Marriage & Family Therapy Program Handbook 2020-2021

College of Biblical Studies
Department of Marriage & Family Studies
1850 Teague Blvd
Abilene, TX 79699

WELCOME

Welcome to Abilene Christian University and to the Marriage and Family Therapy program. The University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the MFT program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). You are part of a group of people selected through prayer and careful consideration, and we are glad you are here. For the next two years, you will be challenged academically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. You will learn new ways of viewing relationships and new ideas about how to create change within relationship patterns, and you will grow as a person and in your own relationships.

Your academic and clinical experiences will be significant. Academically, your journey will be guided by official policy as determined by the University. Clinically, your journey will be guided by the Department of Marriage and Family Studies and the Marriage and Family Therapy program and their policies under the umbrella of the University. You will be given the opportunity to earn 500+ hours of client contact and 100+ hours of supervision within the context of the 24 months of the program. The program equips you for the profession of Marriage and Family Therapy, as our training program is a Marriage and Family Therapy Training program. Thus, the emphasis will be upon relational-systemic-interactional-contextual approaches to therapy and supervision.

The program also will emphasize the importance of working from a multicultural perspective and will also highlight the importance of the AAMFT Code of Ethics and ethical behavior in your development as a therapist. These are areas we are very serious in emphasizing during your time in the program.

This Handbook is designed to be an aide to you through the next two years. It will provide much of the information necessary to complete your journey successfully. It does not, however, supersede any official University documents or policies. It is your responsibility to be familiar with all the University and Graduate School policies and procedures.

The electronic form of this Handbook will allow us to make changes as the year progresses. When situations arise that are not addressed in this manual, consult with a professor, supervisor, or the Chair.

Blessings to you as you join us in this ministry of helping hurting people. God will use you as his instrument while you are here.

Lisa Merchant

Lisa V. Merchant, PhD, LMFT
Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy
Chair, Department of Marriage and Family Studies

Mission Statement

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

The mission of the Department of Marriage and Family Studies is to equip students to strengthen family relationships and solve personal and relational problems through child and family services or therapeutic intervention while cultivating Christian leadership and character in each student. The graduate program in Marriage and Family Therapy accomplishes this mission through:

- Introducing students to a broad range of therapeutic models;
- Providing an exceptional clinical training experience;
- Exploring Christian principles related to the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy
- Encouraging students to cultivate their own spiritual beliefs and worldviews;
- Equipping students to work with diverse and marginalized communities;
- Encouraging development of professional identity and leadership; and
- Creating a culture of research.

Program Goals & Student Learning Outcomes

In alignment with our mission and COAMFTE standards, the program has set the following goals. Student Learning Outcomes measure our progress on these goals.

Program Goal 1: Knowledge
Students will demonstrate knowledge essential to adopting an identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist including the history and development of systemic thinking, early and contemporary MFT models, and Professional Marriage and Family Therapy Principles.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1.1 Students will demonstrate proficient knowledge of systemic thinking as evidenced by 66% of students passing three of the four knowledge domains (domains 1, 2, 3, and 4) of the AMFTRB practice exam (benchmark) with a target of 100% passing all four domains.

1.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to develop a systemic model of therapy as evidenced by 77% of students passing the Content section of the Theory of Change rubric that is part of the Comprehensive Exam on their first try (benchmark) with a target of 100%

Program Goal 2: Practice
The program will develop outstanding clinicians who practice from a systemic lens, can apply theory to a variety of presenting issues, and exhibit basic counseling skills.

Student Learning Outcomes:

2.1 Students will demonstrate the ability to assess, manage, and intervene in crisis situations as evidenced by 66% of students passing Domain 5 on the AMFTRB Practice Exam (benchmark) with a target of 100%

2.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to assess, diagnose, and treat clients from a systemic perspective as evidenced by 85% of students passing the presentation portion of the Comprehensive Exam on their first try.

2.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to assess and diagnose disorders using the DSM5 as evidenced by 77% of students scoring 92% or better on the diagnosis assignments in Diagnosis & Assessment (benchmark) with a target of 100% scoring 92% or better.

2.4 COI: Communities of Interest will report that our students and alumni are equipped to practice competently with a variety of populations and presenting problems from systemic/relational/interactional perspectives as evidenced by 66% of employers and supervisors reporting as such on the Communities of Interest Survey.

Program Goal 3: Diversity
Graduates will work sensitively with people of diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, religions, sexualities, gender identities, abilities, classes, and other marginalized and underserved groups.

Student Learning Outcomes:

3.1 Students will demonstrate willingness to examine their own biases and stereotypes and engage diverse, minority, and marginalized groups as evidenced by 77% of students averaging 92% or better on the Cultural Plunge assignments in Cultural Diversity (benchmark) with a target of 100% of students averaging 92%.

3.2 Students will consider the intersection of client identities in assessment, treatment planning, and intervention as evidenced by 77% of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Cultural Sensitivity on the Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation on average across Internship I-IV (benchmark) with a target of 100%.
3.3 Students will demonstrate awareness of the intersection of their own identities and associated privilege and shame as evidenced by 77% of students scoring at least 92% on the Cultural Genogram in Cultural Diversity (benchmark) with a target of 100% of students averaging 92%.
3.4 Students will work with clients from historically marginalized or underserved groups as evidenced by 88% of students reporting sufficient exposure to marginalized or underserved group on the Graduate Student Survey (benchmark) with a target of 100%.
3.5 ALUMNI: Alumni will report being prepared to work with diverse, marginalized, and underserved clients as evidenced by 88% of alumni reporting as such on the Alumni Survey.

Program Goal 4: Ethics
Graduates will practice ethically in accordance with AAMFT Code of Ethics and state and national rules and laws.

Student Learning Outcomes
4.1 Students will apply the AAMFT Code of Ethics in clinical decision making as evidenced by 77% of students who take the AMFTRB Practice exam will score a passing grade on Domain 6: Maintaining Legal, Ethical and Professional Standards (benchmark) with 100% passing as the target.
4.2 Students will practice in an ethical manner as evidenced by 77% of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on Ethical Practice the Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation Form on average across Internship I-IV (benchmark) with a target of 100%.
4.3 4.3 COI: Communities of Interest persons will report that students and alumni practice ethically as evidenced by 66% reporting as such on the Communities of Interest Survey (benchmark) with a target of 100%.

Program Goal 5: Research and Evidence Informed Practice
Graduates will be able to read, apply, and conduct research to be informed users and conductors of research and to improve client services.

Student Learning Outcomes
5.1 Students will be able to develop and design research projects based on analysis of extant literature as evidenced by 77% of students scoring at least 92% on the Research Process portion of the Research Proposal Rubric in BMFT 615 (benchmark) with a target of 100% of students scoring at least 92%
5.2 Students will incorporate extant literature into their practice of marriage and family therapy as evidenced by 77% of students passing the literature review portion of the Theory of Change paper in the Comprehensive Exam on their first try (benchmark) with a target of 100%.

Program Goal 6: Integration of Faith
Graduates will practice therapy in ways that are consistent with both their therapy model and their spiritual beliefs or worldview and in ways that respect clients' spiritual beliefs or worldview. Students will have opportunity to develop or deepen their faith or worldview.

Student Learning Outcomes:

6.1 Students will be able to articulate a basic, personal understanding of God, humanity, suffering, and restoration as evidenced by 88% of students scoring 92% or better on the final paper in Theological Perspective of Human Behavior (benchmark) with a target of 100%.

6.2 Students will be able to draw from both secular and spiritual sources to develop an integrated theory of therapy as evidenced by 88% of students passing the spiritual integration portion of the written Comprehensive Exam (benchmark) with a target of 100%.

6.3 Students will practice respectfully and sensitively with people of different religious orientations as evidenced by 88% of students meeting or exceeding expectations on Religious Sensitivity on the Faculty Comprehensive Intern Evaluation on average across Internship I-IV (benchmark) with a target of 100%. Faculty Comprehensive Intern Evaluation on average across Internship I-IV (benchmark) with a target of 100%.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Degree Plan

The degree plan for the Marriage and Family Therapy program is included in Table 1 and Table 2 below. This plan may change as the Commission on the Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) makes revisions.

Use this copy to keep track of the courses you have taken. Record the semester and the year. Any transferred courses must be approved in advance by the Department Chair. An official transcript from the other universities must be sent to the Graduate School. The document requesting that a transfer course be considered is available from the Administrative Coordinator of the department.

The degree plan is the official agreement between the student, department, and University. These courses must be taken before a degree will be awarded. Any changes must be approved by the Department Chair and a written change order given to the Graduate School.

Students may choose two electives. Students wishing to pursue doctoral work are encouraged to choose Statistics in the Spring of their first year. Students may also take Group Counseling through the Psychology Department in the Spring of their first year. The Department offers an elective titled Contemporary Issues in Family Therapy for second year students. Students wanting to pursue licensure as a professional counselor may take Career Counseling through the Psychology Department in the Fall or through the online MFT program. Taking Career in the Fall in not an option for students on the thesis track due to the Graduate School's 15 hour course limit.

Non-Thesis Track Degree Plan

Course Number	Course Name	Professor
Year One, Fall		
BMFT 639	Family Theory	Pounds
BMFT 610	Couples Therapy	Merchant
BMFT 601	Pre-Internship	Powell
BMFT 641	Family Therapy I	Mendez-Pounds
Year One, Spring		
BMFT 602	Internship I	Merchant
BMFT 645	Systemic Diagnosis and Assessment	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 615	Research Methods in MFT	Powell
	Elective	
Year One, Summer		
BMFT 662	Family Life Cycle	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 643	Professional Ethics & the Law	Merchant
Year Two, Fall		
BMFT 661	Family Therapy II	Merchant
BMFT 665	Family Therapy across the Life Cycle	Powell
BMFT 634	Addictive Disorders	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 603	Internship II	Faculty
Year Two, Spring		
BMFT 651	Sex Therapy	Powell
BMFT 661	Cultural Diversity	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 604	Internship III	Faculty
	Elective	
Year Two, Summer		
BIBM 696	Theological Perspectives on Human Behavior & Change	Powell & Wiebe
BMFT 605	Internship IV	Faculty

Thesis Track Degree Plan

Course Number	Course Name	Professor
Year One, Fall		
BMFT 639	Family Theory	Pounds
BMFT 610	Couples Therapy	Merchant
BMFT 601	Pre-Internship	Powell
BMFT 641	Family Therapy I	Mendez-Pounds
Year One, Spring		
BMFT 602	Internship I	Merchant
BMFT 645	Systemic Diagnosis and Assessment	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 615	Research Methods in MFT	Powell
	Elective	
Year One, Summer		
BMFT 662	Family Life Cycle	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 643	Professional Ethics & the Law	Merchant
Year Two, Fall		
BMFT 661	Family Therapy II	Merchant
BMFT 665	Family Therapy across the Life Cycle	Powell
BMFT 634	Addictive Disorders	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 603	Internship II	Faculty
BMFT 699	Thesis	Faculty
Year Two, Spring		
BMFT 651	Sex Therapy	Powell
BMFT 661	Cultural Diversity	Mendez-Pounds
BMFT 604	Internship III	Faculty
	Elective	
BMFT 699	Thesis	Faculty
Year Two, Summer		
BIBM 696	Theological Perspectives on Human Behavior & Change	Powell & Wiebe
BMFT 605	Internship IV	Faculty

Department Writing Style

The Department follows the *APA Publication Manual 7th Edition* for all written papers. The student is responsible for purchasing an APA Manual (7th Edition) and learning the necessary sections.

Grading

Grades are calculated on an 8-point scale as follows:

A = 92% or higher
B = 84 to 91.9%
C = 76 to 83.9%
D = 68 to 75.9%
F = 67.9 % or below

According to the Graduate Handbook, GPA may not fall below a 3.0 to graduate and courses with a grade of a D or below must be re-taken. See the Graduate Handbook for more information.

Graduation Policy

Students must meet the academic and clinical requirements outlined in this handbook in order to graduate. Thesis track students will also have to meet the requirements in the Thesis Handbook and Thesis Syllabus in order to graduate. Students must also meet all required university requirements for graduation. Although many students participate in the graduation ceremony at the end of the Spring Semester in the second year in the program, students are not yet graduates of the program until they complete the requirements of graduation and the degree is conferred. For most students this will be at the end of their second summer semester in the program. For a few who do not complete all requirements in that window, it may be longer.

Group Research Projects

The MFT faculty are committed to creating a culture of research within the program. As such, students are required to participate in a research project beginning in the spring of their first year. Students may apply to the thesis track or complete a group research project. The research project is conducted in conjunction with BMFT 615: Research Methods in MFT and is advised by an MFT faculty mentor (non-MFT faculty may be asked to advise the project with the permission of the Program Director). The student group may choose a topic of interest to them, or students may choose to join faculty in ongoing research.

Research topics must:

- Have a direct link to the field of marriage and family therapy
- Have a systemic focus
- Should attempt to fill a gap in the marriage and family therapy literature

The research process should proceed according to the following steps:

1. Students will register for BMFT 615: Research Methods in MFT during the spring semester of their first year. In this course, each student will write a research proposal as part of their grade in the course.
2. Based on the proposals that have been written, students will self-select to participate as a small group in carrying out one of the proposals to completion.

3. Students choose a faculty advisor within the MFT program or seek permission from the Department Chair if they wish to have an advisor in another academic department on campus.
4. The group should meet with their faculty advisor to determine the specific research questions and methods. Abstracts for conference submissions should be developed with the faculty advisor's input.
5. Students are required to submit their research project for presentation at the annual conference of the Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (TAMFT). Abstract submissions are typically due in Summer or Fall. If the group wishes to submit their research to another conference in addition to TAMFT (e.g., AAMFT, CAPS, etc.), they are encouraged to do so.
6. Students are required to submit an application to ACU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the start of data collection. Students should go to www.acu.edu/academics/orsp/institutional.html for the application.

Thesis Track

The MFT thesis-track prepares students for doctoral research by requiring students to design and complete a research project including formulating a research question based on extant literature, designing and proposing the project, soliciting Institution Review Board approval, conducting the research, and articulating the research process, results, and implications in the thesis paper. Student will write a research proposal in BMFT 615: Research Methods which they will submit as part of their thesis application to the faculty in the spring of the first year. Faculty will determine thesis advisors, though students may request an advisor in their application. Faculty will select thesis students based on availability of advisors, availability of scholarship funds, quality of student writing, relevance of the research topic, and feasibility of research methods.

Students apply for thesis in the spring of their first year and are encouraged to begin writing their prospectus and IRB application in the summer. Prospectus and IRB are due in the fall of the second year and the final thesis defense in scheduled for mid-Spring. Students will enroll in 3 hours of BMFT 699: Thesis in the fall and spring on their second year. To participate in May commencement and be considered for Thesis of the Year, students must follow the Spring Defense deadlines listed on the Graduate School website.

Students must follow all the thesis guidelines listed on the Graduate School website and in the BMFT 699: Thesis syllabus.

Student Evaluation Process

Faculty formally evaluate student's progress toward becoming a competent therapist prior to entering Internship I and then at the end of each semester thereafter. Full-time students enter Internship I in the Spring of their first year. The initial evaluation includes the Entrance to Internship Exam and feedback on clinical skills. Thereafter the internship supervisor provides feedback using the *Faculty Comprehensive Evaluation Form*, which faculty, supervisors, and staff complete together in a meeting near the end of the semester.

Entrance to Internship Exam

Prior to seeing clients in Internship, students must pass the Internship Entrance Exam. This exam ensures that students understand the foundational theories of systemic thinking and possess basic counseling skills. The exam consists of a 20-minute oral exam and a 10-minute mock therapy demonstration. Students will submit the demonstration in Pre-Internship and faculty will evaluate the video using the rubric below. Faculty will schedule the oral exam between Dead Day and the end of the first week of the Spring semester. Students who pass both parts of the Internship Entrance Exam will be approved to start co-therapy in Spring I; students may re-take either or both parts of the Internship Entrance Exam once. Students unable to pass the Internship Entrance Exam may a) proceed into internship with conditions to be address/remediated, b) postpone admission into internship until conditions are addressed/remediated, or c) students may be dismissed from the program. The competencies students are expected to demonstrate include:

Competency	PMFTP	Measure
Explain key components of systems theory	Knowledge Statement 01 Foundations of marital, couples, and family therapy	Oral Exam
Identify relationship and therapeutic process	AMFTRB 2.04 Assess the dynamics, processes, and interactional patterns to determine client system functioning	Oral Exam
Articulate a basic theory of change	Core Competencies 4.1.1. Comprehend a variety of individual and systemic therapeutic models and their application.	Oral Exam
Demonstrate the ability to listen, reflect, summarize, and empathize	Core Competencies 1.3.6 Establish and maintain appropriate and productive therapeutic alliances with the clients.	7th Dyad Video
Demonstrate ability to set goals	Core Competencies 3.3.1 Develop, with client input, measurable outcomes and treatment goals utilizing a systemic perspective.	7th Dyad Video

Faculty Comprehensive Evaluation

At the end of each semester beginning in the spring of the first year, students are evaluated by faculty, staff, and supervisors using the Faculty Comprehensive Evaluation form, which informs their Internship II, III, and IV grade. Categories of evaluation include theoretical knowledge, clinical skills, ethical practice, clinic requirements, cultural sensitivity, religious sensitivity, professionalism, interpersonal skills, and personal stability. See the BMFT 603, 604, and 605 syllabus for a copy of the evaluation.

Comprehensive Exam

The purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to assess the student’s knowledge of clinical portions of master’s level study. There are three portions to the comprehensive examination: 1) a theory of change paper, 2) a clinical presentation, and 3) the AMFTRB practice exam. Students must pass all three portions of the Comprehensive Examination in order to graduate from the program.

AMFTRB Practice Exam

Students will take the AMFTRB practice exam before May 31st and submit their score report to the Program Director. To pass the exam, students must pass three of the four knowledge domains (domains 1 to 4). Students who pass three of the four knowledge domains will be able to opt out of the presentation portion of the exam. Students who only pass one or two knowledge domains must complete a remediation plan developed by the program director or his/her designee. Once the student submits evidence of completing the remediation plan, the student is considered to have passed this portion of the comprehensive exam. Students have until 4 weeks prior to graduation to submit evidence they have completed remediation activities. The AMFTRB practice exam costs around $65.

Theory of Change Paper

Students will write a 20- to 25-page theory of change paper. The paper should be professional and represent the students best work. The paper should answer the question “how does change happened” by describing and integrating the student’s foundational, theoretical, and theological/spiritual/philosophical understanding of change. The paper should reflect the students personal understanding of change as supported by scholarly literature with 20+ references. Paper should adhere to the 7th edition of the APA style manual and include headings and subheadings. Students may use first-person. The paper should include the following sections:

- Introduction with thesis statement
- Foundational understanding a change: Student selects and describes the foundational aspects of change that most inform their personal theory of change, e.g., General Systems Theory, cybernetics, multigenerational systems perspective, common factors, first- and second-order change, postmodernism, social constructionism…
- Theoretical understanding of change: Student selects at least two models from which they predominately work and describes the model’s assumptions, mechanism of change, and role of the therapist.
- Philosophical/theological/spiritual understanding of change: Students explains how they understand change from a spiritual, theological, or philosophical standpoint. This section should include at least two refences in addition to sacred texts such as the Bible, the Qur’an, the Talmud, the Vedas, the Book of Mormon, and the like.
- Integrated theory of change: Student selects and describes the assessments and interventions that most inform their work with brief examples of application (e.g., questions they have asked, interventions they have implemented). This section is divided into three subsections: 1) Assessment and Engagement, 2) Interventions, and 3) Termination. Furthermore, this section should describe a process of change that draws from the student’s foundational, theoretical, and philosophical/theological/spiritual understanding of change with each area being represented in some way. Integration should be clearly evident and the student should resolve any discrepancies between their foundational, theoretical, and philosophical/theological/spiritual understanding of change
- Conclusion

In addition to the above content, students will also be graded on the professionalism of their paper. See the rubric below for grading criteria. Students must average at least a 3.0 in each section to pass without re-writes.

Case Study Presentation

The student must also prepare a 30-minute clinical presentation during which time he or she will present a case study including video clips from a relational client system that has been seen in the Marriage and Family Institute. The presentation should begin with a **brief** description of your integrated theory of change. The majority of the presentation should focus on the case study with the following points being addressed:

- Briefly describe the client system, including your initial assessment. Include relevant data from the intake/assessment packet.
- Describe your conceptualization/systemic hypothesis of the case. This should be informed by your integrated theory of change (**Hint:** Use the conceptual language of the theories you are using to describe the source of dysfunction in the client system.)
- Discuss the relevant ethical and legal issues.
- Identify and describe the relevant diversity issues.
- Using the DSM-5, state your diagnostic impressions for each of the members of the system. Discuss the basis for your diagnoses.
- Discuss all referrals you made and any consultations you engaged in, including your supervision consultations.
- Describe the stages of therapy and the interventions you used based on your integrated theory of change.
- Describe the progress of the case over time.
- Assess how the case reflects your theory of therapy. Evaluate the quality of your therapy with this case. Reflect on the personal journey that has drawn you to the two theories you have chosen to integrate.

The clips should illustrate the stages of the student's particular model of therapy in a relational system. The full-time faculty will serve as the committee for MFT students and will be responsible for grading the paper as well as the presentation, but the presentation will be open to all students in the Marriage and Family Therapy program. The faculty will determine an average grade for the presentation based on the rubrics below. For both the paper and the presentation, an average grade of 3 or above is a pass. An average grade of 2-2.99 is a pass with reservations and will include an additional writing assignment. Any score below a 1.99 is a fail.

The date for the Examination must be at least 4 weeks before graduation and will be set each summer for the next year. A sign-up sheet of presentation times will be posted. Students should refer to the MFI Policies and Procedures Manual, page 10, for guidelines on Level 3 Dress for the oral presentation.

Students who are out of sequence should plan on taking the Comprehensive Examination in the last semester of their program, but prior to the Graduate School deadline for Comprehensive Examinations. Students in the prescribed sequencing will take the exam at the announced time.

It is anticipated that most students will pass the examination on the first attempt. Some students may be required to do further study or write additional material. If a student fails the examination a second time, the faculty may choose to assess an academic or clinical penalty upon the student before he/she is allowed to take the examination for the third time. Failure to pass the examination can lead to dismissal from the program. A student has the right to appeal the decision of the comprehensive examination committee through procedures described in the Graduate Catalogue.

Exemplary papers written by former students are available for your reference in a binder in the MFI Reception Office.

Rubric: Comprehensive Examination Theory of Change Paper

1 = Fails to meet minimum expectations
2 = Meets some but not all expectations
3 = Meets expectations
4 = Exceeds expectations

Expectation	Score
Content	
Foundational Aspects of Change • Student selects foundational aspects of change that inform their overall theory of change (e.g., systems theory, common factors, first- and second-order change, postmodernism, social constructionism…) • Student accurately describes foundational aspects of change	
Theoretical Considerations • Student selects 2+ models that largely inform their clinical work • Student demonstrates understanding of the assumptions of the models including how change happens and the role of the therapist in facilitating change	
Philosophical/theological/spiritual considerations of change • Student describes how change happens from their philosophical, theological, or spiritual worldview	
Integrated Theory of Change • Student describes a process of change that draws from their foundational, theoretical, and philosophical/theological/spiritual understanding of change with each area being represented in some way—integration is clearly articulated • Student selects and describes the assessments, interventions, and other activities that most inform their work • Student resolves any discrepancies between their foundational, theoretical, and world view philosophical/theological/spiritual understanding of change • Student demonstrates application with brief examples (e.g., questions asked or intervention executed)	
Professionalism	
Sources • Student references 20+ scholarly sources • Student predominately uses primary sources APA • Student adheres to APA 7th edition Writing • Writing is free of spelling and grammar mistakes • Paper is organized and structured with use of headings and transition statements and includes an introduction with a thesis statement and a conclusion • Writing is clear, active, and concise; sentence structure varies; appropriate word choices	

Rubric: Comprehensive Examination Presentation

1 = Fails to meet minimum expectations
2 = Meets some but not all expectations
3 = Meets expectations
4 = Exceeds expectations

Expectation	Rating
1. Provides a clear description of the integrated theory of change	
2. Provides an adequate description of the client system including assessment considerations	
3. Demonstrates understanding of relevant ethical and legal issues	
4. Ability to identify and describe relevant diversity issues	
5. Possesses the ability to diagnose clients according to the DSM-5	
6. Demonstrates clinical judgment in making referrals and seeking consultation	
7. Provides a clear description of the stages of therapy and the interventions used based on the integrated theory of change and describes the progress of the case over time	

Second Year Survey

Each student will be given the opportunity to evaluate the program in a formal manner. Your responses will be anonymous. The Department Coordinator will send you a survey link. You must complete the survey prior to your Comprehensive Exam Presentation and bring or email faculty a copy of the "Thank You" page that concludes the survey. Students will not be able to present until they submit evidence of completing the survey.

Student Therapy

Being an effective marriage and family therapist often requires us to examine our own histories and work through our own issues. As such, the program requires students to complete 4-6 hours of therapy as a client before the end of the spring semester in the first year. This is can also be a valuable learning experience as a recipient of therapy. The program will attempt to connect students with a pro bono therapist for the 4-6 sessions. If students continue therapy beyond the 4-6 sessions, they are responsible for any fees. Faculty encourages students to make good use of this time. After the 4-6 sessions are complete, the therapist will send the Department Coordinator and Program Director a letter stating the sessions were done. Students will also have opportunity to rate their therapy experience.

Clinical Requirements

Hours Requirements

To graduate, students must complete 500 direct client contact hours, 250 of which must be relational. Direct client contact hours are defined as a therapeutic meeting between an intern and client occurring in a face to face setting, either physically in the same location or mediated by technology. Relational hours include services delivered to "two or more individuals conjointly, who share an ongoing relationship beyond that which occurs in the therapeutic experience" (COAMFTE, 2020, p 41). Examples of relational hours include session with couples, families, roommates, friends, community supports, and groups in which the members have an ongoing relationship outside the therapy hour. An intern may complete no more than 250 hours of direct client contact at his/her off-site internship. Direct client contact may consist of individual, couple, family, and group sessions. Procedures for students who fail to meet this requirement are discussed on page 28. Direct client contact hours are accrued as follows:

- Pre-Internship, fall semester of first year – First year interns will observe 50 hours of relational therapy and 10 hours of supervision in the Marriage and Family Institute. Interns will document their observations as part of the Pre-Internship class. The 50 observation hours must be completed before the intern will be permitted to see clients in co-therapy.
- Internship I, spring semester of first year – At the start of the spring semester, first year interns will begin seeing clients with a second year co-therapist. Co-therapy will continue throughout the spring semester.
- Internships I (summer semester), II, III, & IV – First year interns will begin being assigned their own clients at the beginning of the summer semester. Depending on the needs of the second year interns, however, they may continue in co-therapy for relational cases until the second years graduate in August.

Reporting Hours

The following forms are used to record your clinical contact and supervision hours. You should keep the original copy of these documents and turn in only copies. All of these forms are available in the filing cabinets in the Intern Room.

Cumulative Client List

This list details all direct clinical contact during practicum and serves as a complete listing of all clinical cases. New clients are to be added to this list according to case number.

Supervision Report

This is the complete record of your supervision. Record your supervision hours on the form and use it to generate any reports. It is important to remember that individual supervision involves no more than two interns and group supervision involves no more than eight interns. Interns must maintain a ratio of 5:1 supervision hours; this means for every five hours of client contact, the intern must receive one hour of supervision. Interns are required to obtain 100 hours of supervision throughout the program, and 50 of these hours must consist of sharing observable data (live or video) with the supervisor. Additionally, 50 of the 100 hours must take place in individual supervision. Students may count supervision received by AAMFT-Approved Supervisors at the externship sites with Program Director approval.

Client Contact Monitoring Sheet

Use the electronic Client Contact Monitoring Sheet to maintain an accurate count of your hours and submit this form to the Department Coordinator at the end of each semester. This serves as your official record of hours. Failure to report hours by the deadline will result in a grade reduction in the Internship course. In addition, the intern must complete the hours report located in the MFI Reception Office at the end of each week in order to receive new intakes during the following week. All other practicum requirements are found in the Internship I, II, III, IV, and V syllabi.

Supervision Requirements

The program utilizes relational/systemic supervision, which COAMFTE defines as "the practice of developing the clinical competencies and professional growth of the student as a supervisee, consistent with the relational/systemic philosophy, ethics, and practices of the marriage and family therapy profession" (2020, p. 42). Interns must receive at least 100 hours of supervision throughout the course of the program, 50 of which must consist of observable data (video or live) and 50 of which must be individual (one or two interns). Students will count supervision received by their Internship supervisor and may count supervision provided by their externship only if the supervisor is AAMFT Approved and the student has permission from the Program Director. If students accumulate more than 500 hours of direct client contact, they still must maintain a cumulative client contact-to-supervision ratio of 5:1.

Individual supervision is defined as one or two supervisees receiving supervision. Group supervision is defined as three to eight supervisees receiving supervision. Two supervisees in the therapy room (co-therapy) may receive individual live supervision credit. Others behind the mirror will receive individual live supervision credit if no more than two are observing. Three to eight supervisees behind the mirror constitute group for those observing while those in the therapy room will receive individual supervision.

Supervisees will receive supervision in three settings: 1) one hour each of individual and group with the Internship supervisor assigned by the Department Chair each semester; 2) live supervision on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays as part of the reflecting team protocol; and 3) when a case demands time and attention outside of regularly scheduled supervision. Students may also count supervision provided by an AAMFT Approved Supervisor at their Externship site if they have approval of the Program Director. Supervisees should schedule two to three live supervision sessions each semester.

If an intern must miss supervision due to illness, vacation, or another reason, they must make up the lost hour if their ratio is more than 5:1. If a supervisor misses supervision, they should notify the Clinic Supervisor and Program Director, identify a back-up supervisor for urgent and emergent issues, and make arrangements to make-up the missed sessions if needed. The Clinic Director (and Program Director in their absence) are available for emergency supervision.

Supervision should be conducted weekly, face-to-face at the Marriage and Family Institute (or externship site), but may be conducted occasionally at the supervisor's private office. Circumstances may necessitate supervision via telehealth, in which case interns and supervisors should follow the MFI's telehealth policies.

Supervisor Requirements

To be an Internship Supervisor, full or adjunct faculty must be either AAMFT Approved Supervisors or AAMFT Supervisor Candidates. To be an externship supervisor, the supervisor must be an AAMFT Approved Supervisor.

Reflecting Team Supervision Hours

It is the responsibility of the reflecting team members to negotiate with the nightly supervisor to do a live supervision on a given evening. The team should inform their supervisor of their scheduled clients so the supervisor can plan to provide at least one hour of supervision for every five hours completed by the reflecting team.

Externship Hours and Supervision

Internship Supervisors are responsible for hours obtained at externship sites unless the student is receiving weekly supervision from an AAMFT Approved Supervisor at the site. The Program Director serves as the liaison with off-site placements and is responsible for dealing with administrative and/or structural issues that occur at the sites. Interns should speak with the Program Director and their supervisors for guidance if disputes arise at their sites. If an intern is receiving more client contact hours than can be covered through regular supervision, it is his/her responsibility to discuss this with the Clinical Director and to secure additional supervision.

Completing Hours

For various reasons, students may have difficulty completing their 500 hours of client contact within the advertised two years of the program. In the event an intern does not complete his/her hours by the day of graduation, the following procedure must be followed:

- The student must inform the Department Chair, in writing, of his or her intention to complete the required hours. This should happen no later than July 15th.
- The student may continue to see his or her existing clients and receive supervision in the MFI until the start of the fall semester. However, he or she will not receive new intakes after the date of August graduation.
- After the fall semester begins, the student must obtain an AAMFT-Approved supervisor and a site at which to complete the hours. This information must be approved by the Department Chair prior to obtaining hours at the site. If the supervisor requires payment, it is the intern's responsibility to do so.
- The intern must complete all necessary reports for the Department Academic Coordinator upon completion of the hours. Consequently, hours reports must be submitted to the Department Academic Coordinator by the end of the fall reporting period in order to graduate in December.
- The student will receive a grade of IP in Internship V. Provided the intern completes his/her hours in time for December graduation, this grade will be changed. If, however, the student does not complete his/her hours by the end of the fall semester, s/he will have to register and pay tuition for another semester of internship.

Program Policies & Procedures

Academic Integrity (Plagiarism) and Authenticity of Work

Plagiarism will not be tolerated within the program. Each syllabus contains a statement about plagiarism and confirmed cases of plagiarism within the program will follow both the course policies of the instructor and the university policies related to plagiarism. Instructors may use Turnitin.com to assess for the authenticity of student work and may submit any assignment suspected of being plagiarized to Turnitin.com or successor programs the university opts to use to assess for authenticity. The University's policy on plagiarism can be found here.

ACU Student Code of Conduct

The ACU Student Code of Conduct policy is found in the ACU Student Handbook, which students are strongly encouraged to review. It is summarized here for your convenience:

> Within the context of ACU's mission and its determination to be Christ-centered, students are expected to develop and maintain a high standard of personal and behavioral values. At its core, this expectation is based on loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself. Standards of conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Respect for ACU's longstanding tradition of honesty, moral and ethical integrity, and open inquiry.
2. Respect for the right and necessity of ACU to develop and maintain a Christian atmosphere conducive to academic study and personal growth.
3. Respect for the personal worth, dignity and rights of others.
4. Respect for the diverse backgrounds, personalities, convictions and spiritual traditions of students, staff and faculty who comprise the ACU community.
5. Respect for local, state and federal laws and ordinances.
6. Respect for the discipline, policy, procedures and authority established by ACU for the systematic management of university activities, the well-being of the members of the university community, and the integrity of the institution.
7. Regard for the nature of a moral community by embracing the need to lovingly confront and hold accountable members of the ACU community whose conduct falls outside the boundaries of Christian behavior, university policy, state and federal laws.

Admissions Requirements

The complete admission's policy is found in the ACU Catalog, but is summarized here for your convenience:

1. A completed application for admission with a nonrefundable application fee;
2. An official transcript(s) in English (or translated to English) of all previous colleges attended. The transcript must indicate an earned bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or equivalent;
3. A cumulative undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale;

4. A minimum GRE score of 280
5. Three letters of recommendation;
6. A written purpose statement declaring why the applicant wishes to study marriage and family therapy at ACU and what he or she plans to do professionally upon graduation;
7. Completion of a psychosocial history;
8. A quality of life that reflects high moral standards;
9. Interview with faculty.

When all required materials are received, the application will be reviewed by the MFT faculty. Students are admitted once a year and begin their program of study in the fall semester. All application materials must be completed by the preceding February 1st for the fall semester. The GRE and personal interviews must be completed by April 1st. Acceptance into the program will be granted by April 15th.

No specific undergraduate major is essential for admission. Applicants are encouraged to have undergraduate credit in subjects that embrace human development, family relations, theology, sociology, psychology, and statistics.

Applicants without adequate preparation may be accepted upon the condition that they register for additional courses deemed necessary by the graduate advisor.

A student who does not meet all of the admission requirements may be considered for admission, if space is available. At the discretion of the department chair, such a student may be placed on academic probation during the first semester.

Complaint & Request Policy for Students (Grievance Procedure)

To ensure a sufficient response, student have three ways of lodging complaints depending on the severity of the issue. Reporting technology issues (cameras or printers not working) or depleted supplies (markers, Kleenex, hand sanitizer…) should be done on the Clinic Issue Reporting Form in the Google Drive and not via these complaint procedures. All other matters should be handled via the informal or formal complaint procedures. Verbally complaining to faculty or staff outside of these procedures may result in little or no response.

Informal Requests and Complaints

For issues that can be resolved quickly or that involve the majority of the cohort, students can lodge an informal complaint in either the monthly Staff Meeting or through the student representative in the monthly Supervisors Meeting. Examples might include a request for additional resources, a change in the Comprehensive Exam date, a suggestion for a new policy or procedure, or a recommendation for a training. Students are welcome to lodge these as formal complaints as well.

Formal Requests and Complaints

For issues that need investigation, that are particular to a student or faculty/staff member, that are sensitive, or that are grievous, students should file a formal complaint in writing with the Program Director. Examples include harassment by another student, ethical violations in the clinic, cheating or plagiarism, and ongoing issues between students and others that students have been unable to resolve on their own. Although the student may include as much or as little information in their complaint, detailing the complaint and suggesting a resolution is most helpful. Complaints can be anonymous and may be filed on paper or via email. Should the student not be satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing directly to the Dean of the College of Biblical Studies since presently one person is both the Program Director and Department Chair. The next appeal is to the Dean of the Graduate School and then to the Provost of the University.

Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve issues between students on their own prior to filing a formal complaint.

Graduate School Policies

Knowing the Graduate School policies and interacting with the Graduate School is the sole responsibility of the student. The Program Director must be consulted for all degree plan and course scheduling issues, but the policies and procedures of the Graduate School must be followed and coordinated with them. Please review the online Graduate Catalog for information on graduate school policies, financial assistance, grade policies (e.g., GPA required for graduation, incompletes, academic probation, etc.), and preparing for graduation. Should there be a discrepancy between any of the polices herein and the Graduate School, the Gradate School's policy prevails.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The University's non-discrimination policy says:

> Abilene Christian University complies with all applicable federal and state non-discrimination laws and does not engage in prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin, gender, age or disability in admissions decisions, financial aid and provision of student services, programs and activities. As a private educational institution, however, ACU reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant whose academic preparation, character or personal conduct is determined to be inconsistent with the purposes and objectives of the university.

The non-discrimination policy of the program is:

> Abilene Christian University's MFT Program welcomes students who are diverse in race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationship status, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religion and spiritual beliefs and/or affiliation, and/or national origin. This is true in regard to the recruitment, admission, codes of conduct, hiring, retention, and dismissal decisions related to the program. ACU students are expected to abide by ACU's Code of Conduct.

Abilene Christian University is affiliated with the Churches of Christ and faculty and supervisors are hired who are a missional fit with the university's mission. Faculty and supervisors are aware of this requirement and it plays a role in hiring and retention decisions of faculty and supervisors employed by the university.

Recruitment of Students

The ACU MFT program works with the university admissions office to recruit students from multidisciplinary backgrounds. We are intentional in recruiting students from diverse backgrounds in accordance with the ACU non-discrimination policy on admission listed each year. We also seek to admit at least one student to each cohort who is fluent in both the Spanish and English languages, since our on-campus clinic often serves clients whose first language is Spanish.

Remediation and Dismissal

Occasionally faculty will identify a need for student remediation, such as when a student underperforms in coursework or the clinic, commits repeated or grievous ethical violations, refuses to follow academic or clinic policies, admits to a substance use or mental health issue, or is the subject of a formal complaint. In these instances, the Program will follow existing Graduate School and University policies and may require the student to complete remedial actions, such as a writing assignment, counseling, substance use treatment, suspension from Internship, suspension from the program, a probationary period, faculty mentoring, or a reduced grade in Internship. All the steps in the remediation process will become part of the student's permanent record.

Students who continue to violate the policies, procedures, and standards of professional practice may be dismissed from the program.

Retention of Students

The MMFT program reviews the progress of each student at the end of the semester Faculty/Supervisor meeting which occurs toward the end of the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Academic, clinical, and interactional considerations, along with adherence to program and clinic policies and procedures are reviewed in this meeting and given as feedback on the faculty/staff evaluation. This is part of the program's effort to facilitate the success and retention of MFT program students in ways that are consistent with the university mission and anti- discrimination policy, and student conduct policy. We also utilize academic support services when needed, along with academic advising, and encourage students to bring concerns as they arise so that we can better meet student needs.

Safety, Respect, and Inclusion

The MFT program's definition of safety and policy on creating a safe climate in the classroom is:

> Safety is the ability to express self without fear of reprisal. Within the classroom and clinic, faculty and students will not discriminate based on students' race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, or worldview. Safety does not include freedom from discomfort, as students grow through challenging experiences, which may cause discomfort.

Technology Requirements for the Classroom and Clinic

Each faculty member will establish and include in their syllabus a technology policy for their courses. Students are expected to have basic computer skills. While not required, it is strongly encouraged that each student obtain a laptop to use during the program. Computers are available in the Marriage and Family Institute for clinical work and in the library for papers and class projects.

Students are also responsible for ensuring that they handle clinical information in a secure way. For this reason, student-therapists shall not use their ACU email to contact clients because our email is part of the larger ACU email system, but may use the clinic's HIPPA-complaint account (currently Hushmail). Additionally, student-therapists are responsible for doing their electronic record entries in a place in which others might not see the information, and are responsible for ensuring that in observing cases or reviewing video that doors to the observation areas are closed and the sound mufflers are turned on to protect privacy. Additionally, student-therapists will be required to follow the Standard VI guidelines of the AAMFT Code of Ethics in using technology related to clinical material and the federal HIPAA Standards.

Technology Training

Training in using our electronic records system, as well as the equipment for observing and recording sessions in the clinic will be delivered in the internship course sequence. Also, there is support in the Library for learning about how to use technology more resourcefully and Team 55 in the library is available to assist with personal computer issues. The program is committed to ensuring that program faculty, staff, supervisors, and students are aware of training opportunities in technologies that support our program. Faculty and Supervisor should also utilize these resources for their technology training needs.

Running and Screaming from the Building Policy

Although faculty generally recommends almost stoic control of one's emotions, faculty also recognizes that there are times it is entirely appropriate to run screaming from the building. These times include: a bear attack, sharknados, the apocalypse, Beyonce in the Quad, and finishing your thesis. Using the formal complaint and request policy, students may petition for other exceptions.

Program Assessment Plan

The program formally assesses itself using the mechanisms and timeline in the table below. Survey descriptions are in the second table.

Target	Mechanism	Timeline
Program Goals	Graduate Student Survey COI Survey Alumni Survey	Summer Summer Winter/Summer
Student Learning Outcomes	Varies	Summer
Graduate Achievement	Alumni Survey	Winter/Summer
Student Support Services	Graduate Student Survey	Summer
Teaching/Learning	Graduate Student Survey	Summer
Fiscal/Physical Resources	Graduate Student Survey	Summer
Technological Resources	Graduate Student Survey	Summer
Climate and Safety	Graduate Student Survey Program Director Survey	Summer Summer
Program Director	Graduate Student Survey Program Director Survey	Summer

Assessment	Population	Data Collection Strategy	Analysis & Review
Graduate Student Survey	Graduating Students	Multiple choice and short answer anonymous survey via Google Forms	Faculty, staff, supervisors, and deans review at pre-session (or earlier) and brainstorm ideas for improving underperforming areas.
Alumni Survey	Graduates for the last 3 years	Multiple choice and short answer survey via Google Forms	Data is collected in winter for COAMFTE Annual Report and analyzed and reviewed at pre-session (or earlier) by faculty, staff, supervisors, and deans and ideas are brainstormed for improving underperforming areas.
COI Survey	Licensure, internship, and site supervisors, doctoral faculty, and employers	Multiple choice and short answer anonymous survey via Google Forms	Faculty, staff, supervisors, and deans review at pre-session (or earlier) and brainstorm ideas for improving underperforming areas.
Program Director Survey	Faculty, staff, supervisors, deans	Multiple choice and short answer anonymous survey via Google Forms	Program Director and deans review and brainstorm ideas for improving underperforming areas.

Post-Graduation Information

Alumni Survey

We want to know about your post-graduation successes so that we can assess the program effectiveness and adjust as necessary. As such we will send you an Alumni Survey for three years post-graduation that will collect the following information:

1. If you have or have not passes the AMFTRB exam
2. Your licensure status
3. Your employment status
4. Your perception of the MFT Program and how well it prepares graduates for careers as MFTs.
5. We will also ask your permission to speak with your employer/supervisor for feedback about the program's strengths and weaknesses in preparing people for the workplace and/or include a link for you to send to your employer/supervisor/graduate advisor.

Additionally, the program may look at directory information published by licensure boards and the AAMFT membership list to ascertain the licensure status and AAMFT membership of our graduates.

Licensure in Texas

Step 1: Apply to take the AMFTRB licensure exam through the TSBEMFT website by mid-March. If you plan to pursue licensure elsewhere, apply through that state's licensure board. You must take the exam in the state you plan to be licensed in. Although you can transfer your scores, it is very expensive.

Things to know:

- If you plan to pursue licensure in Texas, you can apply online or via mail. If you apply online, the cost is $137 and covers the application fee ($47) and the initial license fee ($90). You are technically applying for your LMFT Associates license and the board is granting you permission to take the exam.
- Even if you apply online, you still must send in documentation including the Jurisprudence Exam certificate, Form VII (Examination Security Information Acknowledgement Form), and your photo ID.
- You must take the Jurisprudence Exam to get permission to take the licensure exam. The cost is $40.
- Things you do not need to send EVER:
  - We have already sent the Board a letter verifying enrollment.
  - You also do not need to send in Form I, since your degree is COAMFTE accredited.
- Things you do not need to send RIGHT NOW, but will need to send LATER if you are seeking licensure in Texas:
  - Transcript showing a conferred degree
  - Form VI Supervised Clinical Practicum Supervision & Experience Verification Form
  - Form III Supervisory Agreement Form
- There is a sample application in this Google Folder.

- After the board approves for you to take the licensure exam, they will send you a letter with a pin code and instructions.

Step 2: Once you have permission from TSBEMFT, sign up to take the AMFTRB exam at www.ptcny.com. Plan to take the exam in the June or July window (July is usually better so you aren't prepping for comps and the exam at the same time).

Things to know:

- I highly recommend visiting the AMFTRB website to about the application process and test procedures and content. Here is a handy pdf, too.
- It takes two to three weeks after the close of the testing window for TSBEMFT to get your results. Then they will mail you an "upgrade letter" and then you must submit your transcript and other documents. Then it takes several weeks for them to process your application for LMFT Associate. In other words, June or July is the best time to take the exam if you want to be licensed around October.
- The exam is $355!!!!!

Step 3: Study, study, study and then rock socks on the exam!

Things to know:

- Review the content areas listed on the AMFTRB website
- Things to study:
    - AAMFT Code of Ethics
    - Theory-based textbook like Gehart's treatment planning book—be familiar with the language and concepts of the model and how to APPLY them. I recommend that you apply the models to your clients.
    - Genogram symbols and practice reading them
    - Statistics terms, like t-test, independent/dependent variables, validity, reliability, etc.
    - GST definitions assignment from Milholland's class
- Often there will be two right answers, but you will need to choose the BEST answer
- There are apps, practice exams, and courses you can take

Step 4: After graduation, apply for your LMFT Associate license through the TSBEMFT (or in whatever state you are pursuing licensure).

Things to know if you are applying in Texas:

- After graduation, mail to the board:
    - $90 license fee (unless you applied to take the licensing exam online, then you already paid it)
    - An official transcript showing that your degree has been conferred
    - Form VI Supervised Clinical Practicum Supervision & Experience Verification Form (you get this from Teri)
    - Form III Supervisory Agreement Form (find a supervisor even if you do not have a job yet).
    - A copy of your supervisor's license.

If you are not applying in Texas, visit the AMFTRB website for a link to each state's licensing board.

Step 5: Wait. You cannot practice therapy until you have your license.

Things to know:

- You cannot practice therapy or count hours until you have your license. Sometimes we do things that can count as hours, but that you do not need a license to do (e.g., BIPP classes, premarital counseling, case management). If you do these things before you have a license, YOU CANNOT count the hours.

Step 6: Once you have your license, supervisor, and job, go live the dream, accrue hours, and be an awesome, effective, ethical, and diversity-respecting therapist! Also, get liability insurance if you go into practice on your own. And get CEUs!

Things to know:

- If you work at an agency, they often provide insurance, so you will not need your own policy. Having your own policy can be added protection, though. If you do get insurance, CP&H is a pretty common provider.
- As an LMFT Associate, you must get 15 hours of continuing education every two years, three of which must be ethics.
- Even though it isn't required, join TAMFT, NCFR, or other local, state, or national professional organization. Find ways to connect to other MFTs and get CEUs.
- You must wait at least 24- months to apply for full licensure (meaning you must renew at least once as a LMFT-Associate in Texas).
- If you change supervisors, you must let TSBEMFT know or those hours may not count.
- Log your direct, indirect, and supervision hours and have your supervisor sign them each week. If your supervisor dies and they have not documented your hours, your hours may not count.
- You must get supervision every week you see clients unless there is good cause shown. If you miss a week of supervision, document it on your log.

Step 7: Once you have the required hours, apply for full licensure and keep changing the world!

Things to know if you apply in Texas:

- You will have to take the jurisprudence exam again
- You must have renewed your LMFT Associate license at least once
- Things to submit:
    - Another application
    - Another $90
    - Jurisprudence exam certificate
    - Form VI (unless you submitted it previously)
    - Form V Supervisory Experience Documentation Form for each supervisor.
- Be sure all dates on Form V are correct. Look at the date your licensed was issued and the effective date of your Supervisory Agreement Form (SAF). You cannot count any hours before either of these dates. So, if you signed your SAF on August 31st, started training at your job September 15th, and your license issue date is October 1st, your first day of seeing clients should

be no earlier than October 1st. Likewise, if your license was issued on August 31st, you started training on September 15th, and your SAF was approved on October 1st, your first day of seeing clients should be no earlier than October 1st. Incorrect dates on the Form V is the most common complaint seen by the licensing committee.

Licensure in Other States (Portability of Degree)

Although the program meets the academic and clinical requires for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist in Texas, it may not meet the academic and clinical requirements of other states. AMFTRB maintains a list of and links to regulatory board in other states and jurisdictions (https://amftrb.org/state-requirements). Prior to beginning your studies at ACU, we strongly recommend you review in the academic and clinical requirements for your preferred state.

Insurance

Graduates going into private practice should purchase liability insurance and those working for an agency should strongly consider it. Annual costs depend on the amount of coverage and the insurance company. AAMFT members often purchase through CPH & Associates because they get a discount. In making future choices about insurance coverage, you are encouraged to select an "occurrence policy" rather than a "claims made" policy. The following hotlink will explain the differences: http://www.hpso.com/individuals/professional-liability/claims-made-occurrence

TAMFT/AAMFT

Upon graduation, students will need to transfer from student to associate status with TAMFT and AAMFT.

This & That

Additional Costs

In addition to tuition, there are additional costs associated with the program including:

- TAMFT Membership—estimated $50 annually
- TAMFT Conference and Day at the Dome— $500 for conference fees, hotel, lodging, and food. Limited funding may be available. Volunteering for the conference may reduce fees.
- TAMFT Poster-printing fee--$20-$40
- Books—$300 - $500 per semester
- AMFTRB Practice Exam— around $60
- Exam Prep—$150-$300, optional
- Printing/Copying at the Library and interlibrary loans—$0 to $15
- Copying at MFI--.08 cents per page
- Graduate Banquet, optional—$15 first year, free second year
- Additional, optional workshops—estimated $100-$1000
- Career Counseling assessment fee—estimated $60
- Parking Permit—$50

Students are required to join the Texas Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (TAMFT) both years in the program and to attend the TAMFT annual conference Day at the Dome. We encourage students to join other professional organizations in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT) and the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). Failing to join TAMFT or attend the TAMFT conference/Day at the Dome can result in a reduced Internship or Pre-Internship grade.

Students are required to take the AMFTRB practice exam as part of their Comprehensive Exam. During the summer, students are encouraged to enroll in an exam prep course, like Crunch Time Prep, and attend any free exam study sessions offered by faculty.

Class Representatives

In the Fall semester, each class will select a representative for the year. The class representative helps represent students in the governance of the program. Following is a list of duties of the class representative.

First Year Class Representative:

- Attends monthly MFT staff and supervisor meetings and serves as liaison between 1st year students and faculty and staff in these meetings. The program views this as a way the students exercise their voice in the governance of the program, including voicing student concerns/complaints. These concerns and complaint are then discussed by the faculty-supervisors to help facilitate a resolution Note: From time-to-time the class representative will be asked to attend other meetings in which input is needed.

- Works with the MFI Administrative Coordinator to communicate desk coverage needs during the Christmas and Spring Break holidays or upon short notice for such reasons as illness, medical appointments, etc.
- Covers the desk and/or makes arrangements with peers for desk coverage if the person assigned to the desk does not show for desk duty.
- Assists Graduate Assistants with set-up for meetings and special events.
- Brings to the faculty all non-academic issues/concerns on behalf of the 1st year class. Academic issues/concerns should be addressed with the faculty individually or with the Chair of the department.
- Works with 2nd year class representative to coordinate a Q&A panel made up of current students for the Prospective Student Interview weekend.
- Works with the Administrative Coordinator of the department to provide transportation for prospective students (i.e. pick up from the Abilene airport and bring to campus and then back to airport for departure).
- Offers a brief, 5-7 minute message from the first year class to the graduating cohort at the annual Graduation Celebration.

Second Year Class Representative:

- Attends monthly MFT staff and supervisor meetings and serves as liaison between 2nd year students and faculty and staff in these meetings. The program views this as a way the students exercise their voice in the governance of the program, including voicing student concerns/complaints. These concerns and complaints are then discussed by the faculty-supervisors to help facilitate a resolution. From time-to-time the class representative will be asked to attend other meetings in which input is needed.
- Assists Graduate Assistants with set-up for meetings and special events.
- Brings to the faculty all non-academic issues/concerns on behalf of the 2nd year class. Academic issues should be addressed with the faculty individually or with the Chair of the department.
- Works with the MFI Administrative Coordinator to cover the desk when the 1st year students are in class. Will also arrange desk coverage in emergency situations when the 1st year class cannot be available for regular desk coverage.
- Works with the 1st year class representative to coordinate a Q&A panel made up of current students for the Prospective Student Interview weekend.
- Works with the Administrative Coordinator of the department to provide transportation for prospective students (i.e. pick up from the Abilene airport and bring to the campus and then back to the airport for departure).
- Offers a brief, 5-7 minute message to his/her colleagues in the graduating cohort at the annual Graduation Celebration.

Department Calendar

The Department maintains a Google calendar titled MFI Intern Calendar. Please accept your invitation to the calendar and refer to it for important dates and meetings throughout the year. The table below includes important dates and clinic closures. In addition to these events, the Department hosts a monthly, mandatory Intern Meeting on the first Tuesday from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Failing to attend the Intern Meeting may reduce your Internship or Pre-Internship grade. See Department Calendar for dates. The Department also holds a monthly Supervisors Meeting on the 3rd Tuesday from 11:30 AM to 12:30 45 PM, which the Class Representative attends. If students have concerns they want addressed in the meeting, they need to make them known prior to the meeting.

Holiday or Conference	Dates	Class?	MFI Open or Closed ?
AAMFT, Online	November 12-15	No	Open
Labor Day	September 7	Yes	Open
Summit	September 20-23	Determined by faculty	Open
Fall Break	Cancelled ☹	Yes	Open
NCFR, Online	November 11-13	Determined by faculty	Open
Thanksgiving	November 25 – 27	No	Closed
Christmas & New Year's	December 24 – January 2	No	Closed
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 18	No	Closed
TAMFT, Austing	March 4-6	No	Closed
Spring Break	March 8– 11	No	Open
Spring Break Fri & Sat	March 12 – 13	No	Closed
Easter	April 2-3	No	Closed
Memorial Day	May 31	No	Closed
Independence Day	July 4-5	No	Closed

Graduate Assistantships/Student Workers

In the spring semester of each year, MFT students are eligible to apply for graduate assistantships within the department. Students will be notified of the application due date. Each full-time faculty member will select her or his own GA and selections will be named by the end of the spring semester. Graduate assistants' tasks will vary depending on the needs of the faculty but will include:

- Setting up meetings and special events
- Working with the department administrative coordinator to assist with prospective student interview housing and meals
- Transporting the ACU/MFI display to the TAMFT conference
- May include working the MFI front desk

Resource Room

Students are encouraged to use the Resource Room to supplement their academic and clinical pursuits. Materials in the resource room are to be used in the resource room. If you wish to make a copy of the material, you must do so in the MFI reception office. Copies should be paid for at the time they are made (8¢ per copy). Department majors have priority access to the resource materials. Supervision sessions and faculty meetings have priority use of the room. You may reserve the Resource Room through the Department Coordinator.

Program Diversity

COAMFTE requires the program to provide and publish a description of diversity within the program each year. The MFT program defines diversity as the representation of diverse, minority or marginalized races, ethnicities, religions, classes, genders and sexualities.

Faculty Diversity 2020-2021 Academic Year

- Three Caucasian faculty members (two core and one part-time) and one Latina faculty member (core)
- Three core female faculty and one part-time male faculty
- Four Christian faculty members representing Presbyterian and Baptist churches
- Four heterosexual, cisgender faculty (three core and one part-time)

Non-Faculty Supervisors 2020-2021 Academic Year

- Two male and two female supervisors
- Four Caucasian supervisors
- Four Christian supervisors representing Churches of Christ
- Four heterosexual, cisgender faculty

Student Diversity 2020-2021 Academic Year

- Nine male and 15 female students, all cisgender
- Two African American/Black, three Hispanic, one Asian/Pacific Islander, and 18 Caucasian students
- Christian and non-Christian faiths are represented among students
- No students openly define themselves as a sexual minority

All About the Faculty

Faculty Bios

Lisa Merchant, PhD, LMFT is the Director of the Marriage and Family Therapy program and Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Studies. She is an AAMFT Clinical Fellow and is an AAMFT Approved Supervision. She is a graduate of the MMFT program at ACU and completed her PhD in MFT at Texas Tech. Dr. Merchant is a seasoned clinician and currently directs a BIPP program in Abilene. Her research is focused in the area of domestic violence and she loves fish tacos.

Lisa Powell, PhD, LMFT-S is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Marriage and Family Studies and Director of the Marriage and Family Institute. She earned her PhD from Amridge University in Montgomery, Alabama in Marriage and Family Therapy. Lisa also works in private practice where she treats families and couples with her therapy dog, Luke. Her areas of research interests include pet therapy and therapy with non-traditional couples and families. Lisa has presented at regional and national conferences on non-traditional family counseling topics and the #MeToo movement.

Joanna Mendez-Pounds, PhD, LMFT is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Marriage and Family Studies. She earned her masters and doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy from Texas Tech University. She has worked extensively with child victims of sexual assault and her research interests include Dreamer and immigrant families. She is an AAMFT Supervisor Candidate.

Michael Pounds, PhD, LMFT is an adjunct professor in the Marriage and Family Studies program at Abilene Christian University. He received his B.S. in Psychology from Oklahoma Christian University, his M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy from Texas Tech University, and his Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy from Texas Tech University. Dr. Pounds has worked as a licensed marriage and family therapist in such settings as the Counseling Center at TTUHSC where he treated clients suffering from a variety of presenting problems, and in private practice treating couples struggling with affairs. He is married to his wife, Dr. Joanna Mendez-Pounds, and they enjoy spending time with their cats and dogs, working on home improvement projects, and connecting with friends.

Faculty Roles

Sometimes it is difficult for students to know who to see when there are concerns about the program or the clinic. This brief description is designed to help students know where to direct their questions. Dr. Merchant is the Department Chair and Program Director and she oversees all aspects of the MFT Program and the undergraduate Child and Family Studies program. She is responsible for the budget, the academic portion of the program, and oversees the faculty and supervisors work. Ultimately, she is responsible for overseeing the operations of the MFT program and the MFI. She is tasked with the responsibility of maintaining the program's quality and also tasked with enhancing the program as needed. Academic concerns and concerns about program policies and purchases should be brought to Dr. Merchant. Dr. Merchant works on a 12-month contract.

Dr. Powel as the Clinical Director oversees the day-to-day functioning of the clinic and as the Clinical Director is the one who has been delegated the responsibility for making decisions about student requests for time away from the clinic, in collaboration with the Internship Supervisor for the student. Dr. Powell does the hands-on management of the clinic and is the person to report concerns about the clinic to and is the first person to contact if your supervisor is not available, except on the on-call evenings when a faculty member is in the clinic (Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday). Dr. Powell works on a 12-month contract.

As a rule of thumb, if the concern is an academic program one, a policy one, a concern about the sufficiency of resources, or related to budget, these concerns should come to Dr. Merchant. Concerns about the MFI and about client concerns should go to Dr. Powell (after speaking with your supervisor).

Supporting the Mission

The faculty of the MFT program at ACU support the mission of ACU, the mission of the program, and the mission of the MFI. Every faculty member is expected to be a missional fit for the university's mission, as a Christian university. Each full-time faculty member in the program establishes goals each year in teaching, scholarship, and service. Students have an opportunity to evaluate the instruction in courses provided by faculty and also have an opportunity to evaluate their Internship supervisors at the end of each semester. Faculty are dedicated to strong teaching, as this is an important component of helping students achieve the student learning outcomes that are connected to the six program goals. Each faculty member engages in research and also serve as mentors for student research projects and thesis committee members, which is part of the program's dedication to a culture of research. Faculty service to the university, community, profession, and the church all create opportunities for them to use their experience and talents to enhance the lives of others. These service activities also often enhance their abilities to serve as better teachers, supervisors, and research mentors in the program. Each faculty member is required to be clinically active, and to maintain MFT licensure, AAMFT Membership, and to be AAMFT Approved Supervisors or AAMFT Approved Supervision candidates.

The supervisors in the MFI also play a critical role in helping the program accomplish the program goals and students to achieve the student learning outcomes. It is no accident that several program goals have a student learning outcome that is measured by the Internship IV Individual Supervision Evaluation form. Supervisors serve to guide you on your journey toward eventually becoming a licensed MFT. Each of our supervisors in the MFI are required to be licensed MFTs in Texas, to be members of AAMFT, and to be AAMFT Approved Supervisors or AAMFT Approved Supervision candidates. They also are required to be a missional fit for the university's mission, as a Christian university.

Achievement Table

Below is the official template that programs should use to disclose their program's COAMFTE Student Achievement Criteria Data in accordance with the Accreditation Standards Version 12. Programs are required to publish data on all of the required Student Achievement Criteria set by the Commission per cohort on an annual basis on the landing page of their program's website. The information must be clearly labeled and identifiable on the program's home page and provide all of the required information.

COAMFTE Student Achievement Criteria Data for Abilene Christian University **Accredited: August 1, 1983** **Advertised Program Length*: 24 months**						
Cohort Year Students Entered Program*	**# of Students in Program**	**Advertised Graduation Rate (%)****	**Maximum Graduation Rate (%)*****		**Job Placement Rate (%)*******	**National Exam Pass Rate (%)*********
	FT	**FT**			**FT**	**FT**
2010-2011	14	100			100	80
2011-2012	23	96			100	95
2012-2013	21	90			100	100
2013-2014	23	96			95	100
2014-2015	19	84			100	87
2015-2016	18	94			100	94
2016-2017	18	94			100	62
2017-2018	14	100			100	75
2018-2019	12	In process			In process	In process
2019-2020	14	In process			In process	In process

FT=Full-time
PT=Part-time
*Programs are only required to provide data on the past 10 years/cohort or since the program was initial accredited, whichever is shorter.
** Programs should report graduation rates for program's Advertised Length of Completion which is how long the program is designed to complete as written.
***Programs can enter graduation rates for program's Maximum Length of Completion which is the maximum allowable time in which a student could finish the program
**** Masters and Doctoral programs are required to provide this information. Job Placement Rates by cohort is defined as the percentage of graduates from the cohort year listed that are employed utilizing skills learned in the COAMFTE accredited program. Job Placement rates are calculated using the following data:

- # of graduates that reported their employment status to the program
- # of graduates, who entered in the year listed, that are employed utilizing skills learned in the COAMFTE accredited program

***** Master programs are required to provide this information. Doctoral and Post-Degree programs are encouraged to share this with the public. For Master's programs only, COAMFTE has established a benchmark of 70% pass rate for each cohort. Programs in California can use the California Law and Ethics exam for MFTs to meet this requirement.