

School of **Social and Family Dynamics**



# **GRADUATE HANDBOOK: Master's of Advanced Studies In Marriage & Family Therapy**

## **GUIDE TO GRADUATE PROGRAM PROCEDURES**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DYNAMICS**

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**School Homepage: <http://www.asu.edu/clas/ssfd>.**

**Graduate College Homepage: <http://www.asu.edu/graduate/>.**

**Graduate College Catalog On-Line:**

**<http://www.asu.edu/aad/catalogs/graduate/>.**

**Graduate College On-Line Application:**

**<https://www-sec.asu.edu/default.sph/gradappmain.class>.**

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**\*Please note: This handbook is subject to change to maintain compliance with the university's Graduate College policies and procedures.**

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## **MAS-MFT Program Objectives**

The purpose of this self-contained accelerated program is to provide high quality coursework and supervised internship/practicum<sup>1</sup> experiences that meet the degree requirements for licensure in the State of Arizona to practice marriage and family therapy as determined and set forth by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners – <http://azbbhe.us/>. The degree requirements are specified by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners; the MAS-MFT program is designed to train practitioners who wish to practice marriage and family therapy.

This 39-semester hour<sup>2</sup> program will prepare the student to:

1. Use appropriate written, verbal, and nonverbal communication skills with therapy clients and professionals.
2. Apply ethics to marriage and family therapy incorporating the rules and regulations of the profession, critical thinking, and compassion.
3. Conduct marriage and family therapy with clients of diverse backgrounds based upon an awareness and appreciation of diversity.
4. Apply knowledge of Systems Theory into practice.
5. Apply knowledge of marriage and family therapy models to practice.
6. Provide reasoning in support of diagnosis and treatment interventions.
7. Complete the educational requirements for MFT licensure eligibility in Arizona as defined by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners (BBHE).

Faculty: Courses are taught by state-licensed marriage and family therapists.

## **Admission to the MAS-MFT Program/Program Requirements**

1. **Submit Graduate College Application.** The first step in applying to a graduate program at Arizona State University (ASU) is completing the application to the Graduate College at ASU and submitting all application materials cited in the Graduate Catalog. To apply: <http://graduate.asu.edu/admissions/>.
2. **Assemble the following materials.** Supplemental materials may be submitted electronically: letters of recommendation, resume/vita, and personal goal statement.

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<sup>1</sup> "Internship" is defined as the clinical placement at a community mental health agency approved by the MAS-MFT faculty. "Practicum" is defined as the MAS-MFT program class in which a student must be registered and enrolled for the entire duration of the internship.

<sup>2</sup> If a student does not complete the required total of 300 direct client contact hours by semester's end in December of year two, the student will be required to register for additional semester hours of practicum in order to complete the internship/practicum. The number of semester hours will depend on the size of the deficiency and will be determined by MAS-MFT faculty.

- a. **Resume/Vita** – Current Resume or Vita. Please include educational history, academic honors, awards/scholarships/fellowships, publications, membership in professional organizations, volunteer activities, and employment history.
  - b. **Letters of Recommendation.** Three letters of recommendation, including at least one from an undergraduate instructor. Letters from employers, supervisors or other professional mentors are also acceptable, but letters from friends or family are not.
  - c. **Personal Goal Statement.** In three pages or less (double-spaced) please describe the following:
    - i. What has lead to your decision to apply to this MFT Program?
    - ii. What are your professional goals and aspirations?
    - iii. What are the strengths you have that will help you succeed in this program?
    - iv. What, if any, clinical and/or research experiences do you have (either paid or volunteer)?
  - d. **Other.**
    - i. **Foreign Language Requirements.** None, except when English is not the student's primary language, in which case TOEFL scores must be submitted to demonstrate proficiency in English. Contact the Graduate College directly about this requirement.
    - ii. **Thesis Requirements.** None.
    - iii. **GRE Scores.** GRE scores are waived for this program and are not taken into consideration as an admission criterion.
    - iv. **Transportation.** For the internship/practicum, students are required to have a vehicle, a valid Arizona driver's license, and proof of current automobile insurance, which must be maintained for the duration of the internship/practicum in accordance with Arizona law.
3. **Admission and Denial Criteria.** No single criterion will serve as the sole basis for admission or denial to the MAS-MFT program. Criteria for admission will include:
- a. Admission to ASU's Graduate College, including the minimum GPA requirement.
  - b. Evidence of outstanding academic and clinical potential from previous academic record, and previous field-related work and/or volunteer experience as addressed in the applicant's personal statement and letters of recommendation.
  - c. Professional goals which are compatible with the MAS-MFT program.

- d. Ability to pass a background check per the applicant's report: background checks are required by all internship site placements; individuals with felonies and/or certain misdemeanors on their record will not satisfactorily pass a background check in accordance with agency requirements. Internship sites may also require a Motor Vehicle Record from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Applicants who have concerns about their ability to pass a background check are encouraged to contact the State of Arizona's Department of Public Safety at: <http://az.gov/>. For concerns about Motor Vehicle Records, contact the State of Arizona's Department of Motor Vehicles at: <http://az.gov/>.
  - e. For international students, proficiency in English as demonstrated by satisfactory TOEFL scores as required by the Graduate College.
  - f. Three letters of recommendation
  - g. Successful completion of an interview with MAS-MFT faculty.
4. **Application Outcomes** will be one of the following:
- a. **Regular Admission** is granted when the applicant meets the criteria of satisfactory grade point average, adequate field-related work and/or volunteer experience, favorable letters of recommendation and a successful interview when enrollment limits have not been met.
  - b. **Provisional Admission** is granted either when the applicant has less than a satisfactory academic record but shows potential for high achievement as a graduate student as evidenced by strong letters of recommendation, or the applicant meets the criteria for regular admission but has had insufficient preparation for the designated area for the graduate study. In such cases, the conditions for admission are stated in the letter of acceptance. The student must meet these stated conditions prior to advancement to regular status. **The student is responsible for initiating a change in graduate classification after the conditions of provisional admission have been fulfilled.** If the conditions for admission are not met within one semester of the student's admission the student will be asked to withdrawal from the program. Students who are dropped from the program may reapply for admittance when they can present evidence that the conditions have been met. Presentation of such evidence does not guarantee re-admittance.
  - c. **Admission is denied** when either the student does not meet the requirements for admission, the student does not rank sufficiently high to be selected for available slots and/or it is deemed that the graduate program fails to match the applicant's needs, goals and interests.
  - d. **Deferred admissions** are not available for this program.

## 5. Additional Requirements/Considerations

- a. **Financial Information**, including tuition, program fees, and residency status. Students pay graduate tuition (in-state or out-of-state), fees, and a per-semester-hour program fee of \$475 for each of the 39 semester hours. Residency status is determined by the Graduate College. Because this is an applied accelerated program, assistantships and other internal funding are not available. Students are encouraged to pursue scholarships or other forms of financial aid independently. **All questions about tuition, financial aid, tuition payment schedules and residency status should be directed to the Graduate College at: <http://graduate.asu.edu/>.**
- b. **External Employment**. Because of the demands of any accelerated clinical graduate program, students can expect to accommodate, **at most**, flexible part-time employment while enrolled in the program. Both coursework and internship/practicum require that students be available during week-day hours for the duration of the program.
- c. **Clinical Employment**. Any clinical employment or nonpaid work experience outside the primary internship placement will **not count** toward the degree requirements. Under no circumstances will the university assume any liability for any work, paid or unpaid, outside of the parameters of the pre-approved internship placement.
  - i. **Background Check**. Although ASU will not conduct a background check, applicants need to be aware that potential internship sites will. Potential interns will need to be able to obtain a state-issued Fingerprint Clearance Card. Any felonies and/or certain misdemeanors in an applicant's or student's background will make them ineligible to receive a Fingerprint Clearance Card and/or work at an approved internship site and thus be unable to complete the program. Applicants who have concerns about passing a background check must address their concerns with MAS-MFT faculty during the application process and should contact the State of Arizona's Department of Public Safety at: <http://az.gov/>. Any student who fails a background check or whose Fingerprint Clearance card is denied or revoked will be ineligible to begin or continue their internship and will be recommended for withdrawal from the MAS-MFT program. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this

circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

- d. **Joining AAMFT/Liability-Malpractice Insurance.** Every MAS-MFT student must carry liability-malpractice insurance (available as a no-cost membership benefit through membership with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) student membership. Thus, students are required to join AAMFT and maintain membership for the duration of the program. A copy of the liability-malpractice insurance certificate must be submitted to MAS-MFT faculty before a student will be cleared to register for Practicum and begin to see clients. Information about becoming a student member of AAMFT can be found at: <http://www.aamft.org/>. Students are encouraged to join AAMFT as early in the program as possible and must maintain their liability coverage for the duration of the internship .

## **MAS-MFT Program Policies**

### **1. Timelines and Coursework**

- a. **Coursework.** A Master's of Advanced Studies in Marriage & Family Therapy is a cohort-based, program that requires the successful completion of a minimum of 39 semester hours, including required coursework and completion of 300 direct client contact hours in a community internship placement approved by the MAS-MFT faculty. The program is self-contained, which means that only the students admitted to this program will be permitted to register for and attend the MAS-MFT classes. Classes outside this program cannot be used to meet the requirements for this degree i.e. there are no elective courses, and courses taken elsewhere, either within ASU or at another institution, cannot be transferred or substituted for any of the courses required for this degree. Courses must be taken in the established course sequence, and students are expected to complete all program requirements with the rest of the cohort (see the Course Schedule on page 19). Courses, with the exception of Practicum, will meet twice each week during daytime hours, for eight weeks (except for Summer Semesters, which follow the university's five-week format). Practicum will follow a sixteen-week semester format, with the exception of Summer Semester, which is eight weeks.
  - i. **Registration Requirements.** All graduate students enrolled in the MAS-MFT program (including students who are taking the required

cohort-based course sequence and/or Practicum) must be registered for a minimum of one hour of appropriate graduate level credit in the department/school in which they are pursuing their degree program. According to the Graduate College, a graduate student who does not enroll at any point during one calendar year (Fall/Spring semesters) is automatically withdrawn from their program.

- ii. **Leave of Absence.** Graduate students may request a Leave of Absence from the Graduate College not to exceed two consecutive semesters, including summer. If a student does request of Leave of Absence and is granted a leave, the student will have to wait to repeat the course(s) missed the next time that particular course(s) is/are offered, typically one year later. See page 19 of this handbook for additional information in the event that practicum is interrupted by a Leave of Absence.

- 1. Students who take an unapproved leave of absence from the program will be considered as withdrawn. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn wishes to return, he or she must reapply for consideration for readmission.

- iii. **Program Completion.** Students who do not successfully complete all of the program requirements within these timelines and for whom an exception has not been granted will be given a deficiency notice first and a deadline for completing all requirements. If the student does not comply with the deadline outlined in the deficiency notice, the student will be recommended for withdrawal from the master's program. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

- b. **Internship/practicum** is expected to begin in January of the student's first year in the program and last for approximately 12 months. Exceptions must be approved by the MAS-MFT faculty and the head of the academic unit. (See page 19 for additional information about internship/practicum interruption.)

- 2. **Maintaining Satisfactory Progress.** Satisfactory academic progress is indicated by course grades as well as by clinical competence and professional conduct.



- a. **Course Grades.** Graduate students are required to maintain a minimum of 3.0 GPA in (a) all coursework taken for graduate credit (courses numbered 500 or higher) (Graduate GPA); (b) all coursework in the student's approved program of study (Program of Study GPA); and (c) all coursework taken at ASU post baccalaureate (Overall GPA).
- i. If any of the Graduate GPA, the Program of Study GPA, or the Overall GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation and will receive a deficiency notice from the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
  - ii. The student will be required to raise the Graduate GPA, the Program of Study GPA, and the Overall GPA to a minimum of 3.00 in one semester.<sup>3</sup> The exception to this rule concerns the two required classes taken during the first eight-week semester of the program: FAS 570 – Introduction to Marriage & Family Therapy and FAS 581 – Professional Issues & Ethics. Students who fail to earn the minimum GPA of 3.0 during the first eight-week semester and/or students who fail to earn a grade of B or better for either of these courses will be recommended for immediate withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
  - iii. If the student fails to raise the Graduate GPA, the Program of Study GPA, and the Overall GPA to a minimum of 3.0 within the allotted time as defined in the preceding section, the student will receive a letter from the Graduate Committee notifying him/her that he/she will be recommended for withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

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<sup>3</sup> Semesters in the MAS-MFT program are eight weeks in the fall and spring semesters, and five weeks in the summer. Practicum runs on a 16-week semester (spring and fall) and on an eight-week semester (summer) concurrent with the community internship.

- b. **Incomplete Grades.** A MAS-MFT student cannot accumulate more than two incompletes at any given time while completing a graduate program of study.
  - i. If a student accumulates three or more incompletes at any given time, the student will be placed on academic probation and receive a deficiency notice from the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
  - ii. The student will be required to complete all incompletes within one semester (note: for classes within the 8-week semester format, the incomplete must be completed within the next 8 weeks).
    - 1. If the student fails to complete all incompletes within one semester, the student will receive a letter from the MAS-MFT Graduate Committee notifying him/her that he/she will be recommended for withdrawal from the program.
    - 2. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
- c. **Clinical Competence and Professional Conduct.** All students admitted to the MAS-MFT program are subject to the general standards of academic good standing of the university. Academic standards alone, however, do not necessarily guarantee that a student will graduate from the program. Because students obtaining a clinical master's degree are placed in positions of dealing with the public, including the internship site supervisors and staff, other mental health and social service professionals, and clients, they must also demonstrate the requisite qualifications for successful professional performance including sound mental health, interpersonal skills, basic communication skills and appropriate professional conduct:
  - i. Students must follow the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics (see Appendix D; also available online at <http://www.aamft.org/>.) In addition, students are required to follow the policies and protocols specific to each of their respective internship sites, and to satisfactorily meet the expectations of the agency supervising their internship. Each internship site will have its own written policies and procedures,

which the site supervisor will review with the student at the start of the internship.

- ii. MAS-MFT faculty will check in with internship site supervisors informally on a monthly basis to inquire whether any concerns about any of the assigned students have arisen. If any concerns are identified, the MAS-MFT faculty, in consultation with the site supervisor, will determine how to proceed; the next step would typically include a meeting with the MAS-MFT faculty and the student.
- iii. To formally assess students' adherence to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and to the policies and protocols of the internship site, the student's internship supervisor(s) will complete an evaluation twice during the internship (see the Internship Evaluation, Appendix C for the evaluation domains).
- iv. If any ratings of "inconsistent" or "unacceptable" are given by the internship supervisor(s), the MAS-MFT faculty will meet with the student and the internship supervisor. The MAS-MFT faculty and internship supervisor(s) will devise an action plan for the student to meet the requirements of a satisfactory standard. All parties will sign the action plan and a deadline for complying with the requirements will be specified.
- v. If the student does not comply with the action plan and the deadline, the student will be recommended for withdrawal from the master's program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
- vi. Classroom Behavior. All students are expected to comply with the university's Code of Student Conduct (available online at <http://students.asu.edu/srr>). In addition, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting appropriate clinical demeanor. Examples of inappropriate behavior include an aggressive and/or raised tone of voice, an implied or real threat against another, a hostile demeanor, or an implied or stated disrespect toward another. MAS-MFT faculty will meet with any student demonstrating these or other disruptive behaviors to determine an appropriate course of action. If a student fails to

remedy these behaviors or refuses to cooperate in devising a plan to remedy the behaviors, the student will be recommended for withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

3. **Comprehensive Exam.** Prior to starting the interview process for an internship placement, students must complete and pass the Comprehensive Examination. The purpose of the examination is to ensure that students are able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and fluency with MFT theoretical, research, ethics and application concepts in order to be adequately prepared to begin clinical work. Exams will be written. MAS-MFT faculty reserves the right to amend the written exam with an oral exam when deemed necessary in order to evaluate the student's knowledge and competency.
  - a. **Eligibility to take the Comprehensive Examination.** To be eligible to take the comprehensive exam, the student must:
    - i. Receive a grade of B or better in **each** of the first two classes, FAS 570 – Introduction to Marriage & Family Therapy, and FAS 581 – Professional Issues & Ethics.
    - ii. Demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior (see preceding section).
      1. Students who are ineligible to take the Comprehensive Examination (see preceding section) will be recommended for immediate withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
  - b. **Outcome of the Comprehensive Examination.** Students who are eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination will do so following the conclusion of the first eight-week semester. Students taking the exam will earn one of the following outcomes:
    - i. **Passed:** A score of 80% or greater in **each and both** exam areas of theory and ethics.

1. Students who earn a “Pass” on the Comprehensive Examination will be eligible to interview for an internship placement at an approved local site beginning in January and continuing for 12 months or until the student completes the required 300 hours of direct client contact.
- ii. **Passed with Conditions:** A score between 70-80% in **either or both** exam areas of theory and ethics.
  1. Students who receive a “Pass with Conditions” will meet with MAS-MFT faculty within one week of the original exam date to receive feedback and will be given **one** opportunity to remediate their exam to bring their overall score in **each and both** exam areas of theory and ethics to a minimum score of 80%. If the score is not raised to the required level after one remediation attempt, the student will be judged to have failed the exam.
- iii. **Failed:** A score of less than 70% in **either or both** exam areas of theory and ethics.
  1. Students failing the exam will not be permitted to begin interviewing for an internship placement and will be recommended for immediate withdrawal from the MAS-MFT program. A student may appeal actions concerning dismissal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

#### 4. Clinical Internship/Practicum

- a. **Approved internship sites** are selected by MAS-MFT faculty. Sites are located locally throughout the Metro Phoenix and surrounding areas. All students will be supervised by a state-credentialed, licensed marriage and family therapist. Additionally, students must have:
  - i. **Their own car.**
  - ii. **A valid Arizona driver’s license** (out-of-state students with a valid driver’s license will be able to obtain an Arizona license once they have moved to Arizona). Internship sites may also require a Motor Vehicle Record from the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles or the equivalent report from the state issuing the student’s current driver’s license. A potential intern who has an unsatisfactory Motor Vehicle Record will be ineligible for internship placement and will be

recommended for withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

- iii. **Proof of current automobile insurance**, which must be maintained for the duration of the internship.
  - iv. **Ability to pass the internship site's background check.** All potential interns must be able to pass a background check for the purposes of obtaining a state-issued Fingerprint Clearance Card. Any student who is unable to pass this check, obtain a Fingerprint Clearance Card and/or whose Fingerprint Clearance Card is revoked will be ineligible to work at the internship site and will be recommended for withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
  - v. **Liability-Malpractice Insurance.** Every MAS-MFT student must carry liability-malpractice insurance for the entire duration of the internship. This insurance is available as a no-cost membership benefit through the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) student membership. A copy of the student's insurance certificate must be submitted to MAS-MFT faculty before a student will be cleared to register for Practicum or start seeing clients. Information about becoming a student member of AAMFT can be found at: <http://www.aamft.org/>. Students are encouraged to join AAMFT as early in the program as possible and must maintain their liability coverage for the duration of the internship.
- b. **Acceptance for an internship placement** is ultimately at the discretion of the internship site supervisor. While MAS-MFT faculty will assist students in preparing for one placement interview, the outcome of the interview is beyond the control of MAS-MFT faculty or of ASU. Students who fail the internship interview will be required to:
- i. Locate their own community internship placement that meets the approval of the MAS-MFT faculty. The student must realize that a

delay in starting the internship will delay their graduation from the program.

- ii. Failure to secure an approved internship placement by the start of the first Spring semester will result in the student needing to drop the practicum course (it is the student's responsibility to stay aware of the university's drop/add deadline dates).
- iii. If the student has not secured an approved internship placement by the start of the first Summer semester, they will be recommended for withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

**c. Enrollment in Practicum.** Practicum runs concurrent with the clinical internship. All students are required to be enrolled in Practicum for the entire duration of the internship (2 semester hours each for Spring, Summer and Fall semester).

**d. Internship/Practicum Attendance.** The internship/practicum places significant time demands on students. Student clinicians registered for clinical practicum are required to spend 10-15 hours during the work week at their internship site, which includes time spent seeing clients in home and in the office, attending supervision sessions, and completing required paperwork and case management responsibilities.

- i. **Practicum meetings.** Practicum meetings with MAS-MFT faculty will be held once a month. Attendance is mandatory. Dates, times and locations for these meetings will be announced at the beginning of each semester.
- ii. **Internship attendance.** The internship is an intensive experience requiring 10-15 hours during the work week at the internship site. Extended vacations or absences of any kind are discouraged. Any absences exceeding 3 business days must be approved in advance by both the internship site supervisor and MAS-MFT faculty. In no instance except a documented emergency will a student be permitted to be absent from the internship longer than 5 business days; only two absences longer than 3 business days will be allowed during the internship. Unapproved absences will result in a reduction of the student's practicum grade for the semester and may place the student at risk for termination from the internship site

and recommended withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.

- e. **Professional Conduct.** Participation in the clinical internship/practicum should be seen as a privilege rather than as a right. It is important to understand that the welfare of the client is just as important as the training needs of the student. Students enrolled in clinical practicum are expected to abide by the American Association of Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT's) Code of Ethics (Appendix D). Violations of the Code of Ethics may result in permanent dismissal from both internship/practicum placement opportunities, and may additionally subject the student to dismissal from the academic degree program. Additionally, strict adherence to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines (<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/privacy.html>) is also essential to protect the privacy and confidentiality of clients being served at internship site clinics.
- f. **Professional Attire.** The student's work at the assigned internship site represents a professional position; as such, the student is representing both ASU and the internship agency. Therefore, it is important that the student's attire reflect that position and level of professionalism. It is recommended that women wear dresses or slacks/skirts and a blouse. Dresses and skirts should be of a professional length. The recommended dress for men is dress slacks or appropriate casual slacks, e.g., khakis. Jeans are not to be worn unless they are accepted on "casual Fridays" per the agency's policy. Shorts, midriff-baring tops, low-cut tops and short dresses or skirts are never acceptable. Students must adhere to the agency policy regarding tattoos and visible body piercings. This dress code is in effect any time the student sees clients or in any way represents the agency or ASU.
- g. **Clinical Internship/Practicum Requirements:**
  - i. **Conduct 300 total hours of therapy.** Students will need 8-10 hours of direct client contact<sup>4</sup> per week for three semesters: Spring,

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<sup>4</sup> Direct client contact is defined as face-to-face (therapist and client) therapy with individuals, couples, and families. Activities such as telephone contact, case planning, observation of therapy without active participation, record keeping, travel, administrative activities, consultation with community members or professionals, or supervision, are not considered direct client contact. Assessments (intakes) may be



Summer and Fall, for a total of a minimum of six credit hours. Meeting this goal requires that the student spend 10-15 hours per week at the internship site during the work week, including work days and some evenings depending on the agency's hours of operation. Note: Students cannot exceed 10 hours of direct client contact per week unless the supervisor is willing and able to provide extra supervision. The supervision/client contact ratio is 1:5; that is, one hour of supervision (either group or individual) for every five hours of direct client contact.

1. **Therapy format.** Students should ensure that at least 150 of the 300 hours is therapy with either couples or families. A maximum of 150 hours can be with individual clients. This will generally not be an issue since internship sites are agencies that mainly serve children and families.
- ii. **Attend weekly supervision.** Students will meet with their clinical supervisor(s) each week. It is the student's responsibility to schedule weekly supervision with the designated supervisor. At least 50% of the supervision hours must be individual supervision (i.e. the student will meet one-on-one with the supervisor). The remaining supervision may be group, where the supervisor meets with several students together.
- iii. **Maintaining a record of supervision and therapy hours.** It is important for the student to keep an ongoing record of all supervision and therapy hours he or she participates in for two reasons: first, when applying for AAMFT Clinical Membership and for state licensure, applicants must document the number of hours and dates when they occurred. Second, prospective employers will want to know how much experience the applicant has had when the applicant applies for professional positions. Therefore, the Internship Reporting Form (see Appendix B) is a monthly requirement. This completed form is to be submitted to the MAS-MFT faculty by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, signed by both the student and their supervisor. The internship agency may have a separate log that must be completed in accordance with agency policy. The supervisor and student should each keep a copy of all signed forms. Reporting forms must accurately reflect the student's therapy and supervision activities. Falsification of any reporting

form is an ethical violation that is subject to the student's dismissal from both the internship/practicum and from the MAS-MFT program.

**h. Continuing in Internship/Practicum.**

- i. Once students have been admitted to internship/practicum, continuing is not automatic, but is decided by the faculty on a semester-by-semester basis and is dependent on the student's performance per the evaluation of the internship supervisor and MAS-MFT faculty. In rare circumstances, students who do not demonstrate sufficient clinical competence, conscientiousness, responsibility, or who commit ethical violations of the AAMFT Code of Ethics (see Appendix D) and/or agency policies may be prohibited from continuing in internship/practicum or in the MAS-MFT program. Students are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures of the MAS-MFT program, the internship agency and the AAMFT Code of Ethics at all times they are representing the agency or ASU in clinical activities that impact client welfare.
  - ii. Completion is also dependent upon the student remaining in good standing with state requirements to keep and maintain a Fingerprint Clearance Card. If a student's Fingerprint Clearance Card is revoked by the state for any reason, the student will not be permitted to continue working at the internship site and will be recommended for withdrawal from the program. A student may appeal actions concerning withdrawal by petitioning the Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics within 10 business days of receiving the withdrawal notice from the Graduate Committee. In this circumstance, student appeals will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee in Family & Human Development.
- i. Completion of Internship/Practicum.** During the semester the student anticipates meeting the required number of client contact hours (typically the Fall semester of Year Two); the student should initiate a meeting with the supervisor to discuss active cases. Clients wishing to continue therapy will need to be transferred to another therapist, which should be determined in consultation with the supervisor in accordance with agency protocol. The student should then schedule a follow-up meeting with MAS-MFT faculty to keep them informed of the internship/practicum completion timeline.
- i. If a student completes the required number of 300 client contact hours early in the final semester, the student must continue the

internship until the end of the semester, including spending 10-15 hours per week at the internship site and completing 8-10 direct client contact hours per week.

- ii. **Practicum interruption.** Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed cohort-based course schedule, including practicum. If circumstances arise necessitating the student to drop out of the program because of a documented emergency and the student is granted a Leave of Absence by the university, the student will be allowed to rejoin the program the following year in order to complete the requirements. This extension will be granted **only** under circumstances of a dire emergency which makes it impossible for the student to continue, and which meet the university's requirements for a complete withdrawal. Whether the student will be able to return to his or her original internship placement will depend on whether the internship agency is able to accommodate the intern in terms of supervisory and client availability. In the event that the original agency cannot accommodate the student, the MAS-MFT faculty will try to assist the student in locating an alternate placement; however, ultimately the student will be responsible for securing an alternate local placement that meets the approval of MAS-MFT faculty. Students who are unable to rejoin the program the following year will need to reapply and start the program from the beginning. Program fees are not refundable, either in part or in whole. Tuition refunds or partial refunds are subject to University policies and timelines.

## **Post-Graduate Information**

1. **State Licensure.** Currently there are two licensure levels for marriage and family therapists in the state of Arizona, as defined by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners (BBHE): Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapist (LAMFT) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). Graduates are also eligible to apply for a Temporary License. Please visit the BBHE website for current restrictions and requirements. Upon graduation, it is advisable to contact the BBHE and follow the required instructions to obtain licensure at the Associate level and, if desired, a Temporary License. Note: BBHE requirements are subject to change. It is the graduate's responsibility to obtain a copy of the current requirements. The BBHE website is: <http://azbbhe.us/>.

2. **American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT)** is the national professional organization for marriage and family therapists. By joining, members automatically become a member of the state organization, the Arizona Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AzAMFT). As a graduate of the program, membership must be upgraded from Student to Associate. After a period of 24 months, members are eligible for Clinical Membership when all the requirements are met. The AAMFT website is: [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org).

## **MAS-MFT Program Course Schedule**<sup>5</sup>

### **FALL, Year One**

- FAS 570 – Introduction to Marriage & Family Therapy (August-October) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 581 – Professional Issues & Ethics (August-October) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 571 – Assessment in Marriage & Family Therapy (October-December) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 576 – Applied Issues in Human Development: Psychopathology (October-December) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.

### **SPRING, Year One**

- FAS 577 – Applied Issues in Children & Adolescents (January-March) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 572 – Advanced Techniques in Marriage & Family Therapy (January-March) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 573 – Dysfunctional Families (March-May) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 580 – Practicum, concurrent with clinical internship (January-May) – 2 semester hours. Sixteen-week semester.

### **SUMMER, Year One**

- FAS 575 – Applied Issues in Couple's Therapy (First Five-Week Semester) – 3 semester hours.
- FAS 578 – Applied Issues in Sexuality (Second Five-Week Semester) – 3 semester hours.
- FAS 580 – Practicum, concurrent with clinical internship (Eight Week Semester) – 2 semester hours.

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<sup>5</sup> Some courses may be presented in a hybrid format, combining in-class and online instruction. This schedule is subject to change as needed to comply with university scheduling.

**FALL, Year Two**

- FAS 579 – Applied Research Issues in Marriage & Family Therapy (August-October) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 574 – Family Theory for Marriage & Family Therapy (October-December) – 3 semester hours. Eight-week semester.
- FAS 580<sup>6</sup> – Practicum, concurrent with clinical internship (August-December) – 2 semester hours. Sixteen-week semester.

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<sup>6</sup> Students are required to remain in the clinical internship/practicum until the semester ends in December, even if they complete their 300 hours while the semester is in progress. If the student has not completed the required hours by the end of the semester, the student must enroll in practicum for the following semester and remain in internship/practicum for the duration of the semester.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Can I attend this program part time?**

Because the program is a self-contained, accelerated program, students must attend full time and take courses according to the class schedule provided in the Program Description.

### **Can I take some of the MAS-MFT courses as a non-degree student?**

Enrollment is limited to students who have been formally admitted to the MAS-MFT program.

### **Can I keep my job while I'm in school?**

It is important to remember that most master's programs take 2-3 full years to complete. This program is an **accelerated** advanced degree program and is very demanding. While students can usually manage a flexible, part-time job, we discourage students from attempting to work full-time, even with a flexible schedule. Remember, you will be attending classes two full days per week and, after the first two eight-week semesters, be spending 10-15 hours each work week at your internship placement. This does not take study time into account. You will be very busy with this program!

### **Are assistantships available?**

Because this is an accelerated, applied program with no research activity, assistantships are not available. Assistantships in other SSFD graduate programs and in other ASU programs are typically granted to students admitted to and enrolled in those programs. Students are free to independently pursue scholarships or other forms of financial aid.

### **How much does the program cost?**

Contact the Graduate College directly for **all** questions about tuition, the tuition payment schedule, and determination of residency status at: <http://graduate.asu.edu/>. There is a program fee of \$475 per each of the 39 semester hours in addition to tuition. The student is also responsible for books, transportation, parking, fees charged by the university, and any other miscellaneous expenses.

**When are classes offered?**

Classes are held two days each week on the Tempe campus (days may vary from semester to semester depending on classroom availability). Typically students will attend two three-hour classes twice a week. Evening and weekend classes are not offered.

**Will I be licensed as soon as I graduate?**

At present, the State of Arizona has two levels of licensure: Associate and Independent, plus a Temporary License for new graduates who are planning to take the licensing exam on the next available date it is offered. Upon graduating, you can apply to take the licensing exam and, upon passing it, you will receive an Associate License. (Whether or not you apply for a Temporary License depends on the timing of your exam date.) This requires that you work for a minimum of 24 months in an approved setting while accumulating additional supervision and client contact hours. Once you've obtained these hours, you can apply for full licensure, which allows you to practice independently. For the most current information, go to <http://azbbhe.us/>.

**Will I be able to get licensed in other states?**

The MAS-MFT program is designed to meet the educational requirements for licensure in Arizona. Each state determines its own credentialing requirements for mental health professionals. Arizona has one of the more stringent licensure requirements, but it is impossible for us to keep current with other states. If you are considering a move to a particular state, we recommend visiting that state's website to find out what credentialing requirements are.

**Can I transfer credits from another MFT program into this program?**

All of the courses in this self-contained program must be taken as prescribed in the course schedule. No transfer credits or course substitutions are permitted.

**Who teaches the classes in the MAS-MFT program?**

All MAS-MFT faculty are licensed as marriage and family therapists in Arizona.

**Do I have to find my own internship?**

In most instances no. All approved MAS-MFT internship sites are selected by MAS-MFT faculty. Sites are located throughout the greater Phoenix area. In some specific instances, such as a student failing the internship interview, it will



be the student's responsibility to secure an alternate internship placement that meets the approval of MAS-MFT faculty.

### **Do I automatically start my internship/practicum in the Spring Semester?**

Although our first two eight-week semester's classes will prepare you to begin your internship/practicum, students will be required to pass a comprehensive examination after successfully completing the first two eight-week classes in the fall semester with a grade of 3.0 or higher. Once a student passes this exam, they will be able to interview with internship site directors at potential placements. Each agency will also conduct a background check before approving a student.

**Important: A felony and/or certain misdemeanors in a candidate's background will make the candidate ineligible for placement at internship sites and thus unable to complete the program. .**

### **When are internship/practicum hours?**

Internship hours vary from agency to agency. Students must be at their internship site for 10-15 hours each work week and can expect to work a combination of daytime hours, evening hours, and, in some cases, on Saturdays. This reflects the typical work schedule of therapists employed at agencies. The more flexible a student is, the sooner they will be able to complete their client contact hours.

### **Why do I need a car for my internship?**

Although Phoenix has public transportation, it is not adequate to get you to and from your internship. In addition, you will likely be providing services to clients in their home as part of your internship. Agencies will also require a valid Arizona driver's license and proof of current automobile insurance, which must be maintained for the duration of the internship in accordance with Arizona law.

### **How is in-state residency determined?**

Residency status is determined by the Graduate College.  
<http://graduate.asu.edu/>.

### **What is the English language requirement for international students?**

For international students, proficiency in English as demonstrated by satisfactory TOEFL scores is required. Contact the Graduate College directly through:  
<http://graduate.asu.edu/>.

**Do you admit students each semester?**

No. Students are admitted for the fall semester only.

**Is this program accredited with COAMFTE (Commission on Accreditation for Marriage & Family Therapy Education)?**

No, and there are no plans to apply for accreditation. While the role of accreditation is to ensure a high standard of quality across all MFT programs, we have demonstrated a high standard: our graduates are successfully passing the national licensing exam and becoming licensed in Arizona as MFT's, which is what our program is designed to do. Our faculty members are all Arizona-licensed MFTs with experience in all aspects of working in Arizona as an MFT, including community mental health and private practice. Faculty member Dr. Karissa Greving Mehall, currently serves as president of the Arizona Association for Marriage & Family Therapy, and Mary Doyle is a member of the Arizona State Board of Behavioral Health Examiner's Marriage & Family Therapy Credentialing Committee.

Prospective students who wish to investigate accredited programs will find a list of them at <http://www.aamft.org>.

**How do I apply?**

Click here for application information: [On-line Graduate College \(GC\) Application - http://graduate.asu.edu/admissions/](http://graduate.asu.edu/admissions/). The application deadline each year is January 15 for admission for the following fall.

**When will I know if I've been accepted?**

The application deadline is January 15. After we review the pool of applications, some students will be selected for a personal interview, which is the next stage of the admission process. Interviews are typically conducted in March. At the conclusion of the interviews, we will make admission recommendations to the Graduate College. The Graduate College makes the final admission determination and will notify students of the outcome of their application, typically by late April.

**If I'm admitted to the program, can I defer my admission?**

Deferred admissions are not available for this program. If a student who has been admitted determines that he or she cannot attend the program for the year

of admission, the student will need to reapply to the program and resubmit the required application materials.

**How do I learn more?**

Because of the high volume of prospective applicants, it is no longer possible to schedule individual informational meetings. We encourage prospective students to attend one of the group informational meetings on campus in the fall (dates will be posted on the program's webpage by the start of the fall semester) to learn more about the program. Specific questions that are not covered on this webpage can be directed to either [Karissa.Greving@asu.edu](mailto:Karissa.Greving@asu.edu) or [Mary.Doyle@asu.edu](mailto:Mary.Doyle@asu.edu).

## **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Course Descriptions</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Internship Reporting Form</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>Internship Evaluation Form</b>
<b>Appendix D</b>	<b>AAMFT Code of Ethics</b>

## **Appendix A – MAS-MFT Program Course Descriptions**

- FAS 570      Introduction to Marriage & Family Therapy**  
An introduction to family systems theory, and an overview of the major theories of marriage and family therapy
- FAS 581      Professional Issues & Ethics**  
Examination of legal and ethical concerns of marriage and family therapists, emphasizing Arizona licensing standards and the AAMFT Code of Ethics
- FAS 571      Assessment in Marriage & Family Therapy**  
A critical examination of the assessment process for individuals, couples and families, with emphasis on the current state-mandated assessment format used in community mental health agency settings
- FAS 576      Applied Issues in Human Development: Psychopathology**  
Emphasis on developing skills necessary to recognize and diagnose maladaptive behavior according to current Diagnostic & Statistical Manual (DSM) criteria while maintaining a systemic perspective
- FAS 577      Applied Issues in Children & Adolescents in MFT**  
An overview of the research and major treatment modalities for children and adolescents with an emphasis on developmental and systemic factors
- FAS 572      Advanced Techniques in Marriage & Family Therapy**  
Practical implementation of systemic intervention skills in marriage and family therapy
- FAS 573      Dysfunctional Families**  
Evaluation of family lifespan development from a multicultural perspective, and a review of factors related to the development of family dysfunction.
- FAS 580      Practicum**  
Community-based placement designed to give students a scope of experience under the supervision of Arizona-licensed marriage and family therapists who have completed the mandatory state-supervisory course
- FAS 575      Applied Issues in Couples' Therapy**  
A critical examination of issues unique to couples therapy from a systemic perspective, including consideration of multicultural diversity

- FAS 578      Applied Issues in Sexuality for Marriage & Family Therapy**  
Examination of major methods used to assess and treat sexual disorders, utilizing both behavioral and non-behavioral methods.
- FAS 579      Applied Research in Marriage & Family Therapy**  
A critical examination of research concepts, quantitative and qualitative research designs, and applicability of clinical settings.
- FAS 574      Family Theory for Marriage & Family Therapy**  
An in-depth examination of the major family theories, including the evolution, premises and assumptions of each.

## Appendix B – Internship Reporting Form

### ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY MAS-MFT PROGRAM Internship Reporting Form CLIENT CONTACT AND SUPERVISION HOURS

This form is to record your hours once per month, beginning on the first day of the month and ending on the last day of the month (if a new month begins in the middle of the week, start a new form; do not overlap months). The form is to be signed by your internship supervisor(s) each month and given to your practicum instructor either in paper or electronic format **NO LATER THAN 12:00 noon on the 15th** of the next month (if the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a Saturday or Sunday the form is due on Monday no later than 12:00 noon). **Late submission will result in a loss of one letter grade for practicum for each late submission.**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Month: \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

Internship Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Week of:	Direct Client Contact Hours <sup>7</sup>			Supervision Hours		
	Indiv.	Family	TOTAL	Indiv.	Group	TOTAL
Current Month Total						
CUMULATIVE TOTALS (All Monthly Totals to Date) <sup>8</sup>						

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Internship Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<sup>7</sup> Direct client contact is defined as face-to-face (therapist and client) therapy with individuals, couples, and families. Activities such as telephone contact, case planning, observation of therapy, record keeping, writing documentation, travel, administrative activities, consultation with community members or professionals, or supervision, are not considered direct client contact.

<sup>8</sup> This is a running total of all of the hours you have accumulated since the beginning of your internship.

**Appendix C – Internship Evaluation Form**  
**Master's of Advanced Studies in Marriage & Family Therapy**  
**Internship Evaluation Form**

School of **Social and Family Dynamics**



**ASU**

Intern's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Intern's Title \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Title \_\_\_\_\_

Internship  
Dates:

From

To

Intern Evaluation	RATING
<p><b><u>Attendance and Punctuality</u></b> (the degree to which the intern can be depended upon to be available for work and to fulfill position responsibilities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Time off is scheduled in advance</li> <li>◆ Work is begun on time</li> <li>◆ Partial and full day absences are kept within guidelines</li> <li>◆ Job responsibilities are covered when absent (if appropriate)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Surpasses <input type="checkbox"/> Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable
<p><b><u>Client Service</u></b> (the degree to which the intern provides effective front line services to external customers/clients)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Client confidence is increased through education</li> <li>◆ Clients receive accurate guidance in service processing</li> <li>◆ Clients are respected, encouraged, and provided opportunities to inform staff as to the nature of their needs</li> <li>◆ Cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the service population are utilized</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Surpasses <input type="checkbox"/> Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable
<p><b><u>Interactions with Others</u></b> (the extent to which the intern shows understanding and sensitivity to the needs and problems of others internal to the organization or doing business with the agency, i.e., contractors, vendors, consultants, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Working relationships are effective</li> <li>◆ Positive image of self and others is displayed</li> <li>◆ Demeanor is respectful and cooperative</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Surpasses <input type="checkbox"/> Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable
<p><b><u>Work Habits</u></b> (the manner in which the intern conducts him or herself in the work environment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Applicable laws, rules, policies and directives are observed (including HIPPA, Confidentiality Standards, Employment Compliance Requirements, etc.)</li> <li>◆ Safety standards and procedures are followed</li> <li>◆ Agency equipment is properly used and maintained</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Surpasses <input type="checkbox"/> Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent <input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable





**Master's of Advanced Studies in Marriage & Family Therapy  
Internship Evaluation Form  
SIGNATURE SHEET**

**1. Rating Supervisor's Signature**

I conducted a progress review discussion with the intern during the appraisal cycle. I also reviewed the performance appraisal ratings and, if appropriate, used the time to explain internship expectations, areas needing clarification, or performance issues requiring improvement.

**Rating Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Rater Comments:*

**2. Intern's Signature**

I was given the opportunity to discuss the contents of this evaluation with the Rating Supervisor. I understand that I may respond to the appraisal within five (5) calendar days from the date of issuance in the space provided below or by attaching one (1) supplemental typewritten page (or handwritten, if legible). I also understand that this appraisal is not subject to review within the agency's Problem Resolution Procedure. The completed appraisal will be forwarded to Human Resources for inclusion in my official personnel file.

**Intern:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Intern Comments:*

## Appendix D – AAMFT Code of Ethics

Effective July 1, 2001

### Preamble

The Board of Directors of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) hereby promulgates, pursuant to Article 2, Section 2.013 of the Association's Bylaws, the Revised AAMFT Code of Ethics, effective July 1, 2001.

The AAMFT strives to honor the public trust in marriage and family therapists by setting standards for ethical practice as described in this Code. The ethical standards define professional expectations and are enforced by the AAMFT Ethics Committee. The absence of an explicit reference to a specific behavior or situation in the Code does not mean that the behavior is ethical or unethical. The standards are not exhaustive. Marriage and family therapists **who** are uncertain about the ethics of a particular course of action are encouraged to seek counsel from consultants, attorneys, supervisors, colleagues, or other appropriate authorities.

Both law and ethics govern the practice of marriage and family therapy. When making decisions regarding professional behavior, marriage and family therapists must consider the AAMFT Code of Ethics and applicable laws and regulations. If the AAMFT Code of Ethics prescribes a standard higher than that required by law, marriage and family therapists must meet the higher standard of the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Marriage and family therapists comply with the mandates of law, but make known their commitment to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner. The AAMFT supports legal mandates for reporting of alleged unethical conduct.

The AAMFT Code of Ethics is binding on Members of AAMFT in all membership categories, AAMFT-Approved Supervisors, and applicants for membership and the Approved Supervisor designation (hereafter, AAMFT Member). AAMFT members have an obligation to be familiar with the AAMFT Code of Ethics and its application to their professional services. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

The process for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical conduct is described in the current Procedures for Handling Ethical Matters of the AAMFT Ethics Committee. Persons accused are considered innocent by the Ethics Committee until proven guilty, except as otherwise provided, and are entitled to due process. If an AAMFT Member resigns in anticipation of, or during the course of, an ethics investigation, the Ethics Committee will complete its investigation. Any publication of action taken by the Association will include the fact that the Member attempted to resign during the investigation.

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| 2. <u>Confidentiality</u>                            | 6. <u>Responsibility to the profession</u>        |
| 3. <u>Professional competence and integrity</u>      | 7. <u>Financial arrangements</u>                  |
| 4. <u>Responsibility to students and supervisees</u> | 8. <u>Advertising</u>                             |

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## **Principle I Responsibility to Clients**

*Marriage and family therapists advance the welfare of families and individuals. They respect the rights of those persons seeking their assistance, and make reasonable efforts to ensure that their services are used appropriately.*

1.1. Marriage and family therapists provide professional assistance to persons without discrimination on the basis of race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

1.2 Marriage and family therapists obtain appropriate informed consent to therapy or related procedures as early as feasible in the therapeutic relationship, and use language that is reasonably understandable to clients. The content of informed consent may vary depending upon the client and treatment plan; however, informed consent generally necessitates that the client: (a) has the capacity to consent; (b) has been adequately informed of significant information concerning treatment processes and procedures; (c) has been adequately informed of potential risks and benefits of treatments for which generally recognized standards do not yet exist; (d) has freely and without undue influence expressed consent; and (e) has provided consent that is appropriately documented. When persons, due to age or mental status, are legally incapable of giving informed consent, marriage and family therapists obtain informed permission from a legally authorized person, if such substitute consent is legally permissible.

1.3 Marriage and family therapists are aware of their influential positions with respect to clients, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid conditions and multiple relationships with clients that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with a client or the client's immediate family. When the risk of impairment or exploitation exists due to conditions or multiple roles, therapists take appropriate precautions.

1.4 Sexual intimacy with clients is prohibited.

1.5 Sexual intimacy with former clients is likely to be harmful and is therefore prohibited for two years following the termination of therapy or last professional contact. In an effort to avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of clients, marriage and family therapists should not engage in sexual intimacy with former clients after the two years following termination or last professional contact. Should therapists engage in sexual intimacy with former clients following two years after termination or last professional contact, the burden shifts to the therapist to demonstrate that there has been no exploitation or injury to the former client or to the client's immediate family.

1.6 Marriage and family therapists comply with applicable laws regarding the reporting of alleged unethical conduct.

1.7 Marriage and family therapists do not use their professional relationships with clients to further their own interests.

1.8 Marriage and family therapists respect the rights of clients to make decisions and help them to understand the consequences of these decisions. Therapists clearly advise the clients that they have the responsibility to make decisions regarding relationships such as cohabitation, marriage, divorce, separation, reconciliation, custody, and visitation.

1.9 Marriage and family therapists continue therapeutic relationships only so long as it is reasonably clear that clients are benefiting from the relationship.

1.10 Marriage and family therapists assist persons in obtaining other therapeutic services if the therapist is unable or unwilling, for appropriate reasons, to provide professional help.

1.11 Marriage and family therapists do not abandon or neglect clients in treatment without making reasonable arrangements for the continuation of such treatment.

1.12 Marriage and family therapists obtain written informed consent from clients before videotaping, audio recording, or permitting third-party observation.

1.13 Marriage and family therapists, upon agreeing to provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, clarify, to the extent feasible and at the outset of the service, the nature of the relationship with each party and the limits of confidentiality.

## **Principle II Confidentiality**

*Marriage and family therapists have unique confidentiality concerns because the client in a therapeutic relationship may be more than one person. Therapists respect and guard the confidences of each individual client.*

2.1 Marriage and family therapists disclose to clients and other interested parties, as early as feasible in their professional contacts, the nature of confidentiality and possible limitations of the clients' right to confidentiality. Therapists review with clients the circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. Circumstances may necessitate repeated disclosures.

2.2 Marriage and family therapists do not disclose client confidences except by written authorization or waiver, or where mandated or permitted by law. Verbal authorization will not be sufficient except in emergency situations, unless prohibited by law. When providing couple, family or group treatment, the therapist does not disclose information outside the treatment context without a written authorization from each individual competent to execute a waiver. In the context of couple, family or group treatment, the therapist may not reveal any individual's confidences to others in the client unit without the prior written permission of that individual.

2.3 Marriage and family therapists use client and/or clinical materials in teaching, writing, consulting, research, and public presentations only if a written waiver has been obtained in accordance with Subprinciple 2.2, or when appropriate steps have been taken to protect client identity and confidentiality.

2.4 Marriage and family therapists store, safeguard, and dispose of client records in ways that maintain confidentiality and in accord with applicable laws and professional standards.

2.5 Subsequent to the therapist moving from the area, closing the practice, or upon the death of the therapist, a marriage and family therapist arranges for the storage, transfer, or disposal of client records in ways that maintain confidentiality and safeguard the welfare of clients.

2.6 Marriage and family therapists, when consulting with colleagues or referral sources, do not share confidential information that could reasonably lead to the identification of a client, research participant, supervisee, or other person with whom they have a confidential relationship unless they have obtained the prior written consent of the client, research participant, supervisee, or other person with whom they

have a confidential relationship. Information may be shared only to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

### **Principle III Professional Competence and Integrity**

*Marriage and family therapists maintain high standards of professional competence and integrity.*

3.1 Marriage and family therapists pursue knowledge of new developments and maintain competence in marriage and family therapy through education, training, or supervised experience.

3.2 Marriage and family therapists maintain adequate knowledge of and adhere to applicable laws, ethics, and professional standards.

3.3 Marriage and family therapists seek appropriate professional assistance for their personal problems or conflicts that may impair work performance or clinical judgment.

3.4 Marriage and family therapists do not provide services that create a conflict of interest that may impair work performance or clinical judgment.

3.5 Marriage and family therapists, as presenters, teachers, supervisors, consultants and researchers, are dedicated to high standards of scholarship, present accurate information, and disclose potential conflicts of interest.

3.6 Marriage and family therapists maintain accurate and adequate clinical and financial records.

3.7 While developing new skills in specialty areas, marriage and family therapists take steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from possible harm. Marriage and family therapists practice in specialty areas new to them only after appropriate education, training, or supervised experience.

3.8 Marriage and family therapists do not engage in sexual or other forms of harassment of clients, students, trainees, supervisees, employees, colleagues, or research subjects.

3.9 Marriage and family therapists do not engage in the exploitation of clients, students, trainees, supervisees, employees, colleagues, or research subjects.

3.10 Marriage and family therapists do not give to or receive from clients (a) gifts of substantial value or (b) gifts that impair the integrity or efficacy of the therapeutic relationship.

3.11 Marriage and family therapists do not diagnose, treat, or advise on problems outside the recognized boundaries of their competencies.

3.12 Marriage and family therapists make efforts to prevent the distortion or misuse of their clinical and research findings.

3.13 Marriage and family therapists, because of their ability to influence and alter the lives of others, exercise special care when making public their professional recommendations and opinions through testimony or other public statements.

3.14 To avoid a conflict of interests, marriage and family therapists who treat minors or adults involved in custody or visitation actions may not also perform forensic evaluations for custody, residence, or visitation of the minor. The marriage and family therapist who treats the minor may provide the court or mental health professional performing the evaluation with information about the minor from the marriage and family therapist's perspective as a treating marriage and family therapist, so long as the marriage and family therapist does not violate confidentiality.

3.15 Marriage and family therapists are in violation of this Code and subject to termination of membership or other appropriate action if they: (a) are convicted of any felony; (b) are convicted of a misdemeanor related to their qualifications or functions; (c) engage in conduct which could lead to conviction of a felony, or a misdemeanor related to their qualifications or functions; (d) are expelled from or disciplined by other professional organizations; (e) have their licenses or certificates suspended or revoked or are otherwise disciplined by regulatory bodies; (f) continue to practice marriage and family therapy while no longer competent to do so because they are impaired by physical or mental causes or the abuse of alcohol or other substances; or (g) fail to cooperate with the Association at any point from the inception of an ethical complaint through the completion of all proceedings regarding that complaint.

#### **Principle IV Responsibility to Students and Supervisees**

*Marriage and family therapists do not exploit the trust and dependency of students and supervisees.*

4.1 Marriage and family therapists are aware of their influential positions with respect to students and supervisees, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid conditions and multiple relationships that could impair professional objectivity or increase the risk of exploitation. When the risk of impairment or exploitation exists due to conditions or multiple roles, therapists take appropriate precautions.

4.2 Marriage and family therapists do not provide therapy to current students or supervisees.

4.3 Marriage and family therapists do not engage in sexual intimacy with students or supervisees during the evaluative or training relationship between the therapist and student or supervisee. Should a supervisor engage in sexual activity with a former supervisee, the burden of proof shifts to the supervisor to demonstrate that there has been no exploitation or injury to the supervisee.

4.4 Marriage and family therapists do not permit students or supervisees to perform or to hold themselves out as competent to perform professional services beyond their training, level of experience, and competence.

4.5 Marriage and family therapists take reasonable measures to ensure that services provided by supervisees are professional.

4.6 Marriage and family therapists avoid accepting as supervisees or students those individuals with whom a prior or existing relationship could compromise the therapist's objectivity. When such situations cannot be avoided, therapists take appropriate precautions to maintain objectivity. Examples of such relationships include, but are not limited to, those individuals with whom the therapist has a current or prior sexual, close personal, immediate familial, or therapeutic relationship.

4.7 Marriage and family therapists do not disclose supervisee confidences except by written authorization or waiver, or when mandated or permitted by law. In educational or training settings where there are multiple supervisors, disclosures are permitted only to other professional colleagues, administrators, or



employers who share responsibility for training of the supervisee. Verbal authorization will not be sufficient except in emergency situations, unless prohibited by law.

### **Principle V Responsibility to Research Participants**

*Investigators respect the dignity and protect the welfare of research participants, and are aware of applicable laws and regulations and professional standards governing the conduct of research.*

5.1 Investigators are responsible for making careful examinations of ethical acceptability in planning studies. To the extent that services to research participants may be compromised by participation in research, investigators seek the ethical advice of qualified professionals not directly involved in the investigation and observe safeguards to protect the rights of research participants.

5.2 Investigators requesting participant involvement in research inform participants of the aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate. Investigators are especially sensitive to the possibility of diminished consent when participants are also receiving clinical services, or have impairments which limit understanding and/or communication, or when participants are children.

5.3 Investigators respect each participant's freedom to decline participation in or to withdraw from a research study at any time. This obligation requires special thought and consideration when investigators or other members of the research team are in positions of authority or influence over participants. Marriage and family therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid multiple relationships with research participants that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation.

5.4 Information obtained about a research participant during the course of an investigation is confidential unless there is a waiver previously obtained in writing. When the possibility exists that others, including family members, may obtain access to such information, this possibility, together with the plan for protecting confidentiality, is explained as part of the procedure for obtaining informed consent.

### **Principle VI Responsibility to the Profession**

*Marriage and family therapists respect the rights and responsibilities of professional colleagues and participate in activities that advance the goals of the profession.*

6.1 Marriage and family therapists remain accountable to the standards of the profession when acting as members or employees of organizations. If the mandates of an organization with which a marriage and family therapist is affiliated, through employment, contract or otherwise, conflict with the AAMFT Code of Ethics, marriage and family therapists make known to the organization their commitment to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and attempt to resolve the conflict in a way that allows the fullest adherence to the Code of Ethics.

6.2 Marriage and family therapists assign publication credit to those who have contributed to a publication in proportion to their contributions and in accordance with customary professional publication practices.

6.3 Marriage and family therapists do not accept or require authorship credit for a publication based on research from a student's program, unless the therapist made a substantial contribution beyond being a faculty advisor or research committee member. Coauthorship on a student thesis, dissertation, or project should be determined in accordance with principles of fairness and justice.



6.4 Marriage and family therapists who are the authors of books or other materials that are published or distributed do not plagiarize or fail to cite persons to whom credit for original ideas or work is due.

6.5 Marriage and family therapists who are the authors of books or other materials published or distributed by an organization take reasonable precautions to ensure that the organization promotes and advertises the materials accurately and factually.

6.6 Marriage and family therapists participate in activities that contribute to a better community and society, including devoting a portion of their professional activity to services for which there is little or no financial return.

6.7 Marriage and family therapists are concerned with developing laws and regulations pertaining to marriage and family therapy that serve the public interest, and with altering such laws and regulations that are not in the public interest.

6.8 Marriage and family therapists encourage public participation in the design and delivery of professional services and in the regulation of practitioners.

## **Principle VII Financial Arrangements**

*Marriage and family therapists make financial arrangements with clients, third-party payors, and supervisees that are reasonably understandable and conform to accepted professional practices.*

7.1 Marriage and family therapists do not offer or accept kickbacks, rebates, bonuses, or other remuneration for referrals; fee-for-service arrangements are not prohibited.

7.2 Prior to entering into the therapeutic or supervisory relationship, marriage and family therapists clearly disclose and explain to clients and supervisees: (a) all financial arrangements and fees related to professional services, including charges for canceled or missed appointments; (b) the use of collection agencies or legal measures for nonpayment; and (c) the procedure for obtaining payment from the client, to the extent allowed by law, if payment is denied by the third-party payor. Once services have begun, therapists provide reasonable notice of any changes in fees or other charges.

7.3 Marriage and family therapists give reasonable notice to clients with unpaid balances of their intent to seek collection by agency or legal recourse. When such action is taken, therapists will not disclose clinical information.

7.4 Marriage and family therapists represent facts truthfully to clients, third-party payors, and supervisees regarding services rendered.

7.5 Marriage and family therapists ordinarily refrain from accepting goods and services from clients in return for services rendered. Bartering for professional services may be conducted only if: (a) the supervisee or client requests it, (b) the relationship is not exploitative, (c) the professional relationship is not distorted, and (d) a clear written contract is established.

7.6 Marriage and family therapists may not withhold records under their immediate control that are requested and needed for a client's treatment solely because payment has not been received for past services, except as otherwise provided by law.

## **Principle VIII Advertising**

*Marriage and family therapists engage in appropriate informational activities, including those that enable the public, referral sources, or others to choose professional services on an informed basis.*

8.1 Marriage and family therapists accurately represent their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice of marriage and family therapy.

8.2 Marriage and family therapists ensure that advertisements and publications in any media (such as directories, announcements, business cards, newspapers, radio, television, Internet, and facsimiles) convey information that is necessary for the public to make an appropriate selection of professional services. Information could include: (a) office information, such as name, address, telephone number, credit card acceptability, fees, languages spoken, and office hours; (b) qualifying clinical degree (see subprinciple 8.5); (c) other earned degrees (see subprinciple 8.5) and state or provincial licensures and/or certifications; (d) AAMFT clinical member status; and (e) description of practice.

8.3 Marriage and family therapists do not use names that could mislead the public concerning the identity, responsibility, source, and status of those practicing under that name, and do not hold themselves out as being partners or associates of a firm if they are not.

8.4 Marriage and family therapists do not use any professional identification (such as a business card, office sign, letterhead, Internet, or telephone or association directory listing) if it includes a statement or claim that is false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive.

8.5 In representing their educational qualifications, marriage and family therapists list and claim as evidence only those earned degrees: (a) from institutions accredited by regional accreditation sources recognized by the United States Department of Education, (b) from institutions recognized by states or provinces that license or certify marriage and family therapists, or (c) from equivalent foreign institutions.

8.6 Marriage and family therapists correct, wherever possible, false, misleading, or inaccurate information and representations made by others concerning the therapist's qualifications, services, or products.

8.7 Marriage and family therapists make certain that the qualifications of their employees or supervisees are represented in a manner that is not false, misleading, or deceptive.

8.8 Marriage and family therapists do not represent themselves as providing specialized services unless they have the appropriate education, training, or supervised experience.

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This Code is published by:  
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Violations of this Code should be brought in writing to the attention of:

AAMFT Ethics Committee  
112 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: (703) 838-9808 - Fax: (703) 838-9805  
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