



OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINION
2016-315A

Eric Ashmore, Executive Director
State Board of Behavioral Health Licensure
3815 N. Santa Fe Ave., Ste. 110
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

May 24, 2016

Dear Executive Director Ashmore:

This office has received your request for a written Attorney General Opinion regarding agency action that the State Board of Behavioral Health Licensure intends to take. The proposed action is to declare a degree program not content equivalent to qualify for licensure as licensed marital and family therapist. The degree program at issue is East Central University's Master of Science in Human Resources with Counselor Option. The degree program, if completed, would qualify for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor, but it does not involve the different coursework necessary for marital and family therapy.

The Marital and Family Therapist Licensure Act, 59 O.S.2011 & Supp.2015, §§ 1925.1-1925.18, requires that an applicant have a "master's degree or a doctoral degree in marital and family therapy, or a content-equivalent degree as defined by the Board," 59 O.S.Supp.2015, § 1925.6(C)(1). The Board's rules require a content-equivalent degree to have at least three courses of three-credit hours each in theoretical foundations of marital and family systems; at least three courses in assessment and treatment; at least three courses in human development, at least one course in ethics; at least one course in research; and a practicum or internship with at least 300 clock hours. *See* OAC 86:15-5-3(b). The Board may believe that, based on the coursework necessary to obtain the above-referenced degree, the degree program does not qualify applicants for licensure as licensed marital and family therapists.

It is, therefore, the official opinion of the Attorney General that the State Board of Behavioral Health Licensure has adequate support for the conclusion that this action advances the State of Oklahoma's policy requiring licensed marital and family therapists to obtain adequate educational qualifications.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Scott Pruitt".

E. SCOTT PRUITT
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF OKLAHOMA