

MFT Program Policy on Student Assessment, Grading, Academic Standards, and Regulations

Policy Availability

This Policy on Student Assessment, Grading, Academic Standards, and Regulations is available to the public via the [MFT Homepage](#) > [Accreditation](#) > [Policies and Handbook](#).

Policy on Grading, Assessment, and Academic Standards & Regulations

Consistent with its mission, Program Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes, the MFT Program policy adheres to non-discriminatory academic standards and regulations that standardize and regulate university operations, so that all students are subject to the same regulations, rules, policies, and assessment procedures and processes. Links relevant to MFT students can be found in the Graduate School Catalog, where, among others, the following topics are addressed:

Appeal of Dismissal from Graduate School	Application for Graduation
Auditing Classes	Comprehensive Examinations
Course Withdrawal	Cross-Disciplinary Courses
Determination of Credit Hours	Diploma Replacement
Expectations for Satisfactory Graduate-Level Student Performance	Financial Aid
General Requirements for Graduate Degrees	Grade Appeal
Grading System	Graduate Assistantships
Hardship Withdrawal	Maximum Course Loads and Other Restrictions
Medical Withdrawal	Mental Health Withdrawal
Plagiarism	Request for Extension of Seven-Year Rule
Satisfactory Academic Progress	Second Master's Degree Program of Study
Student E-mail Responsibilities	Transfer Credit

Monitoring Student Progress

The Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Program at Valdosta State University employs a systematic, multi-method process to monitor student progress across both the academic curriculum and clinical practice components. These processes are designed to ensure that students demonstrate progressive development of knowledge, skills, and professional

This policy addresses Standard 12.5 Eligibility Criteria E. Accuracy and Program Transparency in Policies and Publications and KE III-A Curriculum Alignment and Monitoring. Updated Spring 2026. Scheduled for review Fall 2029 or sooner as necessary

competencies consistent with program goals, Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and the standards of the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE).

Student progress is evaluated continuously using multiple measures, across multiple points in time, and by multiple evaluators, including course instructors, clinical supervisors, and program faculty. This comprehensive approach ensures that student development is tracked holistically and that decisions regarding progression, remediation, and program completion are based on converging evidence that include the following ways:

- Quantitative evaluation via the Practicum Evaluation at the end of each semester.
- Clinical reports from Clinic Coordinator regarding students' case files, which are audited for completion and timeliness, satisfactory progress toward completion of required clinical hours.
- Review of academic progress
 - Student progress within the curriculum is monitored through course-embedded assessments aligned with program SLOs and core competencies. These assessments include examinations, written assignments, case conceptualizations, treatment plans, research projects, and applied learning activities.
 - Faculty evaluate student performance using standardized rubrics that reflect developmental expectations consistent with Level I (Introductory), Level D (Developing), and Level P (Proficient) learning. These assessments provide ongoing, formative feedback and allow faculty to identify areas of strength and areas requiring further development.
 - Student performance is reviewed each semester to ensure satisfactory academic progress. Faculty communicate concerns regarding academic performance through direct feedback and, when necessary, initiate additional review processes.
- Assessment of clinical competence
- Student progress in the practice component is systematically evaluated throughout the three-semester practicum sequence. Clinical competence is assessed using structured practicum evaluation instruments aligned with program competencies and professional standards.
- Supervisors evaluate students on a regular basis, assessing areas such as:
 - Therapeutic alliance and relational skills
 - Systemic case conceptualization
 - Implementation of interventions

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- Ethical and professional behavior
- Cultural responsiveness
- Use of supervision and reflective practice

Students receive both formative and summative feedback through written evaluations, supervision sessions, and live review of recorded clinical work. This ongoing feedback supports skill development and ensures that students are progressing appropriately across the practica sequence.

Transition Points and Developmental Checkpoints

The program incorporates formal checkpoints at critical transition points to evaluate student readiness for progression:

- **Entry into Practicum**
Prior to beginning clinical work, students must successfully complete foundational coursework in theory, ethics, assessment, intervention and successfully pass the Comprehensive Exam I, which faculty review to ensure readiness for contact with the public.
- **Release for independent clinical work**
During the initial phase of Practicum I, students conduct clinical sessions under direct supervision, typically with a supervisor observing in real time. Following this period, students may be approved to conduct sessions without a supervisor physically present (e.g., behind the observation mirror). The decision to grant this release is based on a formal evaluation by the clinical supervisor of the student’s demonstrated competencies, including:
 - Ability to establish therapeutic rapport (joining)
 - Use of systemic questioning and engagement strategies
 - Beginning competence in case conceptualization
 - Ability to collaboratively define presenting problems with clients
 - Adherence to ethical and professional standards
- **Progression Through Practicum**
Student performance is reviewed each semester based on practica evaluations and supervisor feedback. Successful completion of three consecutive semesters of practica indicates satisfactory clinical progress.
- **Comprehensive Examination II**
Near the end of the program, students complete a comprehensive assessment requiring integration of theoretical, clinical, and professional knowledge. Successful completion indicates readiness for entry-level professional practice.

These checkpoints ensure that students meet clearly defined expectations before advancing to more complex levels of training.

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Feedback and Communication Processes

The program emphasizes timely, constructive, and ongoing feedback as a central component of student development. Feedback is provided through:

- Course evaluations and graded assignments
- Individual and group supervision
- Formal practicum evaluations
- Faculty advisement and mentoring

This multi-level feedback structure ensures that students are consistently informed of their progress and are provided with specific guidance for improvement.

Identifying Concerns

The Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Program at Valdosta State University has established systematic procedures for identifying and addressing concerns related to academic performance, clinical competence, and professional behavior. Concerns may be identified at any point in the program by faculty members, clinical supervisors, or the Clinical Coordinator.

When a concern is identified, the program initiates a structured review process designed to support student development while ensuring adherence to program standards. This process may include:

- Documentation of the concern
- Meeting with the student to discuss performance and gather the student's perspective
- Development of a written remediation plan outlining specific goals, required actions, and timelines, when warranted
- Ongoing monitoring and follow-up evaluation

Students are expected to demonstrate improvement consistent with the terms of the remediation plan. Failure to meet remediation expectations may result in additional action, including delayed progression or dismissal from the program, in accordance with program and college policies.

Faculty Review and Early Identification of Concerns

Student progress is regularly reviewed during scheduled faculty meetings, where core and adjunct faculty discuss students who may be experiencing academic, clinical, or professional difficulties. Concerns may be based on a range of indicators, including but not limited to:

- Low performance on assignments or course requirements (including any grade of "C")
- Attendance concerns (absence, chronic lateness)
- Observed disengagement or distractibility in class

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- Reported or observed personal distress affecting performance
- Clinical or supervision-related concerns

During these meetings, the faculty member raising the concern identifies the student and describes the specific area(s) of difficulty (e.g., coursework, supervision, clinical performance) and the behaviors or performance indicators prompting concern. Faculty members then engage in a collaborative discussion, sharing additional observations and perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding of the student’s functioning across contexts.

As part of this process, faculty also identify areas of student strength to support a balanced and developmentally appropriate response. These may include:

- Class participation and engagement
- Timely completion of coursework
- Overall academic performance
- Level of contact with faculty or advisor
- Willingness to initiate communication
- Responsiveness to faculty outreach
- Performance in assistantships
- Professionalism, reliability, and ethical behavior

Determining Action and Intervention

Based on this collaborative review, faculty determine the level of concern and appropriate course of action. Responses may range from informal to formal interventions, including:

- Continued monitoring (“wait-and-see” approach)
- Informal consultation or meeting with the student and advisor or instructor
- Targeted feedback and guidance
- Initiation of formal remediation procedures

When formal action is warranted, the program follows the [Professional Improvement](#) process established by the College of Education and Human Services. This includes:

1. A meeting between the faculty member(s) and the student to discuss the concern, review expectations, and consider the student’s perspective
2. Introduction and review of the COEHS Professional Improvement Plan
3. Development of a [COEHS Professional Improvement Plan](#), the formal, written plan outlining required improvements, actions, and timelines
4. Completion of additional advisement documentation, as needed (e.g., Instructional Advisement Form)

Student progress following identification of concerns is monitored on an ongoing basis and is revisited in subsequent faculty meetings. This ensures that:

- Student progress is consistently evaluated
- Faculty remain informed
- Adjustments to the intervention plans can be made as needed

Related Policy

For additional information, see the [Policy on Addressing Academic Difficulties](#).