

MFT Program Advising Policy

Policy Availability

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

MFT Program Advising

Academic advising for MFT students is intended to provide necessary tools and information to MFT students, allowing them to meet institutional and degree requirements as well as take responsibility for developing educational and career plans compatible with their personal goals. Thus, it is the policy of the VSU MFT Program that:

1. All newly admitted MFT students are assigned an MFT faculty advisor.
2. An *Admission Information Letter* giving the name and email of each student's MFT faculty advisor will be sent by email to the student. A copy of the *Admission Information Letter* is printed and included in the student's permanent file.
3. An individualized *Plan of Study* is drawn up by the student in consultation with and subject to the approval of the student's MFT faculty advisor.
4. The MFT Program will administer a survey on academic advising on a yearly basis to collect information about students' perceptions of the effectiveness and quality of the MFT advising process.
5. Accurate advising information will be published on the MFT Program website.
6. An assessment of the MFT program advising process and policy is a part of the regular program review process; the MFT advising policy and procedures will be assessed and reviewed every 3rd year.

Goals and Responsibilities of MFT Academic Advisors

1. Help advisees understand the requirements of their program and to plan appropriately to meet those requirements.
2. To assist students in choosing educational and career objectives commensurate with their interests and abilities.
3. To answer questions raised by students and to make them aware of the possible short- and long-range consequences of their choices.
4. Help advisees correctly prepare paperwork necessary to meet program requirements, such as course substitutions, waivers, the [Application for Graduation](#), and the [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#).
5. To be an information source regarding policies and procedures of the MFT Program and the University.
6. To be a source for on-going dialogue concerning academic goals, career, and related life issues.
7. Maintain a permanent student file (either electronic or hard copy) for each student. At minimum, each file will include the following:
 - a. Application packet compiled by the Graduate School
 - b. Prospective Student Evaluation
 - c. Welcome to the MFT Program email sent by faculty interviewer denoting admission status (i.e., regular or probationary).

- d. Student's Letter of Intent and Acceptance of Diversity Statement (an email from the student documenting their intent to begin the program and their affirmation of having read and their willingness to abide by, the program's diversity statement).
- e. Admission Information Letter
- f. Comprehensive Exam I
- g. Comprehensive Exam I Evaluation Rubric
- h. Comprehensive Exam II
- i. Comprehensive Exam II Evaluation Rubric
- j. Graduation Check sheet
- k. Post graduate transcript showing conferral of MFT degree

Responsibilities of Students

The advising process depends on the thoughtful participation of the students. Students must assume the following responsibilities:

- Know the requirements for completing the program, graduation, and other university requirements published on the MFT Program and university websites and/or the university catalog.
- Work with an advisor to develop a curriculum plan which will allow them to stay on track for their planned graduation, recognizing other responsibilities they might have including family and work obligations.
- Contact the assigned advisor when concerns arise. These might include deficiency points that have been earned, when any changes are made such as dropping a course(s), when concerned about grades, or when substituting courses.
- If you decide to leave the program, whether permanently or for a semester or more, you are strongly encouraged to contact your advisor. For example, if you leave the program after taking one or two practica, your absence from the program resets the clock, so that when you return, you will be required to re-take your one or two practica, so that you have 3 contiguous practica.
- Accept ultimate responsibility for selection of classes that incorporates personal decisions as well as the academic advice given by the advisor.
- Evaluate the MFT advising process and individual academic advisors by completing an advising survey.

MFT Advising Process

1. Once a student has been accepted for admission and following receipt of the student's Letter of Intent to enter the program, the program director will email the *Admission Information Letter*, which gives the name and email of the student's MFT faculty advisor and relays that the advisor will contact the student before the start of the Fall semester. A copy of the *Admission Information Letter* is printed and included in the student's permanent file.
2. Prior to the start of each new incoming fall class, faculty advisors will contact their advisees, inform them of the advising process and class registration, and send new advisees instructions on how and where to get a background check.
3. Next, the advisor assists students in creating a *Plan of Study* that best suits their needs.

- Once the student has created the plan of study—using the *“Your Plan of Study”* form the advisor will approve the plan and lift the student’s advising flag, allowing the student to register for classes.

Email Alerts/Reminders

Withdrawal. Each semester, just before the mid-term, a version of this email is sent to students reminding them of withdrawal dates:

*“Midterm is closely approaching which means the deadline to withdraw from full-term classes is also near. The last date to withdraw from full-term classes is **someday, October xx, 201x**. Click here for the [VSU withdrawal policy](#).*

Students may withdraw from courses following the drop/add period until approximately one week after midterm by completing the online withdrawal process on BANNER. A grade of “W” will appear in the student’s official records.

Students should keep in mind that excessive withdrawals may affect financial aid. You are advised to check with the [Financial Aid Office](#) about this.

Please set up a meeting with your advisor as soon as possible if you are unsure of if you should withdraw from a course.”

*Thank you,
MFT Advisors*

Registration. Advisors also send out an email around mid-term of the Fall semester, reminding students of Spring and Summer registration. Here is an example of such an email:

“The time for spring registration is getting close—October xxth. At this time, you can register for Spring and Summer 2018.

There will be no formal advising for this semester’s registration. However, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your advisor to make an appointment.

Each of you has a Plan of Study on file, along with your own copy of this form. Assuming no changes are being made, your advisor has reviewed your plan and you have been deemed eligible for registration.

If you would like to make changes to your plan, especially if you are considering slowing down please meet with your advisor prior to midterm. Additionally, if you have already adjusted your plan and did not meet with your advisor please, request a meeting prior to this semester’s registration to ensure you graduate as planned.

Just a reminder, it is the responsibility of each student to register for the proper coursework, take the appropriate pre-requisites, and meet all graduation requirements.”

Prior to registration

Check your registration status by going to your account on the web and clicking the “Check Your Registration Status” option. Please check your status well before advising opens

If you have a hold on your account, we will be unable to lift your advising flag until those holds have been completed. It can take a day or two to resolve problems, so please do not wait until the last minute to check.

Once the electronic advising flag has been lifted from everyone’s account an email will be sent out.

Connect with Your MFT Advisors

Students are encouraged to contact their advisor for the following:

- *Whenever they are considering making changes to their plan of study or whenever they have questions about the order and availability of coursework. **It is the responsibility of each student to register for the proper coursework, take the appropriate pre-requisites, and meet all graduation requirements.***
- *Prior to dropping or adding a course.*
- *If students are having difficulties or have concerns about their performance in class(es), they are advised to meet with the course professor and their assigned advisor prior to the midterm to discuss whether a course(s) should be dropped.*

Graduation. When students are at least two semesters from their anticipated graduation date, advisors contact students and advise them that to graduate, they must complete the MFT Graduation Checklist and the Application for Degree.

The Below Content is Published on the MFT Website

MFT Advising

Academic advising for MFT students is intended to provide necessary tools and information to MFT students, allowing them to meet institutional and degree requirements as well as take responsibility for developing educational and career plans compatible with their personal goals.

Before Registering for Classes

Most students in the MFT program follow a two-year course of study; however, students are allowed up to seven years to complete the degree. Regardless of the speed with which students complete the program, they must consider their academic goals, personal and future plans, and life circumstances as well as the MFT Program course requirements, and, in collaboration with their advisor, create a *Plan of Study*. Once the *Plan of Study* has been created, both the student and the advisor will sign the plan. The advisor will retain the original for inclusion in the student’s permanent file, and the student will keep a copy. Once this is accomplished, the student’s advising flag will be lifted, at which point the student is free to register for classes.

Registering for Classes

Generally, registration is open for a one-month window at mid-semester and reopens again a week prior to the first day of classes. Check the electronic message board (EMB) at FamilyWorks and/or see the [VSU Academic Calendar](#) for specific registration dates. Prior to open registration periods, advisors will lift students' advising flags, which allows them to register for classes. If your advisor has not received a revised *Plan of Study* and a note or email describing the changes and the reason for them, your advisor will assume that your last approved advising plan is in force.

- [How: Register for Classes](#)
- [When: Registration dates are listed in the VSU Academic Calendar](#)
- [Where: Register for Classes in Banner](#)
- [View the Schedule of Classes](#)
- [Contact your faculty advisor](#)

If You Make Changes to the *Plan of Study*

Students are expected to meet with their faculty advisor whenever they are considering making changes to their *Plan of Study* or have questions about the order and availability of coursework. Prior to making changes to a *Plan of Study*, students must provide advisors with the following:

- A revised copy of the *Plan of Study* form
- A brief note or email explaining the proposed change(s) and how the change(s) may impact your date of graduation.

Keep your *Plan of Study* up-to-date! When there is more demand for a course than space or enrollment limits allow, students with outdated advising plans will be removed from the course in question. **It is the responsibility of each student to register for the proper coursework, take the appropriate pre-requisites, and meet all graduation requirements.**

Dropping or Adding Classes

Drop/Add Time Limits – Students may drop and add courses during the official drop/add period, which is usually the first week of classes. Students can drop classes as withdrawal/passing until the midterm; after that, withdraw/fail is the only option.

Withdrawing from a Class

Dropping a course and withdrawing from a course are different. Make sure you know how they differ, particularly as it concerns your continued financial aid eligibility. Prior to dropping or withdrawing from a course, students are expected to talk with academic advisor and strongly encouraged to speak with someone in Financial Aid about any consequences that might occur as a result of dropping a course or withdrawing from the program.

Further, students should be aware that *MFTH 7500 Practicum* must be taken as three contiguous semesters of clinical practice. Students must remain continuously enrolled in *MFTH 7600 Practicum* across three consecutive semesters for one calendar year (for example, Summer-Fall-Spring or Fall-Spring-Summer). Should a student take a semester with no practicum, *the clock resets so that* he or she will have to begin the consecutive sequence all over the next time he or she enrolls in practicum.

Dismissal from the program

If dismissed from the program, a student must sit out for two semesters before re-applying for re-admission. Re-admission is not guaranteed and prior academic performance and/or conduct in the program will be considered. If re-admitted, the student must re-take only courses with deficiencies until the number of deficiency points is less than or equal to two. If the contiguous 3-semester of practica was interrupted, the student is required to take the 3 semesters over again, so that they are continuous. A student cannot take a class more than twice or apply for re-admission more than once. The academic program reserves the right to place specific conditions and contingencies on any offer of readmission.

Talk to Your Professor and/or Your Advisor

At or before midterm, students should evaluate whether they want to continue in the classes for which they are currently registered. Unlike undergraduate classes, graduate classes may not have pre-midterm assignments or exams that help you gauge your progress. To help you decide whether you should remain in one or more of your classes, ask yourself questions such as these: Do I feel comfortable with the material, and do I believe I am gaining mastery over the concepts? Can I reasonably get all of the work done by the end of the semester?

If you are having difficulties or if you are concerned about your performance in a class, you should meet with the professor and your advisor prior to the midterm to discuss whether you should drop or withdraw from the course.

If you do decide to drop or add a course, please see your advisor and re-read the section on changing your advising plan.

How To Do the Program in More Than 2 Years (3 or 4 Years)

If you plan to go through the program more slowly than 2 years, contact your faculty advisor and schedule a meeting prior to MFT New Student Orientation, which occurs the first week of August. The two of you will put your heads together and, based on your needs, hammer out a *Plan of Study* that meets graduation requirements and your personal circumstances and goals.

Graduation

For information on the graduation process, advising, and paperwork, see the [Application for Graduation](#) page. Students who do not fall into the typical two-year course schedule must meet with their advisor **at least two semesters prior** to the anticipated date of graduation to complete the proper graduation forms.

Application for Graduation/Graduation Checklist

Please Note: If you plan to participate in early graduation ceremonies, held in May, make sure you ask for the **Alternative Graduation Request** form at the Registrar's office.

At least two semesters before their projected graduation date, students are required to fill out the [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#) and an [Application for Degree](#), and submit them to the Registrar's Office. The [Application for Degree](#) alerts the Registrar's Office that you are planning to graduate in two semesters, so the Registrar begins comparing your [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#) of completed courses to the published list of [graduation requirements](#). Students

graduate once all requirements have been met. Thus, for the next two semesters, you will update the [Application for Degree](#) form as you complete the remaining two semesters. Here are the steps:

Steps to Applying for Graduation

1. Obtain a Graduation Packet from the Registrar's office.
2. Complete the Graduation Packet.
3. Download and fill out the [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#).
4. Bring the [Application for Degree](#) and [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#) forms to your advisor to be completed and signed.
5. **Note:** It takes a great deal of time to review, complete, and sign your forms. Submit these to the MFT faculty advisor as early as possible. You will be contacted when they are ready for you to pick up.
6. **Important:** Make yourself a copy of all forms once they are signed. You will need a copy of the [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#), because you will be resubmitting an updated version of it at least two more times.
7. Take the completed, signed, and copied forms to the Bursary, pay the \$25 graduation fee, and [get a receipt](#).
8. Take all forms and the Bursary receipt to the Registrar's Office.

Keep in mind that because you are filing forms with the Registrar's office at least two semesters before you graduate, you will not yet have taken some courses listed on the [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#). **Submit the form to the Registrar anyway and as soon as possible.** Then, as you complete the remaining courses, ask the MFT Clinic Director to sign off on them, and re-submit the updated copy to the Registrar's office. Do this each semester, until you have completed all courses required for graduation.

It is your responsibility to update the [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#) each time you complete another course requirement. The Registrar will not allow anyone with an incomplete [MFT Graduation Checksheet](#) to graduate. **Do not delay.** As graduation grows closer, the Registrar's office becomes busier and busier. If your materials have not been processed because they are incomplete, you may not be able to graduate on time.