



**Republic of the Philippines**  
**Department of Social Welfare and Development**  
Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills  
Quezon City  
Telephone No. 931-8101 to 07

Administrative Order No. 12  
Series of 2007

**SUBJECT : Revised Guidelines in the Accreditation of Marriage Counselors (MCs)**

**A. RATIONALE**

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) through the Standards Bureau issued Administrative Order 193 "Guidelines in the Accreditation of Marriage Counselors (MCs) on September 23, 2002. It aims to promote the professional practice of Marriage Counselors thereby ensuring delivery of quality service. Through accreditation, corresponding recognition is given to the Marriage Counselors as experts in assisting couples achieve a stable and functional family relationship.

Since the implementation of the guidelines in 2002, several concerns/issues on the content of the guidelines have been raised through consultation meetings/dialogues and conduct of technical assistance. To ensure that the concerned service providers will be able to meet the set standards and thereby uphold the couple or claimholder's rights to quality service, these issues need to be responded to.

Thus, a review on the implementation of AO 193 was conducted that became the basis for the enhancement of the guidelines to make the standards more accurate and attainable.

**B. MANDATE AND LEGAL BASES**

1. Family Code of the Philippines:

- a. Article 16: In cases where parental consent or advise is needed, the party or parties concerned shall, in addition to the requirements of the preceding articles, attach a certificate issued by a priest, imam or minister authorized to solemnize marriage under Article 7 of this code or a marriage counselor duly accredited by proper government agency to the effect that the contracting parties have undergone marriage counseling." The Civil Code Revision Committee, UP Law Center in its letter dated September 23, 1988 to the National Statistics Office clarified this provision that DSWD is the proper government agency to accredit marriage counselors.

- b. Article 59: No legal separation maybe decreed unless the Court has taken steps towards the reconciliation of the spouses and is fully satisfied, despite such efforts, that reconciliation is highly improbable.

2. Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, series of 2002 ( DSWD, DILG and PopCom) where DSWD is tasked to accredit marriage counselors.

### **C. COVERAGE:**

Accreditation shall cover all trained social workers and other professionals providing marriage counseling services.

To define the areas of competency, there will be two types of accreditation for Marriage Counselors based on their qualifications and experiences in providing any of the interventions described in Section D below. Certificate of Accreditation for both types is valid for 3 years.

### **D. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**1. Marriage Counseling Service (MCS)** – refers to professionally guiding/assisting couples: a) contemplating marriage towards an informed and responsible decision about contracting marriage; b) to enrich the marital relationship; c) to resolve marital conflicts; and, d) to arrive at a decision for the best interests of their children and each other if they filed a petition for legal separation. It is implemented through the following interventions:

**a) Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC)** refers to providing would-be-couples with a basis for making an informed and responsible decision about marriage;

**b) Marriage Enrichment Counseling (MEC)** refers to helping married couples to:

1. Renew and enhance their marital relationship and intimacy;
2. Deepen their marital morality and spirituality.

**c) Marital Crisis Counseling (MCC)** refers to helping married couples to:

1. Experience the process of emotional and psychological healing,
2. Gain an objective perspective of their marital situation,
3. Identify areas for behavioral change and improvement,
4. Identify strengths and areas of reinforcement,
5. Acquire and apply techniques for effective communication and conflict resolution, and
6. Acquire and apply information on marital growth.



**d) Trial Separation Counseling (TSC)** refers to:

1. Motivating the couple in making a final effort at reconciliation;
  2. Accompanying the couple through a process of psycho-spiritual discernment;
2. **Pre-Marriage Counselor**- refers to an individual who meets the requirements for accreditation set forth by the DSWD to provide PMC.
  3. **Full-Fledged Marriage Counselor** – refers to an individual who meets the requirements for accreditation set forth by the DSWD to provide MCS interventions aside from PMC.
  4. Accreditation – refers to the recognition bestowed by the DSWD to an individual's expertise to provide MCS as evidenced by a Certificate of Accreditation.

**E. QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Must have a Bachelor's degree in Social Work or other behavioral and social science courses;
2. Must have attended training on PMC and/or Marriage Counseling Service conducted by DSWD or its recognized institutions;
3. Must be able to demonstrate to the accreditor the skills in conducting marriage counseling such as but not limited to lecturing, interviewing, facilitating, documenting and networking/coordinating.

**F. REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants for accreditation must submit a duly accomplished application form (*Annex A*) together with the following documents in 2 photocopies (original copies must be presented).

1. Pre-Marriage Counselor

New Applicant:

- a. Certificate of graduation /college diploma or transcript of college records from the school attended.
- b. Certificate of attendance to PMC orientation program supervised by an accredited/recognized PMC. If unavailable, a certified true copy from the training provider will be accepted.
- c. Certification from immediate supervisor that the applicant is tasked to conduct PMC sessions and that a documentation of PMC sessions conducted by the applicant within the six months period was submitted.

## Renewal

- a. Certificates of attendance of at least 8 hours training every year (24 hrs. in 3 years) on topics such as but not limited to Human Maturity, Value Clarification, Authentic Love, Responsible Parenting, etc.
- b. Accomplishment report for the past three (3) years preceeding the application. (*Annex E*)
- c. Sample of Summary documentation of PMC session conducted; (*Annex B*)
- d. Other documents to be made available during validation visit:
  - Compilation of clients' intake forms;
  - Accomplished Marriage Expectation Inventory (MEI);
  - Photocopy or duplicate copies of pre-marriage counseling certificates issued;
  - Summary documentations of pre-marriage counseling sessions conducted within 3 years period.

## 2. Full-Fledged Marriage Counselor

### New Applicant

- a. First 2 requirements stated above under Pre-Marriage Counselor new applicant;
- b. Training certificates on marriage counseling/counseling interventions (MEC, MCC and TSC) conducted by DSWD or other DSWD recognized training institutions;
- c. Sample of summary documentation of marriage counseling session: (sample format *Annex C*)
  - at least 2 MEC cases every year ;
  - at least 2 MCC cases every year;
  - at least 2 TSC cases every year.

### Renewal

- a. Certificates of attendance of at least 8 hours training every year (24 hrs. in 3 years) on topics related to Marriage Counseling;
- b. Other documents to be made available during validation visit:
  - Documentation of counseling sessions ( PMC, MEC, MCC and TSC ) conducted with couples within the last 6 months;
  - Accomplishment report of the preceding year;
  - Registry Book containing the names of couples served, date of intervention, no. of M.C sessions, other services provided, and signature of couples.





## G. VENUE

The venue can be a public/private facility which is accessible and safe for both the counselor and counselee/s and must:

1. Promote an atmosphere of privacy and interaction between the marriage counselor and the counselee /s;
2. Be ventilated, well lighted and free from any form of distraction and disturbance;
3. Contribute to the quality of communication between the counselor and counselee /s.

## H. PROCEDURES

1. **Application.** The applicant shall file application specifying the type of accreditation applied for ( Pre-Marriage Counselor or Full-Fledged Marriage Counselor) to the concerned DSWD Field Office (FO) with photocopies of all documentary requirements stated in item F. Original copies of documents submitted shall be presented for verification/pre-assessment purposes. Once verified, the assigned FO staff shall acknowledge receipt within three working days the application with the photocopy of each document presented (*Annex A*). These shall be endorsed to the DSWD-Standard Bureau (SB) for final review and reference during the on-site accreditation assessment. Concerned DSWD-FO shall keep a file copy of all documents submitted for reference purposes.
2. **On-site Accreditation Assessment.** The Standards Bureau shall conduct an on-site accreditation assessment in coordination with the FO and the applicant. The following activities shall be undertaken:
  - a. In-depth interview with the applicant to determine his/her level of knowledge/comprehension about Marriage Counseling;
  - b. Validation of documents and review of cases;
  - c. Observation on the actual conduct of pre-marriage counseling session; and
  - d. Review of documents on marriage counseling covering knowledge - skills - attitude (KSA) requirements of the specified interventions of marriage counseling applied for, to wit:

### **Pre-Marriage Counseling Service (PMS)**

1. Human maturity
2. Value Clarification
3. Authentic Love
4. Responsible Parenting

### **Marriage Enrichment Counseling (MEC)**

1. Building Each Other's Self-esteem;
2. Mutual Empathy and Effective Communication;

3. Interpersonal Justice in Man-Woman Roles;
4. Sensuality, Sexuality, and Spirituality in Marriage;
5. Couple-for-others, Love

#### **Marital Crisis Counseling (MCC)**

1. Identification of Pain;
2. Ventilation of Pain;
3. Objective and Renewed Insight;
4. Strengths and Dysfunctional Marital Interactions;
5. Marital Growth Process

#### **Trial Separation Counseling (TSC)**

1. Motivation to work for a last try, with the help of a competent counselor;
2. Integration with the process of discernment – finding God's will.

Confirmation report shall be sent by DSWD-SB to the concerned Field Office within ten working days after the on-site accreditation assessment. In cases where the assessment falls below the set standards, the said applicant/s shall be given appropriate technical assistance (TA) on specific areas needing improvement and a re-assessment shall be conducted six months thereafter.

3. **Issuance of Accreditation Certificate and Identification (I.D) card.** Based on the types of accreditation applied for, corresponding certificate of accreditation and ID shall be issued by the Standards Bureau through the concerned Field Offices within 15 working days after the on-site accreditation assessment.

For easy reference, attached is the Procedures Flowchart (*Annex D*)

4. **Renewal of Accreditation and ID.** Renewal of accreditation and ID as Pre-Marriage Counselor/Full-Fledged Marriage Counselor shall be made every three years.

### **I. BENEFITS OF AN ACCREDITED MARRIAGE COUNSELOR (MC)**

1. An Accredited Marriage Counselors shall be a priority for :
  - Continuing technical assistance (TA) to include attendance to lecture series, seminars workshops and other forms of capability building;
  - Consultation meeting/s, program development, policy formulation and other related activities of the Department; and
  - Inclusion in the list of professionals for scholarships, fellowships, and post graduate studies in regional, national



- Inclusion in the list of professionals for scholarships, fellowships, and post graduate studies in regional, national and foreign level courses or training relative to marriage counseling.
2. Announcement of name in the DSWD website.
  3. Recognition/appreciation for having been accredited during flag ceremony at FOs/LGUs.
  4. Access to reading/informative materials on family trends and issues available at the Local Social Welfare and Development Office and DSWD Field Offices.

## **J. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

1. Social Welfare and Institutional Development Bureau
  - a. Provide FOs a list of DSWD recognized training institutions providing trainings/seminar on marriage counseling;
  - b. Conduct of trainer's training;
  - c. Ensure continuity of training programs to further enhance the competence of service providers.
2. Standards Bureau
  - a. Provide technical assistance to FOs on the interpretation of the guidelines and requirements for accreditation;
  - b. Assess applicants for accreditation;
  - c. Ensure nationwide dissemination of the guidelines and compliance of SWDAs;
  - d. Maintain an updated inventory of accredited and not accredited MCs to facilitate monitoring of compliance and provision of technical assistance;
  - e. Issue ID card and Accreditation Certificate;
  - f. Coordinate with the Civil Registrar Office for the issuance of corresponding MC to the Local Civil Registrar's Office re: marriage license to be issued only to those would-be -couples who have PMC certificates signed by accredited MCs;
  - g. Posting the list of accredited MCs at the DSWD website.
3. Program Management Bureau
  - a. Provide technical assistance to FOs on the implementation of Marriage Counseling Service.
  - b. Provision of reading/informative materials on family trends and issues to accredited MCs.

## 5. Field Offices

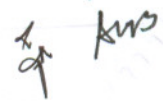
- a. Ensure compliance of involved service providers to the guidelines;
- b. Intensify conduct of advocacy through regular orientation/consultation and dialogue to promote the guidelines especially at LGU and NGO level. Bi-annual reports on these activities shall be submitted to the Standards Bureau.
- c. Coordinate with LGUs re: strategies that will encourage compliance and effective implementation of MCS e.g a resolution allocating percentage from the annual income gathered from marriage license fees to be distributed among accredited MCs in a particular city/municipality as additional monetary incentives/benefits to accredited MCs;
- d. Conduct of pre-accreditation assessment and filing of copies of all documents submitted by the applicants for reference purposes;
- e. Conduct of training on MCS for LGU/NGO workers directly involved in the implementation of MCS;
- f. Conduct regular meeting with accredited MCs for updates on newly enacted laws, policies/guidelines and issues affecting families, among others. This will also be a venue for exchange of information and experiences on marriage counseling;
- g. Assist in the training of LGU PMC Team per Joint MC no 1 s. 2002;
- h. Provide LGUs a list of accredited MCs.
- i. Submit to the DSWD-SB an updated inventory of accredited and not accredited MCs.

## K. EFFECTIVITY

This order shall take effect immediately and supersedes other DSWD guidelines and issuances inconsistent thereof. Let copies of this Administrative Order be given to all DSWD Field Offices, Local Government Units, Non-Government Organizations and other government agencies.

Issued this 3rd day of Aug 2007 at Quezon City.

  
ESPERANZA I. CABRAL  
Secretary



Annexes:  
Annex A: Application Form  
Annex B: Summary Documentation of PMC Session  
Annex C: Summary Documentation of Marriage Counseling  
Annex D: Procedures Flowchart  
Annex E: Accomplishment Form



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Social Welfare and Development  
**STANDARDS BUREAU**

**Application Form for the Accreditation of Marriage Counselors**

Field Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- New  
 Renewal

- PMC  
 Full-Fledged

**A. Personal Information:**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Civil Status: \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel. No. : \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile No: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
3. Tertiary Education: \_\_\_\_\_  
4. Graduate Studies, if any \_\_\_\_\_  
5. Name of Agency Presently Connected: \_\_\_\_\_  
6. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
7. Present Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
8. No. of Years in Service: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Years as Marriage Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_  
9. No. of PMC Sessions conducted for the past 3 years \_\_\_\_\_

For Full-Fledged Only;

10. Cases Handled for the past 3 years : \_\_\_\_\_  
11. No. of Active Cases : \_\_\_\_\_  
12. No. of Cases Terminated : \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Previous Work Experience: (Please use separate sheet when necessary)**

Name of Agency	Position/Designation	Date From-TO

**C. Training Courses attended related to Marriage Counseling Service:**  
*(Please use separate sheet when necessary)*

Title	Date	Duration	Conducted by

**D. Marriage Counseling sessions conducted/handled**

Types of sessions/intervention	No. of Couples	Status/Remarks
Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC)		
Marriage Enrichment Counseling (MEC)		
Marital Crisis Counseling (MCC)		
Trial Separation Counseling (TSC)		

**E. Experiences in providing Marriage Counseling Service** *(please use another sheet when necessary)*

1. Describe your most significant/difficult experience/s in providing counseling to couples ( as PMC or Full-Fledged Marriage Counselor) and how were you able to deal with this/these?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What were your insights from this/these experience/s?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Applicant*



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*(Please use separate sheet when necessary)*

Title	Date	Duration	Conducted by

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1. Describe your most significant/difficult experience/s in providing counseling to couples ( as PMC or Full-Fledged Marriage Counselor) and how were you able to deal with this/these?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What were your insights from this/these experience/s?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Applicant*

**Checklist of Documentary Requirements**  
(To be accomplished in two copies)\*

**For DSWD-Staff use only**

- Certificate of graduation /college diploma or transcript of college records
- Certificate of training on PMC/MCS conducted by DSWD or its recognized training institutions;
- Certification from immediate supervisor that the applicant is tasked to conduct PMC
- Certificate of training attended or refresher course
- Annual accomplishment report for the past three years
- Sample of Summary documentation of PMC sessions conducted
- Sample summary of:
  - 2 MEC cases every year
  - 2 MCC cases every year
  - 2 TSC cases every year
- Documents for review during visit for PMC
  - Compilation of clients' intake forms;
  - Accomplished Marriage Expectation Inventory (MEI);
  - Photocopy or duplicate copies of pre-marriage counseling certificates issued;
  - Summary documentations of pre-marriage counseling sessions conducted within 3 years period.
- Documents for review during visit for Full-Fledged:
  - Documentation of counseling sessions ( PMC, MEC, MCC and TSC ) conducted with couples within the last 6 months;
  - Accomplishment report of the preceding year;
  - Registry Book

**Recommendations/Action Taken:**

- For endorsement to SB-Central Office
- For follow up of lacking documents
- For technical assistance
- others, please specify

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Assessed/Reviewed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Over Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Designation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*\* one copy to be given to the applicant*



## Sample of Summary Documentation of PMC Session

1. Date of Session: \_\_\_\_\_
2. No. of Couples: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Highlights of Sessions: (Describe what transpired during the session  
i.e topics discussed, methodologies and the  
participants' degree of participation, feelings  
interaction, among others)

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### 4. Issues and Concerns

Issues	Clarifications Provided

### 5. Recommendations for Future Action:

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Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature over printed Name

## Sample of Summary Documentation of Marriage Counseling Sessions

1. Date of Session: \_\_\_\_\_
2. No. of Couples: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Type of Intervention provided  MEC  MCC  TSC
4. Nature of Problem Presented: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Helping Goals: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Time Frame: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Session Objectives:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Highlights of the Session ( describe among others the couple's feelings, reactions and counselor's/counselee's interaction toward meeting the objectives of the session).

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

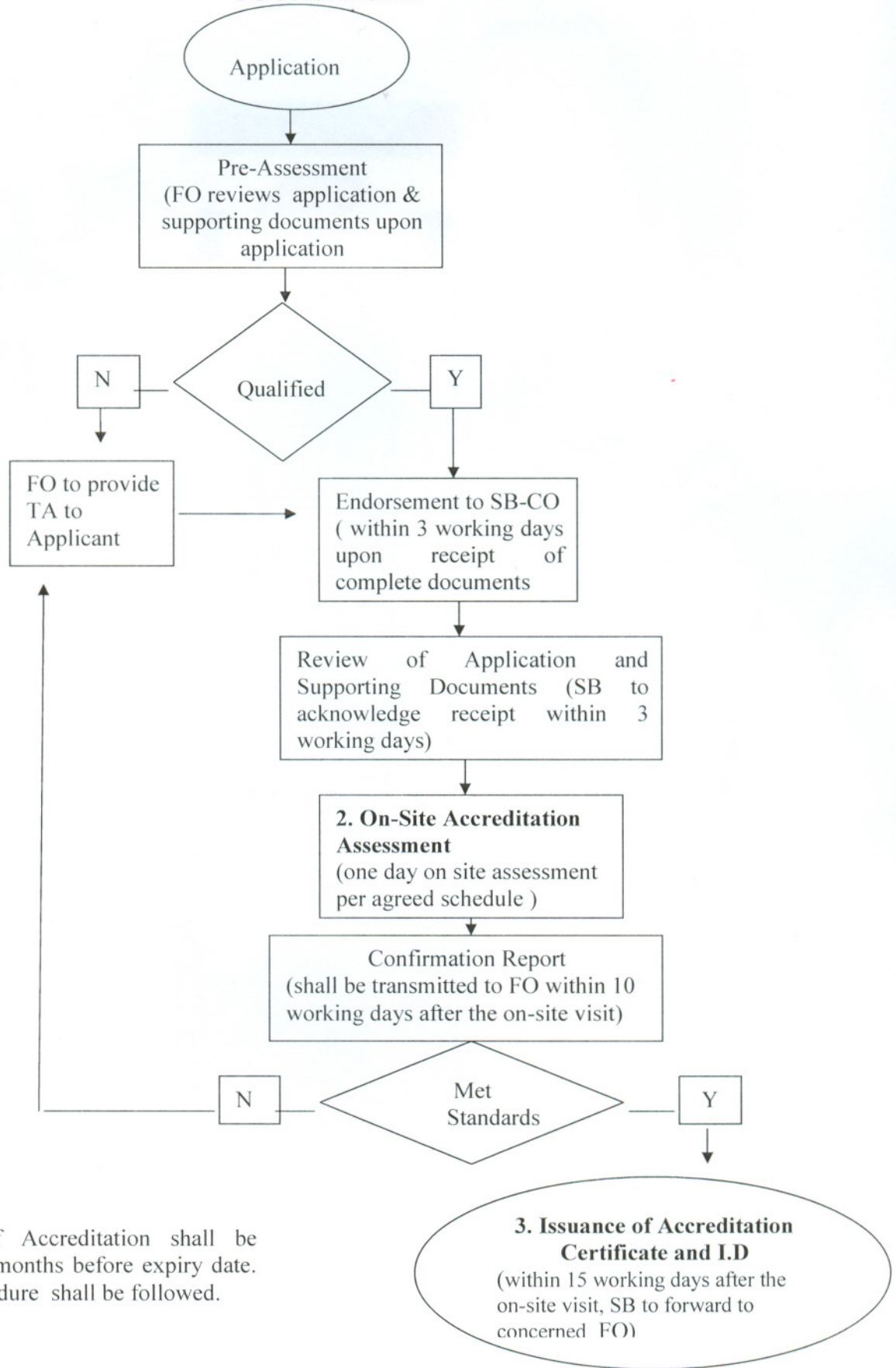
9. Recommendations/Agreements for follow-up sessions.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Over Printed Name



## FLOWCHART IN THE ACCREDITATION OF MARRIAGE COUNSELORS



Note: Renewal of Accreditation shall be applied 2 months before expiry date. Same procedure shall be followed.

Annual Accomplishment Report  
CY \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Counselor \_\_\_\_\_ Field Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
Area of Assignment: : \_\_\_\_\_  
Total no. of couples served (unduplicated): \_\_\_\_\_

Services Provided	No. of Couples Served
Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC)	
Marriage Enrichment Counseling (MEC)	
Marital Crisis Counseling (MCC)	
Trial Separation Counseling (TSC)	
<b>Total</b>	

Issues/Problems Encountered:

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Action Taken:

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Recommendations:

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Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Over Printed Name

Date: \_\_\_\_\_