

Department of Family Therapy

DMFT CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

The Doctorate in Marriage in Family Therapy (DMFT) clinical experience begins at the Brief Therapy Institute (BTI). Students progress through four Internal Practica at the BTI clinic, which are assessed based on set skills considered necessary for the successful practice of family therapy. Nova Southeastern University and the Department of Family Therapy require that all students complete the HIPAA course requirements found on WebCT before seeing clients in the clinic. Please contact the Internship Coordinator for more information.

Client Contact Hours

To complete the DMFT in Family Therapy, students must complete 1000 hours of direct face-to-face client contact, 500 of which must be relational, with couples and families. They also must accumulate at least 200 supervision hours, 100 of which must be based on direct observation, videotape, or audiotape. At least 50 of the 100 must be based on direct observation and/or videotape. Students are responsible for documenting their clinical and supervision hours, using the forms provided on our SHSS website.

DMFT students who can document that their previous supervised clinical practice is comparable to that which would be received in a COAMFTE accredited program may petition the program to waive some or all of the required 1000 direct client contact hours. ***However, waiving all or part of this client contact hour requirement does not release a student from completing all of the practicum or internship requirements of the program.*** For a waiver request to be approved, the student must also provide a copy of their supervisor's vita or credentials. In order for supervision to count, these credentials must indicate that the previous supervisor is an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, is a licensed MFT, received training in MFT supervision, is an AAMFT clinical member, and is recognized by a state regulatory body as being an equivalent MFT supervisor. The transfer of contact hours sheet can be found on the Marriage and Family Therapy section of the SHSS Student Resources website.

If a waiver request is approved, students still must document 100 in-the-room client contact hours with individuals, couples, and/or families during their time as a student in the program before beginning clinical internship. At least half of these hours must be accrued at the Brief Therapy Institute (BTI) and practicum hours may be included in the total. In order to count, all direct client contact hours must be supervised by AAMFT approved or state equivalent supervisors, who will sign and document that the hours submitted are accurate. Students must follow all BTI policies and procedures.

Documentation must include the date, type of session (i.e., family, couple, or individual), length, and location of each session. Students must have access to case notes for all sessions listed. The necessary forms may be obtained from the program office or online. Students must submit their completed forms to the Internship Coordinator at the end of each term so that their file remains updated. Students must keep a copy of all completed and signed forms.

Students are expected to keep track of their client contact and supervision hours throughout the program. At the end of each term, students must properly complete documentation of their hours on the designated sheets provided by the program, which can be obtained from the Student Resources section of the SHSS website. Students will need to sign and date all forms before turning the form in. It is also the student's responsibility to make sure that the supervisors have initialed, signed, and dated the appropriate spaces on the forms before giving the sheets to the Internship Coordinator.

Only hours spent in supervision with an AAMFT Approved Supervisor will be counted towards graduation requirements. Students must record the hours spent in supervision with their faculty or any other AAMFT approved supervisor that may be supervising them.

A separate client contact hours form must be filled out for each site each term. If a student has more than one AAMFT approved supervisor within a term, a separate supervision form must also be filled out.

External Practicum

The DMFT External Practicum is designed to provide the student with a supervised full-time clinical experience, emphasizing a relationally focused practice. The minimum time requirement to complete external practicum obligations is six to eight hours per week over the course of two academic terms. Before beginning External Practicum, students will work with the DFT Internship Coordinator to develop an External Practicum site and a contract with that site. Prior to beginning the external practicum experience, students must have a completed and signed copy of the practicum contract signed by themselves, their internship site supervisor, their faculty supervisor, and the Department Chair. If proof of professional liability insurance coverage is needed for the Practicum site, a copy can be obtained from the Internship Coordinator. Practicums will be evaluated by both the site supervisor and faculty supervisor each term, using the DFT program's practicum evaluation forms. Students will be invited to assess their own performance as well. These forms, designed by faculty, closely assess clinical skills and can be obtained online at our SHSS website and from the student's faculty supervisor.

The institution(s) sponsoring the practicum site(s) will have been in operation for at least two years. Practicum site(s) will provide adequate facilities and equipment for the intern to carry out designated responsibilities. If students have an AAMFT Approved Supervisor on site to supervise their clinical hours, or obtain an outside AAMFT Approved Supervisor, they will register for 1 credit hour per term for a minimum of 3 terms; if students request supervision from a faculty AAMFT Approved Supervisor, they will register for 3 credit hours per term for a minimum of 3 terms. When taking one credit hour, students need to review their degree plan to ensure they will meet the required credit hours for their degree.

Before students begin their practicum experience, they must have a copy of the practicum contract signed by the student, their site supervisor, faculty/AAMFT Approved supervisor, and the department chair. Students must also make sure that they are covered by the Department's professional liability insurance. A copy of this insurance can be obtained from the Internship Coordinator's office. There are five pieces of information that must be provided to the Internship Coordinator before starting at a field placement:

1. the original signed copy of the Internship contract;
2. a resume of the on-site supervisor to demonstrate that he or she has at least a master's degree in a mental health profession and is a licensed mental health professional with a copy of their state license, or any other applicable certificates proving eligibility. If students are obtaining an outside AAMFT Approved Supervisor, they should be able to provide the AAMFT Supervisor certificate in addition to a curriculum vitae or resume;
3. a brochure or written information about the site;
4. a written description from the on-site supervisor about duties and responsibilities;
5. an official letterhead from the site.

Any other site information may be provided as it pertains to the student's practicum experience. The student is responsible for letting his/her faculty supervisor and the Internship Coordinator know of any administrative changes that may take place at the site affecting their placement. Additional documentation may be required for transitional purposes.

There are three forms that must be completed by the end of the term in the evaluation process.

1. The site supervisor's evaluation. The student will need to submit this evaluation to his/her site supervisor three weeks prior to the end of the term. The student should schedule a time to review the completed evaluation with the site supervisor by the end of the term. The form will need to be filled out completely, signed, and dated by the site supervisor and the student prior to turning it in to the faculty/AAMFT Approved supervisor.
2. The faculty/AAMFT Approved supervisor will fill out a separate evaluation based on the student's site supervisor's recommendations and his/her personal supervision experience with the student. The Faculty/AAMFT Approved supervisor will then review the evaluation with the student who will also be given the opportunity to make comments on the form. The student will need to sign and date this form as well.
3. The third evaluation is the student's evaluation of his/her site. This evaluation is required to provide administrators with information on the student's experience at the site and will only impact the student's grade if it is not turned in. This evaluation process does not replace the online course evaluation that must be completed by students at the end of each term.

All paperwork must be turned in within one week subsequent to the end of the term. If paperwork has not been turned in by the time grades are due, a grade of "F" will be assigned to the student until the required paperwork has been received.