State Licensure Statutes, Regulations, Forms, and Policies not only change on a regular basis, but may contain contradictory information. It is the responsibility of any individual who may review this document to check with their licensure board regarding all requirements and policies regarding the licensure process. For more information please refer to your state licensing board, click here to find your state licensing board website [aamftrc.org](http://aamftrc.org).

Starting degree program after 8.1.12 and finishing before 12.31.2018

Does this State require a degree program to include a specific number of credit hours (e.g. 45, 48 or 60 semester credits)? If so, how many credit hours are required?
Yes, California requires a minimum of 60 semester credit hours.

What type of institutional or programmatic accreditation is required?
An applicant for MFT licensure in California must possess a doctor’s or master’s degree meeting California requirements in marriage, family, and child counseling, marriage and family therapy, couple and family therapy, psychology, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, or counseling with an emphasis in either marriage, family, and child counseling or marriage and family therapy, obtained from a school, college, or university approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education or accredited by either the Commission on the Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education or a regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. The board has the authority to make the final determination as to whether a degree meets all requirements, including, but not limited to, course requirements, regardless of accreditation or approval.

Does the state require the program to have COAMFTE or CACREP Accreditation?
No, California does not require these accreditations.

Does the State accept a COAMFTE accredited degree without requiring the applicant to list specific courses on the license application?
No.

What courses does the State require an applicant to have taken in order to have met this educational requirement for licensure?
California has several requirements:
No less than 12 semester units of coursework in theories, principles, and methods of a variety of psychotherapeutic orientations directly related to marriage and family therapy and marital and family systems approaches to treatment and how these theories can be applied therapeutically with individuals, couples, families, adults, including elder adults, children, adolescents, and groups to improve, restore, or maintain healthy relationships. In addition, California requires students to have been engaged in a practicum that involves direct client contact, and a minimum of six semester units of practicum in a supervised clinical placement that provides supervised fieldwork experience.
In addition, the state of California requires instruction in all of the following:

(A) Diagnosis, assessment, prognosis, and treatment of mental disorders, including severe mental disorders, evidence-based practices, psychological testing, psychopharmacology, and promising mental health practices that are evaluated in peer reviewed literature.

(B) Developmental issues from infancy to old age, including instruction in all of the following areas:
   (i) The effects of developmental issues on individuals, couples, and family relationships. (ii) The psychological, psychotherapeutic, and health implications of developmental issues and their effects. (iii) Aging and its biological, social, cognitive, and psychological aspects. (iv) A variety of cultural understandings of human development. (v) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of socioeconomic status and other contextual issues affecting social position. (vi) The understanding of human behavior within the social context of a representative variety of the cultures found within California. (vii) The understanding of the impact that personal and social insecurity, social stress, low educational levels, inadequate housing, and malnutrition have on human development.

(C) The broad range of matters and life events that may arise within marriage and family relationships and within a variety of California cultures, including instruction in all of the following: (i) Child and adult abuse assessment and reporting. (ii) Spousal or partner abuse assessment, detection, intervention strategies, and same-gender abuse dynamics. (iii) Cultural factors relevant to abuse of partners and family members. (iv) Childbirth, child rearing, parenting, and step parenting. (v) Marriage, divorce, and blended families. (vi) Long-term care. (vii) End of life and grief. (viii) Poverty and deprivation. (ix) Financial and social stress. (x) Effects of trauma. (xi) The psychological, psychotherapeutic, community, and health implications of the matters and life events described in clauses (i) to (x), inclusive.

(D) Cultural competency and sensitivity, including a familiarity with the racial, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds of persons living in California.

(E) Multicultural development and cross-cultural interaction, including experiences of race, ethnicity, class, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender, and disability, and their incorporation into the psychotherapeutic process.

(F) The effects of socioeconomic status on treatment and available resources.

(G) Resilience, including the personal and community qualities that enable persons to cope with adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other stresses.

(H) Human sexuality, including the study of physiological, psychological, and social cultural variables associated with sexual behavior and gender identity, and the assessment and treatment of psychosexual dysfunction.

**Additional Notes:** California expects that the doctor’s or master’s degree program that qualifies for licensure or registration shall do the following:

1. Integrate all of the following throughout its curriculum:
   a. Marriage and family therapy principles.
c. An understanding of various cultures and the social and psychological implications of socioeconomic position, and an understanding of how poverty and social stress impact an individual’s mental health and recovery.

2. Allow for innovation and individuality in the education of marriage and family therapists.

3. Encourage students to develop the personal qualities that are intimately related to effective practice, including, but not limited to, integrity, sensitivity, flexibility, insight, compassion, and personal presence.

How many client contact hours must a student obtain during practicum, and how many of these must be relational hours?

California requires that there should be 150 hours direct client contact PLUS 75 hours of client-centered advocacy or 75 hours relational **TOTAL: 225 Hours**

California rules state that a trainee may be credited with supervised experience completed in any setting that meets all of the following: (A) Lawfully and regularly provides mental health counseling or psychotherapy. (B) Provides oversight to ensure that the trainee’s work at the setting meets the experience and supervision requirements set forth in California rules and is within the scope of practice for the profession as defined in California rules. (C) Is not a private practice owned by a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed psychologist, a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed physician and surgeon, or a professional corporation of any of those licensed professions. In addition, experience may be gained by the trainee solely as part of the position for which the trainee volunteers or is employed.

**Additional Notes**: A student must be enrolled in a practicum course while counseling clients, except as specified in subdivision (c) of Section 4980.42. (iv) of the California Laws and Regulations.

How many supervision hours must a student obtain during practicum?

As a **Trainee** (someone who enrolled in a qualified program), an individual needs to receive at least “one unit” of supervision contact for every five hours of psychotherapy or counseling performed.

California defines one “unit” if supervision equals one hour of individual supervision or two hours of group supervision.

**Additional Notes**: Trainees are not permitted to earn supervision hours via videoconferencing.

What is the required length of practicum in this state?

Students in California are required to have six (6) semester hours of practicum.

**Additional Notes**: The maximum number of hours a person can earn while a Trainee is no more than 1,300 hours of the following:

- Counseling and Supervision Hours (maximum 750 hours)
- Administering and Evaluating Psychological Tests, Writing Clinical Reports, Writing Progress or Process Notes maximum 250 hours
- Workshops, Seminars, Training Sessions or Conferences (maximum 250 hours)
- Client Centered Advocacy - Personal Psychotherapy Received (maximum 100 hours are triple counted as 300)
POST-GRADUATE REQUIREMENTS

What are the minimum number of years of clinical experience a graduate needs to obtain a license, the minimum number of client contact hours, and how many of these hours must be relational hours?

The California Board requires 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience and 104 weeks of supervision to qualify for MFT licensure. Of the 104 supervised weeks required, 52 weeks must be weeks in which the applicant received at least one hour of one-on-one, individual, face-to-face supervision.

The required 3,000 hours of supervised experience must conform to the following breakdown:

Counseling Hours
- Individual Psychotherapy (no minimum or maximum number of hours)
- Couples, Family, and Children (minimum of 500 hours required); The first 150 hours of conjoint treatment of couples and family hours can be double counted starting 1/1/2010.
- Group Therapy or Counseling (maximum of 500 hours)
- Telemedicine Counseling (maximum of 375 hours)
- Administering and Evaluating Psychological Tests, Writing Clinical Reports, Writing Progress or Process Notes (maximum of 250 hours) Other Non-Counseling Hours (maximum of 1,250 hours)
- Workshops, Seminars, Training Sessions or Conferences (Max 250 hrs.)
- Personal Psychotherapy Received (Max 100 hrs. triple counted as 300)
- Client Centered Advocacy - Direct Supervisor Contact (Both individual and group); Personal Psychotherapy received does not count as work experience and does not require supervision.

Additional Notes: A supervised week is any week in which a Trainee or Intern meets with an individual supervisor for one hour or a group supervisor for two hours. The maximum amount of work experience that a Trainee or Intern may count in a given week is 40 hours.

What is the minimum number of experience hours required by this State?
As noted above, California requires 3000 hours of experience.
Of these 3000 hours:
- no more than 1300 hours earned prior to the degree being granted will be allowed to count
- not more than 40 hours in any seven consecutive days will be allowed to count
- a minimum of 500 of these hours must be relational hours
- not more than 250 hours of professional enrichment activities excluding personal psychotherapy
- not more than 100 hours may come from personal psychotherapy (These hours will count triple totaling 300 hours)
- no hours may be completed before completing 12 semester units of graduate study
- no hours gained more than 6 years prior to application date will be counted with the exception of 500 practicum hours

Additional Notes: Effective January 1, 2012.
No more than 1,000 hours of experience will be allowed in the following areas:
- Direct Supervisor Contact
- Professional Enrichment Activities

For hours gained on or after Jan. 1, 2012, no more than 500 hours of experience in the following areas:
- Administering/evaluating psychological tests
- Writing clinical reports, progress notes, and/or process notes
- Client centered advocacy
What is the minimum number of post-graduate supervision hours required by this State, and how many of these hours must be individual supervision?

California requires that supervision shall include **at least one hour of direct supervisor contact in each week for which experience is credited in each work setting**, as specified: (1) A trainee shall receive an average of at least one hour of direct supervisor contact for every five hours of client contact in each setting. (2) An individual supervised after being granted a qualifying degree shall receive at least one additional hour of direct supervisor contact for every week in which more than 10 hours of client contact is gained in each setting. No more than five hours of supervision, whether individual or group, shall be credited during any single week.

For purposes of this section, “one hour of direct supervisor contact” means one hour per week of face-to-face contact on an individual basis or two hours per week of face-to-face contact in a group. Direct supervisor contact shall occur within the same week as the hours claimed. (5) Direct supervisor contact provided in a group shall be provided in a group of not more than eight supervisees and in segments lasting no less than one continuous hour.

An intern may be credited with supervised experience completed in any setting that meets both of the following: (A) Lawfully and regularly provides mental health counseling or psychotherapy. (B) Provides oversight to ensure that the intern’s work at the setting meets the experience and supervision requirements set forth in this chapter and is within the scope of practice for the profession as defined in California rules.

Starting January 1, 2010, MFT Interns working in a governmental entity, school, college/university, or an institution that is both nonprofit and charitable may obtain all supervision via videoconferencing. Videoconferencing has not been defined in California rules other than it must be two-way and occur in real time (live). Videoconferencing is considered the same as face to face direct supervisor contact.

**Additional Notes:** Group supervision sessions shall include no more than eight (8) persons receiving supervision.

Only in a private practice setting does a supervisor need to be employed by, and practice at, the same site as the applicant’s employer. In a setting that is not a private practice, the supervisor may be employed by the registrant’s employer on either a paid or voluntary basis. An off-site supervisor must sign a letter of agreement with the agency employing the applicant.

**What are the State requirements for an individual to be qualified as a supervisor?**

Only licensed mental health professionals can supervise Trainees and Interns in California. Licensed mental health professionals include licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed psychologists, and licensed physicians certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Additionally, the supervisor must maintain a current valid California license. The supervisor must have held that license for at least two (2) years and practiced psychotherapy or directly supervised trainees, interns, or associate clinical social workers that perform psychotherapy as part of their clinical practice for at least two years within the last five-year period immediately preceding supervision. The California Board requires supervisors of Trainees and Interns to complete a minimum of six (6) hours of supervision training or coursework within two years immediately preceding supervision (or within 60 days of commencement of supervision) and every renewal period thereafter. Psychologists and physicians certified in psychiatry are exempt from supervision training.
Does the state require the National Examination offered by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB)?
California does not use the test provided by AMFTRB, but requires its own tests. Beginning January 1, 2013: An applicant for licensure as a marriage and family therapist shall pass the following two examinations as prescribed by the board: (1) A California law and ethics examination. (2) A clinical examination.

Additional Notes:
Beginning January 1, 2013: Upon registration with the board, a marriage and family therapist intern shall, within the first year of registration, take an examination on California law and ethics. (c) A registrant may take the clinical examination only upon meeting all of the following requirements: (1) Completion of all required supervised work experience. (2) Completion of all education requirements. (3) Passage of the California law and ethics examination.

Does the State have specific training requirements beyond the graduate degree?
None are noted.

Can an individual with a criminal history request board review before actually having to apply for licensure?
While California does not review these requests for applicants to an MFT program or for students in programs, when an individual graduates from a qualified program, they must register within 90 days of when the degree was conferred to become a registered Intern. During the registration process, these individuals will undergo a Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal history background check. It is at this point an individual will know if they qualify for licensure in California.

The California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Section 1813 states: "When considering the denial of a license or registration under Section 480 of the Code, the board, in evaluating the rehabilitation of the applicant and his or her present eligibility for a license or registration shall consider the following criteria: (a) The nature and severity of the act(s) or crime(s) under consideration as grounds for denial. (b) Evidence of any act(s) committed subsequent to the act(s) or crime(s) under consideration as grounds for denial which also could be considered as grounds for denial under Section 480 of the Code. (c) The time that has elapsed since commission of the act(s) or crime(s) referred to in Section 480 of the Code. (d) The extent to which the applicant has complied with any terms of probation, parole, restitution, or any other sanctions lawfully imposed against the applicant. (e) Evidence, if any, of rehabilitation submitted by the applicant."

How can someone contact the Board in this state?
Kim Madsen, Executive Officer
1625 N. Market Blvd, S200
Sacramento, CA 95834
Phone: 916-574-7841 FAX: 916-574-8625
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Every state has a "definitions" section of their rules and/or statutes. Are there any definitions that might be important for an applicant to pay attention? (Note: this is not a complete list; please review definitions in your state)

“Intern” means an unlicensed person who has earned his or her master’s or doctor’s degree qualifying him or her for licensure and is registered with the board.

“Trainee” means an unlicensed person who is currently enrolled in a master’s or doctor’s degree program, as specified in Sections 4980.36 and 4980.37, that is designed to qualify him or her for licensure under this chapter, and who has completed no less than 12 semester units or 18 quarter units of coursework in any qualifying degree program.