

MFT Program Policy on Client and Supervision Contact

Policy Availability

The **Policy on the Accrual of Client and Supervision Contact Hours** is available to the public through the [MFT Homepage > Accreditation > Policies and Handbook](#).

Client Contact Hours Are Accrued Across Three Consecutive Semesters

Once enrolled in MFTH 7600 Practicum, the Program requires that the students remain continuously enrolled for one calendar year across three consecutive semesters. If the student has not accrued the required client contact or supervision hours at the end of the year, they must enroll in either *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.

Client Contact Hours Required by the MFT Program and by the State of Georgia

In 2025, the state of Georgia wrote new rules concerning client contact, making them congruent with COAMFTE client contact requirements. However, as of January 2026, the new rules have not yet been published. Until legally posted, students must continue to accrue 500 client contact hours, if they intend to pursue licensure in the state of Georgia.

Required by the State of Georgia

All students must accrue client and supervision contact hours in the following ratios:

- 500 total hours of direct clinical experience
- 100 hours of supervision provided by a licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, clinical social worker, psychiatrist or psychologist, who was also an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, a Georgia Board Approved Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisor, or a person who was receiving supervision-of-supervision in order to qualify for either designation.

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

- A. the State of Georgia (see [GA Rule: O.C.G.A. § 43-10A-13](#)) requires that students accrue a minimum of 500 direct client contact hours in an MFT master's degree program. Consistent with the Program's mission and program goals to teach therapeutic practice, live, face-to-face, real-world therapy with clients under supervision with AAMFT Approved faculty supervisors and in accordance with COAMFTE accreditation Standards V12.5, KE III-C, students are required to accrue the following:
 - a minimum of 500 direct client contact hours
 - of the 500 hours, 100 must be relational (couples or families or related groups¹)
 - 100 of the 500 hours must be "relational"—face-to-face with families and/or couples
 - 100 may be alternative hours (behind-the-mirror, co-therapy, reflecting teams)

¹ Group therapy can count as relational only if the participants are related or in a defined relational system (e.g., a multi-couple group working on parenting or couple dynamics together, a group home setting in which the group members live together)

Required by the MFT Program

In congruence with COAMFTE accreditation Standards V12.5, the VSU MFT Program client contact requirement for graduation is a total of 300 hours. Of that total . . .

- A minimum of 150 face-to-face hours must be accrued at FamilyWorks, and 100 of the 300 hours must be relational.
- A minimum of 150 face-to-face hours must be accrued face-to-face (which includes virtual) at FamilyWorks (not at an internship).
- 100 hours of face-to-face supervision hours. (see the Policy on Practicum and Internship for more information about the nature of supervision hours).

Clinical Competence and Graduation Eligibility

Hours are necessary but not sufficient for graduation. Meeting the minimum hour requirements does not, by itself, qualify a student for graduation.

Students must also demonstrate satisfactory clinical competence, professionalism, ethical practice, and readiness for entry-level marriage and family therapy practice as evaluated by Program faculty and supervisors.

A student who has accrued all required client contact, supervision, and clinical experience hours may nevertheless be required to remain enrolled in clinical training, complete a remediation plan, or delay graduation if their performance on Practicum or Internship evaluations indicates that their clinical work is unsatisfactory.

Examples of concerns that may affect graduation eligibility include, but are not limited to:

- Deficits in clinical competence or case conceptualization
- Ethical or professional conduct concerns
- Inadequate integration of supervision feedback
- Insufficient systemic or relational clinical skills
- Failure to meet Program competency benchmarks
- Unsatisfactory ratings on Practicum or Internship evaluations

The Program faculty retain the authority to determine whether a student has demonstrated the level of clinical competence necessary for graduation, regardless of whether minimum hour requirements have been completed.

COAMFTE Definitions of Direct Clinical Contact Hours

The MFT Program adheres to the following definitions, as put forth in COAMFTE V12.5 Standards:

Couples are defined as two partners who request treatment for their intimate and/or family relationships.

Direct Clinical Contact Hours are defined as a therapeutic meeting of a therapist and client (individual, relational, or group) occurring in-person synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by technology. Assessments may be counted if they are in-person processes that are more than clerical in nature and focus. Also, therapy services delivered through interactive team modalities may provide direct client contact for specific team members who have in-person interaction with the client/system during the session. Therapy team members who engage in the therapeutic process only behind the mirror may not count the experience as direct client contact. Activities such as telephone contact, case planning, observation of therapy, record keeping, trainings, role-playing, travel, administrative activities, consultation with community members or professionals, and/or MFT relational/systemic supervision are not considered direct client contact. (p. 33).

Families are a social unit of two or more individuals, related by blood or non-blood, characterized by emotional engagement and/or commitment, and self-defined as family.

Foundational Practice Component is the practicum and/or internship phase of the program associated with the foundational curriculum, where students apply what they are learning in clinical practice. The foundational practice component requires a minimum number of therapy hours and a specified ratio of relationally/systemically oriented individual and group clinical, MFT relational/systemic supervision to therapy hours completed.

Group MFT relational/systemic supervision consists of one supervisor and eight or fewer students. Regardless of the number of program clinical supervisors present, a group cannot exceed eight students to qualify for group relational/systemic supervision. For example, ten MFT students and two program clinical supervisors are not appropriate because the number of students exceeds eight.

MFT Relational/Systemic Supervision is the practice of developing the clinical competencies and professional growth of the student as a supervisee, consistent with the MFT relational/systemic philosophy, ethics, and practices of the marriage and family therapy profession. Supervision is distinguishable from psychotherapy or teaching. MFT Relational/Systemic Supervision may be provided through virtual supervision.

Observable Data includes audio and video recordings, as well as live (behind the mirror, in the room for co-therapy, reflecting teams, etc.).

Program Clinical Supervisors provide MFT relational/systemic supervision within a COAMFTE accredited program. Program Clinical Supervisor qualifications include the following:

- a) demonstration of professional identity as a marriage and family therapist, and
- b) demonstration of training in MFT relational/systemic supervision by one of the following:
 - A graduate course in MFT relational/systemic supervision equivalent to three semester-credit hours
 - Postgraduate professional education in MFT relational/systemic supervision of at least 30 clock hours
 - A state established MFT supervisor designation that includes relational/systemic

supervision training

- Designation as an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Approved Supervisor Candidate

Relational Hours is a category of direct clinical contact hours in which a clinician delivers therapeutic services with two or more individuals conjointly, who share an ongoing relationship beyond that which occurs in the therapeutic experience itself. Examples include family subsystems, intimate couple subsystems, enduring friendship/community support subsystems, and residential, treatment, or situationally connected subsystems.

- Relational hours also may be counted with relational subsystems that include a person whose only available means to participate in the in-person therapeutic meeting is telephonic or electronic (e.g., incarcerated, deployed or out-of-town subsystem members.)
- Group therapy can be counted as relational hours if those in the group therapy have a relationship outside of (above and beyond) the group itself. Conversely, group therapy sessions of otherwise non-related individuals are not considered as relational hours.

Specific Categories of Client Contact Defined and How to Count Client Hours

The following describes how various client and supervision contact hours are defined.

Therapeutic work must be therapeutic, meaning it involves clinical interventions aimed at addressing the client's mental health, relational issues, or concerns in the context of family systems. These hours cannot include administrative duties, supervision, or other indirect client-related activities.

Supervision are hours spent in supervision, either individual (1 or 2 students) or group (2+ students). If a therapist is working directly with a client while a supervisor is present (virtually or face-to-face), then both client contact and supervision time are accrued. Supervision hours alone, without a client present, do not count toward direct client contact hours. This is only supervision time.

Simultaneous Client Contact and Supervision

When a supervisor is actively observing a student/co-therapists working with a live client, the student(s) earn both direct client contact and observable data supervision.

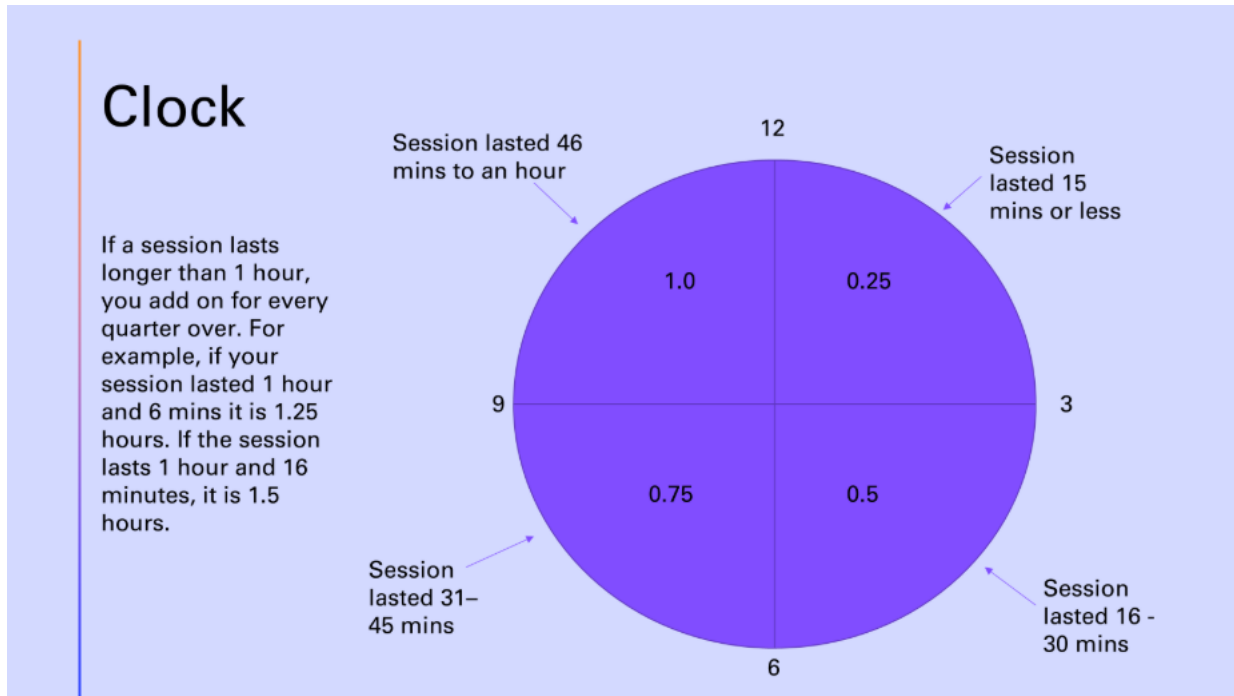
Term	Definition
Individual Client Contact	An individual client contact hour occurs when the therapist intern meets with one client in a therapeutic session, either in person or via telehealth.
Relational Client Contact	A relational client contact hour occurs when the therapist intern meets with two or more people who share a relationship with one another (e.g., couples, families, roommates, parent–child dyads, siblings) or participates in a therapy group, either in person or via telehealth.

Alternative Client Contact	An alternative client contact hour occurs when the therapist intern is not directly providing therapy but is observing a live therapy session (e.g., behind a one-way mirror or via video).
Individual Supervision (Observable)	An observable individual supervision hour occurs when a supervisor directly observes the therapist intern conducting a therapy session with one or more clients, either live, behind a one-way mirror, or via video. This format is also referred to as live supervision.
Group Supervision (Observable)	An observable group supervision hour occurs when a supervisor directly observes multiple therapist interns (or a supervisory group) conducting or participating in a therapy session, either live, behind a one-way mirror, or via video.
Individual Supervision (Case Report)	An individual supervision hour by case report occurs when a supervisor and therapist intern meet to discuss or review a particular client case. The intern presents case information, clinical issues, or process reflections; the supervisor is not observing a live session during this time.
Group Supervision (Case Report)	A group supervision hour by case report occurs when a supervisor meets multiple therapist interns to discuss one or more client cases. Each intern may present case material, receive feedback, and participate in group discussion; the supervisor is not observing a live session during this time.

How to Count Client Contact Hours

Students will count client contact hours according to the following guidelines:

- at FamilyWorks, time is counted in 15-minute increments (quarter hours), written out as 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, 1, 1.25, etc.



- Any longer than 15 mins is counted as 0.5 hrs. and anything less is counted as 0.25 hrs.
- If a session lasts longer than 1 hour, add on for every quarter over the hour.
 - Example, if your session lasted 1 hour and 8 mins, it is documented as 1.25 hours. If the session lasts 1 hour and 16 minutes, it is 1.5 hours.
 - Example: If you see a client for 36 minutes, in the duration box on the case note form, write 0.75 hrs.
- All phone calls (confirming sessions, returning calls, etc.) can be documented as 0.25 in the case note, but is not counted towards (COAMFTE or state of Georgia client contact hours).

Supervision Contact Hours

The primary goals of supervision are the growth and development of supervisees' professional therapeutic competence and the assurance that clients are receiving high quality therapy. Each student enrolled in Practicum must receive weekly individual and group supervision. A significant percentage of this supervision is live observation and occurs during weekly practicum. Supervisors vary in the degree to which they focus on theory, skills, and the self-of-the-therapist. However, each of these issues will receive attention at some point in the program.

Clinical supervision is distinct from classroom learning in several ways (see [MFT Program Policy on Supervisor Qualifications, Roles, and Responsibilities](#)) and is provided only by AAMFT Approved Supervisors or AAMFT Supervision track mentors. Co-therapists, fellow students, uncredentialed MFT graduates, and supervisors at off-campus internships sites (unless licensed MFTs and AAMFT Approved Supervisor) may not serve as clinical supervisors to MFT students.

Supervision Structure and Supervisor-to-Student Ratios

The program requires that all students enrolled in practicum participate in both group supervision and individual supervision each week. Group and individual supervision occur as part of the scheduled practicum experience and provides opportunities for case consultation, live observation, and video review of clinical work. In addition to this required weekly structure, students may schedule additional individual or group supervision with their assigned supervisor as needed to support clinical development and address case-specific concerns.

Each semester, four clinical supervisors facilitate four practicum sections. No practicum section exceeds eight students, with most sections enrolling six to seven students. This structure results in a supervisor-to-student ratio that ranges between 1:6 and 1:8. In addition, the Clinical Coordinator, who is a Georgia-licensed clinician and an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, regularly provides supervision as needed, increasing the number of available supervisors to five when supervisory demand requires additional support.

Although the program allows for a maximum ratio of 1:8, practicum groups are most commonly maintained at approximately 1:6, which faculty believe creates a stronger learning environment. Ratios within the 1:6 to 1:8 range allow supervisors to provide intensive supervision, individualized feedback through live and recorded session review, and maintain the ethical and legal responsibility required for services delivered by student therapists.

Liability Insurance

All students are required to carry liability insurance and must maintain continuous coverage while enrolled in the MFT Program. It is recommended that students join AAMFT since a liability insurance policy is part of student membership. Students must be able to show proof of purchase by submitting the Certificate of Proof of Purchase to the Clinical Coordinator by the last day of September of the first semester.

Georgia Licensing

The Georgia rules and laws for MFT licensing as well as the general educational and post-graduation requirements for Georgia can be found at the [Georgia Board of Prof. Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists](#).

In Georgia, MFT graduates can be hired with just the Master's degree in MFT. However, most GA mental health employers are interested in graduates who intend to get fully licensed. Georgia, like many states, follows a [2-step licensure](#) process:

1. Once you have your diploma, showing that you have a Master's degree in MFT, you can apply to get your Licensed Associate Marriage & Family Therapist (LAMFT). By submitting the requisite state application and fee, you are then approved to sit for the national exam, which is administered by the [Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards \(AMFTRB\)](#). When you pass the exam, you receive the LAMFT (provisional license) designation.

2. You are eligible to start working toward your full Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) at anytime after graduation (before or after obtaining LAMFT) by spending at least 2 years completing these post-graduation requirements:
 - a. the accrual of 2,500 post-master's client contact hours, accrued in no less than 2 and no more than 5 years.
 - 500 hours earned during the master's degree program may be used toward licensure. Thus, in the state of Georgia, 2,000 post-Master's hours remain to be accrued after graduation.
 - b. the accrual of 100 post-Master's supervision hours
 - c. Of the 100 supervision hours, at least 50 must be from individual (you alone or you and one other person) supervision. The remaining 50 hours may be group supervision (you and two or more people).

Supervision During Scheduled Breaks and Holidays and Anticipated Absence

During regularly scheduled breaks (such as Fall and Spring Break, Christmas, Thanksgiving, MLK Day, July 4, etc.), students seeing clients will meet with his/her/their current practicum supervisor for pre-arranged or walk-in supervision. See [Policy on Unplanned Interruption of Supervision](#) for more on this.

Supervisors who anticipate absences (e.g., vacation, conference attendance, scheduled medical personal leave) will work with other faculty members to cover the absence. The supervisor will contact his or her supervisees in advance of the scheduled absence and inform them of the supervision coverage that has been arranged.

Related Policies

[Policy on Telehealth Therapy](#)

[Policy on Clinical Readiness](#)

[Policy on Practicum and Internship](#)