

MFT Program Policy on Assessment of SLO, Graduate Achievement, and the Curriculum

Policy Availability

The Policy on Assessment of SLO, Graduate Achievement, and the Curriculum is available to the public via the [MFT Homepage > Accreditation > Policies and Handbook](#).

Policy Overview

This document presents a detailed description of

- I. how SLO data are collected and evaluated
- II. how student/graduate achievement are assessed
- III. How findings are used for program improvement

Language Clarification

To ensure clarity, this policy distinguishes between data collection instruments and the faculty-led assessment process.

1. SLO Assessment Survey (data collection instrument)

Each Fall or Spring semester, the MFT Program administers the SLO Assessment Survey to students.

The SLO Assessment Survey is a data collection tool designed to gather student perceptions related to Student Learning Outcomes. The survey results contribute one source of information about student learning and program effectiveness.

The survey itself does not constitute the formal assessment of SLOs; rather, it provides supplemental data that informs the broader evaluation process conducted by faculty.

2. Assessment of SLOs (faculty evaluation process)

The assessment of SLOs is a structured, faculty-driven evaluation process that occurs on a continuous basis.

Overview of SLO Assessment

MFT Program faculty and staff use established rubrics to evaluate student performance in both coursework and clinical practice. These rubrics are aligned with:

- specific student learning outcomes
- defined assessment measures
- clearly established performance targets

Data generated from rubric-based evaluations are aggregated and reviewed by faculty. This systematic review process determines:

- the extent to which students are achieving each SLO

This policy addresses Standard V12.5, Eligibility Criterion E: Accuracy and Program Transparency in Policies and Publications and KE I-B: Plan for Assessing Outcome-Based Educational Achievement. Updated Spring 2026 and scheduled for review and update Spring 2030 or sooner when necessary.

- whether performance targets are being met
- whether the program is fulfilling its stated Program Goals and mission

Survey data, along with other relevant evidence, may be considered during this review. However, the formal assessment of SLOs is grounded primarily in direct measures of student performance.

I. Assessment of SLOs

The MFT Program implements a systematic, documented, and evidence-based process for assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) on a continuous, semester-by-semester basis. This faculty-driven process evaluates the extent to which students achieve established program learning expectations and provides data to support ongoing program effectiveness.

Faculty members and the Clinical Coordinator use standardized, rubric-based direct measures to assess student performance in didactic coursework and supervised clinical practice. Each rubric is intentionally aligned with the following:

- clearly articulated Student Learning Outcomes
- defined assessment measures
- established performance targets

This alignment ensures that SLO assessment is structured, transparent, and consistently implemented across courses and clinical experiences.

Each semester, faculty review rubric-generated data to determine whether established targets are met. Aggregated SLO findings are used to do the following:

- evaluate overall program effectiveness
- assess progress toward Program Goals
- ensure alignment with the program's mission
- Inform evidence-based decision-making

Documented findings are used to support continuous program improvement (close the loop), including curricular refinement and instructional adjustments.

Data Mechanisms

SLOs are embedded across the MFT curriculum and are assessed through designated assignments and evaluative measures. Select SLOs are operationalized through clearly defined performance targets. These targets specify:

- a minimum percentage of students
- achieving at or above
- a defined minimum score on a designated assignment or evaluative measure

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Targets function as objective indicators of student achievement. Meeting or exceeding targets demonstrates satisfactory attainment of the SLO; failure to meet targets triggers faculty review and, when necessary, corrective action.

Data Collection, Documentation, and Aggregation

At the conclusion of each course, the instructor collects student performance data from all assignments aligned with identified SLO targets. Raw scores are entered into designated Raw Target Score Grid. Here is an example:

Fall 2024 - Summer 2025: Raw Target Scores											
Fall 2024 Target Data											
Course			Course			Course			Course		
MFTH 6800: Relational Theory, Practice, & Ethics			MFTH 6900: Foundations of Family Therapy			MFTH 7500: Development in the Family System			MFTH 7601: Treatment Issues in MFT		
Assessment Measure			Assessment Measure			Assessment Measure			Assessment Measure		
Systems Theory Final Exam			PCP Reflection Paper			Encountering Difference Project			Clinical Case Presentation		
SLO Assessed			SLO Assessed			SLO Assessed			SLO Assessed		
2			1			3			2		
Max Points			Max Points			Max Points			Max Points		
25			30			35			50		
Target Score			Target Score			Target Score			Target Score		
80% of students will earn ≥ 75%			80% of students will earn ≥ 75%			80% of students will earn ≥ 75%			80% of students will earn ≥ 75%		
Students	Raw Score	1 indicates target met	Students	Raw Score	1 indicates target met	Students	Raw Score	1 indicates target met	Students	Raw Score	1 indicates target met
1	16		1	30	1	1	20.6		1	46	1
2	20	1	2	30	1	2	31.8	1	2	40	1
3	23	1	3	29	1	3	33.5	1	3	49	1
4	23	1	4	27	1	4	31.1	1	4	41	1
5	23	1	5	29	1	5	29.4	1	5	49	1

Students	Raw Score	1 indicates the target was met	Students	Raw Score	1 indicates the target was met	Students	Raw Score	1 indicates the target was met	Students	Raw Score	1 indicates the target was met
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...
22	100	1	22		52.8		22	100	1	22	33	1	22	38	1
23	100	1	23		68	1	23	100	1	total	196		23	40	1
24	100	1	24		73.6	1	24	100	1	avg	32. 7		24	39	1
25	100	1	25		71.2	1	25	100	1				25	40	1
26	100	1	26		68	1	26	100	1				26	39	1
27	100	1	27		72	1	27	100	1				27	40	1
							total						total		
							avg						avg		
Total # of students who completed the assessment		27		Total # of students who completed the assessment		27	Total # of students who completed the assessment		27	Total # of students who completed the assessment			Total # of students who completed the assessment		
Total # of students who met the target				Total # of students who met the target			Total # of students who met the target			Total # of students who met the target			Total # of students who met the target		
Percentage of students who met the target		xx%		Percentage of students who met the target		xx%	Percentage of students who met the target		xx%	Percentage of students who met the target			Percentage of students who met the target		

This standardized documentation process ensures:

- consistent data collection across courses and semesters
- accurate tracking of student performance relative to SLO targets
- reliable aggregation of data for program-level review

The Raw Target Score grid calculates the following:

- total number of students completing the assignment
- total number of students meeting the target
- percentage of students meeting the target

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Longitudinal Aggregation and Program-Level Review

Course-level SLO results are subsequently entered into a multi-year aggregation grid organized by Program Goal and corresponding SLO. Here is an example:

PG 4: Professional MFT Identity - SLO 4: Students will claim the professional identity of an MFT									
Year	MFTH 7600: Practicum in MFT			SLO Survey			MFTH 7600: Practicum in MFT		
	Items 17, 42, 65, 18, 43, and 66 (80% minimum)			SLO question concerning MFT identity (80% minimum)			COMPS II (80% minimum)		
	# of students who met the	# of students who completed the assignment	% of students who met the target	# of students who met the target	# of students who completed the assignment	% of students who met the target	# of students who met the target	# of students who completed the assignment	% of students who met the target
2024									
2023									
2022									
2021									
2020									
2019									

This longitudinal tracking system enables faculty to:

- monitor trends in student achievement over time
- compare performance across assessment measures
- identify strengths and areas for improvement
- document evidence of sustained achievement

Annual faculty review of aggregated data supports systematic evaluation of program effectiveness and documentation of improvement actions. When targets are not met, faculty identify contributing factors, implement targeted interventions, and reassess subsequent data to evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions.

How Data Are Analyzed

SLO data are analyzed through a formal, documented annual faculty review process conducted in conjunction with preparation of the University's Institutional Effectiveness Report (IER) and Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP).

An annual faculty meeting designated for assessment is convened and includes:

- core faculty
- clinical Coordinator
- adjunct faculty (invited to participate)

During this meeting, faculty review SLO target data from:

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- Fall of the previous academic year
- Spring of the current academic year
- Summer of the current academic year

This structured review ensures systematic evaluation of student learning across a full academic cycle.

Scope of Data Reviewed

For the SLOs scheduled for in-depth review that year, faculty examine all relevant assessment data, including:

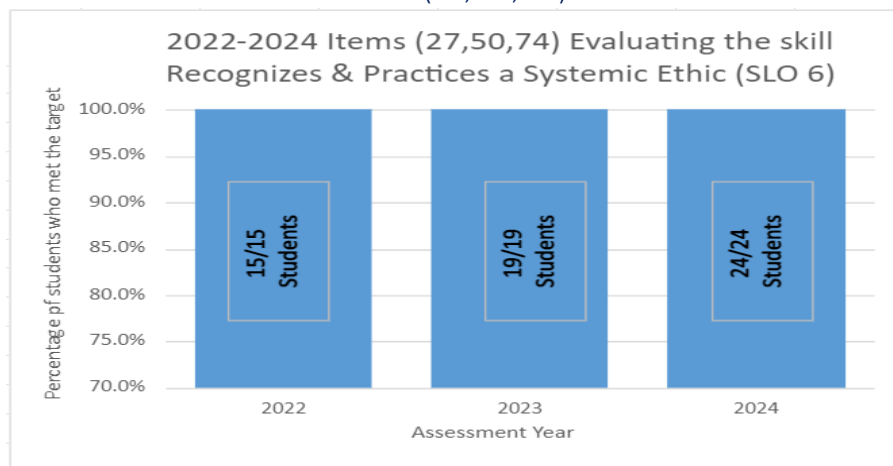
- raw target scores
- aggregated percentage data
- longitudinal comparisons
- charts and graphs organized by course, target, semester, and year

Faculty engage in evidence-based discussion to:

- determine whether performance benchmarks were met
- identify patterns or trends over time
- analyze contributing factors
- develop action steps, if needed

Implications and decisions are documented as part of the institutional effectiveness reporting process. Here is an example of a targeted SLO analysis:

SLO 6: Practica Evaluation Items (27, 50, 74)



Target: Across three consecutive practica, 80% of students will earn a minimum average score of 3 for practicum evaluation items 27, 50, and 74, which evaluate the skill, “*recognizes and practices a systemic ethic*” and is linked to SLO 6: Practice informed by ethics.

Timeline for Data Collection and Analysis

Although the program collects and aggregates SLO data every semester for all outcomes with established targets, two SLOs are selected annually for in-depth analysis and formal written reporting, in accordance with the MFT SLO Assessment Schedule for the university Institutional Effectiveness Report and Plan:

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Year	MFT SLO Assessment Schedule IER and IEP	Data Analyzed	Submission Date & Year
2018 - 2019	SLO 5: Recognize the way research informs relational family therapy treatment	Fall 2017, Spring & Summer 2018 semesters	9/30/2019
	SLO 6: Practice Informed by ethics		
2019 - 2020	SLO 1. Practice from a multi-culturally sensitive lens	Fall 2018, Spring & Summer 2019 semesters	9/30/2020
	SLO 2. Practice from a systemic lens		
2020 - 2021	SLO 3: Obtain entry-level employment in mental health settings	Fall 2019, Spring & Summer 2020 semesters	9/30/2021
	SLO 4: Claim the Professional Identity of a Marriage and Family Therapist		
2021 - 2022	SLO 5: Recognize the way research informs relational family therapy treatment	Fall 2020, Spring & Summer 2021 semesters	9/30/2022
	SLO 6: Practice Informed by ethics		
2022 - 2023	SLO 3: Obtain entry-level employment in mental health settings	Fall 2021, Spring & Summer 2022 semesters	9/30/2023
	SLO 4: Claim the Professional Identity of a Marriage & Family Therapist		
2023 - 2024	SLO 5: Recognize the way research informs relational family therapy treatment	Fall 2022, Spring & Summer 2023 semesters	9/30/2024
	SLO 6: Practice Informed by ethics		
2024 - 2025	SLO 1: Practice from a multi-culturally sensitive lens	Fall 2023, Spring & Summer 2024 semester	9/30/2025
	SLO 2: Practice from a systemic lens		
2025 - 2026	SLO 5: Recognize the way research informs relational family therapy treatment	Fall 2025, Spring & Summer 2026 semesters	9/30/2026
	SLO 6: Practice Informed by ethics		

- * The IER represents work accomplished during the fall, spring, and summer semesters of the past year.
- * The IEP represents work forecast for the upcoming summer, fall, and spring semesters.

This structured rotation ensures that:

- two SLOs undergo comprehensive review each year

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- all six SLOs are evaluated in depth within a three-year cycle
- each SLO is reassessed for sustained achievement over time

Faculty review of scheduled SLOs occur in Summer or early Fall to allow sufficient time for analysis, interpretation, and documentation prior to submission of the final Institutional Effectiveness plan and report by September 30.

Continuous Improvement (Closing the Loop)

When targets are not met, or when trend data indicate concern, faculty:

1. identify contributing factors
2. develop and implement corrective actions
3. document planned improvements in the IEP
4. reassess subsequent data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

This annual cycle of data collection, aggregation, analysis, action, and re-evaluation ensures a systematic, evidence-based assessment process aligned with institutional and accreditation standards.

How Data Are Presented to COIs

The MFT Program systematically disseminates Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment findings to its identified Communities of Interest (COIs), which include:

- current students
- faculty (core and adjunct)
- program staff
- alumni

SLO data are communicated through one or more of the following mechanisms:

- program Community Meetings
- program newsletters
- formal email communications distributed to students, alumni, faculty, and staff

Shared information includes aggregated SLO results, interpretation of findings, and any resulting program improvement actions.

Recipients are invited to provide feedback, including observations, recommendations, and program improvement suggestions. This feedback is documented and considered part of the program's continuous improvement process.

Who Reviews MFT Program SLO Analyses

Valdosta State University demonstrates compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation (2024 edition)*, published by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) through "systematic, ongoing, integrated, research-based reviews that result in continuous improvement" at the institutional level.

In alignment with this institutional framework, the MFT Program's annual SLO analyses are incorporated into the University's:

- Institutional Effectiveness Report (IER)
- Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP)

These reports undergo formal administrative review and approval through the following chain:

1. Head, Department of Human Services
2. College Assessment Committee Chair

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3. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
4. University Assessment Committee Chair

This multi-level review process ensures institutional oversight, accountability, and alignment with university-wide assessment standards.

Integration of External Standards

As part of the annual review process, the MFT Program evaluates and incorporates relevant updates to external professional and regulatory standards, including:

- the Code of Ethics and Core Competencies of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
- Georgia licensure laws and regulatory requirements
- examination policies, procedures, and content updates from the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards

Documented changes to these standards are reviewed and, where applicable, integrated into curricular revisions, assessment practices, and reported program improvements.

Student Input on Mission, Program Goals, and SLO Revisions

If revisions to the program mission, Program Goals (PGs), or Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are proposed—including additions, deletions, or substantive wording changes—faculty formally solicit student input. Student feedback is gathered through:

- open faculty meetings
- program Community Meetings

Input is reviewed and considered prior to final adoption of changes. This process ensures stakeholder engagement and alignment between program objectives and student experience.

II. Assessment of Student/Graduate Achievement

As defined in the glossary of Accreditation Standards, V12.5, student/graduate achievements are *“statements that articulate the professional accomplishments of a program's graduates, aligned with the program's mission, beginning with completion of the educational program.*

Accomplishments include indicators such as graduation rates, licensure examination pass rates, job placement rates, employment in clinical, academic, MFT relational/systemic supervision, training and/or research settings, and licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist.”

Data Mechanisms

Job placement statistics, licensure rates, and other data about graduate and student accomplishments and achievements comes to us informally and formally. Informally, information comes to the program through on-going collegial relationships with graduates who stay in touch with program faculty as they secure jobs, get promotions, and enter doctoral programs.

Formally, we continuously accrue data from the administration of the *Alumni* and *Exit Surveys*.

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Timeline for Data Collection and Analysis

The schedule for data collection and analysis adheres to the Program's Master Schedule of Surveys and Evaluations.

How Data Are Collected

1. Data for graduation and retention are taken from student admission, attrition, and graduation statistics accrued by the program with each annual, incoming class.
2. Data for licensing and employment derive from *Alumni* and *Exit* surveys that are administered according to the Program's Master Schedule of Surveys and Evaluations,
3. The *Alumni Survey*, administered through Qualtrics, collects data from program graduates concerning the following areas:
 - graduate trends and achievements
 - licensing rates
 - licensure exam pass rates
 - job placement

The Exit Survey, completed by each graduating cohort, gathers students' perceptions of the following:

- Readiness to practice from a culturally systemic lens
- Readiness to practice from a systemic lens
- Preparedness to obtain entrylevel employment in a mental health setting
- Development of a professional identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist
- Consideration of research within family therapy practice
- Ability to practice ethically

Additional information gathered:

- intention to seek licensure
- efforts and success in securing employment prior to graduation
- overall perception of the value of their investment in an MFT education at VSU

How Data Are Aggregated and Analyzed

Student/graduate achievement statistics are aggregated by Qualtrics, an enterprise feedback management platform that provides web-based survey tools for conducting survey research, evaluations, and other data collection activities. During preparation of the program's Annual Report to COAMFTE, the Program and Clinical Coordinator enter the aggregated data into the required GAD (Graduate Achievement Data) grid, which is reviewed at a faculty meeting for discussion and approval.

III. Assessment of the Curriculum

Data Sources

The following comprise the data sources that guide a faculty review of the curriculum:

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- program current curriculum map
- course syllabi
- aggregated SLO/target data for previous 2 years
- course readings (books, articles, etc.) and teaching/learning practices
- course assessment measures
- changes in Georgia State laws or rules
- core competencies
- AAMFT Code of Ethics
- AMFTRB practice domains
- relevant Georgia state licensing regulations/changes
- aggregated SLO/target data for previous relevant years
- program Outcome-Based Education and Assessment Plan

*Note: COAMFTE V12.5 standards no longer include the evaluation of teaching/learning practices as a stand-alone entity. However, because teaching/learning practices are integral to a detailed review of the program's curriculum and curriculum mapping activities, the faculty informally (without numerical data from a specific survey or evaluation) includes a review through discussion and review of the FCAs and the curriculum/syllabi.

Timeline for Data Collection

The curriculum is assessed every five years and sooner when necessary.

How Data Are Aggregated and Analyzed

The curriculum is mapped for its relationships to the following:

- course syllabi
- PGs and SLOs
- core competencies
- AAMFT Code of Ethics
- AMFTRB practice domains
- relevant Georgia state licensing regulations/changes

Purpose of Curriculum Mapping

Curriculum mapping is done for the purpose of aligning courses, instruction and teaching/learning practices, core competencies, licensing rules and laws with foundational curricular areas, program goals, and student learning outcomes as well as explore teaching/learning practices (what is taught and how, using what assessment measures). The curriculum map is utilized to do the following:

- document what is taught and when, and who teaches it
- reveal gaps in the curriculum
- identify the learning opportunities (e.g., assessment measures/course assignments) that produce the program's outcomes
- set priorities as a program/assure that teaching/learning practices align with program

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mission and goals.

- carve an educational path in which everyone is working together toward common outcomes, thus increasing the likelihood that students will meet or exceed expectations
- inform the Assessment Plan

Curriculum Alignment and Faculty Review Process

COAMFTE foundational area (FCAs) are mapped to courses as they relate to the above listed areas. All areas are mapped across the curriculum and reviewed for balance, appropriateness, validity, and reliability.

Faculty discuss perceived strengths and weaknesses of their courses and consult with each other/exchange ideas about improving/changing them based on SOIs (student opinion of instruction), assessment measure scores, target data, faculty perception of the strengths and weakness of her/his teaching as well as that of a given class. Also included is a continued discussion about how to best educate/inform students about the program's OBE framework.

Best Practices in Curriculum Mapping

The program follows best practices in Curriculum Mapping.

- Whenever possible, build in practice and multiple learning trials for students to absorb introductory information, develop (practice), and gain proficiency.
- Allow faculty members to teach to their strengths. Whenever possible, give particular outcomes to the instructor best suited for the task.
- Ask if the program is trying to do too much.
- Communicate . . .
 - overtly to students, who do not themselves always make the connections between courses: Faculty members can make explicit connections across courses for them. For example, at the beginning of the course, a faculty member can remind students about material they were introduced to in a previous course and explain how the current course will have them practice or expand their knowledge. To do this, faculty seek to know about what and how other faculty are teaching, what teaching/learning practices their colleagues rely on, and what those practices are designed to accomplish.
 - to students how the program is designed by publishing the curriculum map on the Program website and/or distribute to relevant communities of interest (COIs), such as alumni, current students, and faculty. Request feedback from COIs.

Sources

Arafeh, S. (2015, March). Curriculum mapping in higher education: A case study and proposed content scope and sequence mapping tool. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. DOI: 10.1080/0309877X.2014.1000278

Smith, H. R., & Chittams, J. (2024). Defining best practices and validation for curriculum mapping. *Cogent Education*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2342662>

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How COIs Are Informed

When assessment of the curriculum results in significant curricular changes, relevant COIs are informed.

The Importance of Transparency

Transparency of the Program's Outcome-Based Education Framework is of vital importance for the following reasons:

1. consumer protection
2. public accountability
3. demonstrated commitment to accuracy and currency
4. disclosure of student achievement data
5. clarity of academic and clinical expectations
6. access to due process mechanisms
7. demonstration of program effectiveness
8. request for communities of interest feedback
9. clear communication of program mission, goals, and SLOs
10. transparent clinical training requirements
11. published policies on admission, retention, and graduation
12. transparency of faculty qualifications and roles
13. grievance and due process procedures

This description is reviewed and updated whenever the program conducts an overarching assessment of its [Curriculum Map](#) and in between when circumstances make it necessary.

Comprehensive Program Review

Required by [USG 3.6.3 Comprehensive Program Review Policy](#), Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) is a set of procedures, involving analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, which produce a systematic review of the effectiveness of academic programs. The [purpose of CPR](#) is to address the quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution's mission. The MS in Marriage and Family Therapy Comprehensive Program Review schedule is as follows:

- 2018 – 2019
- 2025 – 2026
- 2031 – 2032

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