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

Does the 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?

No, Alabama does not specify a minimum number of credit hours.

What type of institutional or programmatic accreditation is required?

Alabama requires that the qualifying degree must come from a regionally accredited educational institute and be a masters or doctoral graduate training in marriage and family therapy (or an allied field with graduate level course work in marriage and family therapy) that meets the Board course requirements.

Does the State require the program to have COAMFTE or CACREP Accreditation?

Alabama 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?

Yes.

What courses does the State require an applicant to have taken in order to be have met this educational requirement for licensure?

Alabama requires that graduate coursework must consist of the six areas deemed essential educational training for the practice of marriage and family therapy. This coursework will embrace a family systems perspective of human and family development and of treatment of individuals, couples, and families, either alone or in a group. This coursework will address the practice of marriage and family therapy through utilization of established principles that recognize the interrelated nature of the individual problems and dysfunctions in family members in order to assess and treat emotional, mental, and behavioral disorders.

Course equivalents: one (1) course = three (3) semester credits from a recognized educational institution; or forty-five (45) didactic contact hours (lecture hours).

(1) Marriage and Family Studies (two (2) courses, minimum). Courses in this area should present a fundamental introduction to systems theory. The student should learn to think in systems terms across a wide variety of family and other social structures and a diverse range of presenting issues (i.e., gender, culture, substance abuse). Topic areas include: systems theory, family development, subsystems, blended families, gender issues in families, cultural issues in families, etc. All courses in this area must
have a major focus from a systems theory orientation. Survey or overview courses in which systems is one of several theories covered do not qualify for this area. Courses in which systems theory is the major focus and other theories are studied in relation to systems theory are acceptable. (2) Marriage and Family Therapy (three (3) courses, minimum). Courses in this area should have a major focus on advanced family systems theories and systemic therapeutic interventions. This area is intended to provide a substantive understanding of the major theories of systems change and the applied practices evolving from each theoretical orientation. Major theoretical approaches might include: strategic, structural, object relations family therapy, behavioral family therapy, communications family therapy, intergenerational family therapy, and systemic sex therapy. Survey or overview courses in which family therapy is one of several types of theories covered do not qualify for this area. (3) Human Development (two (2) courses, minimum). Courses in this area should provide knowledge of individual personality development and its normal and abnormal manifestations. The student should have relevant coursework in human development across the life span which includes special issues that affect an individual’s development (i.e., culture, gender, and human sexuality). The material should be integrated with systems concepts. Topic areas may include human development, child/adolescent development, psychopathology, personality, theory, human sexuality, etc. Test and measurements courses do not qualify for this area. (4) Professional Issues and Ethics (one (1) course, minimum). Courses in this area are intended to contribute to the professional development of the therapist. Areas of study should include the therapist’s legal responsibilities and liabilities, professional issues and ethics as a marriage and family therapist, professional socialization, and the role of the professional organization, licensure or certification legislation, independent practice and inter-professional cooperation. Religious ethics courses and moral theology courses do not qualify for this area. (5) Research (one (1) course, minimum.) Courses in this area should assist in understanding and performing research. Topic areas may include: research methodology, quantitative methods, and statistics. Individual personality, test and measurement and library research courses do not qualify for this area. (6) Mental Health Diagnosis (one (1) course, minimum). The course in this area should assist in understanding and treating psychological diagnoses related to the International Classification of Diseases and/or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Topic areas may include: major mental disorders and learning disorders, personality disorders, intellectual disabilities, acute medical conditions, addictions, sexual disorders, and psycho-developmental and environmental factors contributing to disorders. This course will be required for all licensees beginning January 1, 2013.

Note: Graduates of programs, which at the time of the applicant’s graduation were COAMFTE programs, are deemed to have met the Board course requirements.

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

Alabama requires students to complete a minimum of five hundred (500) direct client contact hours obtained concurrently with the required supervision; two hundred fifty (250) of these direct client contact hours must be with couples or families physically present in the therapy room; Individuals who have graduated from a COAMFTE program have met requirement.

How many supervision hours must a student obtain during practicum?
Alabama requires students to complete a minimum of 100 supervision hours based on the ratio of one (1) supervision hour for every five (5) direct client contact hours completed concurrently; fifty (50) of these hours must be individual supervision. Group supervision is encouraged. The supervision must be provided by a Board Approved Supervisor. Individuals who have graduated from a COAMFTE program have met requirement.

A student in Alabama is considered a “MFT Intern” and is expected to submit a contract for supervision to the Alabama Board. Students in a COAMFTE program currently under program supervision have met this requirement. An individual may remain an MFT Intern for a maximum of four (4) years and is expected to renew their MFT Intern designation every two (2) years if applicable. In order to renew the Intern must have completed the required Continuing Education Units and submitted applicable fees for license renewal prescribed by the Board. In order for an Intern designation to be renewed, the intern must have completed a minimum of ten (10) contact hours of acceptable Continuing Education or Experience Units during the previous twenty-four months. A minimum of three (3) of these hours must be clinical MFT workshops, a minimum of three (3) of these hours must be in the area of diagnosis and treatment, and a minimum of three (3) of these hours must be in the area of professional issues and ethics.

What is the required length of practicum in this State?

Alabama requires a minimum of 12 months of internship.
Post-Graduation 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?

After graduating, an individual working toward licensure in Alabama must complete a minimum of two (2) years post-degree full time (30 or more clock hours per week) MFT work experience or the equivalent part time MFT work experience under the supervision of a Board Approved Supervisor. Specifically, this individual must complete a minimum of one-thousand (1000) post-degree direct client hours concurrently with the required ratio of one (1) supervision hour to every ten (10) client contact hours; two hundred-fifty (250) of these direct contact hours must be with couples or families physically present in the therapy room.

It is the responsibility of the candidate and the supervisor to ensure that direct client contact hours and supervision hours are concurrent. This applies for hours toward the internship and post-degree requirements. Individuals who have graduated from a COAMFTE program have met this requirement for their internship, but must document their post-degree hours.

What are the minimum number of experience hours required by this State?

Alabama does not specify a minimum number of required hours of experience after graduating.

What are the minimum number of post-graduate supervision hours required by this State, and how many of these hours must be individual supervision?

Alabama requires that an individual seeking licensure must complete two-hundred (200) hours of supervision, one-hundred (100) of which must be individual. Candidates may count up to one-hundred (100) supervision hours earned during the graduate program toward this requirement if 1) They apply and are granted internship status prior to beginning their internship (this would ensure that their supervisory arrangement would be Board approved); 2) Internship must contain a ratio of one (1) supervision hour for every five (5) client contact hours; 3) Supervision and client contact hours are completed concurrently. The remaining one hundred (100) hours of post degree supervision must include at least fifty (50) hours of individual supervision. Graduates from COAMFTE programs have met this requirement. Applicants from allied mental health professions or candidates not completing a Board approved graduate internship must complete concurrently the full supervision requirement post-degree. Programs that are not COAMFTE approved require board approval prior to beginning the internship.

Additional notes about supervision requirements in Alabama:

Supervision of marriage and family therapy is expected to have the following characteristics:

(a) Face-to-face interaction with the supervisor, usually in periods of approximately one (1) hour each on at least a weekly basis for a period of two (2) years;

(b) 25% of these face-to-face supervision hours may be conducted via electronic communications by an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, AAMFT Supervisor Candidate, ABEMFT Approved Supervisor, or ABEMFT
Supervisor Candidate. Acceptable electronic communication is defined as communication that is simultaneously interactive both visually and orally.

(c) Based on an integration of marriage and family therapy clinical and supervision constructs;

(d) A contract for supervision is required for all MFT candidates who are under supervision for MFT licensure; The contract for supervision requires sufficient detail for review and approval by the Board.

(e) Without approval of the Board, a supervisee may not have more than two (2) supervisors.

(f) The following characteristics are not acceptable as clinical supervision:

(1) Peer supervision, i.e., supervision by a person of equivalent, rather than superior, qualifications, status and experience;

(2) Supervision by current or former family members or any other person where the nature of the personal relationship compromises the professional relationship;

(3) Administrative supervision (i.e., clinical practice performed under administration rather than clinical supervision of a director or executive director);

(4) A primarily didactic process wherein techniques or procedures are taught in a group setting, classroom, workshop or seminar; and Consultation, staff development or orientation to a field program, or role playing of family interrelationships as a substitute for current clinical practice in an appropriate clinical setting.

Group Supervision may consist of no more than six (6) supervisees, regardless of the number of supervisors.

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

Alabama requires that a qualified supervisor in Alabama meets the following qualifications:

(1) Is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist;

(2) Has submitted a completed application on the forms prescribed by the Board an been approved by the Board

(3) Completed a minimum of four (4) years post-degree full time (30 or more clock hours per week) MFT work experience or the equivalent part time work experience.

(4) Completed a graduate course in supervision with a minimum of thirty (30) contact hours or the equivalent;

(5) Provided evidence to the Board of having completed a minimum of one hundred-eighty (180) hours of clinical supervision to MFTs and/or MFT trainees during a period of not less than two years. During this time, the candidate must actively supervise at least two supervisees for at least nine (9) months each.

(6) Completed thirty-six (36) hours of supervision of supervision from a Board approved LMFT Supervisor Mentor. Supervision of Supervision should continue throughout the entire period of one’s candidacy,
even if the thirty-six (36) hours have been completed. If the training period extends beyond two years, at least eighteen (18) hours of Supervision of Supervision must be obtained in the final year of candidacy.

(7) The Supervisor Candidate is responsible for logging monthly supervisee direct client contact hours, supervision hours and type of supervision for each supervisee, and supervision of supervision hours. These monthly logs will be submitted with the Candidate’s final application.

OR

(8) Is an AAMFT Approved Supervisor

Additional notes:

It is now the responsibility of the candidates for MFT Associate and LMFT and their supervisors to ensure that direct client contact hours and supervision hours are concurrent.

Does the state require the National Examination offered by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB)?

Yes.

Does the State have specific training requirements beyond the graduate degree?

None are noted in Alabama.

Can an individual with a criminal history request board review before actually having to apply for licensure?

It is unclear if Alabama will conduct pre-application reviews.

How can someone contact the Board in this state?

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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)

None are noted in Alabama.