.

CANDIDATE TRAINING CENTER

Phase 5: Board Decision

Centers that move into Phase 5 will be considered **Candidate Training Centers**.¹⁰ It is during this phase of the process that the Director of Training Center Certification will compile a comprehensive report for the Board that will contain the training center's basic information, critical observations from the Director of Training Center Certification, and an abridged transcript of the Training Center Certification Committee meeting in which the decision was made to recommend the center.

Prior to the ACBC Annual Conference, or in some instances the quarterly meetings of the full Board of Trustees, the Board will meet to vote upon the recommendation of the TCCC, a sub-committee comprised of Board members. During this portion of the meeting, the Board will have an opportunity to ask further questions of TCCC members, the Director of Training Center Certification, and the Executive Director.

- The Board of Trustees will respond in one of the following ways.
 1. Vote to approve and affirm the recommendation of the TCCC.¹¹
 2. Ask the Director of Training Center Certification to gather more information and perform a follow-up presentation to the Board at a later date.
 3. Vote to reject the recommendation of the TCCC and deny certified status to the candidate center.

The candidate will receive an official decision (in the form of an e-mail and/or official letter) communicating the decision of the Board by the Director of Training Center Certification. After Candidate Training Centers have been approved by the Board, that center will move to the next phase of the process.

¹⁰ *Candidate Training Centers* are not yet formally affiliated with ACBC. This means that no part of their training program is counted toward the fulfillment of ACBC certification.

¹¹ Certification is granted upon a 2/3 majority vote by the ACBC Board of Trustees. The annual Board of Trustee meeting takes place prior to the ACBC Annual Conference.

CERTIFIED TRAINING CENTER

Phase 6: Orientation and Operational Requirements

Upon approval by the Board of Trustees, the Prospective Training Center is immediately granted certified status and now enjoys the rights and privileges of being an ACBC Certified Training Center including, but not limited to, the benefits outlined in [Section 2](#) of this manual.

After approval by the Board of Trustees, the Director of Training Center Certification will schedule a meeting with the director of the newly approved CTC for the purposes of onboarding and orientation. The following elements will be addressed:

- In conjunction with Membership Services, the newly approved center will be connected with an ACBC Fellow or Member of the Academy who shall provide supervision to that center.¹²

NOTE: By “supervision” the guiding documents of ACBC expect all certified institutions to be formally associated with a Fellow or Member of the Academy who shall ensure quality and compliance in the areas of counseling and training through maintaining an ongoing relationship with that center, providing guidance and instruction when requested, and assisting the center during times of annual reporting, systematic reviews, or occasional audits.

- The newly approved center, along with the supervising Fellow, will schedule an interview with the Director of Training Center Certification for a time not exceeding six months within their first year of becoming certified.¹³
- The center may update their profile information, be provided relevant log-in credentials, and be reminded of important dates (e.g. renewals, special events, new initiatives, etc.)
- The newly approved center will be oriented to ongoing certification matters as seen in the remainder of this manual.

¹² See “Article IV. Institutional Membership” of the ACBC Bylaws.

¹³ The purpose of this meeting is to provide a health check and to determine that all requirements and expectations are being met.

Section 4 | Maintaining Certified Status

In addition to the keeping the pre-application requirements outlined in this manual (see [Section 3](#), pages 5-6), ACBC Certified Training Centers considered in good standing with the organization, must at all times meet and fulfill the responsibilities outlined below.

Failure to adhere to any of these requirements will result in an audit of the training center in question and may necessitate revoking the center's certified status.

The following two (2) elements are crucial in maintaining compliance and good standing as a certified institution of ACBC.

- **Specific Training Requirements**
- **Annual Renewal Process**

Specific Training Requirements:

The quality and standards of the training at an ACBC Certified Training Center must correspond to the following:

- Training programs must be “designed to meet at least the requirements for individual membership” in ACBC. These are outlined, in part, in the *ACBC Fundamentals Training Course* (see [Appendix 1](#)).
- The *entirety* of the core fundamentals content (e.g. Fundamentals Training Course) must be taught by an ACBC certified counselor.¹⁴
- At least 50% of the content must be taught by qualified men.¹⁵

¹⁴ This requirement was approved and passed by the Board of Trustees during their 2019 annual meeting in Memphis, Tennessee. Certified Training Centers will be given three (3) years in which to comply to this requirement. This requirement comes into effect on January 1, 2023.

¹⁵ The Board of Trustees relies upon the ecclesiastical authority of the training center to determine how this requirement is to be met.

- At least 50% of the content must include coursework that is original in design, organization, and delivery. It is expected that any borrowed work or intellectual property is appropriately referenced and cited.
-

Renewal Process:

In addition to maintain standards in the quality and frequency of training, Certified Training Centers are required to renew their institutional certification on an annual basis. The following three elements make up this renewal process.

Annual Report

Individual directors of Certified Training Centers, in conjunction with the supervising Fellow, are responsible to complete the *Training Center Annual Report* by a fixed date each calendar year.¹⁶

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive update to the ACBC Board of Trustees concerning the condition, progress, performance, and overall health of each Certified Training Center during a particular calendar year. This report will also aid in assessing the center's compliance to all requirements and standards outlined in this manual and provide ACBC the means by which to report statistical information. This report will also help ACBC to glean best practices from centers that are excelling and to further equip and engage centers that need assistance. Answers to each question must be answered comprehensively and with attention to detail.

Once the *Training Center Annual Report* has been completed by the respective Certified Training Center director, it must be submitted to the Director of Training Center Certification by the deadline.

¹⁶ A link to this report will be sent to the Certified Training Center director and will inform the director of the deadline for submission.

Annual Agreement

At the time that the *Annual Report* is completed, directors of each of certified center are required to reaffirm, the *ACBC Institutional Membership Covenant* (see [Appendix 5](#)). If the director disagrees with any portion of the covenant, he or she is to contact the Director of Training Center Certification as soon as the disagreement becomes known. This covenant must also be reviewed and signed by the supervising Fellow responsible associated with that particular center.

Annual Dues

Certified Training Centers shall pay dues by the last day of January each year. The amount of these dues is based on the number of students who have enrolled in Phase 1 training at that center during the preceding calendar year. Training centers are required to track enrollment of all students who participate in training offered at that center as it relates to the ACBC certification process.¹⁷ The three tiers of annual dues are as follows:

Tier 1:	0-25 students enrolled	\$150.00
Tier 2:	26-125 students enrolled	\$300.00
Tier 3:	126+ students enrolled	\$750.00

For example, if annual dues are set to be paid by January, the renewing center will select the tier amount which best reflects Phase 1 enrollment numbers for the previous calendar year.

¹⁷ At any time, ACBC staff may contact any of our Certified Training Centers in order to request verification of training for individuals requesting documents related to Phase 2. It is, thus, important to keep thorough records regarding trainees.

Section 5 | General Accrediting Matters

The mission and purpose of ACBC includes not only setting standards for excellence for biblical counseling training but also necessitates occasional accrediting reviews of affiliated institutions to ensure continued excellence and quality in counseling services and training. As an accrediting and certifying agency, ACBC takes quality seriously and this is reflected in routine reviews focused on the quality of content and conduct.

Reviews and Audits:

Institutional Review

In order to ensure that standards outlined in this manual and further defined in the *ACBC Standards of Doctrine, Standards of Conduct, Constitution and Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures* are kept in compliance, each Certified Training Center will need to submit to a comprehensive review in an increment to be determined by the Executive Director from the time that the center became certified.

The certification review may involve the following:

- Review of the center's *Annual Reports* from the past five (5) years or since the time of the last review.
- Submission of the entirety of Fundamentals Training Course (e.g. Phase 1) training curriculum (see [Appendix 1](#)).
- Submission of a selection of lectures in an audio and/or video format for review. This selection will be at the discretion of the Director of Training Center Certification and/or the TCCC.
- Interviews with the center director, member(s) of the ecclesiastical authority over the center, counselors, trainees, and supervising Fellows.

All findings will be summarized and reported to the TCCC for recommendation and/or affirmation of accrediting status as a certified institution of the organization.

Institutional Audit

On certain occasions, whether prompted by failure to meet standards of excellence as listed in [Section 4](#) or prompted by requests for data in addition to normal reporting procedures, the Director of Training Center Certification may find a CTC to be in violation of the standards set forth in this manual.

In these scenarios, the Director of Training Center Certification, in conjunction with the center's supervising Fellow, will begin an inquiry into the matter. At this point the center is considered under institutional audit.

The Director of Training Center Certification and the supervising Fellow may seek to collect documentation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Current schedules related to overall training programs
- Current training enrollment information and statistics
- Current list of training options offered (e.g. online, remote, etc.)
- Current state of counseling services
- Financial arrangements and health of the center

After the necessary data has been gathered for the institutional audit, the Director of Training Center Certification will summarize the findings and provide a report to the TCCC that outlines the specific violations in addition to recommendations for addressing these violations.¹⁸

- The TCCC will then respond in one of the following ways:
 1. Provide a specific plan-of-action for the center to adequately address the stated violation in order to meet compliance.

NOTE: Time periods for compliance may not exceed one (1) year. During this time, the center may maintain certified status, but be identified as being under

¹⁸ The Director of Training Center Certification will partner with the supervising Fellow assigned or affiliated with the Certified Training Center under audit.

institutional audit. If compliance is not met within the stated period of time, the center's status will be revoked.

2. Ask the Director of Training Center Certification to gather more information and perform a follow-up report to the TCCC at a later date.¹⁹
3. Deem the violations serious enough to consider the center as not being in good standing with ACBC. At this time, the TCCC will decide to revoke the center's certified status. This action may also be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

¹⁹ The center will still be considered under audit during this time.

Appeals and Requests:

Letter of Appeal

Four (4) groups may submit a *Letter of Appeal* to the Director of Training Center Certification in order to request various considerations regarding their unique circumstances, address previous decisions of the TCCC and/or Board of Trustees, and/or address current situations that may negatively impact their current certified standing with ACBC.

- Group 1: Prospective Training Centers²⁰
 - Request for exemptions to current requirements, fees, or processes
 - Request for application to be reconsidered by the TCCC after initial denial
- Group 2: Candidate Training Centers
 - Request for application to be reconsidered by the Board after initial denial
- Group 3: Certified Training Centers
 - Ask for an adjustment in current situation in order to maintain compliance or avoid potential violations (e.g. need to change or transition ecclesiastical authority, other changes that would impact status)
- Group 4: Former Certified Training Centers
 - Ask for reconsideration of a previous TCCC/Board decision in order to be reinstated as a certified institution in good standing.²¹

²⁰ These may be first-time applicants, or applicants who had previously gone through the institutional certification process but were initially denied.

²¹ If the center had lost its certification for longer than one (1) calendar year, then that center will need to submit a *Request for Reinstatement* (see below).

In each of these scenarios, the Training Center Certification Committee (TCCC) will be the first group to address the appeal and choose to either accept the appeal and forward it to the full Board for discussion and vote or to reject the appeal outright. This decision will be considered final.

The appeal must be provided on official letterhead from the center and/or from the ecclesiastical authority. The letter must be detailed and may also accompany any additional documentation that would supplement the appeal.

Request for Reinstatement

In unique scenarios where a former training center's certification has lapsed for over one (1) calendar year and would seek to have its certified status reinstated, the director of that center must submit a formal *Request for Reapplication* to the Director of Training Center Certification.²² While the details of this request will differ on a case-by-case basis and should begin with a meeting with the Director of Training Center Certification, the following elements should be included:

- Pay the reapplication fee of \$250.00.²³
- Provide a detailed timeline outlining and including the initial application process, initial certification of the center by the ACBC Board of Trustees, and reason(s) for the center losing its accredited status.
- Provide a detailed point-by-point description of all the elements of the center that has remained the same (curriculum, leadership, oversight, etc.) since initial certification.
- Provide a detailed point-by-point description of all the elements of the center that has been changed (location, curriculum, leadership, oversight, etc.) since initial certification.
- Submit a digital copy of the entire Fundamentals Training Course (see [Appendix 1](#)) to the Director of Training Center Certification.

²² These requests may only be submitted by formerly certified centers that have had minimal to no change in ecclesiastical authority, location, or curriculum.

²³ This will be processed by the Director of Training Center Certification prior to the request for reapplication to be considered.

This information should be compiled and contained within the body of a letter addressed to the Training Center Certification Committee. Be sure to explain the reasons why the center is seeking re-certification and how the center has sought to comply with all requirements as outlined in this manual. Additional information may be requested by the Director of Training Center Certification or the TCCC. Final decisions will be made by the Board of Trustees as a recommendation from the TCCC.

Section 6 | Counseling Specializations

ACBC desires that all certified members seek to further sharpen their counseling skills and their knowledge of God's Word through ongoing education. Counseling Specializations are specifically designed to allow ACBC certified counselors the opportunity to minister to their counselees with excellence in the areas covered by this advanced training.

Note: In order for training to count towards earning specialized status, it is expected that trainees must first complete all requirements of ACBC certification and be in good standing as a certified member of ACBC. This must be done before beginning any portion of the specialization training process.

The following two (2) phases provide an overview of the counseling specialization training process. The entire process must be completed within one (1) year.

- **Education Phase**
- **Examination Phase**

Education Phase:

In this phase, it is the responsibility for the certified member to find a Certified Training Center that offers specialization training. During this phase, the certified member must at least fulfill all of the core education requirements (including the training and reading components) that our outlined in [Appendix 2](#), [Appendix 3](#), and [Appendix 4](#) of this manual.²⁴

²⁴ These training requirements were approved by the Board of Trustees during the 2017 annual meeting of the Board.

ACBC Counseling Specializations are uniquely related to certified institutions in the following ways:

- Counseling Specializations are made available *exclusively* through Certified Training Centers.
- Certified Training Centers (CTCs) may host an ACBC certified member who is specialized, but who is not necessarily affiliated with that particular center.
 - The host CTC may promote the event through ACBC
 - The host CTC must track enrollment/registration of all trainees and report this information in their *Annual Report*.
 - The host CTC must provide a *Counseling Specialization Study Guide* to all registrants.²⁵
- The *entirety* of the Counseling Specialization core training (found in the following templates) may only be taught and facilitated by ACBC certified members. Of this training, at least 67% must be taught by a member who has earned counseling specialization in the same area of instruction.²⁶
 - It is the responsibility of the instructors to comply and follow the guidelines in the *Marriage Specialization Template* (see [Appendix 2](#)), the *Reconciliation Specialization Template* (see [Appendix 3](#)), and the *Addiction Specialization Template* (see [Appendix 4](#))

²⁵ This can be obtained by center directors from the Director of Training Center Certification and are available online. It is the responsibility of all Certified Training Centers to understand the requirements and standards for specializations and to communicate this information clearly and concisely to all who inquire.

²⁶ The Director of Training Center Certification and the Membership Services Coordinator maintain a comprehensive list of all ACBC certified members in good standing who have earned one, or more, of the approved counseling specializations.

Examination Phase:

Once all of the education requirements have been met satisfactorily, members will enter into the examination phase.

Step 1

Complete the *Counseling Specialization Exam Access* form. This information will include the following:

- The year you became a certified member with ACBC
- The name of the ACBC Certified Training Center where you received your specialization training and instruction
- The name of the Director of the ACBC Certified Training Center where you received your specialization training and instruction
- The dates of the training and instruction
- The titles of the lectures along with the name(s) of the instructor(s) for each lecture

NOTE: The entirety of the core training must be provided by an ACBC certified member and at least 67% of that core must be taught by a member who has earned the specialization in the same area of instruction.

- The titles of the required books you have read including the total number of pages you have completed for each book.

Step 2

Access to the exam will not be granted until you have answered each of these questions to the satisfaction of the Director of Training Center Certification. Once this has been done, students will be granted access to *Part 1: Multiple Choice and True/False Questions* portion of the exam. This portion of the exam contains

questions from the reading and training and provides the students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the material.

- Students may not access any additional resources. This includes notes, Bible, or books.
- Students must receive a score of at least 80% in order to pass Part 1.
- Students will be given a time limit of 2.5 hours in order to complete Part 1.
- Students must complete this section in one sitting.²⁷

Step 3

Upon completion, students will be granted access to *Part 2: Counseling Case Studies*. The second part of the examination consists of a short-answer case-studies. This portion of the exam is designed to test the student's ability to employ counseling theory with an attention to method and application within various scenarios.

- Students must complete the case studies using only an unmarked Bible.
- Students must submit the counseling case studies within one week of downloading the file.
- Students, upon completion, may e-mail the file as a Microsoft Word document (".doc" or ".docx") to the Membership Services Coordinator at mwilliams@biblicalcounseling.com

Note: There is a \$50.00 fee associated with this portion of the exam.

²⁷ If for some reason, you do not pass Part 1, you will be given two (2) more opportunities to meet the passing requirement of at least 80 percent.

Section 7 | International Training Centers

ACBC is committed to pursuing excellence in biblical counseling not only on a national level, but on an international level as well. Our global initiative is designed to see Certified Training Centers established in other in order to engage those in international contexts with biblical counseling. These centers will serve as regional hubs for biblical counseling education and training that will lead to ACBC certification.

In addition to the requirements set forth in [Section 3](#) and [Section 4](#) of this manual, prospective international centers must meet the following requirements:

- ACBC certified members in-country must be identified and their involvement in the formation and ongoing ministry of this center must be established.
- ACBC guiding documents, including the following: *ACBC Standards of Doctrine, Standards of Conduct, Constitution and Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures*, must be translated in the native language and available for all trainees.
- The ACBC Exams (e.g. Theology and Methodology) may or, in some cases, must be translated in the native language.²⁸
- An ACBC Fellow and/or Grader, approved by ACBC, must be identified who can operate fluently in the native language and can grasp cultural nuances.
- Once these elements have been met, the applying director of the international center must contact the Director of Training Center Certification in order to set up an interview with Membership Services and/or the Executive Director of ACBC.

²⁸ All translations must be supervised by a trusted source recognized and approved by the Executive Director of ACBC.

Section 8 | Marketing & Branding

While the initial institutional certification process speaks to the high standard of excellence in both biblical counseling services and training, it is vital for centers to continue in a spirit of excellence after they become certified for as long as they are formally affiliated with ACBC.

Toward this purpose, it is helpful for Certified Training Centers to consider how marketing their services will help advance the mission of ACBC and how a proper view of branding will also help our various institutions represent ACBC and the biblical counseling movement well.

Among the various reasons a center might consider marketing, I have included three to consider:

Glory of God

Certified Training Centers are not selling some new flashy product. Instead, the mission of ACBC is to see the full restoration of the sufficiency of the Scriptures for counseling in every local church in the United States and worldwide. That is our motivation for the development of purposeful marketing strategies. We want every person to be fully persuaded that God's Word has the answers to the toughest problems people face. We want to see the Lord Jesus Christ magnified over against the wisdom, theories, and interventions of man.

Advancement of Biblical Counseling

Many pastors and lay people do not know of any alternative to out-sourcing (defer and refer model) or integrative counseling. By pursuing excellence in marketing, we can greatly reduce the amount of people who are unaware of biblical counseling in our regions and introduce them to a model that is comprehensive, established, and multi-faceted.

Access to Training

There are many people in and around our regions who are eager to learn how to teach and apply the Scriptures to real life issues. They are stay-at-home moms,

pastors, plumbers, lawyers, Sunday school teachers, and high school students. By pursuing excellence in marketing, we will ensure those who know about and are eager to learn biblical counseling have an opportunity to receive training at our training centers.

Introducing the Tools

There are three (3) tools that you will want to consider when marketing the services offered at your training center. After these tools have been introduced, it will important to demonstrate the various ways these tools can be effectively utilized.

Website

The quality of your website is crucial for effective marketing. Oftentimes, this is the first line of contact between potential trainees and your center. We must therefore strive to make a good first impression.

Social Media

Social media is the most effective way to reach most amount of people for the least amount of money. Here are the three of the most influential social media platforms:

Facebook: This is a social media platform that enables user to post pictures, text, and other forms of media to a public or private “feed.” This Facebook “feed” is analogous to a local bulletin board. Only, it is not just the residence of your town who see the post, but potentially thousands of users in your region.

Twitter: This is a text-based platform which allows users to send out short messages to those who follow their account.

Instagram: This is a photo-based platform which functions similarly to Twitter.

Branding

Branding refers to the actual logo and overall presentation of the training center. This is the image people associate with your organization. ACBC, for example is represented by the tree logo. Oftentimes, these logos become easily recognizable and help current and potential trainees and users make associations to your center's mission, platforms, offerings, and resources.

Utilizing the Tools

Best Practices for your Website

An effective website excels in two things: aesthetics and functionality. You can have the best and most accurate information but lack the presentation and so miss an opportunity to serve your virtual guest.

The Homepage

- It will be helpful for you to view each person who visits your website as if they were a guest visiting your house.
- The homepage functions as the front door and it is important not to “scare people away” with a messy presentation.
- You must keep this section clutter-free by removing low-quality images and limiting the amount of text which appears. This “front door” must demonstrate a clean, simple, and easy to navigate layout.

The Navigation

- Navigation refers to how the guest will travel from one part of the website to another.
- Excellent navigation will take help the guest travel to the correct page without getting lost. This requires labeling to be clear and accurate.

- If they click on a calendar icon and are directed to the staff member page, the navigation does not demonstrate excellence.
- If the guest must search for 5 minutes to find the upcoming events page, the navigation does not demonstrate excellence.

Actions Steps for Website

- If you haven't done so already, create a website.
- Walk through your website as if you are a new, first-time guest. Try this as a person looking for counseling. Try this as a person looking for training. As you do this, identify weaknesses: is your front door (home page) inviting? Does it provide clear direction? Does it contain pixelated or poor-quality images? Is it cluttered with text?
- Ask individuals unfamiliar with your center to navigate your website and provide feedback.
- If you are unable to fix these issues on your own, hire a web designer to help or mobilize tech-savvy friends of the training center to help.
- Whether or not a training center has the ability to create a personal website or not, ACBC provides and hosts space on its website for each Certified Training Center to promote their yearly trainings (certification, conferences, etc.)
 - TIP: Make sure to report all training to the Director of Training Center Certification each year and whenever dates are selected. If you don't communicate this information, ACBC will not be able to [promote](#) your center's events effectively.

Best Practices for Social Media

ACBC Social Media Accounts

Whether or not your training center has a social media account, ACBC provides all Certified Training Centers a platform to promote services, training, and events through one of their three social media accounts.

In order to submit a request click this [link](#) and complete the online form.

Personal Social Media Accounts

Facebook

- Begin by inviting other users to “Like” your page. “Liking” a page is as simple as pressing a button. Every time a new person “Likes” your page, Facebook will alert all of this person’s friends.

Twitter

- Twitter is text-based while Instagram is photo/video based. To get the most out of this platform you must build a follower base. To do this, you must begin “following” other users. Ideally, they will follow you in return.
- A great way to build traction on Twitter is to have another user “retweet” one of your messages or mention you in a tweet. All those who follow this person will see your training center.

Instagram

- Instagram provides a glimpse into your training center. Post pictures of training events, staff members, conferences. This helps to build excitement.

Action Steps for Social Media

- Create a Facebook page, Twitter account, and Instagram account.
- Build your follower base by inviting people to like your page and following other users.
- Mobilize members of your staff and church to invite their Facebook friends, Twitter followers, etc. to like your page.
- Interact with those who like your page or follow you by retweeting and mentioning them in your posts.
- Post upcoming training events, updates regarding your center, and any original blog content.
- Be sure to follow ACBC:
 - Facebook: @ACBCounselors
 - Twitter: @acbc
 - Instagram: @biblicalcounseling

Best Practices for Branding

ACBC Logo and Branding

All Certified Training Centers have access to use the official ACBC logo and all badges that represent various training courses. These logos and badges are widely recognized by those who are familiar with ACBC and are also used in a consistent fashion throughout the various platforms, trainings, events, and initiatives of the oldest and largest biblical counseling certification organization.

There are several ways that a Certified Training Center can maximize the ACBC brand to promote and market their services and also communicate to a larger audience that the services provided are excellent and held to a high standard.

- Utilize logos and event badges for broadening and recognition purposes.

- ACBC Logo

This is the official logo of the Association of Certified Training Center. Use of this logo is authorized by ACBC for all Certified Training Centers in good standing with the organization.

- Fundamentals Training Course Badge

This is the official badge used by the Association of Certified Training Center to represent vetted, approved, and excellent training represented by the Fundamentals Training Course (e.g. 30 hours of Phase 1) of the certification process (see [Appendix 1](#)). This badge is highly recognizable and can be used by ACBC staff to point inquirers to where they can find/identify this training.

- Advanced Training Course Badge

This is the official badge used by the Association of Certified Training Center to represent vetted, approved, and excellent training represented by education that goes beyond Phases 1-3 of the certification process. This badge is highly recognizable and can be used by ACBC staff to point inquirers to where they can find/identify this training.

- Exam Preparation Course Badge

This is the official badge used by the Association of Certified Training Center to represent vetted, approved, and excellent training represented by education that focuses on Phase 2 of the certification process. This badge is highly recognizable and can be used by ACBC staff to point inquirers to where they can find/identify this training.

- Specialization Logos

These logos are used by the Association of Certified Training Center to represent approved, vetted, and excellent curriculum represented by core training requirements for each of the counseling specializations. These badges are highly recognizable and can be used by ACBC staff to point inquirers to where they can find/identify this training.

Personal Logo and Branding

- Whether or not to rebrand your training center's logo is a difficult decision since it involves time, money, and some nostalgia. While the process can be challenging, rebranding can help to generate new interest in your training center and reach people who would otherwise not give you the time of day.
- People often associate the quality of a training center logo with the quality of training center.
- Here are questions to consider if you currently have a brand and may want to consider the effectiveness and quality of that brand:
 - Does the logo clearly communicate your training center's identity?
 - Does the logo use outdated colors or design?
 - Is the image too busy? Too much text? Is the graphic too detailed?
 - Logos which are more minimalistic may be reproduced easier than a more complex logo.

- A simple logo looks great in both an electronic and print formats.
- Is the easy to read?

Action Steps for Branding

- Ask those both within and outside your training center to assess your currently branding (logo, presentation on website and printed material).
 - If deemed necessary, consider rebranding. You can reach out to ACBC for help with this!
- Remember, all ACBC training centers are permitted to use the ACBC logo in their advertising, including website and printed material.
 - Reach out to ACBC for access to all relevant logos and branding materials.



Appendices

Appendix 1 | Fundamentals Training Course

The Fundamentals Training Course is comprised of topics approved by the ACBC Board of Trustees that are required to be taught by a verified institution for the satisfactory completion of the learning components found within Phase 1 of the certification process. These topics must be taught in a minimum of 30 hours.²⁹

The following training requirements may be found in Article II, Section A, Point 1 of the *ACBC Bylaws*:

“Satisfactory completion of a course of study at a Christian church, training center or educational agency certified by this Association. This course of study must include orientation to biblical counseling, counseling case studies, marriage and family counseling, observation of counseling, and critical reflection on various theories of counseling and models of integration.”

The following template was created in accordance with these requirements and also contains learning outcomes and objectives for each of the Board approved topics.³⁰

I. Orientation to and Dynamics of Biblical Counseling

A. Basics of Biblical Counseling

1. The Need for Biblical Counseling

- This topic will cover the following learning outcomes:
 - The calling of all Christians to counsel
 - Human problems due to depravity and the impacts of the curse
 - Sufficiency of Scripture to provide answers to life’s problems

²⁹ The hours reflect the minimum requirement. A training center may exceed the minimum requirement as they see fit and within reason.

³⁰ These learning outcomes have been reviewed and approved by the Board. All Certified Training Centers are expected to align training in Phase 1 to at least meet these objectives and outcomes.

- Need to guard against worldly myths that attempt to explain human problems and solutions to those problems

Passages to Consider: Colossians 1:28-2:8; 2 Peter 1:3; Hebrews 3:13; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:8; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:15; Romans 15:4-7; 14

2. The Definition and Goal of Biblical Counseling

- This topic will cover the following learning outcomes:
 - Definition of BC:

Biblical counseling is the personal discipleship ministry of God's people to others under the oversight of God's church, dependent upon the authority and sufficiency of God's Word through the work of the Holy Spirit. Biblical counseling seeks to reorient disordered desires, affections, behaviors, and worship toward a God-designed anthropology in an effort to restore people to a right fellowship with God and others. This is accomplished by speaking the truth in love and applying Scripture to the need of the moment by comforting the suffering and calling sinners to repentance thus working to make them mature as they abide in Jesus Christ.

- Develop a God-oriented worldview instead of a man-centered worldview
- Provide Hope based in an eternal perspective
- Point to Jesus Christ as the means of restoration
- Christlikeness as the aim of human growth and change

Passages to Consider: Romans 8:28-29; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:12-15; Philippians 2:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12-13; 1 Corinthians 3:19; Ephesians 5:18-19; John 10:10; Titus 2:12-13; Romans 15:4, 13; Romans 3:10-12, 23

3. Progressive Sanctification

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Distinction between Justification and Sanctification
NOTE: Much confusion and vexation comes when a counselee confuses these two doctrines of salvation.
 - Sanctification as God's Will
 - Sanctification as Transformation
 - Sanctification as Cooperative Effort (Work of God and Duty of Man)
 - Blessings of Sanctification

Passages to Consider: 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Romans 8:28-29; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians. 4:12-14; Philippians 2:12-13

4. Process of Biblical Change

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Position for Change (union with Christ)
 - Power to Change (Holy Spirit, motivation)
 - Process of Change (e.g. confession and repentance, renew the mind, put off/put on, etc.)

5. Qualifications of a Biblical Counselor

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Mature Believer (e.g. full of goodness)
 - Striving in Godliness
 - Servant of God, not man
 - Demonstrates biblical fidelity
 - Accurately handles God's Word

Passages to Consider: Romans 5:1; 14:13-14; John 14:16; 16:5-11; Galatians 3:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; Matthew 15:8

6. Getting to Heart Issues

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Distinguish between behaviors and desires (e.g. idols of the heart, root and fruit)
 - The Word of God and the Spirit of God expose the inner man
 - God's inward assessment of people (as opposed to merely outward)
 - Address motivations of the heart
 - Mortification of the flesh

Passages to Consider: 1 Samuel 16:7; Galatians 5; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:43-45; Exodus 20:1-3; Ezekiel 14:1-8; Romans 1: 18-25; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Genesis 4:5-7; Psalm 32:3; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 12:1-2; Proverbs 4:23

B. Key Elements in Biblical Counseling

1. Gathering Data

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Establish the necessity for listening well
 - Focus on fact-based questioning versus feeling-oriented questioning
 - Introduce various ways data can be gathered.
 - Provide tools for collecting, evaluating, and processing data.

Passages to Consider: Proverbs 18:13,15,17; James 1:19-20

2. Discerning Problems Biblically

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Present Scripture as lens (not filter) for interpreting data
 - Establish a theologically paradigm of evaluating problems biblically
 - Demonstrate the connection between behavior and heart

Passages to Consider: Proverbs 4:23; 23:7; Luke 6

3. Establishing Involvement with Counselees

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Demonstrate the superiority of Christian/biblical care from clinically-informed therapy (Prov 27:6; 1 Thess 2:7-12; 5:14ff; Rom 15:14)
 - Show the need and importance of establishing loving relationships
 - Provide clarity on limits to confidentiality (cf. Matthew 18; 1 Cor 5) regarding church discipline and legal reporting
 - Articulate the implications of counseling the opposite sex (Prov 16:17; 23:3; 1 Tim 2:12; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Tim 5:1-2)

Passages to Consider: Proverbs 16:17; 23:3; 27:6; 1 Timothy 2:12; 5:12; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; 5:14ff; Romans 15:14;

4. Giving Hope

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Focus attention on the centrality of the Gospel in counseling as the basis for real hope and healing
 - Emphasize the point that all people need hope
 - Demonstrate the false hope of psychological coping mechanisms and techniques
 - Show how biblical hope is ultimately eschatological and surpasses current circumstances without minimizing people's pain

Passages to Consider: Romans 5:2-5; 8:22-26; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 1:3-4; Romans 12:1-2; Proverbs 25:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

5. Providing Instruction

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Establish the leadership of “The Helper” (Holy Spirit)
 - Contrast the didactic nature of BC vs. the non-directive/authoritative methods of secular psychology
 - Discuss the process and necessity of speaking the truth in love
 - Provide biblical example of instruction in action (e.g. Jesus, Paul) and highlight various ways instruction was given

Passages to Consider: Ephesians 4

6. Giving Homework

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 - Show how homework translates discussion into action
 - Point to the power of Scripture in homework as the real “work” of counseling
 - Demonstrate how proper interpretation (basic Hermeneutics) leads to proper application
 - Instruct on the importance of indicatives and imperatives in Scripture

Passages to Consider: Hebrews 4:12-14; Isaiah 55:10-11

II. Critical Reflection on Various Theories in Counseling

A. Secular and Integration Theories

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Distinguish between secular, integration, and biblical models of counseling
 2. Understanding the foundations of secular and integration models
 3. Understanding the goals of secular and integration models
 4. Explain difference between descriptive data and prescriptive data

5. Purposes of General Revelation and Special Revelation
6. The Nature of Truth (e.g. All truth is God's truth?)

B. What Makes Biblical Counseling Biblical?

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Human purpose is to glorify God
 2. Scripture as Standard of Truth (Authority, Sufficiency)
 3. Scripture as providing the ultimate framework for understanding human condition, the nature of human problems, and the solution to these problems.
 4. Necessity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for the counseling task

III. Husband and Wife Relationships

A. God's Purpose for Marriage

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Marriage as God-ordained institution (e.g. covenantal and committal)
 2. Marriage as providing companionship
 3. Marriage as the anchor of the family
 4. Marriage as a display of the Gospel (Justification)
 5. Marriage as a means for holiness (Sanctification)

Passages to Consider: Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:6; Leviticus 18:20; Genesis 2:18-25; Mark 10:8; Ephesians 5:31; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Genesis 1:22, 27-28; 9:1; Malachi 2:5

B. Roles of the Husband and Wife

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Understanding biblical manhood (nature and responsibilities)
 2. Biblical disciplines/qualities of godly husbands (e.g. lover, leader, priest)

3. Understanding of biblical womanhood (nature and responsibilities)
4. Biblical disciplines/qualities of godly wives (e.g. lover, helper, industrious)

Passages to Consider: Genesis 1:27; 2: 15, 19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:1-3; 16:13; Proverbs 14:8; Ephesians 5; 1 John 3:16-18; 1 Peter 3:1-6; Proverbs 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5

C. Communication

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Build a theology of the tongue (i.e. power of words)
 2. Characteristics of Wise Communication
 3. Attacking problems and not people (i.e. avoiding conflict)
 4. Developing godly communication habits

Passages to Consider: Ephesians 4:25-32

D. Biblical Sexuality

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Defining sex in terms of 1. Gender and 2. Intercourse
 2. God's biological Order (i.e. gender differences)
 3. God's theological Ordre (i.e. gender roles, responsibility and functions)
 4. Man's sinful distortion and confusion of sexual nature
 5. God's plan for sex (marital, monogamous, heterosexual)
 6. God's purpose for sex (intimacy, giving, procreation)

Passages to Consider: Genesis 1-2; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:13-16; Proverbs 5:15-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Leviticus 18:22-23; Romans 1:26-27; Jude 7; Proverbs 5:15-20; Song of Solomon 7:1-12

IV. Parent and Child Relationships

A. Goal of Parenting

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Stewardship of a blessing (children)
 2. Evangelism of wayward souls
 3. Instructors of young hearts and minds
 4. Shepherding in sanctification

Passages to Consider: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Deuteronomy 6; Ephesians 6:4; Matthew 10:28; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Luke 6:43-45; Mark 7:14-23; 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 51:6, 10; James 1:13-15; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:1-3

B. Parental Instruction

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Wisdom vs. Foolishness
 2. Theocentric Instruction
 3. Nature/characteristics of godly counsel
 4. Types of Discipleship (exemplary, formative, and corrective)

Passages to Consider: Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 20:5; Hebrews 12:5-11; Psalm 78:1-8; Proverbs 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1; 11, 21; 4:10; 19:18

C. Parental Discipline

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Heart vs. behavioral change
 2. Levels of understanding the heart (e.g. desires, thoughts, beliefs)
 3. Addressing the heart
 4. Heart of the parent when discipling your children

Passages to Consider: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Deuteronomy 6; Ephesians 6:4; Matthew 10:28; Proverbs 4:23; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Psalm 51: 6, 10; Romans

1:25; James 1:13-15; Mark 7: 20-23; Matthew 12:34; Proverbs 1:7; 20:5; Ephesians 6:1-3

V. Frequent Issues in Counseling

A. Guilt and Repentance

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Contrast true guilt (justification) from false guilt (feelings of guilt)
 2. Provide instruction regarding biblical confession (Prov 28:13; James 5:14)
 3. Articulate a biblical position regarding repentance in relation to sanctification
 4. Show how repentance is deeply trinitarian (roles of God, Holy Spirit, and Christ)

Passages to Consider: Proverbs 28:13; James 5:14; John 16:8; Acts 2:37; John 7:7; Galatians 6:1; Psalm 32:5; Matthew 11:28-30; 1 John 1:9; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 9:14; 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16

B. Forgiveness

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Define forgiveness biblically, especially regarding its role in reconciliation
 2. Outline popular views centering on forgiveness (transactional/interpersonal vs. personal/heart transformative)
 3. Describe the consequences of a spirit of unforgiveness/pride/arrogance (e.g. root of bitterness)
 4. Demonstrate what behaviors/actions/attitudes often describe a peacemaker from Scripture

Passages to Consider: Nehemiah 9:16-17; Psalm 86:5; Romans 5:6-8; Psalm 103; 10-12; Jeremiah 50:20; Romans 5:16-21; 8:1, 33-34; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Mark 11:25; Matthew 18; Luke 23:39-43; 1 John 4:20-21

C. Trials and Suffering

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Explain the reality of trials and suffering in this world
 2. Define trials and suffering biblically (as opposed to temptations, etc.)
 3. Show how God redeems trials and suffering
 4. Emphasize the importance of counseling with love, concern, and patience to those who suffer

Passages to Consider: Genesis 1:31; 2; 3:17-19; 6:5-6; Philippians 2:5-11; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 21:1-22:5; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; 1 Samuel 12:9-12; Job 1:8; 2 Corinthians 11:23-29; Acts 2:23; 4:27; Psalm 66:10

D. Fear and Worry

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Outline the biblical concepts of Worry
 2. Define sinful worry as rebellion and/or lack of trust
 3. Outline the biblical concepts of Fear
 4. Define sinful fear as worship of self

Passages to Consider: 1 Corinthians 7:32; 12:25; Matthew 10; Luke 10; 12; 22; 25-26; Psalm 10; Exodus 18; Deuteronomy 5; Matthew 14; Genesis 3; Proverbs 3

E. Anger

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Contrast the biblical understanding of emotion from the emotion of anger
 2. Contrast righteous and unrighteous anger from Scripture by examining motives, means, and outcomes
 3. Demonstrate the common manifestations of unrighteous anger
 4. Point out the roots of unrighteous anger (sensuality; desires of the flesh; unforgiveness; desire for control, etc.)

Passages to Consider: Psalm 37:8; Proverbs 12:16; 14:17; 15:18; 16:32; Ecclesiastes 4:31; James 1:19, 20; Genesis 4:5-8; Kings 5:10-14; 2 Chronicles 26:16-23; Exodus 22:24; Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 3:5

F. Depression

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Explain the cyclical process / downward spiral of depression (how worrisome thoughts lead to deeper despair, taking eyes off God, etc.)
 2. Define depression biblically (good and bad) along with its redemptive purpose
 3. Demonstrate a connection between sinful depression and repentance
 4. Emphasize the need for compassion during a season of grief/sorrow/depression

Passages to Consider: Ephesians 1:3-2:10; 5:18-6:9; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Romans 8:28-29; 1 Peter 1:3, 13; Psalm 42-43; 131; 2 Peter 1:1-11

G. Sexual Sin

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Provide a biblical perspective of sex as God's design (marriage, good purposes and reasons)
 2. Demonstrate biblically how sex has been twisted by sin (outside of marriage)
 3. Teach on "sexual Immorality" from Scripture
 4. Outline the various consequences of sexual immorality (e.g. sin against our body, shame, poison from within, etc.)

Passages to Consider: Matthew 15; Mark 7; 1 Corinthians 5-6; Genesis 2-3; 9; 20; Galatians 5

VI. Medical Issues in Counseling

A. Physical Illness and Biblical Counseling

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. Biblical principles of health and illness
 2. Spectrum of Disease (spiritual to organic, emphasis on response)
 3. Encouraging appropriate medical care
 4. Biblical victory in the midst of no cure
 5. Ministering to the suffering

Passages to Consider: Genesis 3:15-19; Psalm 38:3-11; 1 Corinthians 11:29-30; John 9:1-3; Philippians 1:29; James 5:11; 2 Kings 20:5; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Proverbs 17:22; Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Deuteronomy 29:29; Philippians 4:8; 2 Corinthians 4:6-9

B. Psychotropic Drugs and Biblical Counseling

- This topic will cover the following objectives:
 1. The need for compassion and humility
 2. Medical diagnosis vs. Psychiatric diagnosis (no identifiable pathology)
 3. Chemical Imbalance Theory (definition, history, implications within current psychiatry, etc.)
 4. Psychotropic Drug Information (e.g. mechanisms uncertain)
 5. Do Antidepressants work? (i.e. what do you mean by “work”)
 6. Counselors and Medications

Passages to Consider: 2 Timothy 2:24; Matthew 10:16; Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Corinthians 1

VII. Case Studies (2 hours)

A. Total Casebook, Role Plays, and other Practice Case Discussions (2 hours)

There are two (2) other aspects of Phase 1, these include the following.

Counseling Observations (10 hours)

In-person counseling observation is ideal, but video observation also fulfill this requirement. The counselor being observed must be ACBC Certified.

Assigned Reading

In order for assigned reading to satisfy Phase 1 requirements, the books must come from the ACBC Required Reading list.³¹

ACBC requires 1,000 pages total: with 300 of the 1,000 pages coming from books under the “Theology” subheading of the reading list.

³¹ This list can be found on the ACBC website.

Appendix 2 | Marriage Specialization Template

The following 15 hours of topics make up the core training requirement for the Marriage Counseling Specialization.³²

The *entirety* of the core outline below must be taught by a certified member. Of this, at least 67% must be taught by a certified member who has earned the Marriage Specialization Template.

I. Theological Foundations of Marriage

- A. The Nature and Purpose of Marriage
- B. The Role of the Husband
- C. The Role of the Wife

II. Orientation to Marriage Counseling

- A. Dynamics of Marriage Counseling
- B. Serving Your Spouse in Marriage
- C. Pre-Marital Counseling
- D. Divorce and Remarriage

III. Issues in Marriage Counseling

A. Marriage and Sex

- i. Enjoying Intimacy in Marriage
- ii. Dealing with Sexual Issues in Marriage

B. Marriage and Communication

- i. Communication in Marriage
- ii. Conflict Resolution in Marriage

³² The hours reflect the minimum requirement. A training center may exceed the minimum requirement as they see fit and within reason.

C. Marriage and Family

- i. Parenting Issues in Marriage
- ii. Family Worship
- iii. Ministry to Blended Families
- iv. Interaction with Extended Family
- v. Family Finances

Assigned Reading:

To receive specialization in marriage counseling a member must complete 1,000 pages of reading from the following approved books.³³

- *When Sinners Say I Do*, Dave Harvey
- *God, Marriage, and Family*, Andreas Köstenberger
- *The Exemplary Husband*, Stuart Scott
- *The Excellent Wife*, Martha Peace
- *Peacemaking for Families*, Ken Sande
- *Solving Marriage Problems*, Jay Adams
- *Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*, C.J. Mahaney
- *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: Critical Questions and Answers*, Jim Newheiser
- *This Momentary Marriage*, John Piper

³³ Trainees will be required to report the books they have read along with the page numbers for each.

Appendix 3 | Reconciliation Specialization Template

The following 15 hours of topics make up the core training requirement for the Reconciliation Counseling Specialization.³⁴

The *entirety* of the core outline below must be taught by a certified member. Of this, at least 67% must be taught by a certified member who has earned the Reconciliation Specialization Template.

I. Theological Foundations of Reconciliation

- A. A Biblical View of Confession
- B. A Biblical View of Forgiveness

II. Orientation to Reconciliation Counseling

- A. Pursuing Peaceful Relationships That Undermine Conflict
- B. Pursuing Peace When Other Refuse to Change
- C. Leading a Mediation and Arbitration

III. Issues in Reconciliation Counseling

A. Dynamics of Conflict

- i. Understanding Conflict Biblically: Causes
- ii. Understanding Conflict Biblically: Categories
- iii. Understanding Conflict Biblically: Consequences
- iv. Dynamics of Conflict with Unbelievers

B. Reconciliation Strategies

- i. Conflict Resolution Strategies for Families
- ii. Conflict Resolution Strategies for Churches

³⁴ The hours reflect the minimum requirement. A training center may exceed the minimum requirement as they see fit and within reason.

iii. Conflict Resolution Strategies at Work

Assigned Reading:

To receive specialization in reconciliation counseling a member must complete 700 pages of reading from the following approved books.³⁵

- *Help! I'm in a Conflict*, Ernie Baker
- *Unpacking Forgiveness*, Chris Brauns
- *Redeeming Church Conflict*, Tara Barthel and David Edling
- *Pursuing Peace*, Robert Jones
- *The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness*, John MacArthur
- *The Peacemaker*, Ken Sande
- *Peacemaking for Families*, Ken Sande
- *The Young Peacemaker*, Corlette Sande

³⁵ Trainees will be required to report the books they have read along with the page numbers for each.

Appendix 4 | Addictions Specialization Template

The following 20 hours of topics make up the core training requirement for the Addictions Counseling Specialization.³⁶

The *entirety* of the core outline below must be taught by a certified member. Of this, at least 67% must be taught by a certified member who has earned the Addictions Specialization Template.

I. Theological Foundations of Addictions

- A. Understanding Addictions Biblically
- B. A Biblical Understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous
- C. A Biblical Understanding of Twelve Steps Programs
- D. Understanding and Evaluating Celebrate Recovery from a Biblical Perspective

II. Orientation to Addictions Counseling

- A. Where to Begin with Life Dominating Sins
- B. How to Change Patterns of Thought
- C. The Role of the Church Helping Someone Who is Addicted
- D. The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Change Process

III. Issues in Addictions Counseling

- A. Dynamics of Addictions
 - i. Medical Issues and Addictions
 - ii. Counseling and Substance Abuse
 - iii. Counseling and Gambling
 - iv. Counseling and Sexual Sin

³⁶ The hours reflect the minimum requirement. A training center may exceed the minimum requirement as they see fit and within reason.

B. Addictions Intervention Strategies

- i. Counseling an Addict's Enabler
- ii. How to Conduct an Addiction Intervention
- iii. Prevention Strategies for Addiction
- iv. Counseling Families Impacted by Addiction

Assigned Reading:

To receive specialization in addictions counseling a member must complete 1,200 pages of reading from the following approved books.³⁷

- *The Heart of Addiction*, by Mark Shaw
- *Relapse: Biblical Prevention Strategies*, by Mark Shaw
- *How Not to Raise and Addict*, by Mark Shaw
- *Divine Intervention: Hope and Help For Families of Addicts*, by Mark Shaw
- *Hope and Help for Gambling*, by Mark Shaw
- Hope and Help for Video Game, TV, and Internet "Addiction," by Mark Shaw
- *Putting Off Life Dominating Sins*, by Susan Heck
- *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, by Edward Welch
- *Diehard Sins*, by Rush Whitt
- *The Discipline of Grace*, by Jerry Bridges
- *Godliness Through Discipline*, by Jay Adams
- *Killing Sin Habits*, by Stuart Scott
- *Deception: Letting Go of Lying*, by Lou Priolo
- *Manipulation: Knowing How to Respond*, by Lou Priolo
- *The Enemy Within*, by Kris Lundgaard
- *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life*, by Jeremy Pierre
- *Free Indeed*, by Richard Ganz
- *The Doctrine of Repentance*, by Thomas Watson
- *Freedom That Lasts*, by Jim Berg

³⁷ Trainees will be required to report the books they have read along with the page numbers for each.

Appendix 5 | Institutional Membership Covenant

- I affirm that our training center adheres and subscribes to the ACBC Standards of Doctrine, Standards of Conduct, Constitution and Bylaws, and Policy and Procedures.
- I affirm that our training center has a “responsibility to, and working relationship with, a duly recognized ecclesiastical authority such as a church, group of churches, and/or denomination subscribing to the Christian values expressed in the ACBC Standards of Doctrine and Standards of Conduct.”
- I affirm that our training center offers biblical counseling as an ongoing ministry.
- I affirm that our training center has offered substantive training in biblical counseling as an ongoing ministry.
- I affirm that our center offers training programs designed to meet at least the requirements for individual membership in ACBC and these shall be continually provided.
- I affirm that at least 67% of the content taught at and under the authority of our training center shall be taught by an ACBC Certified counselor. This includes any on-site, off-site, or online training.³⁸
- I affirm that all current and future counselors and trainers on staff shall be in agreement with the purposes and principles of ACBC.
- I affirm that all counseling shall be conducted under the supervision of a Fellow or Member of the Academy of ACBC.
- I affirm that all training programs shall be conducted under the supervision of a Fellow or a Member of the Academy of ACBC.
- I affirm that a Fellow or Member of the Academy of ACBC shall provide supervision of my center and be involved in the annual reporting process.

³⁸ As of January 1, 2023, the *entirety* of the Fundamentals Training Course must be taught by a certified member.