

Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Practicum Handbook

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Description of Practicum

The MFT Practicum is designed to support students in developing and applying counseling skills through supervised clinical experience. Students begin transitioning into professional practice by working directly with clients while participating in class discussions focused on skill development, the counseling process, and professional identity. Practicum experiences emphasize working with diverse client populations and receiving ongoing, targeted feedback from both site and faculty supervisors.

Students are expected to apply foundational knowledge of counseling theories and techniques in a field setting, with a strong emphasis on skill development under supervision. Whenever possible, students should work with a consistent group of clients over time to support deeper therapeutic work. Early in the practicum, observation and co-therapy are encouraged to build confidence and competence. In addition to direct service, students will engage in indirect professional activities such as administrative tasks, collaboration with other professionals, referrals, and evaluation methods.

Supervision is a central component of the practicum experience and includes a minimum of one hour per week of individual or group supervision with an approved MFT site supervisor. Supervision may include case report and consultation, live observation and/or review of recorded sessions.

Time Commitment & Hour Requirements

Fall & Spring (4 units / 180 total hours):

- 144 hours at the practicum site, including:
 - 80 direct client contact hours
 - 16 supervision hours
 - 48 indirect service hours
- 36 additional hours through group practicum meetings, readings, and assignments

Summer (3 units / 135 total hours):

- 112 hours at the practicum site, including:
 - 60 direct client contact hours
 - 13 supervision hours
 - 39 indirect service hours
- 23 additional hours through group practicum meetings, readings, and assignments

Practicum Objectives & Learning Outcomes

Course Objectives

1. Provide students with support as they develop competence in systemic, ethical, and culturally sensitive clinical practice.
2. Help students practice and evaluate their counseling approaches, and evaluate how they are attuned to relational and contextual factors.
3. Provide students with a structured space to review their knowledge of major theories of family therapy, diagnosis and assessment, professional ethics, and culture and ethnicity.
4. Provide students time with supervisors, peers, and faculty members to review their therapy practices, ask questions, and receive feedback.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Students will apply theoretical concepts from MFT models to clinical cases.
2. Students will apply knowledge of the diagnostic criteria for the major mental disorders and best practices for MFT assessment.
3. Students will practice and examine their skills in systemic assessment and treatment.
4. Students will develop and implement treatment plans and utilize case notes to track client progress.
5. Students will apply knowledge of the AAMFT code of ethics and ethical clinical practice.
6. Students will initiate supervision and understand and manage personal issues that have potential to impact delivery of therapy.
7. Students will identify how contextual factors (e.g. culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, religion, etc.) are related to specific clinical cases.
8. Students will practice and examine their skills in culturally sensitive assessment and treatment with diverse populations.

Practicum Placement

All students will be placed at a practicum site through the MFT program. Students will not be responsible for finding their own sites, and placement at sites will take into account student readiness, student interest, and interviews with clinical site supervisors.

Screening Process

This process will occur at the midterm point during a student's first semester. Students will be evaluated on the following:

- Midterm academic performance in all first semester courses
- Instructor observation and evaluation within HDFS 501: Basic Skills in Counseling class
- Student's written clinical preparation plan and Pre-Practicum Checklist (part of HDFS 501 course):

- Before beginning practicum, students will be required to complete a Pre-Practicum Checklist in Experiential Learning Cloud, where they will upload their trainings and insurance, as well as reflect on strengths, areas for improvement, and goals as they enter their practicum experience.
- Student's Clinical Competency Screening with faculty members (part of HDF5 501 course)
 - As a program requirement and prerequisite for enrollment in practicum, students must successfully complete the Clinical Competency Screening. During finals week, students will participate in brief role-play counseling sessions with a trained evaluator, who will assess foundational clinical skills introduced throughout the semester. Students will sign up for one individual screening appointment during finals week and one appointment where you will be a fictional client to a classmate. Prior to the screening, students will receive a brief client scenario. During the screening, students will conduct a short counseling session demonstrating basic helping skills, professional demeanor, cultural responsiveness, and readiness for beginning clinical practice.
 - While participation in the screening process is required for the course, screening performance itself is evaluated separately from the course grade. All students will receive course points for simply completing the screening; however, the outcome of the screening will be used to determine eligibility for practicum placement.
 - Students will be evaluated by a trained therapy professional. These evaluators will meet together before screenings occur to norm evaluations and standardize rating practices
 - Students who do not meet competency expectations will be provided with feedback and a remediation plan. Additional information regarding screening procedures, evaluation criteria, and remediation policies will be provided during the semester.
 - See the Appendix below for full instructions, evaluation forms, and norming guide for evaluators.

In addition to the student evaluation with MFT program faculty, practicum placement will also take into account the student's preferences for available practicum placements. Students will be referred directly to their top choice practicum sites for application and interview process.

Trainings, Clearances, and Insurance

- Mandatory: HIPPA
- Mandatory: Obtain Liability Insurance
 - Before beginning practicum, all MFT students are required to purchase supplemental liability insurance. It is recommended that students become student members of AAMFT, as this includes free liability insurance for student members. [AAMFT Membership Page](#)
- Will vary based on student site: Fingerprint clearance or background check

Required Practicum Hours

Direct Client Contact

300 total hours of direct client contact are required by the AZ Board of Behavioral Health to meet MFT practicum requirements. Therefore, for each semester of practicum (4 semesters total), students will be required complete:

Spring and Fall Terms:

- **80** hours of direct client contact at your clinical site
 - Approximately 5 to 6 hours of client contact per week for 16 weeks
 - *Recommended* that 25 of these 80 hours be relational (national accreditation standard, AZ does not have a requirement for relational hours)*
 - When tracking hours, students must note which hours are relational

Summer Term:

- **60** hours of direct client contact at your clinical site.
 - Approximately 5 to 6 hours of client contact per week for 13 weeks
 - *Recommended* that 25 of these 60 hours be relational (national accreditation standard, AZ does not have a requirement for relational hours)*
 - When tracking hours, students must note which hours are relational

**Associates are required to complete 1,000 of their 1,600 clinical hours as relational hours.*

Clinical Supervision

The practicum experience must be supervised by a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the state of Arizona who has completed the required supervisor training and holds valid certification as an approved supervisor.

Clinical supervision is provided to monitor and ensure protection of the public, quality clinical services, and to facilitate professional development and support for the Supervisee. Given that, both the Supervisor and Supervisee agree to stay current and follow the regulations of the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners www.azbbhe.us as well as the most current AAMFT Code of Ethics <https://www.aamft.org/AAMFT/web/Action-Advocacy/Code-of-Ethics-New.aspx>

If a complaint is filed against the Supervisor with the BBHE, they agree to notify the supervisee and MFT program within 10 business days. Upon completion of hours required for licensure and/or the discontinuation of the supervisory relationship, the Supervisor will complete the supervision verification forms in a timely manner and will discuss any concerns with doing so if applicable.

Supervisor and Supervisee will schedule a mutually convenient time for regular supervision meetings, at least one hour each week. Each agree to respect the time of one another and thus will be on time and prepared for each meeting. Supervision meetings can take place face to face in person and/or via videoconference. Supervision via videoconference can provide a convenient means for meeting. Supervisor and Supervisee agree to discuss any concerns including inherent risks of electronic communication and possible risks of technology failure as it applies if meeting virtually. Supervisor and Supervisee agree to give each other the same attention and respect during video conference meetings as they would if meeting in person. Clinical supervision will focus on case conceptualization and documentation review, and clinical skill development. If a high-risk situation arises, including but not limited to, danger to client, danger to others, safety planning, crisis intervention, and/or mandated reporting situations Supervisee agrees to immediately reach out to Supervisor.

Supervisory Relationship

The Supervisor-Supervisee relationship is crucial for the protection of the public, integrity of the field, and development of the Supervisee. While a strong rapport is necessary to optimize clinical supervision, it is important to remember that the supervisory relationship needs to remain professional in nature in order for the Supervisor to provide objective support and assessment.

To ensure objectivity, Supervisor and Supervisee agree to avoid any conflicts of interest, dual relationships, etc. If supervision is utilized for licensure purposes in Arizona, the Supervisor ultimately must objectively attest to the capabilities of the Supervisee when verifying hours for licensure. Supervisor and Supervisee commit to assessing the supervisory relationship on an ongoing basis and to address any concerns regarding the relationship as they occur. At regular intervals, Supervisors and Supervisees will provide one another with feedback. Feedback will be gathered formally at mid-term and end-of-term.

Supervision Hours

Within each semester of practicum (4 semesters total), students will be required complete a certain number of supervision hours.

Spring and Fall Terms:

- **16** hours of clinical supervision provided by an LMFT with approved supervisor designation (1 hour per week for 16 weeks)

Summer Term:

- **13** hours of clinical supervision provided by an LMFT with approved supervisor designation (1 hour per week for 13 weeks)

These hours can include both individual and group supervision. A minimum of 4 hours in fall/spring and 3 hours in summer (25% of total hours) of individual supervision are required.

- Individual = one supervisor and one student
- Pairs = one supervisor and two students
- Group = one supervisor and two to six students

**At the associate level, 25 of the 100 hours of clinical supervision are required to be individual (R4-6-212)*

- Each clinical supervision session must be at least one hour long
- Supervision can be provided through a variety of techniques such as case discussion, live observation, video recording review, co-therapy, telephone consultation, and group consultation.
- Within each semester of practicum (4 semesters total), students will be required to complete at least **3-5 hours of supervision that involve direct observation** with their supervisor (face to face observation, telehealth observation, or by review of audio/video).
- **12-15 hours of supervision that involve direct observation** will be required by the end of the program.

**Associates are required to complete 10 of their 100 supervision hours through direct observation (R4-6-212)*

Types of Supervision

- Case Consultation: This is counted when your case or another student's case is reviewed and supervised without the use of raw data (video, audio tape, or live supervision).
- Video: This is counted when videotape of a case is presented in supervision. In Group Supervision, this is counted when you or another student presents videotape of a case.
- Audio: This is counted when audio of a case is presented in supervision. In Group Supervision, this is counted when you or another student presents audio of a case.
- Live: Live supervision is counted when you conduct therapy in the presence of a supervisor, or you view a live case with a supervisor. It can be counted as live, by the one or two therapists conducting the session, or those therapists viewing the session with the supervisor.

Documentation of Supervision Hours

The Supervisor and Supervisee will maintain written documentation of supervision meetings. Documentation of supervision meetings will be completed and signed within 10 contemporaneous days of the meeting, however best practice is within 24 hours. This documentation will be completed in Experiential Learning Cloud.

Supervisee will track hours for licensure, which supervisor will review and confirm on an ongoing basis. This documentation will be completed in Experiential Learning Cloud.

In addition, Supervisor will regularly review Supervisee's clinical documentation and provide feedback as needed. Supervisor will have unrestricted access to Supervisee's clinical documentation and Supervisee agrees to complete clinical documentation as required by the BBHE and Employer.

Indirect Service

- Approximately **48** hours of Indirect Service will be required each fall/spring semester of practicum, **39** hours in summer, (approximately 3 hours per week). This may include:
 - Time spent getting familiar with your practicum site (computer systems, office policies, etc.)
 - Team meetings at your clinical practicum site
 - Work done to prepare for supervision
 - Reviewing files
 - Writing case notes
 - Preparing presentations or programs agreed upon by on-site supervisors and students
 - Attending workshops/conferences agreed upon by on-site supervisors and students
 - Reading, research, and other activities agreed upon by on-site supervisors and students
 - Additional supervision hours required or recommended by your site

Direct vs. Indirect Hour Definition

- **Direct Service:** Supervised use of counseling, consultation, or related professional skills with actual clients (can be individuals, couples, families, or groups) for the purpose of fostering social, cognitive, behavioral, and/or affective change. These activities must involve interaction with others and may include: (1) assessment, (2) counseling, (3) psycho-educational activities, and (4) consultation. The following would not be considered direct service: (1) observing others providing counseling or related services, (2) record keeping, (3) administrative duties, (4) clinical and/or administrative supervision.
- **Indirect Service:** This includes work students do in preparing for supervision, both individual and group, familiarizing themselves with the site, reviewing files, doing recorded critiques, writing case notes, preparing classroom presentations or community programs, attending workshops/conferences, reading, research, and other activities agreed upon by on-site supervisors and students.

Audio/Video Recording and Live Observation Policy

Because the MFT Practicum is a training experience, at least **3 hours of live observation are required each semester**. This can be face to face observation, telehealth observation, or by review of audio/video. The purpose of live observation is so the student and the Supervisor can review the student's work and give feedback to enhance skills. When video is used, this needs to be explained to the client both during the initial screening process and during the intake interview. Clients must also sign a consent form acknowledging their agreement to record sessions. **Video/audio recordings are not stored on personal devices and are not intended to be part of the client file, they are for training**

purposes only and should be destroyed by the end of the semester in which the recording was completed. Please note:

The Consent for Video/Audio Recording is available to students in the practicum course site and below in the Appendix, and must be completed for all session recordings. Site-based consent to record documents can be used in lieu of the UA documents. All consent forms must remain in the client's file and should not be sent to the University of Arizona.

All recording files are to be deleted at the end of each semester.

Completing the Required Practicum Course Materials

The following assignments must be completed in order to pass the practicum course:

- Mid & End-Term Evaluation: At mid and end-term, students will need to arrange with their site supervisor a time to review the evaluation form and to assess their progress at their site. These evaluations are completed in Experiential Learning Cloud (ELC) that the student must initiate.
- Weekly Logs: Using ELC, a weekly hour log is due during every week of the semester including the final week.
- Mid and End Term Verification of Hours: The Verification of Hours is signed by the student, the site supervisor, and the student's instructor.
- Student Evaluation of Site and Supervisor: At the end of the term, students will evaluate their experience with their site and site supervisor by completing the Site and Site Supervisor Evaluation. This evaluation is completed in ELC and is not shared with the site or site supervisor.
- Students are strongly advised to keep duplicate copies of all these materials and maintain them well after the end of the semester and graduation as they may be helpful or necessary for licensure.

Qualifications and Responsibilities of Site Supervisors

Qualifications of Site Supervisor (R4-6-214)

Beginning January 1, 2027, the Board shall consider hours of clinical supervision submitted by an applicant if the individual who provides the clinical supervision:

1. Is qualified under R4-6-212(A); and
2. Completes one of the following:
 - a. At least 12 hours of training, approved by the Board or sponsored by one of the four state behavioral health associations, and delivered live in-person or by live webinar within the last three years that meets the standard specified in R4-6-802(E) and addresses the following:
 - i. Role and responsibilities of a clinical supervisor including Arizona eligibility requirements for providing clinical supervision;
 - ii. Skills necessary to provide effective oversight of and guidance to a supervisee who diagnoses, creates treatment plans, and treats clients within the supervisee's scope of competence;
 - iii. Supervisory methods and techniques;
 - iv. Approaches to providing evaluation of a supervisee's ability to practice ethically and competently;

- v. Arizona work experience and clinical supervision requirements for independent licensure;
 - vi. Arizona requirements for clinical supervision documentation;
 - vii. Arizona requirements and process for completing work experience verification and clinical supervision verification forms;
 - viii. Arizona requirements of supervised private practice as described in R4-6-217; and
 - ix. Arizona exemptions to licensure as related to Arizona Department of Health Services;
- b. A clinical supervisor certification from the National Board for Certified Counselors/Center for Credentialing and Education;
 - c. A clinical supervisor certification from the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium; or
 - d. Designation as an approved clinical-member supervisor from the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy; and

3. Completes the Board's three-hour Clinical Supervision Tutorial regarding Arizona Statutes and Regulations.

Responsibilities of Site Supervisor

Program Coordination & Communication

- Maintain knowledge of the MFT program's expectations, requirements, and student evaluation procedures.
- Assist MFT program staff and faculty in determining whether the site is appropriate for practicum students and supports their professional growth.
- Communicate with the MFT Director of Graduate Studies and/or Academic Program Manager regarding any problems or concerns at the placement.
- Respond to inquiries from students, faculty, and university staff in a timely manner.
- Attend one group consultation session with the MFT Practicum Instructor each semester. Multiple dates, times and modalities will be provided, and supervisors must attend one session.

Training & Administrative Requirements

- Attend the required UA practicum supervisor training each fall semester.
- Obtain all necessary authorization from the agency/practice and the UA MFT program for student placement.
- Request and review a copy of the student's liability insurance.
- Complete required documentation, including mid-term evaluations, final evaluations, and verification of hours, by program deadlines.

Student Orientation & Work Environment

- Orient students to agency/practice policies and procedures, including (but not limited to): responsibilities, schedules, case assignments, emergency procedures, record keeping, dress code, confidentiality, and release of information.
- Ensure students receive appropriate training on the telehealth practices and procedures specific to the practicum site before providing telehealth services.
- Provide adequate workspace, telephone access, office supplies, and necessary staff support.
- Ensure that students are never alone in the office/agency while providing counseling services to clients.

Supervision, Evaluation, & Professional Development

- Provide a minimum of one continuous hour of supervision each week, and be available as needed.
- Offer a variety of professional experiences (e.g., individual/group counseling, consultation, administrative tasks, record keeping, program development, professional development, networking, public relations).
- Encourage and support the application of developmental theories, counseling theories, clinical skills, best practices, diagnosis, and counseling techniques.
- Provide ongoing, constructive feedback regarding student performance.
- Intervene immediately if client welfare may be at risk.

Clinical Oversight & Documentation

- Review and discuss clients' presenting concerns and treatment plans with the student.
- The Supervisor and Student will maintain written documentation of supervision meetings and submit this documentation through Experiential Learning Cloud.
- Documentation of supervision meetings will be completed and signed within 10 contemporaneous days of the meeting, however best practice is within 24 hours.
- Student will track hours for licensure, which supervisor will review and confirm on an ongoing basis.
- Supervisor will regularly review Supervisee's clinical documentation and provide feedback as needed. Supervisor will have unrestricted access to student's clinical documentation and student agrees to complete clinical documentation as required by the BBHE and Employer.
- Provide feedback on at least three audio/video recordings or live observations per semester, and complete all required forms.

Ethical & Legal Compliance

- Present and model appropriate clinical skills and ethical decision making.
- Maintain good standing with the AZBBHE.
- Ensure adherence to the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics.
- Ensure compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), where applicable.
- Be available to Supervisee as needed for emergencies relating to client welfare and/or ethical obligations of Supervisee.
- Monitor effectiveness and fit of Supervisor/Supervisee relationship.
- Ensure the following consent forms are on file for each practicum students and their clients:
 - Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPPA) (provided by practicum site)
 - Informed Consent (provided by practicum site)
 - Notification of clinical supervision (template in appendix)
 - Consent to be recorded or observed (template in appendix)

Responsibilities of Students

The practicum student is responsible for the following:

Site Placement & Program Requirements

- Submit practicum interest forms and applications by stated program deadlines each semester.
- Ensure all required approvals and signatures from the practicum site and MFT program are completed by the specified deadlines.
- Ensure the Site Supervisor completes the required Site Supervisor Orientation prior to the start of the semester; failure to do so will make the student ineligible to begin practicum.
- Ensure that only the approved Site Supervisor provides individual supervision; any changes must be approved by the MFT Academic Program Manager before continuing client work.
- Successfully complete all requirements before beginning practicum, including demonstrating the minimum required counseling skills, knowledge, and competencies.

Professional Conduct & Compliance

- Follow all practicum site and university policies and procedures.
- Maintain professional liability insurance throughout the practicum experience.
- Ensure that at no time while providing counseling services are students alone in the office/agency setting.
- Keep the practicum site, Site Supervisor, and MFT program faculty/staff informed of any issues or concerns.
- Respond to inquiries from site supervisor, faculty, and university staff in a timely manner.
- Be familiar with the counseling skills evaluation criteria outlined in Appendix

Time Commitment & Hour Requirements

- Maintain consistent attendance at the practicum site and all required practicum course meetings.
- Commit to the agreed-upon number of hours per week at the practicum site each semester, which should include the following to meet state and university requirements:
 - Accrue a minimum of 80 direct client contact hours per fall/spring semester, and 60 in summer.
 - Complete approximately 48 hours of indirect service per fall/spring semester, and 39 in summer, (about 3 hours per week).

Supervision & Clinical Training

- Participate in a minimum of one continuous hour of supervision each week with the Site Supervisor and document each meeting through Experiential Learning Cloud form.
- Arrange meetings between involved parties (student, Site Supervisor, MFT program faculty) as needed.
- Prepare for supervision by obtaining and reviewing session recordings or participating in live observations.

- Discuss all client cases in supervision and have case files and treatment plans available for review.
- Present case conceptualizations, interventions, and techniques used; remain open to feedback.
- Implement supervisor feedback in sessions and discuss outcomes in subsequent supervision meetings.
- Consult with the supervisor in emergency situations.
- Inform Supervisor of any of the following occurrences immediately after they occur:
 - Incidents of restraint
 - Incidents of violence to clients and/or clinician
 - Incidents of violence to all others
 - Disclosed thoughts of client regarding violence to others
 - Knowledge of any suicidal thoughts or intent
 - Any possible confusion on, or breach of, appropriate boundaries
 - Any known violations of confidentiality and/or clients rights
 - Reports of abuse or neglect made to Department of Child Safety (DCS) or Adult Protective Services (through Arizona Department of Economic Security).

Client Care, Documentation, & Recording

- Inform clients that the student is in training and that their case may be discussed in supervision; obtain all required consent forms.
- Obtain written consent prior to any audio/video recordings (including parent/guardian consent for minors).
- Follow agency and university policies regarding recording, where applicable.
- Maintain accurate weekly logs of practicum hours for review with the Site Supervisor.
- Submit all required practicum documentation (e.g., hour logs, evaluations) by end-of-semester deadlines.

Ethical & Legal Compliance

- Utilize appropriate clinical skills and ethical decision making.
- Adhere to the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics.
- Adhere to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), where applicable.
- Ensure the following consent forms are on file for each client:
 - Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPPA) (provided by practicum site)
 - Informed Consent (provided by practicum site)
 - Notification of clinical supervision (template in appendix)
 - Consent to be recorded or observed (template in appendix)

Responsibilities of MFT Faculty and Staff

The MFT Program Faculty and Staff share responsibility for creating a supportive, ethical, and collaborative clinical training environment. Working in partnership with students and practicum site supervisors, faculty and staff facilitate meaningful clinical learning experiences while ensuring compliance with University of Arizona policies, Arizona licensure requirements, and professional standards established by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT).

Clinical Training and Program Oversight

- Establish and maintain practicum policies, procedures, and requirements consistent with program, university, accreditation, and state licensure standards.
- Develop, coordinate, and oversee practicum and internship experiences.
- Approve practicum sites and site supervisors to ensure they meet program requirements.
- Maintain partnerships with community agencies and clinical training sites.
- Monitor the quality and appropriateness of practicum placements.
- Respond to student and site supervisor inquiries in a timely manner.
- Communicate important program updates, deadlines, and practicum requirements.
- Coordinate meetings with students, site supervisors, and faculty when concerns arise.
- Maintain open communication to support a collaborative and successful practicum experience.
- Address concerns related to student performance, supervision, site placement, or client welfare in collaboration with students and site supervisors.

Student Support and Advising

- Assist students in preparing for practicum and internship placement.
- Facilitate practicum screening process to ensure student readiness for placement.
- Provide guidance regarding practicum requirements, timelines, and expectations.
- Review and approve all required practicum documentation before student placement.
- Monitor student progress throughout the practicum experience.
- Support students experiencing challenges in practicum and collaborate with site supervisors to address concerns.
- Develop remediation plans, when necessary, to support student success.

Site Supervisor Support

- Provide orientation and required training for practicum site supervisors.
- Serve as a resource for site supervisors regarding program expectations, supervision requirements, and student development.
- Maintain regular communication with site supervisors throughout the semester.
- Consult with site supervisors regarding student performance, professional development, and any concerns that arise.

Faculty Supervision and Evaluation

- Facilitate practicum seminar and group supervision consistent with program requirements.
- Provide opportunities for students to integrate theory, research, ethics, and clinical practice.
- Review student case presentations.
- Evaluate student progress using competency-based assessment methods.
- Review midterm and final evaluations completed by site supervisors.

- Provide timely feedback regarding students' clinical skills, professional development, and ethical practice.

Compliance and Documentation

- Maintain student practicum records, evaluations, clinical hour documentation, and required program files.
- Verify that students meet practicum and graduation requirements.
- Ensure compliance with university policies, the AAMFT Code of Ethics, HIPAA, and applicable state regulations.
- Report concerns regarding ethical, legal, or professional conduct through established university procedures.

Professional Development

- Promote the development of students' professional identity as Marriage and Family Therapists.
- Encourage culturally responsive, ethical, and evidence-informed clinical practice.
- Foster self-reflection, lifelong learning, and professional growth.
- Provide educational opportunities related to supervision, licensure, ethics, and professional practice.

Practicum Evaluations

Students will participate in formal performance evaluations at both the midterm and the end of each practicum semester. These evaluations are completed collaboratively with the student's Site Supervisor and assess progress toward developing entry-level clinical competencies and professional behaviors expected of a Marriage and Family Therapist in training.

In addition to completing formal evaluations, Site Supervisors will communicate with the practicum instructor at least once each semester to discuss the student's clinical progress, strengths, and areas for continued development.

If a student's average evaluation score falls below 3.0 on the program's rating scale, or if the Site Supervisor and practicum instructor determine that additional support is warranted, the student will be placed on a formal remediation plan. The remediation plan will identify specific areas for improvement, establish measurable goals, outline strategies and resources to support skill development, and provide a timeline for reassessment. The purpose of the remediation process is to promote student growth and ensure the development of the clinical competencies necessary for successful progression in the program.

Required Practicum Forms

Client Forms

- Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPPA) (provided by practicum site)

- Informed Consent (provided by practicum site)
- Notification of clinical supervision (template in appendix)
 - Supervisee and Supervisor will ensure that each client is informed in writing that Supervisee is working under the clinical supervision of Supervisor and means for contacting Supervisor should concerns arise. In addition, Supervisee will ensure each client has acknowledged an understanding that the Supervisor will have access to client information and records and to provide appropriate supervision, the Supervisee will need to disclose such to the Supervisor.
- Consent to be recorded or observed (template in appendix)
 - Supervisee and Supervisor will ensure that each client is given a written consent form to obtain their permission to record sessions. This form will indicate that the Supervisee is working under clinical supervision and counseling sessions may be recorded by the therapist-in-training with the client's permission. Clients will be informed that recording sessions is a significant component of therapist training and offers immeasurable value to the educational mission. Clients will also be informed of how the videos are used within supervision, how they are stored securely, and how long they are saved before deletion.

Student and Supervisor forms (In ELC)

- Site profile and supervisor information (completed by supervisor)
- Placement Interest form (completed by student)
- MFT & Clinical Site Practicum Placement Agreement (program specific contract)
- Weekly hour log
- Midterm evaluation
- End of term evaluation
- Student evaluation of site and supervisor

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Given the inherent considerations regarding confidentiality and privacy, Supervisor and Supervisee agree to discuss and agree on any use of AI in the documentation of supervision before utilizing AI. In addition, Supervisee agrees to not use AI in providing or documenting treatment of clients without permission from Supervisor to ensure use is ethical.

Students and supervisors should review the MFT program AI policy listed on the MFT program website.

Grievances

When interpersonal or professional issues arise at the practicum site, students and supervisors are asked to speak directly to the person involved. If that does not resolve the issue, they can then take the issue to the Director of Graduate Studies. Students should not discuss interpersonal grievances with their peers or others not involved in the issue.

Online/Virtual Counseling and Supervision Guidelines

All policies and expectations outlined in the **MFT Practicum Handbook** and **MFT Graduate Handbook** apply to both in-person and telehealth counseling sessions, as well as in-person and virtual supervision. Practicum supervisors are responsible for ensuring that students receive appropriate orientation and training on the telehealth practices, procedures, technology, documentation requirements, and ethical and legal standards specific to their practicum site before engaging in virtual clinical services.

Accruing Contact Hours Between Semesters

Students who wish to continue working with clients at a practicum site between semesters must complete the electronic Form for Accruing Contact Hours Between Semesters. Students who are working between semesters to accrue hours at the same site with the same supervisor while in incomplete status must complete this form. This form is **only** for students who are continuing at the same site with the same site supervisor. The form is required to continue to accrue practicum hours between semesters (without the waiver, no between semester clinical hours completed will be accepted) and students are strictly prohibited from client contact during the break. This form is signed by the student, the site supervisor, and the UA MFT Program Manager and is completed through Experiential Learning Cloud.

- Approval must be obtained before the student continues providing clinical services between semesters.
- Students may only count clinical hours completed during an approved waiver period.
- Students must remain under the supervision of an approved Site Supervisor at all times.
- Approval is contingent upon continued compliance with University policies, practicum requirements, and applicable Arizona Board regulations.
- Submission of this form does not automatically authorize continued clinical practice.
- If approved, students will remain enrolled in practicum units with an “Incomplete” mark until the required hours are complete.

Appendix

Instructions and Forms for Clinical Skills Competency Screening in HDFS 501:

Clinical Skills Competency Screening

Because HDFS 501 is part of a clinical training program, students enrolled in the course will be held to professional standards consistent with practicum readiness. In addition to demonstrating basic counseling skills, graduate students are expected to show intentional use of interventions, responsiveness to client needs, and emerging systemic thinking consistent with Marriage and Family Therapy training. During finals week, students will participate in a brief role-play counseling session with a trained evaluator, who will assess foundational clinical skills introduced throughout the semester. Students will sign up for an individual screening appointment during finals week. Prior to the screening, students will receive a brief client scenario. During the screening, students will conduct a short counseling session demonstrating basic helping skills, professional demeanor, cultural responsiveness, and readiness for beginning clinical practice.

Completion of the Clinical Competency Screening is required to pass this course. Students who fail to complete the screening will receive a failing grade in the course. While participation in the screening process is required, screening performance itself is evaluated separately from the course grade. Students will receive course credit for completing the screening; however, the outcome of the screening will be used to determine eligibility for practicum placement.

Successful completion of the clinical skills evaluation is required in order to progress to practicum. Any student that does not pass this screening will complete a remediation plan before being cleared to begin practicum.

Instructions

Sign up for two slots to attend an in-person evaluation session with one of our evaluators. One slot you will be the therapist being screened, in the other slot you will be playing the fictional client for a classmate. At the designated time/day, please arrive on time and dressed professionally.

Clinical Skills Competency Rubric

Rating Scale:

- 1 = Below Expectations (Not Practicum Ready)
- 2 = Emerging
- 3 = Competent (Minimum for Practicum Readiness)
- 4 = Strong
- 5 = Advanced

1. Attending & Presence

- Eye contact, body language, appropriate encouragers, warmth
- Ability to create psychological safety
- Joining skills used to establish/maintain therapeutic alliance

Benchmark for Passing: Consistently engaged, present, and responsive

2. Empathy & Emotional Attunement

- Accuracy and sufficient frequency/use of emotion reflections

- Ability to identify and respond to emotional content
- Sufficient frequency and quality of validation of client emotions
- Client feels understood (not just repeated)

Benchmark: Demonstrates accurate empathy at least several times

3. Use of Counseling Skills

- Appropriate use of:
 - open/closed questions, circular questions, scaling questions, exception questions, etc.
 - paraphrasing, summarizing
 - reframing
 - influencing skills (when appropriate)

Benchmark: Uses multiple skills appropriately and flexibly

4. Clinical Intentionality

- Skills are purposefully deployed (not random or scripted)
- Influencing skills are demonstrated (empathic confrontation, logical consequences, etc.)
- Student can clearly identify:
 - *What they were trying to do*
 - *Why they chose that approach*
- Fitting referrals, resources, etc. recommended/provided

Benchmark: Clear evidence of intentional, goal-directed responses

5. Responsiveness to Client

- Follows client's lead
- Empathic confrontation is used as needed and is appropriate given the therapeutic alliance
- Adjusts based on client reactions
- Avoids rigid/scripted responding
- Professional clinical presence established and maintained (use of expert power, etc.)

Benchmark: Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in real time

6. Systemic Awareness (MFT Lens)

- Acknowledges relational/contextual factors
- Considers relationship systems the client belongs to
- Incorporates at least one of the following during the screening:
 - one systemic question
 - one relational reframe

Benchmark: Demonstrates basic ability to think beyond the individual and incorporate important systemic factors during clinical conversations.

7. Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity

- Avoids assumptions
- Demonstrates openness, curiosity, and humility
- Responds respectfully to identity/cultural content
- Uses appropriate body language and nonverbal communication

Benchmark: No culturally insensitive or dismissive responses

8. Professionalism & Ethics

- Maintains professional boundaries
- Avoids:
 - giving inappropriate advice
 - over self-disclosure
 - judgmental language/framing
 - etc.

Benchmark: No ethically concerning behaviors

9. Overall Readiness Rating

Practicum Ready / Borderline / Not Yet Ready

Overall Passing Criteria

To pass:

- No score of “1” in any category
- Average of **3 or higher** in each category 1-8
- Must be rated “**Pass**” overall

Remediation Plan

Students who do not pass:

- Meet with instructor for feedback
- Complete:
 - additional role play screening
 - targeted practice plan
- Re-assessment required before practicum eligibility is granted

Clinical Skills Screening: Rating Form

Student Name:

Date:

Evaluator:

Rating Scale

- 1 = Below Expectations (Not Ready)
- 2 = Emerging
- 3 = Competent (Minimum for Practicum)
- 4 = Strong
- 5 = Advanced

Skill Category	Rating (1-5)	Comments
Attending & Presence		
Empathy & Attunement		

Use of Counseling Skills		
Responsiveness to Client		
Clinical Intentionality		
Systemic Awareness		
Cultural Awareness		
Professionalism & Ethics		

Overall Readiness Rating:

Practicum Ready | Borderline (Remediation Recommended) | Not Yet Ready (Remediation Required)

Evaluator Comments

- Strengths:**

- Growth Areas:**

Norming Guide for Evaluators

Purpose

To ensure consistent evaluation of student clinical readiness across evaluators.

What “Competent” (3) Looks Like

Attending

- Maintains consistent eye contact and engagement
- Uses encouragers appropriately
- Does not appear distracted or disengaged

Empathy

- Reflections are generally accurate
- Captures emotional content at least a few times
- Avoids parroting or surface-level responses

Skills Use

- Uses at least 3–4 different skills
- Skills are mostly appropriate (even if imperfect)
- Not overly scripted or mechanical

Intentionality

- Student understands:
 - what they were trying to do
 - why they chose that intervention
- Even if execution isn't perfect, intention is clear

Systemic Awareness

- At least one:
 - systemic question OR
 - relational comment
- Shows awareness that problems exist in context

Cultural Awareness

- Demonstrates openness and curiosity
- Avoids assumptions or minimizing statements

Professionalism

- No major ethical concerns
- Avoids inappropriate advice, judgment, or boundary violations

What Requires a “Not Ready” Rating (Non-Negotiables)

Any of the following:

- Dismissive or judgmental responses
- Ignoring emotional content repeatedly
- Giving excessive/directive advice prematurely
- Boundary violations or inappropriate self-disclosure
- Inability to engage client (flat, disengaged presence)

Borderline Cases

Student meets basic skill level but:

- lacks consistency
- struggles with responsiveness
- shows minimal intentionality

These students should:

- pass conditionally OR
- complete targeted remediation plan

Notification of Clinical Supervision

You are receiving counseling services from a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) Trainee who is currently enrolled in the University of Arizona Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy Program. The therapist-in-training is not licensed and is providing services under the supervision of a qualified clinical supervisor.

While your therapist's Clinical Supervisor will have access to your client information and records, they are also bound by confidentiality as outlined in the informed consent document and they meet the clinical supervisor qualifications required by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners. If you wish to contact your therapist's Clinical Supervisor, please feel free to do so by contacting **insert contact information (ie call xxx-xxx-xxxx or email xxxxx@xxxx).**

By signing below, you are acknowledging an understanding of the above notification of clinical supervision.

Print name

Client Signature

Date

Print name

Client Signature

Date

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UA MFT Informed Consent for Video Recording

Note: A copy must be signed by each person participating in recorded counseling sessions. The parent or legal guardian must sign in the event the patient is a minor.

[Name of practice] collaborates with the University of Arizona Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy program (MFT) to support the teaching and training mission of the MFT program, and therapists-in-training, at the University of Arizona. Given this educational, teaching-training function, clients are frequently asked to have certain counseling sessions recorded by the therapists-in-training. Recording these sessions is a significant component of therapist training and offers immeasurable value to the educational mission. You are being provided with this consent form to obtain your permission to record your sessions. Feel free to ask your therapist any questions about the purpose or use of the recordings.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to abide by its terms while receiving services at **[Name of Practice]**.

Your signature below indicates that you give permission to record your sessions to

(name of your therapist-in-training): _____

Additionally, your signature below indicates that you understand the following:

- My therapist is a therapist-in-training.
- I can request that the recording be turned off at any time and may request that the recording or any portion thereof be erased. I may terminate this permission to record at any time.
- The purpose of recording is for use in training and supervision. This will allow the above referenced therapist-in-training to consult with his or her assigned supervisor(s) in an individual or group supervision format, who may listen to, or watch, the recordings alone or in the presence of other therapists-in-training involved in direct supervision.
- The contents of these recorded sessions are confidential, and the information will not be shared outside the context of individual and group supervision.
- The sessions will be recorded using Zoom and stored within HIPAA-compliant encrypted media or within secure applications.
- These recordings will not become part of my treatment record, as they are being created strictly for education and training purposes.
- These recordings will be retained for one semester following their creation and then will be deleted, or otherwise destroyed.

Your recorded sessions will be shared with the supervising therapists at the following locations: **[Name of Practice]**

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____