

## MFT Program Policy on Practicum and Internship

### Policy Availability

This policy is available to the public via the link to [Program Handbook and Policies](#) on the [MFT website](#).

### Eligibility to Register for Practicum

Pre-requisites that must be taken or completed before a student can register for *MFTH 7600 Practicum* are as follows:

- Successful completion of service learning
- *MFTH 7102: Interventions in MFT*
- *MFTH 6800 Relational Theory, Practice, & Ethics*
- *MFTH 6900 Foundations in MFT*
- *MFTH 7101 Family Systems Theories*
- *MFTH 7102 Interventions in MFT*
- *MFTH 7050 Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice*
- *MFTH 7500 Development in the Family System*
- Successful completion of Comprehensive Exam I

### 1 Year of Continuous Enrollment in Practicum is Required

Once enrolled, students must complete one year (three semesters) of continuous practica. This means that students must remain continuously enrolled for one calendar year across three consecutive semesters.

### Accrual of Clinical Hours

Consistent with our mission and program goals to teach therapeutic practice, live real-world therapy with clients, and supervision with AAMFT Approved faculty supervisors are the program's pièce de résistance. All students must accrue client and supervision contact hours in the following ratios:

- 500 total hours of client contact, of which at least 40% (200 hours) must be relational (family and couples).
- A minimum of 150 hours at FamilyWorks
- 100 hours of supervision, 50% of which must be observable data (live, audio, and/or video recordings).

Specific requirements for client and supervision contact hours are as follows:

1. A minimum of 500 client contact hours. Of the 500 hours,
  - a. a minimum of 100 face-to-face hours must be accrued at FamilyWorks.
  - b. 40% of the 500 hours must be "relational"—face-to-face with families and/or couples
  - c. 100 may be alternative hours (behind-the-mirror, co-therapy, reflecting teams)
2. 100 hours of face-to-face supervision hours. Of the 100 supervision hours,
  - a. a minimum of 50 must be based on raw data (live, direct observation, video- or electronic recording, reflecting teams, behind the mirror)
  - b. all must be with a GA licensed, AAMFT Approved Supervisor or Supervisor track, which

means that all must occur at FamilyWorks MFT faculty member. Supervision at internship sites is considered administrative in nature and is not be counted toward the 100 required hours.

3. During the time that students are enrolled in practicum, they receive supervision every week that they see cases. During official national holidays, when clients will not be seen, supervision is not required.
4. If the student has not accrued the required client contact or supervision hours at the end of the year, he or she must re-enroll in *MFTH 7600 Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy* (space permitting) or *MFTH 7980 Internship in Marriage and Family Therapy* until the required therapy and supervision hours have been accrued (see [Policy on Practicum](#)).
5. All students are required to have liability insurance and must maintain continuous coverage while enrolled in *MFTH 7600 Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy* or *MFTH 7980 Internship in Marriage and Family Therapy*.
6. Students are required to join AAMFT, which membership avails them of a liability insurance policy.
7. Students may choose to participate in an off-campus internship.

#### **When All Client Contact Hours are Not Accrued in One Year**

Unlike master's level training in many other fields (biology, math, accounting), your training relies on clients. There are many factors that can make this unreliable and inconsistent, including seasonal changes (e.g., Christmas, Halloween, school breaks), internship sites, client type, case difficulty, and many other human variables. Clients cancel or leave therapy for a wide variety of reasons. Neither the MFT faculty, the program, nor the university can guarantee that the entire 500-hour client contact requirement can be accrued in the one year of continuous enrollment, although most students do. If the student has not accrued the required client contact or supervision hours by the end of the year of three practica, he or she must remain enrolled in the university, maintain his or her liability insurance, and remain under the supervision of an AAMFT Approved Supervisor faculty member. This requires that the student enroll in a fourth practicum (*MFTH 7600 Clinical Practicum*), space permitting. If space is not available, he or she must enroll in *MFTH 7980 Internship in MFT* and continue to see clients until the required therapy and supervision hours have been accrued. If the accrual of remaining hours is not complete at the end of the fourth clinical semester, an additional semester or semesters are required until all required client contact and supervision hours are met.

#### **Carrying a Caseload at FamilyWorks is a Program Requirement**

It is at [FamilyWorks](#) that your clinical work is video recorded, availing both you and your supervisors of the best opportunity to observe your work, so that you can consult together in face-to-face supervisory conversations. Further, it is at [FamilyWorks](#) that you work closely with AAMFT Approved, systemically trained, and Georgia licensed family therapy faculty.

#### **Policy on Early Start Practicum (ESP)**

Assuming a 2-year plan of study, MFT students typically start their clinical work in the first semester of their second year (2-1). However, when practicum seats are available, eligible first year students may register for *MFTH 7600: Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy* and begin their clinical work in the summer of their first year.

**Eligibility for ESP:** The number of 1<sup>st</sup> year students admitted to summer practicum is limited to the space available on the summer practica teams as well as the needs of the FamilyWorks Clinic. Students who wish to be considered for early admission into practicum must . . . .

1. successfully complete the Comprehensive Exam I.
2. be willing to defer taking *MFTH 7700 Assessment in MFT* until the 2<sup>nd</sup> summer semester
3. be willing to defer taking *MFTH Psychopathology & Psychopharmacology* until the 2<sup>nd</sup> summer semester
4. stay on campus during the summer semester to attend practicum each week, transition onto new cases and, assuming supervisor approval, take on new cases during June, July, and August.

**Selection Process:** MFT faculty look at course projections to get a close estimate of how many practicum slots we have available for any given semester.

1. The MFT faculty then put out a call for those interested in ESP which includes the notification that interested students will have to submit their Comprehensive Exam I early, since Comp I is a pre-requisite for *MFTH 7600 Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy*.
2. Students notify the Clinic Director of their interest and request inclusion in the early practicum lottery drawing.
3. A lottery drawing date and time is established and advertised in advance.
4. A lottery drawing, open to all students and faculty, is held in the MFT classroom.
5. MFT faculty facilitate a name draw until all of the predetermined early admissions practicum slots have been filled. A second draw is done to establish a list of EPS alternates.
  - o Early Practicum Alternates: In the event that someone is unable to fulfill the early practicum requirements, regardless of reason, an alternate *may* be called upon to take their place. For this reason, alternates must be able to meet all of the requirements. Alternates are called upon in the order they were drawn during the EPS drawing.

### **Internships are Encouraged**

Internships are not required. However, we encourage students to take internships, which help students accrue the required hours, provide an invaluable feel for the inside of the American mental health system, and adds value to student experience and resumes.

Please see the Clinic Director for help finding an internship or settling problems that you might have during an internship.

### **Procedure for Reporting, Discussing, and Resolving Internship Problems**

The following establishes the procedure for dealing with problems when the site, a site supervisor, or the student is having difficulties at an internship:

#### **A. Responsibilities of the Student**

- Assuming awareness on the part of the student that there is a difficulty, he or she should begin by contacting the MFT Program Clinic Director, Tabitha McCoy (229) 293-6266 or his/her faculty supervisor. The discussion during this contact should seek to understand the problem from the student's perspective, discuss possible solutions, decide who would be involved in the solutions and what additional contacts or meetings need to occur, and create a plan for resolving the problem.
- If the Clinic Director/Faculty supervisor adjudges that the problem needs further input from the Program Director or the faculty, he or she should inform the student of this, and move the discussion on to the next level.

#### **B. Responsibilities of the Site/Site Supervisor**

- Assuming awareness on the part of the site supervisor that there is a difficulty, he or she should begin by contacting the MFT Program Clinic Director, Tabitha McCoy (229) 293-6266 or his/her faculty supervisor. The discussion during this contact should seek to understand the problem from the Site/Supervisor's perspective, learn who is/would be involved in the solutions, what additional contacts or meetings need to occur. If a plan for resolving the problem is not initiated in this conversation, further conversations should be scheduled for the purpose of doing so.
- If the VSU Clinic Director/Faculty supervisor adjudges that the problem needs further input from the Program Director or the faculty, he or she should inform the Site Supervisor of this, and move the discussion on to the next level.

#### **C. Responsibilities of the Program/Clinical Director/Faculty Supervisor**

- The MFT Program will be responsible for taking all reasonable measures to:
  - learn the nature of the problem based on the wider context in which it is embedded. This will include speaking with the involved parties (student, site supervisor, relevant others).
  - work with the Site/Site supervisor and/or the student to discover/devise a solution that takes into consideration the best treatment of clients, if clients are involved; fair treatment of all concerned (student, site supervisor, etc.); the student's education and training; and, any and all legal and ethical considerations
  - take the problem to the Program Director if/when, a plan for resolving the problem cannot be created.
  - Depending on the nature of the problem, others may be brought into awareness and discussion of the problem. These might include the Department Head, college Dean, and/or the university attorney.