



e-Newsletter

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Open Letter to ACPE Centers and ACPE Supervisors

By [David Johnson](#), APC President

As an individual who is certified by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) as well as the Board of Chaplaincy Certification Inc. (BCCI), I have become aware of a problem for those who might seek the status of board certified chaplain (BCC) after having received clinical training in an accredited center: An educational bind is being created for some clinical pastoral education (CPE) students/residents.

As students and residents often begin to inquire about certification during their CPE programs, BCCI asks for your help in disseminating the following information to them:

Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) standards for certification through its affiliate, BCCI, require that four units of ACPE, NACC, or CASC accredited CPE be completed before one can apply for BCC status. (Of the four CPE units, one may be from another chaplaincy group, but the student must complete a CPE equivalency application for that unit.)

Often, the four CPE units are completed during a residency year within an accredited ACPE center. In recent years as more ACPE centers have moved toward offering a three-unit residency year, a problem has begun to appear. This problem involves a student attempting to “double dip” using a single CPE unit for two different purposes.

When a student in seminary enrolls in a unit of CPE to be used as credit toward the required 72 graduate semester hour credits of a seminary degree, that unit *cannot* be used as one of the four required for BCC certification. To do so would be using the CPE unit for dual purposes, or “double dipping.” However, if a student enrolls in a unit of CPE for denominational purposes and does not use the unit for seminary credit, that CPE unit *can* be used toward BCC certification. Additionally, if a student has taken CPE in seminary, but the degree is at least 72 graduate semester hours of credit *after* deducting semester hours for CPE, then the unit of CPE *can* be used toward BCC certification.

The reason this has become an increasing problem for our students is that so many more CPE centers are moving toward three-unit residencies. This forces the student to use a previous unit of CPE. On the other hand, when a residency is a four-unit educational experience, it does not matter whether a CPE unit during seminary was used toward the degree or not.

Therefore, BCCI encourages every center that offers a three-unit CPE residency to ask prospective students if they have used their previous unit of CPE for seminary credit toward the required 72 graduate semester credit hours. If they did use it for seminary credit and their degree was not more than 72 graduate semester credit hours, they would need four units of CPE if they think they would ever want to be certified through BCCI.