



Marriage and Family Therapy

Program Handbook

Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy

July 2020

*This handbook is neither a contract nor an offer of a contract. The material contained herein is not intended to substitute for or otherwise modify the regulations that are contained in the current Northcentral University Catalog or any other official documents. This handbook was designed to document requirements specific to the Marriage and Family Therapy degree programs. The University reserves the right to change any provision or requirement, including fees, at any time with or without notice. The University further reserves the right to require a student to withdraw from the University for cause at any time. Failure to read this handbook does not excuse students from the requirements and regulations described herein.*

*Northcentral University welcomes all qualified adult students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, veteran status, or disability. This applies to all Northcentral University policies, practices, or procedures involving applicants, students, faculty members, employees, and the public. Northcentral reserves the right to refuse admission to anyone the University believes does not meet Northcentral University academic standards or demonstrates actions or behaviors not aligned with Northcentral University policy.*

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School of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Department of Marriage and Family Sciences

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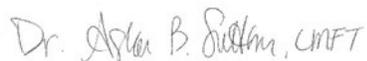
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Dear Northcentral Marriage and Family Therapy Student,

Welcome to Northcentral University's Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) graduate program. We are pleased to welcome you as students and colleagues in the pursuit of knowledge in the field of MFT. Northcentral University's MAMFT Program holds the distinguished honor of being the first ever distance-based program to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Since receiving accreditation, our MA Program has seen considerable growth. In addition to supporting student's pursuit of meeting their state's educational requirements that lead to obtaining their license as a marriage and family therapist, the MAMFT Program offers a number of specializations. These specializations provide additional opportunities to learn more about specific populations and presenting problems they will likely address in clinical settings. This Program Handbook has been developed to support your success as you begin and progress through your studies. We wish you the best and look forward to your participation in, and contribution to, the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Northcentral University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dr. Asha B. Sutton, LMFT". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Asha Sutton, LMFT  
Program Director, MAMFT Program  
asutton@ncu.edu

## Welcome to the Northcentral University Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy Handbook

- You may use this online Help System to locate policy information and print individual handbook sections.
- To navigate using the sidebar to the left:
- Click one of the Chapter titles or an Appendix to see the topics in that portion of the manual
- Click a topic title to display that portion of the Handbook
- You may also use the Search function to locate for a topic of interest.
- To print an individual topic, click the Print button while the topic is displayed.
- If you wish to print the entire Handbook, click on “Table of Contents/Print Version”.
- To return to the MFT Home Page, click on “Back to MFT Site”.
- When receiving web-based links to the [University Catalog](#), please be sure that you are viewing the most recent version of the catalog and outlined polices and procedures from the dropdown box.



- Throughout this Handbook, direct links are provided when possible. Note that links are subject to change and it may be necessary to self-navigate websites to locate referenced information.
- Direct any question about the Handbook to the Office of the Dean, Dept. of Marriage and Family Sciences ([mfs@ncu.edu](mailto:mfs@ncu.edu)).

# 1 – INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to serve as a guide for students enrolled in the COAMFTE accredited Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) degree program at Northcentral University. University-wide rules and regulations can be found in the [Northcentral University Catalog](#). The policies of this handbook are consistent with university policies and are intended to supplement, not replace, university policies and procedures. In addition, the educational and training protocols of the program are designed to conform to the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) standards of training and practice, including the [AAMFT Code of Ethics Conduct](#).

Please read this handbook carefully, as you are expected to know this information. If you have any questions, please contact the Department Chair or Program Director of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences at [mfs@ncu.edu](mailto:mfs@ncu.edu). This document will be revised periodically to reflect necessary programmatic changes that may occur due to changes in the profession, the University, license requirements or other relevant contexts. All policies, and any changes to these policies, shall be reviewed and approved by appropriate administrative personnel and will be communicated to students as needed.

This handbook shall be distributed to the following named persons or groups of persons: 1) All faculty members staff, and leadership associated with the MAMFT Program; 2) All graduate students both current and entering the MAMFT degree program; and 3) The Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

## THE PROFESSION OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

The profession was launched as a number of psychologists and psychiatrists began to see limitations in treating most mental health issues using treatment approaches focused on individuals. It became apparent to these women and men that treating whole families and combinations of family members (e.g., parents, couples) yielded positive results. From these initial observations and efforts, the field of marriage and family therapy (MFT) was born. The MFT field has now become a distinct mental health discipline with its own body of theory, research, clinical techniques, and code of ethics. All fifty (50) states and the District of Columbia currently have active legislation that governs the practice of MFT. Marriage and family therapists diagnose and treat problems from a systemic perspective. They work with individuals, couples, families, and/or larger systems in a variety of contexts. The work of MFT focuses on interactional and relational processes and seeks to build on the client's strengths and resources. Marriage and family therapists help families address and change relationships and patterns of communication so those families can find reasonable solutions to problems for themselves. There are many models of practice in MFT, and individual practitioners may vary greatly in the methods and techniques they use in their clinical work.

## Overview of the MAMFT Program

Northcentral University, a regionally accredited educational institution, uses distance-based (online) education as the predominant method of instruction and interaction for its degree programs. The MAMFT program is housed within the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences (DMFS) which is part of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. It is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), with the majority of the coursework and training process conducted online. The exception to this is the clinical training component, which is described later in this handbook.

The MAMFT degree program is focused on developing the clinical skills, as well as the personal and professional growth, that are required for effective practice in the field of MFT. The program is designed to provide an integrated learning experience for adult students seeking specific training in the profession of MFT, exposing students to both modern and postmodern approaches. Students in this program will critically analyze a broad range of theories and practical knowledge in MFT, utilize research, and apply professional standards of conduct. Degree requirements also include involvement in ongoing clinical work and supervision. This training prepares students for therapeutic and educational work in a variety of settings including mental health centers, public service agencies, military service centers, and private practice. Graduates of the MAMFT program are well prepared to begin the process of seeking licensure in their home state, country, or area.

The MAMFT program at Northcentral University is designed to meet general requirements for licensure with opportunities for students to take additional courses beyond the 45 hours required for the degree, if needed, to meet specific requirements in their state, country, or area. This program has no residency requirement, allowing students to complete their program without having to relocate. In addition, students will complete clinical training in their local area with an approved local clinical supervisor who meets state requirements for supervisors of MFT trainees. Students will also have interactive online supervision sessions with an MFT clinical faculty member who works to support student success, during the clinical training and as a future professional.

## Specializations within the MAMFT Program

Obtaining a specialization at the master's level offers students the opportunity to focus their studies in a specific content area. By focusing on this specialized area, students gain both content and application knowledge that enables them to become an "expert" in the particular area. Students in a specialization are required to complete two content courses, a research project focusing on issues related to the specialization during their research course, and at least 100 hours of clinical experience in the specialization area in an approved setting with a qualified local clinical supervisor.

Students in the MAMFT program may elect to complete a specialization in one of the nine areas described below. The program website and catalog provide further detail about each specialization.

- General Family Therapy
- Medical Family Therapy
- Military Family Therapy
- Child and Adolescent Family Therapy
- Couple Therapy
- LGBTQ Couple and Family Therapy
- Trauma-focused Systemic Therapy
- Systemic Treatment of Addictions
- Systemic Sex Therapy

## 2 – MISSION AND PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

### UNIVERSITY VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Please visit the Course Catalog for our current Vision, Mission, and Values, which can be located on the [About NCU](#) page.

### DEPARTMENT OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY SCIENCES MISSION, VISION AND GOALS

#### Department Mission

The mission of the Northcentral University Department of Marriage and Family Sciences is to provide personalized educational opportunities to students throughout the world that will allow them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values integral to professional practice within the marriage and family sciences.

#### Department Vision

The vision of the Northcentral University Department of Marriage and Family Sciences is to improve the human condition by engaging a diverse community of faculty, staff and students through education, research and practice.

#### Department Goals

The Northcentral University Department of Marriage and Family Sciences promotes the development of:

- Specialized knowledge and skills in discipline-specific models and theories
- Ethical professionals
- Commitment to affirm and promote diversity
- Research competency
- Practical skills that positively impact individuals, families, and communities

## PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program is to prepare competent, ethical, culturally sensitive Marriage and Family Therapists. The program emphasizes a family systems perspective so that client processes, whether these clients are individuals, couples, or families, are contextually conceptualized. Faculty engage students in a one-on-one process that invites students to grow both professionally and personally through the development of critical thinking skills, information literacy, important clinical skills, an appreciation for and knowledge of research through the scholar-practitioner model, a valuing of diversity, and a lifelong commitment to learning and service.

The broad goals of the MFT program are to:

1. Provide the essential academic training needed to effectively practice marriage and family therapy, including training in marriage and family therapy theory, research, major clinical models, professional ethics, standards of best practice, and related issues with purposeful application of family systems theory across the curriculum.
2. Train program participants in the scholar-practitioner model, including the ability to evaluate existing research and implement existing research into professional practice.
3. Promote in students the application of critical thinking skills, including respect for and use of critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to solving problems related to behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and relational processes.
4. Evaluate the readiness, professionalism, maturity, ethical adherence, skills, clinical insight, and competence of program participants, provide the coursework and clinical experience requirements necessary for provisional licensure as a marriage and family therapist in most states or clinical membership in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and prepare and encourage individuals to continue their education in marriage and family therapy as a lifelong learner and/or at the doctoral level.
5. Provide opportunities for students to prepare to be successful when taking any required licensing examination to obtain a license to practice marriage and family therapy.
6. Encourage personal growth, intellectual accomplishment, global awareness, and respect and appreciation for diversity.
7. Prepare students to practice informed, respectful, and scholarly communication skills in print and electronic media in clinical and academic venues.
8. Provide and facilitate clinical training needed for competent and effective practice as a professional Marriage and Family Therapist, including the ability to assess, diagnose, and treat individuals, couples and families with a wide variety of presenting issues including mental illness as defined by the DSM-5.

## GOALS AND OUTCOMES

### Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

The missions of the institution and the program are directly associated to the program goals. The goals of the program are designed to evaluate students learning in the areas of diversity, practice, knowledge/research, and ethics. Each of these goals are directly related to the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) and are linked to a single program outcome. The SLO's are supported and measured based on benchmarks that allows the MAMFT program to assess the data and determine whether the program is achieving the stated outcome.

NCU Institutional Learning Outcomes – Master's (ILOs), Program Goals, and Student/Graduate Learning Outcomes (SLO's):

**NCU Institutional Learning Outcomes #1 (ILO)** - Verbally provide scholarly beliefs, opinions, and concepts across a wide range of contexts.

**NCU Institutional Learning Outcomes #2 (ILO)** - Relate written scholarly beliefs, opinions, and concepts across a wide range of contexts.

**NCU Institutional Learning Outcomes #3 (ILO)** - Analyze interpretation, representation, calculation, application, and analysis of data and information in authentic contexts.

**NCU Institutional Learning Outcomes #4 (ILO)** - Evaluate own and others' assumptions and arguments.

**NCU Institutional Learning Outcomes #5 (ILO)** - Determine resources needed in order to support a decision or address a problem.

**NCU Institutional Learning Outcomes #6 (ILO)** - Determine requisite research skills to complete culminating experience for degree.

**Program Diversity Goal** – Program will exhibit commitment to diversity through curriculum content and student composition.

**Program Practice Goal** – Program will prepare students/graduates to demonstrate systemic clinical skills that positively impact individuals, families, and communities.

**Program Knowledge/Research Goal** – Program will prepare students/graduates to have expertise in discipline-specific models and techniques that are informed by research.

**Program Ethics Goal** – Program will prepare students/graduates to be knowledgeable of and practice as ethical professionals.

**Student Learning Outcome #1 (SLO#1)** -Students will employ competence in working with diverse populations in clinical settings.

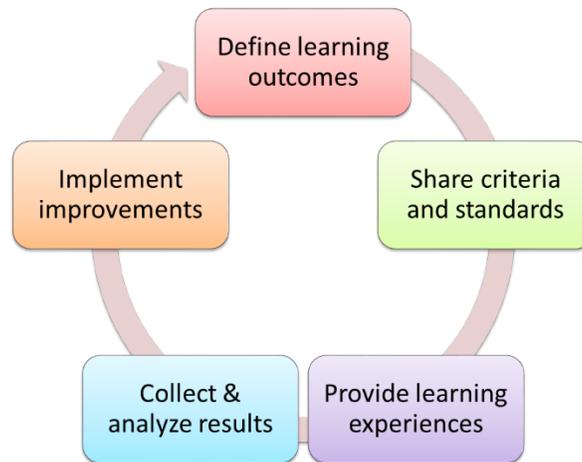
**Student/Graduate Learning Outcome #2 (SLO #2)** –Students/Graduates will apply family systems oriented clinical skills across a variety of contexts.

**Student Learning Outcome #3 (SLO#3)** -Students will contrast family systems theory oriented models of therapy.

**Student Learning Outcome #4 (SLO#4)** –Students will formulate a decision-making process for ethical dilemmas congruent with the AAMFT Code of Ethics.

## MAMFT PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The Department of Marriage and Family Sciences (DMFS) follows a repeating assessment cycle as part of an ongoing strategic plan of continuous improvement. The assessment cycle aligns with NCU's Institutional Assessment practices and includes the following: 1) Define outcomes of interest; 2) Set standards and measures; 3) Provide learning experience; 4) Collect data to analyze outcomes; 5) Develop action plans based on outcomes; 6) Repeat.



Student Learning Outcomes are measured directly at the program and institutional level. Each course within the MFT program has associated with it a list of four to six course learning outcomes (CLOs) which map to the program's four program student learning outcomes (SLOs) and NCU's six institutional learning outcomes (ILOs).

The program's curriculum map demonstrates how learning outcomes are introduced, developed and mastered, across the curriculum.

Student learning outcomes are measured using rubrics tied to key activities across courses. Rubrics are used by faculty and clinical supervisors to evaluate student achievement of program and institutional learning outcomes as well as clinical practice during practicum and internship. Additionally, student self-report and faculty observation regarding student progress on key indicators of graduate-level performance are integrated into each course via the Student Progress Evaluation. We use a number of additional tools to examine program quality and student satisfaction such as end-of-course surveys, student surveys, inquiries of resources sufficiency and student persistence data.

A systemic framework is used in evaluation of the clinical practicum and internship at the end of each course. Students complete evaluations of their site, local supervisor and NCU faculty member. Local supervisors complete an evaluation of the student based on AAMFT core competencies which are aligned to the program's student learning outcomes. Finally, the NCU faculty member completes an evaluation of the student. During the final internship course students deliver a final case presentation which is scored by two faculty members using a grading rubric.

NCU's MAMFT Program uses a two-tier approach to program evaluation. The first tier, an *Annual Assessment Report* is completed each year and updated quarterly. The report consists of four sections: curriculum, student outcomes, interpretation of findings and future goals and action plans. The second tier, is a *7-year Program Review*. The Program Review is a comprehensive examination of academic program quality that incorporates both internal and external review.

Summaries of student and program outcomes are reviewed annually and used to guide curricular or pedagogical changes. The aggregated data and analysis are provided to various Communities of Interest (COI) including but not limited to faculty, students, Student Advisory Council (SAC), Program Advisory Council (PAC), Faculty Council, University administration, and others as appropriate. Action plans tied to the strategic plan are created to improve educational outcomes, curriculum and overall program quality based on outcome data and faculty feedback. Status of action plans are updated by administration quarterly and reviewed with COIs annually. Feedback is requested from each community of interest which is then used to implement change and improvement in the program.

## 3 – GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following program policies are reviewed and revised as necessary. Policies have been developed to be fair and equitable. All program policies are designed to be supportive of the program and university mission and values. If students have questions regarding any policies or any other information found in this handbook they are encouraged to contact the Department Chair or the MAMFT Program Director ([mfs@ncu.edu](mailto:mfs@ncu.edu)) to seek clarification.

### STUDENT RECRUITMENT POLICY

The Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) program uses a targeted recruitment policy, that is consistent with the university mission, values, and anti-discrimination policy, seeking out highly motivated professionals to provide an accessible opportunity to earn an accredited degree in MFT. The targeted strategies utilize various multi-media, social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn), magazines, regional and national conferences, etc. to reach out to a diverse group of potential applicants throughout the world.

### PROGRAM RETENTION POLICY

The MAMFT program facilitates the success and retention of all students in ways that are consistent with the university mission and anti-discrimination policy, through faculty training, academic advising, and student support services.

### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The MFT Program abides by the University's Non-Discrimination Policy, as found in the current Northcentral University Catalog. In addition, faculty are invested in the personal and professional growth of students, and developing an understanding and appreciation for diversity is an important element of this growth. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, ethnicity, relationship status, gender identity, health status, national origin, race, color, religion, spiritual values, gender, sexual orientation, SES, learning disabilities, physical limitations, age, veteran status, belief systems, and academic and professional background. Respect for diversity is embedded in the nature of the MFT Programs at Northcentral University, and the Programs are committed to acknowledging and discussing issues of diversity. Due to the online nature of the program, students and faculty members come from a wide variety of contexts. As such, the importance of diversity can be seen in the actual diversity of our students, faculty, and supervisors, as well as being evident throughout our curriculum, clinical training, and educational outcomes.

## POLICY/PROCEDURE – PROGRAM CLIMATE

The University and MAMFT Program supports the climate of safety, respect, and appreciation for all students. Further information regarding our policy, review the [Student Well-Being and Safety section](#) of the University Catalog.

## ADMISSION POLICY

Admission to a Northcentral University Master’s program requires a conferred bachelor’s degree from an accredited academic institution. In addition, a current resume or curriculum vita and a copy of degree transcripts are required. Applicants will also complete an application packet that reviews the program requirements and expectations. The packet requires applicants to review the MAMFT Program website, the Northcentral University Catalog, regarding the requirements for pursuing licensure, and program/graduation requirements for MFT training. Applicants are expected to compose a plan to obtain licensure, including exploring the requirements of finding a clinical practicum site and supervisor, as well as post-master’s degree requirements for licensure. Applicants are also required to respond to a series of questions referred to as a “Statement of Intent” so that MAMFT program faculty may evaluate the applicant’s interest in and readiness for the MAMFT program, as well as to see a brief sample of their writing. Applicants complete a Statement of Professional Ethics and Conduct, in which they are required to report any previous ethical and/or criminal behavior that may be relevant to training and practicing as a marriage and family therapist. Because state laws require licensed marriage and family therapists to be of good moral character, any prospective student who has been convicted of a felony prior to or subsequent to admission is required to immediately inform the MAMFT Program Director of the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences of this conviction in order to determine the best course of action. In addition, a felony conviction may also disqualify a student from some clinical internship placement sites, thereby making it likely the student will be unable to complete the requirements of the MFT degree program. Once all documentation is received, MAMFT applicants must participate in a one-to-one synchronous interview with a current MFT faculty. After submitting all required materials and completing a one-to-one interview with program faculty, student will complete a background check prior to enrollment.

What follows is an outline of what to expect once the student is accepted.

<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Action</b>
Academic Advisor	Provides the student access to the Virtual Campus, and works with the student to schedule courses for at least one year in the Course Scheduler.
Student	Stays in contact with her or his Academic Advisor (AA) in order to adjust the timing of courses, ask questions, or request information or assistance regarding any matter related to the educational aspects of the program. The most common ways of maintaining contact are email, phone calls, or the University message system.
Student	Utilizes the Virtual Campus as the primary means for completing coursework and degree requirements, serving as the gateway to courses, the NCU Bookstore, communication with faculty, staff, and other students, University resources such as the Northcentral Library, the Academic Success Center (ASC), the NCU Commons, and the IT Service Desk. Using the Virtual Campus, the student can review her or his degree plan, request/register for specific courses, manage educational finances, and setup or edit personal information found in the Virtual Campus.

Student	Begins courses and also begins to submit assignments in a timely manner. No “bulk uploading” is accepted. The student must receive feedback and a grade on the current assignment before submitting the next assignment.
Faculty Member	When assignments are completed and submitted for grading, the faculty member reviews, evaluates, offers detailed feedback, and submits the feedback and grades for students’ completed work. University requirements are such that faculty must respond to questions in messages or email within 48 hours and they must grade and submit detailed feedback for all work submitted within 4 business days.
Student	Takes advantage of the asynchronous model to work at their convenience, within the allowed time frames for course participation and faculty member responsiveness. Students are encouraged to also set time to talk via Skype or Zoom Video Conferencing (or by phone) if additional mentoring or support is needed.

## MINIMUM TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND TRAINING

Students in an online program must have the technological resources necessary for them to be successful.

The following link explains the minimum technical requirements for NCU students:

<http://www.ncu.edu/tuition-and-admissions/admissions-requirements/technical-requirements>

### Technology Training

There are three key applications (technology) used in the program. The three applications are the Learning Management System (LMS), video conferencing applications for the clinical courses, and clinical tracking application. The following training is required:

#### Students:

- *Learning Management System (LMS)*- Students are required to participate in the “Walk to Class” with their academic advisor. Advisors will provide a personal one-on-one training in which they will show you how to use the LMS (online classroom).
- *Video Conferencing*- Currently, the MFT program uses an application called Zoom, which is a HIPAA compliant video conferencing tool. Students are required to participate in the orientation and training that will be provided during their first clinical course/practicum. In addition, students are required to review the asynchronous trainings for this tool (<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/201137166-Audio-Video-Sharing>).
- *Clinical Tracking Application*- Currently, the MFT program uses an application called *Tevera* to track all clinical hours and supervision received during the practicum and internship courses. The application allows local supervisors to verify and sign off on client contact hours as well as the supervision hours received. This tool also allows students to evaluate their experiences with sites and supervisors. Students will receive guidance and training with this application during their clinical courses with their assigned faculty.

#### Supervisors:

- *Clinical Tracking Application*- The only technology local and faculty supervisors are required to use is the approved tracking system. The software will be used to track all clinical hours and allow supervisors to sign off on client contact hours and/or supervision hours. This tool also allows supervisors to evaluate the clinical progress of students. The Director of Clinical Training can provide additional training or orientation as needed.

#### Faculty:

- *Learning Management System*- As part of the hiring process, faculty are required to complete the faculty training with the LMS. The training is provided by the University's Center for Teaching and Learning. As this training is continually updated, faculty will be enrolled in the most current version of the training during the hiring process.
- *Video Conferencing*- Currently, the MFT program uses an application called Zoom, which is a HIPAA compliant video conferencing tool. Faculty will be trained how to use this tool when assigned to teach practicum and/or internship courses. Additional asynchronous training for this tool is provided at the following location (<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/201137166-Audio-Video-Sharing>).

### UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION

University enrollment specialists and students' academic advisors orient students to the learning environment. Students will receive links that provide information on what students can expect as they begin their studies at NCU.

### LICENSURE INFORMATION

While each state board is the ultimate authority on its own rules and regulations governing the practice of marriage and family therapy in their state, sometimes it is difficult to know where to start or what to ask. Licensure information and important links to other sites can be found on the [NCU MFT webpage](#).

### PROGRAM PORTABILITY POLICY: STATE LICENSURE LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that applicants are aware of any issues that may affect their professional goals. Some state regulatory boards do not accept degrees earned in an online environment as meeting the educational requirements for licensure. Other states may have requirements for specialized accreditations or other unique course/credit requirements above and beyond the standard degree plan that would prevent clinical practice as a student and/or successful application for licensure. Although licensure laws are governed by individual states and can change frequently, the MFT program administration seeks to identify these states and notify applicants in those states with any known limitations. However, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all licensure requirements are met. This policy outlines the process of notification and verification for situations where these limitations apply.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Notification will be given to applicants to the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy degree program that live in an identified state that may not currently accept Northcentral University's (NCU) Marriage and Family Therapy degree for licensure. Any applicants from an identified state or expecting to practice in an identified state are expected to comply with the verification process outlined in the procedure below.

## SCOPE OF NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Because there are some states that have regulations that prohibit the use of a degree from the Northcentral University MFT Program as meeting licensure requirements, the DMFS program administration will notify applicants who live in, or express interest in practicing within, one of those identified states.

## CONTINUED REQUIREMENTS AFTER ADMISSION

Once enrolled, students are required to work with the state in which they wish to practice as a MFT to ensure that they are in compliance with all licensure requirements. The program will provide information when possible to support those efforts, but it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all licensure requirements are met. Completion of the program does not guarantee the opportunity to sit for licensure.

## PROCEDURE: APPLICANTS WITH KNOWN LICENSURE LIMITATIONS

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>MAMFT Program</b>	1. Provide the <a href="#">Licensure Limitation Acknowledgement Letter</a> to all students/applicants who live in or express an interest in practicing in states that do not currently accept Northcentral University's (NCU) MAMFT degree for licensure, or are informed that their degree plan will not meet state requirements.
<b>Applicant</b>	2. Complete the <a href="#">Licensure Limitation Acknowledgement Letter</a> which requires initials and a signature acknowledging the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCU's MAMFT program is designed for individuals desiring to pursue clinical licensure in their respective state or province. NCU staff and/or faculty have informed me that at this time my home state or the state in which I have indicated a desire to practice may not accept my degree for licensure.</li><li>• To graduate with a MAMFT from NCU, I must complete all clinical requirements (i.e. 500 client contact hours and 100 hours of supervision) even though I may decide not to pursue a license and/or employment as an MFT.</li><li>• I have reviewed my state laws and regulations and/or contacted my state licensing board to determine that I am able to obtain a clinical placement as a student therapist even though it is NCU's understanding that this degree will not qualify for licensure in my state.</li></ul>
<b>MAMFT Program Personnel</b>	3. Address in a timely manner any questions or concerns that are raised by the applicant related to this issue.
<b>Applicant</b>	4. Print, initial, sign, scan and submit the form to <a href="mailto:mfs@ncu.edu">mfs@ncu.edu</a> .

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AND STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Students are required to sign the Student Acknowledgement Form as part of the first course (MFT5101), acknowledging that they have read, understood, and have agreed to abide by all confidentiality policies required by the Program and they have reviewed this program handbook. MFT Training at Northcentral University can be both personally and professionally challenging. Students seek to acquire the knowledge and develop the practical skills needed to be successful as a systemically trained mental health professional. In this process, students are expected to engage in a high level of self-reflection, personal application, and self-disclosure. As a general rule, students should only share what they are comfortable sharing about themselves. Faculty, staff and supervisors are expected to handle student disclosures with respect and will only share information with other Northcentral University MFT faculty, Northcentral University administrators, clinical supervisors, NCU staff, or student employers for the purpose of assisting in the student's development as a clinician.

In addition, faculty and local clinical supervisors work collaboratively for the benefit of the students and the MAMFT program. Therefore, the DMFS faculty, supervisors, and staff may discuss and disclose information concerning performance as a student and as a therapist-in-training. This information, including information a student may share in courses or in supervision, will only be disclosed to other DMFS clinical faculty, supervisors, and staff as needed (deemed pertinent for students' and/or the MAMFT program's benefit by faculty, supervisors, and staff). No information will be shared outside of those listed above without consent of the student or without prior notification to the student of the disclosure, except in cases of emergency or litigation.

## STUDENT PROGRESS EVALUATION

What follows is an outline of the post-acceptance evaluation points a student must progress through.

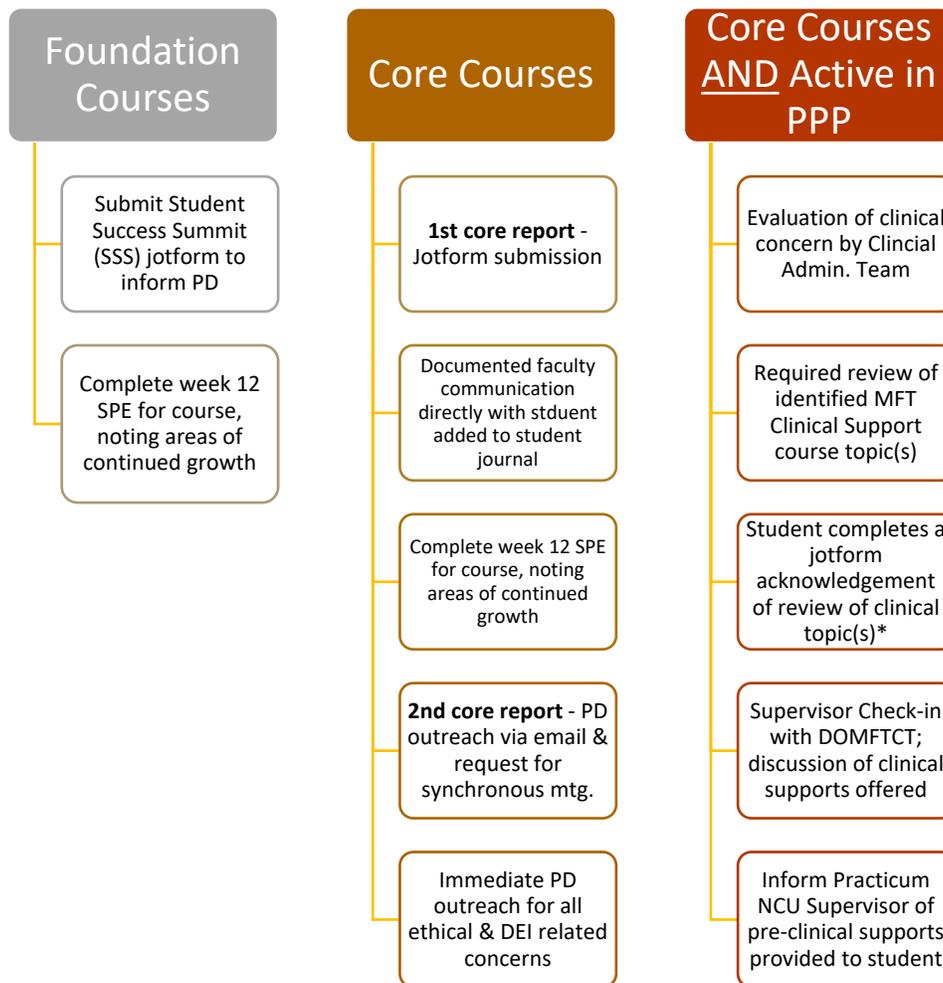
<b>Clinical Readiness Evaluation</b>	
Student	Satisfactorily completes first nine courses and the Practicum Preparation Process (PPP) allowing them to move to the Clinical Readiness Evaluation. Students may also choose to complete all content courses before moving to the Clinical Readiness Evaluation. As part of this evaluation the student must pass a clinical readiness quiz testing content knowledge, satisfactorily respond to an ethical issue in a clinical scenario (any students who has passed their MFT ethics course [MFT 5102 or MFT 6201] with a grade of B+ or higher will not be required to complete this component of the PPP), and be interviewed by the Director of Clinical Training or Associate Director of Clinical Training to discuss clinical readiness.
Director of Clinical Training	Makes a determination about clinical readiness which includes a review of the Student Progress Evaluation Forms. In addition, background checks are required for all students prior to starting practicum and internship (any students who have already completed a background check as part of their admissions process to the program will not be required to complete a new background check unless this is required by their placement site). If the student is determined to be clinically ready to see clients, he or she is admitted to the clinical phase of the program. If not, an action plan is created or, in some cases, a student may be dismissed from the program.
<b>Final Clinical Case Presentation Evaluation</b>	
Student	In addition to taking the Practice National Exam (note: students who show evidence [clear documentation] of having passed the National Exam or the California Exam are exempt from taking the practice examination), the student is expected to present a Final Clinical Case Presentation to at least two Faculty Members/Fellow Students. They are expected to present a case, show video clips, and describe the process/model of therapy they employ. Students who pass this will move on to the next step, students who do not pass this will either re-present or receive an action plan and re-present when deemed ready by the MFT Faculty.

## TRACKING STUDENT PROGRESS

As a student completes each course, the Faculty Member will post a grade and complete a Student Progress Evaluation (SPE) form related to the student's performance in the course. These forms are reviewed regularly by the DMFS Administrative Faculty and during the Clinical Readiness Evaluation Process.

Prior to clinical training, any student that has been cited as experiencing *Future Clinical Readiness Concern(s)* will matriculate through the following process. Documentation will be shared between the student, MA-MFT Program Director, Director of MFT Clinical Training (DOMFTCT), and appropriate MFS faculty and staff.

### Student Success Submit (SSS) – Future Clinical Concerns Follow-up Process



\*Clinical Support Acknowledgement Form: <https://form.jotform.com/SMFSNCU/clinical-support-acknowledgement>

Once students enter the practicum/internship course sequence, a student's progress which includes collecting necessary client contact hours and required supervision hours is monitored in each practicum and internship course via a hours summary report. If students do not acquire 400 approved direct client contact hours (200 of these relational) by the end of their second internship (MFT6992), they will be required to enroll in extension courses until the needed hours are achieved. If a student in the MA program has not completed all 500 hours of client contact (including at least 250 hours of relational client contact) and 100 hours of supervision (51 individual hours and 50 raw data supervision hours) by the end of the Capstone course, they can: 1) request a course extension for the Capstone course (if the hours are nearly completed) or 2) will receive a failing grade for the Capstone course and have to re-take it (if more than 2-3 weeks are needed to complete the hours).

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All work submitted in each course must be the student's own work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by the Faculty. The submission of another person's work represented as that of the student's without properly citing the source of the work will be considered plagiarism and will result in an Academic Integrity Policy Violation Notice being filed by the Faculty Member. The results of this could be a request to resubmit an assignment, an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course and may result in academic dismissal. Student assignments are regularly submitted to TurnItIn.com for originality evaluation.

### CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Northcentral University has established a Code of Conduct for all students and faculty in the University community, including applicants, and alumni. Students in the MAMFT program are expected to abide by this code at all times. This code can be found in the [Ethical Standards & Practice](#) section of the [Northcentral University Catalog](#). In addition, MFT students and faculty are expected to follow the [AAMFT Ethical Code](#). Those found to have committed a violation or to have attempted to violate either of these Codes will be subject to disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the University.

### GRADE POLICY

See [Grading Policies & Procedures](#) section of the [Northcentral University Catalog](#) for information about the NCU Grading Policies.

## STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Part of the process of becoming a professional is learning to deal appropriately with disagreements and grievances. Generally speaking, most concerns can be effectively addressed and resolved between the student and their faculty. Engaging in a respectful interchange of ideas and concerns with peers and supervisors an important part of a student’s professional development. Learning to address concerns in a professional manner is an important graduate student skill.

If a student experiences a concern, either academic/clinical or administrative (e.g., university policy or procedures), they should follow the steps outlined in the table below. These steps are consistent with the levels of action described in the University Catalog. For academic concerns regarding grade appeals, students should contact their Academic & Financial Advisor or refer to the [University Catalog](#) for the [current appeal process](#).

<b>Step</b>	<b><u>Academic/Clinical Concerns</u></b>	<b><u>Administrative Concerns*</u></b>
Level 1	Faculty/Professor	Academic and Financial Advisor
Level 2	MFT Program Director When addressing concerns regarding clinical training, first contact the Clinical Director- <a href="mailto:clinical@ncu.edu">clinical@ncu.edu</a> )	Associate Director of Student Services
Level 3	SSBS Department Chair	Director of Student Services/Sr. Director of Student Services
Level 4	SSBS Assistant Dean of Students	Office of Provost
Level 5	SSBS Dean	Formal Grievance*
Level 6	Office of Provost	
Level 7	Formal Grievance*	

\*See [University Catalog](#) for additional information regarding University policies and procedures

## UNIVERSITY COURSE POLICIES

Please consult the current version of the [Northcentral University Catalog](#) for information regarding the following policies. Please note this section focuses on specific course policies relevant to the MFT program but is not a comprehensive (and may not be the most current) summary of all course policies.

- Course Participation
- Assignment Submissions
- Recommended Schedule for Course Completion
- Submittal Turn-Around Schedule
- Course Learning Assessment/Course Grade

## GRADUATION POLICY

Upon completion of all program requirements, the student will contact their Academic Advisor to begin the process of petitioning for graduation. To assure that all requirements of the program, degree, and specialization, as well as those of the University, are met prior to conferring the degree, a Graduation Audit will be performed in response to a student's Graduation Request.

The student submits the request to graduate electronically which sets an alarm for the Academic Advisor. The advisor then verifies that all general requirements have been met to earn the degree. An additional audit is performed by the Assistant Dean of the School of Marriage and Family Sciences to ensure that program specific requirements have been met.

For all students, degree requirements include:

- 3.0 (letter grade of "B") or higher GPA
- Official documents on file for basis of admission from an appropriately accredited academic institution
- Official transcripts on file for all transfer credit hours accepted by the University
- All financial obligations to the University paid in full

Program Specific Requirements include:

- Completion of all coursework
- Completion of all clinical training requirements
  - Evidence of completion includes verification by the student and supervisor of accrued client contact and supervision hours
  - Approval by the Director of Clinical Training

Once the Academic Advisor and Department Chair have approved the request, an alarm is set for the Accounting Department which then verifies that all fees are paid. When approved by Accounting, the Registrar receives an alarm to issue the diploma.

## SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the standard by which Northcentral University measures students' progress toward completion of a degree or certificate program. The three components of SAP are Grade Point Average (GPA), Course Completion Rate (pace), and Maximum Timeframe. If, at any time, a student is not meeting the minimum requirements for SAP, he/she receives an email notification in Virtual Campus as well as an email to the personal address on file. However, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to know these requirements, and failure to receive notification does not nullify the SAP status.

Additional information regarding the [Satisfactory Academic Progress policy](#) can be found in the [Northcentral University Catalog](#).

## Program Probation

Occasionally students experience difficulty in their graduate program that may lead to being placed on probation or other corrective actions. A student may be placed on program probation by the University or administrative probation by DMFS administrative faculty for unsatisfactory academic progress or for unsatisfactory performance in other training domains. These include, but are not limited to, practicum placements, internship placements, professional or ethical violations or concerns and/or other reasons identified by faculty.

Students placed on probation will remain on probation for a minimum of twelve weeks. Students placed on probation for unacceptable grades must successfully remediate the unacceptable grade, without incurring any additional complaints or problems, in order for probationary status to be removed. Removal from probation requires satisfactory progress of any remediation plan as determined by University and/or DMFS administrative faculty consensus. Failure to meet the conditions of probation will result in dismissal from the program. If a student believes that the probationary status is not justified, or that the conditions of the probation are unreasonable, the student may appeal in writing to the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences within 10 working days. A student who has formerly been on probationary status may be terminated from the program for future inappropriate conduct or subsequent academic difficulties.

## Resources Available to Students When Experiencing Difficulties

When a student is placed on probation, several steps may be taken as a part of his or her remediation plan. This plan may include, but is not limited to, the following: (a) reducing the student's course load, (b) referring students to the Northcentral University academic assistance resources, (c) considering a possible leave-of-absence, (d) suggesting a referral of a student for therapy services or medical intervention in his or her local community, (e) creating a behavioral contract to outline the necessary changes and steps that must be taken for successful completion of the program, (f) requiring additional sections of practicum or internship beyond the minimum normally required by the program, and (g) providing additional faculty mentoring and encouragement. All recommendations are designed with the goal of helping students to succeed. However, the DMFS faculty's primary concern must first be the welfare of the clients seeking assistance. If, during a student's program, the clinical faculty determines that a student does not have the personal and professional health and maturity needed to be an effective marriage and family therapy practitioner, the student will be advised of this and counseled to seek another area of study.

## DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM

A student's dismissal from the program may be a student decision or faculty decision. Students with a history of legal difficulties, or with legal charges or issues pending at the time of enrollment, are expected to make full disclosure of said charges during the enrollment and interview process. Failure to disclose information or students convicted of a felony during the program may be dismissed from the program. Students who violate the University's Code of Conduct and/or Academic Integrity policy while enrolled in the program may be subject to immediate administrative dismissal. Students failing to complete the Clinical Development Committee (CDC) process may be subject to dismissal (as outlined in Clinical Training Manual). Students who have been dismissed due to a violation of the Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity policy, or due to any other legal or ethical matter, do not qualify for readmission to Northcentral University. Students in violation of the University's Attendance policy may be withdrawn. Dismissal of students who fail to meet their financial obligations to the University is handled by the Accounting department. The Code of Conduct, Attendance policy, and a summary of the Academic Integrity policy are published in the Catalog. Complete information concerning Academic Integrity is provided in the Virtual Campus to students. For additional information regarding [Dismissal Policies](#) students can reference the [Northcentral University Catalog](#).

## APPEALS, GRIEVANCES AND CONCERNS

Students who believe they have mitigating circumstances and wish to appeal their administrative dismissal must initiate the appeal within 30 days of receiving notification of the dismissal. Students appealing an administrative dismissal must follow the process outlined in the University Catalog found in Chapter 8- Student Rights and Responsibilities.

The Administration and University Documents sections in the Virtual Campus is where students will find links for Grade Appeals, Grievances, the SAP Appeal form, and a link for students to register "Concerns" (e.g. regarding Accounting, Faculty Services, Technical Support, Registrar, Financial Aid, and "All Others"). Students who register a concern may check back to see if the concern was resolved, is in progress, or has been passed by the Office of the Ombudsman Office to another, appropriate office of the University for resolution (i.e., "escalated").

As indicated in the [Student Grievances section](#) of the [University Catalog](#), in the event that a student has a complaint or dispute with the University regarding the University's application of policies and procedures, its decisions, or judgments, the student has a right to seek a satisfactory resolution through the formal avenues of appeal and/or grievance. A grievance may not be filed if other avenues such as filing a "Concern" or an "Appeal" are available to the student.

## Escalation Procedures

1. Academic Advisor/ Financial Services Advisor/ Faculty
2. Academic Liaison Associate Director of Student Services
3. Student Submission of Electronic Concern: Auto-routed to Functional Team Leaders for resolution. (Note: Simultaneously, the Concern is routed to the Office of Compliance Management for review and alternate routing if necessary including the escalation of a concern to a grievance level complaint.)
4. Grievance: A grievance is a formal complaint that has not been resolved at other levels within the University. Note: Being adequately addressed does not mean that the decision was necessarily made in the student's favor. It means that the matter is afforded due diligence and is adjudicated in accordance with ethics, academic integrity, policies, regulations, and laws.
5. Appeals of final grades must use the appeal process defined in "[Grade Appeals](#)" in the Northcentral University Catalog. Review carefully the directives on appeals as often the decisions of Deans in these matters are not grieve-able. (Note: Other Appeals include but are not limited to: SAP, academic dismissal, administrative dismissal, and re-admission. Students should refer to the catalog for details on advancing these types of appeals.)

## Adjudication

Formal grievances are reviewed by the appropriate senior leader (i.e., the Chief Academic Officer and Provost for all academic decisions) and are considered final. Students can locate the Concerns link on the Student Portal.

Students may not grieve the stated or published policy of Northcentral University.

Students may file a complaint with the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education. The student must contact the State Board for further details.

## EXIT INTERVIEW, ALUMNI, AND EMPLOYER EVALUATION SURVEYS

Graduating students are asked to participate in an online Alumni Survey and a Survey of Employers of graduates one year after graduation. The primary purpose of the exit interview is to give students an opportunity to share with the MFT faculty their overall evaluation of the MFT program, including ways that it can be improved. The primary purpose of the alumni survey is to gather information about alumni views of how well the program prepared them for success in various areas (e.g., for entry employment as an MFT, to practice systemically, to take the national examination, to advance understanding of cultural diversity issues, to practice ethically, for future education) and current employment. The purpose the employer evaluation survey is to gather information about their views of how well our graduates are doing, what competencies may be lacking, and, in general, how satisfied they are with the graduate's performance. Students are asked to please be sure to provide contact information (email, phone, etc.) when they graduate so they or their employers can be provided links to these various surveys.

## FACULTY AND STUDENT GOVERNANCE

### Faculty Governance

Faculty governance is an extremely important part of the NCU model, both within the program and across the university to ensure the program is able to achieve its educational outcomes. Faculty Governance is defined as faculty (core and adjunct) working collaboratively with administration and engaging meaningfully and substantively in the life of the university beyond teaching and research. For more information regarding Faculty Governance refer to the University Policy and Procedures Manual section *202-3 Faculty Role in Governance*.

In part because of the larger size of the DMFS faculty and to ensure faculty have sufficient time and opportunity to share ideas and influence the direction of the program, rather than having single monthly faculty meeting, like many traditional programs, a variety of smaller more focused faculty meetings are held on a regular basis. For example, faculty meet weekly (i.e. Student Success Summit) with AFA's and Program Director to discuss the needs of the student and any changes needed in the program to better support students. Faculty teaching practicum/internship courses meet with the Director of Clinical Training each week to discuss program needs and student needs in regard to the clinical training stage of the program. The entire teaching faculty meet together monthly during a Faculty Focus meeting with the Dean, Department Chair, Program Director and other administrative faculty to further discuss program updates, changes, and ideas for improvement across the entire program. MFT senior faculty in director positions meet bi-weekly with the Dean, Department Chair, and Program Director to discuss and review program procedure and policies. In these meetings, faculty are encouraged to bring up any topics, ideas, feedback, or opinions that may help improve the program. In addition to these weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly faculty meetings, twice a year the entire faculty including all directors, staff, Dean, and Department Chair meet for a multi-day department retreat to review outcome data, conduct strategic planning, discuss recent changes in the program and explore ideas for continuous improvement. In addition to all the above outlined formal methods of faculty governance, the DMFS faculty participate on a variety of program and university level committees and taskforces. Current formal meetings/committees which support faculty governance in the MFT program include but not limited to:

- Faculty Senate
- DMFS Adjunct Faculty Council
- Monthly SSBS Faculty Focus Meeting
- Bi-weekly DMFS Administrative Faculty Meetings
- Weekly SSBS Administrative Faculty Meetings
- Weekly DMFS Student Success Summits with all faculty
- Weekly Clinical DMFS Faculty Meeting
- SSBS Diversity Committee
- SSBS Research Committee
- Monthly University Academic Affairs Committee
- University Assessment Committee
- University IT Committee
- Faculty Selection Committee
- Scholarship Committee
- Curriculum Design(CD) Committee

## Student Governance

Student governance is a very important part of the NCU model, both within the program and across the university. The University Policy and Procedures Manual, section *208-7 Role of Student in Governance*, indicates that students, as consumers, have a valuable perspective on the educational services they receive. Therefore, the University can benefit from their perceptions and input, especially on academic and administrative matters.

Students in the MAMFT program are encouraged to participate in governance through the following methods:

- SSBS Diversity and Community Committee
- Student Advisory Council
- MFT Student Association

## 4 – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PROGRAM FACULTY

### FACULTY

The faculty in the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences are made up of professionals that have all been trained in systemic theory and practice. Currently, 100% of the faculty hold doctorate degrees with approximately 90% of those coming from COAMFTE accredited programs. All faculty are trained marriage and family therapists, currently 90% are licensed and clinically active as MFT's (either seeing clients or supervising students). All faculty teaching the practicum courses are AAMFT Approved Supervisors or Supervisor Candidates. As a group, the faculty have over 750 years of experience teaching in the field of family therapy with over 1100 years of clinical experience. The faculty is made up of diverse professionals with a variety of cultural and professional backgrounds. The department is made up of full-time and part-time (adjunct) faculty, with the majority of students being taught by the full-time faculty. Faculty are encouraged to participate in teaching, scholarship, service, and practice activities that enable the program to achieve its goals and outcomes.

NCU MFT students reside in 18 countries and in 48 states. NCU MFT faculty reside in 3 countries and 23 states. For more information on MAMFT student and faculty demographics visit, <https://www.ncu.edu/student-experience/online-education-guide/marriage-and-family-therapy/mamft-students-faculty-demographics>.

## 5 – GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES

**Notice:** Please consult the current version of the [Northcentral University Catalog](#) for information regarding curriculum, academic requirements, fees, deadlines, academic policies (including requirements regarding English proficiency and degrees awarded by non-U.S. Institutions), and application and admission requirements. All students in the MAMFT program are expected to be familiar with the appropriate MAMFT Program Handbook and the policies outlined in the current University Catalog, as well as agree to abide by all key policies and procedures. In addition, students are expected to agree to and abide by the professional and ethical behavior outlined in the AAMFT Code of Ethics, and failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

### CREDIT HOUR REQUIREMENTS

While the Marriage and Family Therapy specialization requires only 45 credit hours to graduate, some students may need additional specific courses or additional credit hours in order to meet state licensure requirements. These courses can be selected from the Marriage and Family Sciences section of the NCU Catalog if needed. It is students' responsibility to work with their academic advisor and their state licensure board to ensure the additional credits will meet the requirements of the state in which they are seeking licensure.

### TIME LIMITS FOR DEGREE COMPLETION

Northcentral University allows 6 years to complete Master's programs requiring more than 36 credit hours. Students who are unable to complete a degree program within the stated time limits are dismissed. Students who believe they have extenuating circumstances may document the circumstances and send a request for consideration to their respective Department Chair or School Dean or designee. Exceptions to the policy are determined on a case- by-case basis and, if granted, are granted only once.

### NOTIFICATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

While the field of marriage and family therapy is an increasingly international phenomenon, it continues to have strong historical and contextual roots in the western cultures (e.g., the United States). Therefore, much of the practice, literature, and research in the field continues to be conducted in contexts that are common in western cultures. One of the benefits of online education is the expansion of the practice of marriage and family therapy into international contexts, thus expanding the field's knowledge base and applicability. While all students are encouraged to read broadly in the professional literature, international students are specifically encouraged to seek out literature and experiences that will help them to practice ethically and sensitively in their local contexts. In addition, international students are strongly encouraged to work closely with their local supervisors to practice in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner that is appropriate to their local contexts.

## LICENSURE AND ACCREDITATION

Students intending to seek licensure must take full responsibility for ensuring that their degree program at Northcentral meets the licensing requirements of their local state licensing board. Northcentral cannot provide assistance to students regarding the interpretation or understanding of a state's licensure requirements.

Students are responsible for keeping all clinical demographic data and supervision records for presentation to state boards. Northcentral is not responsible for maintaining these records and is not able to provide this information for you when you apply for licensure.

If a student wishes to pursue licensure, it is important to know that some states require that graduates have a degree from a program that carries a particular accreditation, such as the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), the American Psychological Association (APA), or the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The MAMFT program at Northcentral is accredited by COAMFTE. In addition, Northcentral does not have a residency requirement and does not meet the residency requirement of any state. Students should check with the licensing body in the state(s) in which they intend to practice to determine if a particular accreditation or residency is required. A directory for Marriage and Family Therapy licensure boards can be found [here](#) as well as at [AMFTRB.org](http://AMFTRB.org). Once applicants have researched their state requirements, they should be able to make an informed decision regarding their professional objectives and determine if a Northcentral program meets their educational needs.

### Licensure Information

While each state board is the ultimate authority on their own rules and regulations governing the practice of marriage and family therapy in their state, sometimes it is difficult to know where to start or what to ask. Licensure information and important links to other sites can be found on the [NCU MFT webpage](#), as well as an email address to ask licensure questions ([clinical@ncu.edu](mailto:clinical@ncu.edu)).

## MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

The NCU MAMFT program requires that all students join the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT), the International Family Therapy Association (IFTA) or other national professional association representing the profession of MFT in the student's home country. Part of training to be a Marriage and Family Therapist is investing in one's professional development. Being involved with relevant professional associations such as the AAMFT is an important part of the learning process and of establishing a professional identity as a MFT. There are also other benefits of joining. For example, among other things, AAMFT members receive copies of the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, six annual issues of *Family Therapy Magazine*, access to *AAMFT Job Connection*, free access to most of the resources that are available through *Family Therapy Resources* and a liability insurance policy is included with the student membership. MFT Students at Northcentral University normally qualify for the Student Membership.

## AAMFT ETHICAL CODE POLICY

All faculty, local clinical supervisors, and students will conduct their practices and professional relationships in accordance with the most current edition of the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Care will be taken to "...do no harm" through treatment decisions, practice, and personal relationships.

When practicing, supervising, or observing therapy, all students, faculty, and on-site supervisors must follow the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#). These guidelines will be presented to students in their Ethics course and revisited in various places throughout the program. However, it is each student's responsibility to know the provisions of the code prior to conducting therapy sessions. Please read and follow ethical guidelines carefully. All students are strongly encouraged to schedule an appointment with the Director of Clinical Training to ask any questions regarding MFT ethics.

## LIABILITY INSURANCE

When enrolled in Practicum or Internship, each student is required to obtain student level liability insurance. Students can buy this through CPH & Associates ([www.cphins.com](http://www.cphins.com)). AAMFT Student Members in good standing can receive free professional liability insurance through AAMFT and CAMFT. **Students must have liability insurance before they can begin seeing clients.** As International students have different country regulations, these students are required to submit written proof that liability insurance is not required in their home country where they are practicing.

## SSBS DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

The Department of Marriage and Family Sciences welcomes students and faculty who are diverse in age, nation of origin, ethnicity, culture, ability, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. This Committee aims to serve SSBS administrators, staff, faculty, and students by treating all members of the community with respect, equity, and appreciation and by committing to assisting NCU in its larger mission to be an inclusive and diverse learning environment. The Committee exists to promote and strengthen efforts towards equity, inclusion, and social justice in the NCU SSBS community, consistent with recommendations from our accrediting bodies, to support and train our students in the helping professions. Our primary objective is to assess and improve the quality and breadth of diversity considerations within the SSBS community through faculty and student engagement.

If there is a way that the committee can support you in terms of diversity and community building, please contact [mfs@ncu.edu](mailto:mfs@ncu.edu).

## MFS PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Department of Marriage and Family Sciences (DMFS) Professional Advisory Council (PAC) consists of faculty and program administrators from other COAMFTE accredited MFT Masters and PhD programs, alumni from both the PhD and MA MFT programs, and community-based supervisors and/or directors working in mental health agencies that employ MFTs as well as researchers and a representative of third party payers. Similar PACs exist in each school throughout Northcentral University. The primary purpose of the DMFS PAC is to provide industry expertise to the DMFS, acting as sounding boards to ensure that what our students are learning relevant discipline knowledge and skills that align with the needs of external stakeholders. PAC members are asked to participate in various evaluation activities and annual and semi-annual symposium. These activities provide the DMFS with valuable information to help support the continuous improvement of our academic programs.

## NORTHCENTRAL MFT STUDENT ASSOCIATION AND STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

A MFT Student Advisory Board (SAC) and the MFT Student Association (MFTSA) have been established. The SAC was instrumental in establishing the MFT Student Association (MFTSA). Membership in these groups is open to graduate students in the Marriage and Family Therapy Programs at Northcentral.

The SAC serves as a liaison between students, faculty, and administration. SAC members work together to evaluate and provide recommendations to DMFS policy and programs, as well as work toward increasing student awareness and participation with DMFS opportunities. More specifically, this board is expected to identify issues important to the future of the University and the DMFS program, as well as provide feedback and recommendations regarding improvement or enhancements to the programs.

The MFT Student Association is committed to creating opportunities for connection among the students and between the students and faculty. The organization accomplishes its mission by: 1) Sponsoring opportunities for interaction and connection via virtual venues; 2) Sponsoring opportunities for interaction and connection via local events; 3) Innovating methods of community creation and maintenance for the DMFS Programs; 4) Peer orientation into the program (to welcome new students and answer questions); 5) Peer Mentoring program (seasoned students being available to assist newer students).

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY HONOR SOCIETY

DELTA KAPPA INTERNATIONAL, the name for the International Marriage and Family Therapy Honor Society, has symbolic and historical significance within the field of marriage and family therapy. The purpose of Delta Kappa International is to provide marriage and family therapy professionals an ongoing scholarly forum for the exchange of ideas related to the development of research, theory, and clinical practice. The Greek letters, Delta Kappa, have symbolic and historical significance within the field of marriage and family therapy. DELTA represents the triangle. The points of the triangle represent the three corners of the therapeutic relationship - the client/family present in the room, the therapists and therapeutic treatment team, and the external influences intertwined between lives of clients and professionals. KAPPA is the universal symbol for knowledge. The shape of the KAPPA symbol has a single long vertical line representing the intervention that occurs in the therapeutic process. The two lines meeting at the midpoint of the vertical line create a point of confluence with the therapist and the client system - joining together for change.

Northcentral's DMFS program hosts the Iota Chapter of Delta Kappa. Students in the MAMFT program can qualify for the honor society if they have a 3.75 cumulative GPA or higher and have completed 12 semester hours in the program. To apply, students must complete the application form and submit a one-time membership fee. Enrollment for Delta Kappa occurs two times per year with induction ceremonies for each. Eligible students are notified via email and are provided direct access to the Delta Kappa website for enrollment.

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Northcentral University offers an array of student support services. Contact information for all student support services can be found in the current [Northcentral University Catalog](#). The Virtual Campus is where students will find links for Disability Services, a link for students to register "Concerns" (e.g., regarding Accounting, Faculty Services, Technical Support, Registrar, Financial Aid, and "All Others"), and other important information. With the use of a web-survey the program evaluates student support services annually to ensure the quality of these services are meeting the program and student needs. Please consult the [Northcentral University Catalog](#) for specific information pertaining to the following services:

- Enrollment Services
- The Student Success Tour
- Academic Advising
- Disability Services Office
- Educational Materials and Resources
- Northcentral University Library Services
- Academic Success Center
- Alumni Services
- Student Financial Services
- Registrar
- IT Service Desk Team

## 6 – CLINICAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

### MAMFT CLINICAL TRAINING

Clinical training involves a student engaging in applied learning experiences, responsibilities, and methods of evaluation. To meet the clinical requirements for the MAMFT degree, students must complete a total of 500 hours of direct client contact (therapy), with a minimum of 50% (250) of these being relational therapy hours (i.e., spouses, partners, parent/child, siblings, or those sharing a residence). Students must also receive a minimum of 100 hours of approved supervision, with a minimum of 51 hours of face-to-face supervision with their local individual supervisors. At least 50 hours must utilize direct client data (video, audio, live supervision). In some cases, students may be required to pay for local clinical supervision. This will depend on the local clinical placement and/or local clinical supervisor they contract with to complete their practicum and internship requirements. The decision to pay for local supervision is entirely up to the student and not a requirement of Northcentral University. The clinical experience is divided up over five or more courses:

MFT 6951 MFT Practicum I (3 credits for 12 weeks)

MFT 6952 MFT Practicum II (3 credits for 12 weeks)

MFT6991 MFT Internship I (1 credit for 12 weeks)

MFT 6992 MFT Internship II (1 credit for 12 weeks)

MFT 6993 (if needed, 1 credit for 12 weeks)

MFT 6994 (if needed, 1 credit for 12 weeks)

MFT 6996 (if needed, 1 credit for 12 weeks)

MFT 6997 (if needed, 1 credit for 12 weeks)

MFT 6995 MFT Internship & Capstone (1 credit for 12 weeks)

COAMFTE and many states require a practicum experience of at least one year in length, and although some students currently reside in states that may require less than one year of practicum experience, these students could encounter difficulties moving their license to another state that requires at least one year. Therefore, students are required to complete a minimum of two (2) practicum courses and three (3) internship courses that span over a minimum of a one-year period (52 weeks). Each Practicum clinical course lasts 12 weeks and, in addition to doing therapy and receiving supervision, there are a series of assignments to complete in conjunction with each course. Students and faculty audit hours at the end of each clinical course. After the fourth clinical course (second internship course), students are required to register for an Internship Extension course if the audit reveals the student has not obtained enough client contact or supervision hours. Attendance via webcam is required weekly for NCU Group Supervision during Practicum and Internship.

\*\* Please note that students are responsible to ensure that their length of Practicum and Internship, along with the required number of clinical hours, meets their states requirements for licensure.

## MAMFT DEGREE PRACTICUM

The Practicum courses are each 3 credits, 12 weeks in length and consist of a series of assignments that students must complete and upload to the Virtual Campus, as well as accruing their direct client contact hours at their practicum sites (doing approximately 10-12 hours of direct therapy per week). This must occur while attending two hours of weekly group supervision with a Northcentral Faculty Member and at least one hour of individual supervision from a local clinical supervisor on a weekly basis.

## MAMFT DEGREE INTERNSHIP

Upon successful completion of Practicum courses I and II, MAMFT students are required to enroll in 3 consecutive one credit Internship courses (each 12 weeks in duration). The major focus of the internship experience is to complete the remaining hours of the required 500 direct client contact hours (with 250 of these being relational hours). The Internship experience will last for a minimum of 36 weeks, but may be longer depending on how much time students need to complete all requirements. The clinical audit that occurs immediately preceding enrollment in MFT6995, will determine approval to start the final required Internship course. This audit will be completed by the Director of Clinical Training and in conjunction with the faculty supervisor.

Students enrolled in Practicum (MFT6951 and MFT6952) or Internship (MFT6991, MFT6992, MFT6993, MFT6994, MFT6996, MFT6997 and MFT6995) are required to meet with their local clinical supervisor for one hour of individual supervision as long as they are actively seeing clients. Individual supervision is defined as supervision consisting of no more than two supervisees at a time in supervision, unless defined otherwise by the respective state regulations.

## Clinical Requirements and Definitions

1. MFT students must know and follow the clinical experience regulations for the location where they are currently seeing clients (even if they do not intend to pursue licensure in that location after graduation). Students who intend to seek licensure in a different location/state than their current location are encouraged to know and follow the requirements of that licensure location as well.
2. To meet the clinical requirements for the MFT master's degree, students must complete a total of 500 hours of direct client contact (therapy) as a primary or co-therapist with individuals, couples, families, or groups prior to graduation. At least 250 hours of direct client contact must be completed with relational cases, meaning two or more clients who are in a relationship with each other actually present for the session (e.g. couple or family therapy). Please reach out to the clinical administrative team if there are questions about what counts as relational hours. If a student is working in a location/state that requires *more* client contact than 500 hours, the student is allowed to complete additional hours as needed while in the program. Students that live in locations with fewer hours of required client contact must still complete the minimum requirement of 500 total hours and 250 relational hours.
3. MFT students must participate in a total of 100 hours of clinical supervision. At least 51 hours of supervision must be individual supervision, defined as supervision with either 1 or 2 supervisees and at least half of the time specifically devoted to the students' cases and

supervision needs. If students are practicing in states that have higher requirements (e.g. CA will only consider supervision as “individual” supervision when there is a one-to-one ratio, thus if there are two student therapists present it is considered group supervision) they must abide by the more rigorous state requirements. The remaining hours may be individual or group supervision. Group supervision is defined as supervision involving 3-8 supervisees (unless a specific standard is mandated in state requirements). At least 50 hours of supervision must include direct observation of client sessions, including live supervision with the supervisor observing the session as it occurs or review of audio or video-recorded sessions. The remaining hours may include a combination of live/video supervision or they may be focused on the student’s verbal report of cases using case notes, etc. Students that are seeing clients must participate in clinical supervision sessions with the local clinical supervisor weekly. If a student is working in a location/state that requires more hours, greater frequency of supervision, or a different type or quantity of supervision than the established program requirements, the students are responsible to know and follow the local requirements for supervision (even if they do not intend to pursue licensure in that location after graduation). Please note that the program divides the clinical experience up over several courses: Practicum I, Practicum II and Internship I, II, and III. On average students should plan to earn the first 100 client contact hours during the first Practicum, the next 100 hours during the second Practicum and the remaining 300 hours during the Internship courses.

4. It is important to distinguish between the role of the NCU practicum/internship faculty and the local clinical supervisor. When working with NCU faculty, NCU students will attend weekly practicum/internship two-hour, face-to-face, video conference sessions. In order to count hours towards graduation, students must meet weekly with an AAMFT-approved supervisor. These practicum/internship sessions are facilitated by AAMFT Approved Supervisors or Supervisor Candidates, and are designed to provide group supplemental clinical consultation and/or training to NCU students. However, it is important to note that comprehensive supervision is not being provided. This is group clinical training in which students will present cases for the group to discuss and use in their clinical development. NCU faculty will not review each of the student’s clients on a weekly basis, nor have time to answer all clinical questions for each student each week.

Local clinical supervisors are expected to provide supervision in sufficient volume, with ample time and access to review each of their clinical cases and answer questions as necessary. In addition, the supervisor of record should review and sign off on all clinical hours as well as review clinical notes and client charts as required by their local state and/or site policies. For all legal and ethical purposes, the local clinical supervisor is the “supervisor-of-record” and is responsible to provide adequate supervision for students to practice ethically and legally within their assigned placement.

Supervision hours obtained during Practicum or Internship courses with Northcentral MFT practicum faculty may count toward the 100 required supervision hours unless expressly prohibited by state regulation or the student’s local placement agency.

Some states will not allow students to count distance face-to-face (via video conferencing) contact with practicum or internship faculty as supervision hours to meet state regulations and licensing requirements. In those states, all 100 supervision hours must be earned locally. Students are still expected to attend weekly NCU group supervision.

5. Students must participate in both Practicum and Internship at Northcentral, including active participation in the interactive web-conferencing sessions required in these courses, which focus on academic supervision of students' clinical experience. Students must qualify for Practicum and Internship by completing the Practicum Preparation Process. This process includes 1) Clinical Readiness, and 2) Site and Supervisor Vetting and Contracting. Students that need to switch or add placement sites or supervisors, after starting with the original placement or supervisor, must complete additional Site and Supervisor Vetting and Contracting process.
6. MA students must be continuously enrolled in a Practicum or Internship course when they are actively seeing clients at their clinical placement. They may count clinical hours gained between the end of one clinical course and the beginning of subsequent clinical course if they maintain active on-site supervision with their local supervisor and NCU faculty. If a student needs to withdraw from a Practicum or Internship course they must immediately cease from seeing clients at their local clinical site.
7. The Practicum/Internship courses must be continuous and completed in the following sequence: MFT6951, MFT6952, MFT6991, MFT6992, and MFT6995. If students are determined to have not made adequate progress in collecting client contact hours, relational hours, and/or supervision hours at the end of MFT6992, they must enroll in MFT6993 (and perhaps additional extension courses) before they will be allowed to enroll in MFT6995.
8. Supervision methods are defined as follows and should be documented as follows:  
**Live Supervision** is defined as secure video conferencing, one-way mirror, physically present during the session, or other methods of observation that allow the supervisor to observe and/or participate as the student provides therapy to an individual, couple, group or family.  
**Audio Supervision** is defined as the supervisor listening to the student conduct therapy that has been previously audio recorded.  
**Video Supervision** is defined as the supervisor watching the student conduct therapy that has been video recorded at a previous time.  
**Case Report Supervision** is defined as the process when students report clinical information regarding previously conducted therapy with the use of clinical documentation and memory of previous clinical sessions.

\*\*\*Please refer to Clinical Handbook for further details\*\*\*

## MFT PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS

### NCU Faculty Members

Practicum or Internship Faculty within the MFT program at Northcentral University will meet the following qualifications:

1. Hold a graduate level degree in MFT.
2. Hold an active state MFT license in their state, province or country.  
\*The license must be a full license which allows the Faculty to practice Marriage & Family Therapy independently.
3. Complete or be enrolled in a pre-approved 30-hour AAMFT Supervision Fundamentals training course.
4. Be an AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor or Supervisor Candidate.

### Local Clinical Supervisors

During the Practicum and Internship portion of the MAMFT degree program, students must be under the direct supervision of a qualified supervisor who meets or exceeds the requirements stated below. They must also meet or exceed the qualifications put forth by the state, province or country in which therapeutic services are being provided. An AAMFT Approved Supervisor who also meets the requirements set forth by the state, province or country in which the student is providing therapeutic services will automatically meet all requirements for Northcentral University.

1. Within the US the supervisor must meet or exceed the state's requirements to supervise an individual (i.e., trainee or intern) that is pursuing an MFT license. Local supervisors must be state approved supervisors defined as either being registered on a state approved list, if states have one, or meet the state specific post-degree requirements for supervising MFTs. Students in states that require higher or more advanced qualifications for supervision of MFT students (e.g., state requires a face-to-face AAMFT Approved Supervisor for student therapist, but not for post-degree) students must meet this higher state required standard.
2. Due to the large variability with international students' licensing requirements, local clinical supervisors in international locations are considered on a case-by-case basis to determine the best possible fit. The following list includes examples of qualifications considered when choosing and approving an international clinical supervisor:
  - a. Licensure or credential to independently practice as a mental health practitioner in the same jurisdiction as the student.
  - b. Evidence of some form of MFT focused training, including ANY of the following:
    - nine or more graduate credits of MFT focused coursework
    - ten or more years of direct clinical experience with couples and/or families
    - Licensure in MFT
    - AAMFT Clinical Membership

- AAMFT Approved Supervisor
- State or international jurisdiction approval to supervise MFT interns

### NCU MFT Faculty Local Clinical Supervisor Policy

In an effort to provide students high quality MFT clinical experiences, it is the policy of the Department of Marriage and Family Science (DMFS) that NCU faculty may serve as local clinical supervisors to NCU MFT students. DMFS faculty should be aware that providing local clinical supervision to MFT students is not expected nor a part of their teaching or administrative responsibilities at NCU. Further, as in any supervisory relationship, NCU faculty agree to acknowledge and manage the dual relationship issues inherent in such a professional relationship. The supervision contract, including but not limited to remuneration for supervision services, is exclusively between the SMFS faculty and NCU MFT student and expected to conform to extant legal, professional, and ethical standards.

## CLINICAL TRAINING COURSES

### Northcentral Online Practicum Sessions

The actual content of the Practicum courses closely resembles traditional group supervision, except that they are conducted through online web-based video conferencing with a Northcentral University Clinical Faculty Member. This clinical instruction is designed to supplement and broaden the supervision of the local clinical supervisor, not replace the local clinical supervisor. This requires students to have an internal or external web cam.

Students need a headset to ensure confidential information is not shared and are encouraged to acquire a noise-cancelling headset with microphone. The interactive, online group practicum sessions last for 2 hours. Amongst other topics, group supervision discussions include case consultation, assessment, treatment planning, therapy models, clinical intervention, documentation, professional development and self-of-the-therapist issues.

### Recording

Students are required to record some of their client sessions (using a digital video camera or audio recorder) to share during online and local clinical supervision sessions. By using a digital recording device, students can play their recordings on their computer and share them during Northcentral web-based supervision sessions as well as use them for local supervision (as requested by the local site supervisor). There are a number of reliable and relatively inexpensive digital recording devices a student can purchase.

### Informed Consent

Students are required to have all of their clients sign a standard informed consent document that discloses the video recording of sessions and requests permission for recording, transmission, and supervision of the sessions with the Northcentral Faculty Member. This NCU informed consent document is available in the Books and Resources area for each Practicum and Internship course. Note that the NCU informed consent is designed to supplement and not replace the informed consent document that the student's site normally provides all clients. It is important to use the form, however,

because the NCU document provides information about the student's status as a student that most probably the site's normal informed consent does not contain.

## Technology Requirements

In practicum and internship class sessions, students will meet in a secure online forum for live web conferencing. Before meeting for the first time a trial run can be scheduled to test and run the technical components of the process, such as making sure webcams work, learning to capture and share video clips, sharing a presentation, etc. The Clinical Handbook also has additional information regarding how to use platform and clinical hours tracking technology.

NCU supervisors will provide the link for the weekly group supervision in the News section of the course and most commonly in their Welcome Letter. Prior to clicking to open the link, it is best to have closed all other applications that may be open on the student's computer as these may interfere with the operation of the web session (bandwidth issues).

Students are expected to manage confidential client data in a manner that adheres to the Standards of the 2015 AAMFT Code of Ethics and HIPPA laws. Please review the Technology Checklist in the Practicum Preparation Process, and within the Clinical Handbook for more information about the use of technology in clinical work at NCU.

## Logging Hours

Students are required to log their therapy and supervision hours. Each week in Practicum and Internship courses, students should post their hours to the appropriate assignment in the virtual course room. The NCU supervisor will review hours and if there are logging errors or concerns, will provide feedback to the student or the Director of Clinical Training.

## AATBS Practice Test

As part of the evaluative process during the MAMFT Internship, students are required to take an AATBS Practice Test. This test helps assess their acquired level of knowledge and to help students prepare for their post-graduation licensure exam. If the student fails to obtain a passing score she or he will provide the faculty supervisor with a proposed study plan. Once the student has provided an appropriate study plan, successfully completed all additional assignments for MFT6992, and has acquired at least 375 total client hours (190 of these relational) they will proceed to MFT6995, Internship & Capstone. The student should use the outcome information obtained in from the AATBS tests to prepare for the National AMFTRB Examination when they pursue a state license as a Marriage & Family Therapist.

## Theory of Therapy Final Evaluation- Capstone

Throughout the process of training in marriage and family therapy, students are exposed to a variety of models and techniques of therapy. In actual clinical practice, students discover what works best for them in assisting clients to achieve the goals that are established in therapy. The final capstone project for master students required in the final Internship Course (MFT6995) provides students an opportunity to present their personal model of therapy to a group of at least two DMFS faculty. As a necessary conclusion to clinical training, in this final section of the course, students are required to develop a personal theory of therapy that identifies the best fitting model(s) and techniques of therapy that they have assimilated into consistent methods of clinical practice. In the final Theory of Therapy presentation, the student will have the opportunity to clarify a personal model of therapy that will include how they understand the process of problem formation and resolution within the context of therapy.

The presentation of the student's personal model of therapy is evaluated by the DMFS faculty. Students should refer to the grading rubric and assignment requirements in the course room for more specific information. The grading rubric is designed to evaluate the students' ability to articulate their mastery of systemic theory and its application.

## Final Case Presentation Policy

The Final Case Presentation is your opportunity to present to the DMFS faculty the therapeutic skills you have acquired throughout the program. The scoring for the final case presentation is the determining factor for completion of the course along with the completion of the clinical hours (500 client contact and 100 supervision). In the event that you do not pass the final case presentation, you will receive a zero for the assignment and will be allowed a second attempt prior to the completion of the course.

In the event that you do not pass the second attempt, you will be required to re-enroll in MFT6995 for another 12 weeks. Faculty may request the Program Director to be present for any subsequent attempts.

### Note:

If you are required to present your final case presentation again, your faculty and committee will provide guidance and make recommendations.

## 7- PURSUING LICENSURE

### OVERVIEW

The MAMFT programs at Northcentral University is designed to help students to become effective, knowledgeable clinicians who are prepared to seek licensure. However, Northcentral cannot guarantee that program graduates will be eligible for licensure, pass licensure exams, or become licensed as marriage and family therapists. **Students have sole responsibility for ensuring that they take the required coursework and fulfill the requirements to prepare for and meet licensure requirements in their own state.** Nevertheless, it is anticipated that program graduates will seek licensure and the following information may be helpful to students in that regard. Most states in the United States have specific requirements that must be met in order to be licensed as a marriage and family therapist. Typically, these requirements are patterned after AAMFT Educational Guidelines, but variance in specific requirements exists from state to state. For example, some states require a specific course in addictions while others do not. Similarly, some states require more hours of direct or indirect clinical services than others. In view of the requirements for state licensure and the variation from state to state, common requirements and the potential for meeting such requirements at Northcentral are discussed below.

### EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Most state licensure requirements include the need for an accredited master's degree in marriage and family therapy or a closely related field, along with completion of a specific set of related courses. Often these courses are consistent with national standards for licensure. **As an example** of state program requirements, the State of Arizona is provided below, along with a list of Northcentral courses that could be taken to potentially meet the state requirements. As is the case with most states, the proposed Northcentral courses are likely to meet the didactic requirements for the State of Arizona, but the actual approval of such courses is entirely determined by the state, and it remains the responsibility of individual students to ascertain the appropriateness of courses in meeting individual state requirements.

### CLINICAL EXPERIENCE PREREQUISITES

As part of a master's degree program or post graduate clinical training, most states require that applicants for licensure complete a practicum and/or internship experience for a certain number of months and/or supervised, direct client contact hours. **For example**, the State of Arizona requires an internship involving a minimum of 300 hours of direct client contact that must be supervised by a licensed MFT or other clinician who is determined by the state to be a qualified clinical supervisor for MFTs. The clinical experience requirements for the MFT programs at Northcentral exceed the requirement for the State of Arizona. We require 500 hours of direct client contact for the MAMFT. Nevertheless, in Arizona and all other states, students are responsible for determining if clinical experience in the MAMFT program at Northcentral will meet the requirements for their state.

## LICENSURE APPLICATION, FEES, AND EXAMS

The licensing process in most states involves completion of an in-depth application process and often involves multiple associated fees. Students are responsible for completing all licensing requirements, applications, fees, etc. for their own state.

Most states require licensure applicants to complete and pass a licensing examination after graduation and before becoming fully licensed. In all US states, the required examination is the national MFT exam (with one major exception being CA which requires applicants to pass state licensing exam in place of the national exam), offered by the Professional Examination Service, which is developed by the Association for Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB). Students are solely responsible for preparing for, paying for, taking and passing the examination. Northcentral does not guarantee that any graduate will qualify for or pass the licensing exam. However, the required coursework in the MAMFT master's program at Northcentral is designed to substantially cover the licensing exam content (including the content for the exams).

Upon completion of a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy and all other state licensing requirements, most states require a substantial amount of additional supervised clinical experience (typically two years of full time work) prior to awarding full licensure as a marriage and family therapist. Students should determine the specific requirements for their state and make plans to complete the clinical experience requirements in order to qualify for licensure.

## MEETING CURRICULUM REQUIREMENT FOR LICENSURE IN ARIZONA

Licensure requirements vary from state to state, including the required coursework that is needed to prepare for licensure. Students are responsible for determining whether the given state will accept coursework from Northcentral University to meet those requirements. As an example, the curriculum requirements for the State of Arizona are outlined below, along with lists of potential Northcentral courses that may meet the stated requirements. If doctoral students are lacking any of the Standard Curriculum that is covered in the Master's program they will be required to complete this as part of their degree plan. The state of Arizona requires coursework in six categories as well as a supervised internship experience. The number of required courses for each category, a description of the category, and a list of potentially relevant Northcentral courses is offered for each category.

### Marriage and Family Studies (3 courses)

Studies of introductory systems theory, family development, family systems, including marital, sibling, and individual subsystems, special family issues, and gender and cultural issues, all with a major focus on a systems theory orientation.

MFT5101 – Foundations for Graduate Study in MFT  
MFT5103 – Systemic Evaluation and Case Management  
MFT6103 – Cultural Diversity, Gender, and Family Therapy

Marriage and Family Therapy (3 courses)

Studies of advanced systems theory and interventions, major systemic marriage and treatment approaches, structural, strategic, nonanalytic, group therapy, behavioral marriage and family therapy, communications, and sex therapy.

MFT5104 – Treatment Planning and Traditional Family Therapy  
MFT5105 – Recovery-Oriented Care and Postmodern Family Therapy  
MFT6104 – Family Therapy with Children  
MFT6105 – Couples and Sex Therapy

Human Development (3 courses)

Studies of normal and abnormal human development, personality theory, human sexuality, and psychopathology and abnormal behavior, which may be integrated with systems theory.

MFT6101 – Lifespan individual and Family Development  
MFT6102 – Psychopathology, Diagnosis and Systemic Intervention  
MFT6105 – Families in Crisis (Trauma/Addictions/Violence/Infidelity)

Professional Studies (1 course)

Studies of professional ethics as a therapist, including legal and ethical responsibilities, liabilities, and family law.

MFT5102 – Legal, Ethical and Professional Development in MFT

Research (1 course)

Studies of research design, methodology, and statistics in marriage and family therapy.

MFT5106 – Research Methods and Evidence Based Practice

Practicum (2 courses)

Studies that are limited to the provision of marriage and family therapy services to individuals, couples and families within an educational or professional setting under the direction of a faculty member or supervisor designated by the college or university.

MFT6951 – MFT Practicum I  
MFT6952 – MFT Practicum II

### Internship

An applicant for licensure as an associate marriage and family therapist or a marriage and family therapist shall complete a supervised internship as part of the master or higher degree curriculum.

MFT6991 – MFT Internship I (1 credit)

MFT6992 – MFT Internship II (1 credit)

MFT6995 – MFT Internship and Capstone Presentation (1 credit)

### RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY

The program has an intentional and comprehensive strategy to attract and retain a diverse student body and faculty including instructors, supervisors, professional staff, etc. Due to the format of the distance-based education structure, the program is accessible to students and faculty from diverse and marginalized backgrounds that would often be otherwise unable to be part of an accredited MFT graduate program in a regionally accredited university. The recruitment strategy of the program entails a broad and diverse approach to marketing to attract potential students, staff, and faculty. We utilize the power of the Internet and social media to reach the most diverse population possible. Additionally, in the recruitment of potential students we use organizations that advertise to a wide variety of people and collect leads expressing interest in graduate studies. These leads are then purchased by NCU and the potential students are contacted to see if there is a fit between the goals of the applicant and the programs we offer. The Program Director and Department Leadership meet with the University marketing team on a monthly basis to review current social media adds, recruitment efforts, and the use of paid leads to ensure we diversify the type of information being shared and student populations being attracted. As part of this strategy the program has strived to offer diversity in curriculum, offering specializations in a variety of areas to attract a wider body of students, supervisors, and faculty. Faculty are recruited through traditional Internet-based websites (Higher Ed Jobs, Monster, AAMFT Job Connections, etc.) where we often purchase the “diversity package” to ensure the post are on specific websites that market to diverse populations of professionals. Reaching potential students, staff and faculty is facilitated by the many Internet-based resources that remove many of the barriers to searches that existed historically. In addition, we receive referrals from our current full and part time faculty, students, and alumni which are spread across the national and many foreign counties, as well as our Program Advisory Council members. We also recruit potential students, staff and faculty at professional conferences (e.g., AAMFT Annual Conference, state MFT conferences, etc.) where we receive inquiries regarding our programs and employment with the University. The program works with each student to support their efforts to secure supervisors in the student’s local community ensuring that programs supervisors reflect the diversity we see in our student body. There are formal structures in place to not only attract but retain a diverse student body and faculty/staff. The department has a formal Diversity Committee that meets regularly to explore initiatives to increase diversity in the program composition as well as increased understanding and respect for diversity within and outside of the program. The department also has a formal Retention Committee that meets regularly and provides regular reports to program leadership to monitor and develop initiatives to address the retention of the diverse student body within the program. Although the program continually strives to increase the diversity of the program, the current strategic efforts has successfully created a program rich diversity in its current student body, faculty, and supervisors.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A – SELECT ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

#### Application Process Forms

- [Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy Application Packet](#)
- [MFT Background Clearance Packet](#)

#### Assessment/Evaluation Measures

- [Student Annual Survey](#)
- [Student Progress Evaluation \(SPE\) - Foundations](#)
- [Student Progress Evaluation \(SPE\) - Core](#)
- [Theory of Therapy Final Case Presentation Grading Rubric](#)

#### General Program Forms

- [Student Acknowledgement Form-MAMFT](#)
- [Licensure Limitation Acknowledgement Letter- Graduation Request](#)
- [Licensure Limitation Acknowledgement Letter- Applicants](#)
- [MFT Student Withdraw Survey](#)

#### AAMFT Code of Ethics

- [Click here](#) to access the Most recent version of the AAMFT Code of Ethics

## APPENDIX B - PRACTICUM PREPARATION PROCESS

All of the Practicum Preparation Forms are contained in Tevera. Tevera is organized into 3 sections: Pre-Application tasks, Site Application tasks, and Supervisor Application tasks.

### Pre-Application

- Resource Acknowledgement Form for the Welcome Letter, MAMFT Clinical Training Handbook, Informed Consent, and Tevera Guide
- Pre-Requisite Course Review
- Ethics Requirement
- Technology Checklist
- Clinical Readiness Quiz
- HIPAA Compliance Quiz
- Clinical Readiness Orientation

### Site Application

- Agency Proposal
- Agency Profile
- Proof of Insurance
- Site Walk-Through
- Proof of Liability Insurance, AAMFT Membership, and Background Check

### Supervision Application

- Local Clinical Supervisor Proposal
- Local Clinical Supervisor Profile
- Supervisor Documents Upload
- Four-Way Agreement between Student, Site Representative, Local Supervisor, and NCU
- Off-Site Supervisor Agreement (as applicable)
- Supervisor Check-In Meeting
- NCU Group Availability Request

## APPENDIX C - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. How can I learn more about the profession of Marriage and Family Therapy?

Marriage and family therapy (MFT) is a profession that uses a systems theory orientation to treat individuals, couples, families and groups that struggle with mental and emotional disorders as well as a wide range of behavioral and relationship problems. Marriage and family therapy is a distinct profession from that of psychology, counseling, social work, and other mental health professions. More detailed information about marriage and family therapy can be found in the links below.

- AAMFT responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the profession  
[https://www.aamft.org/About\\_AAMFT/About\\_Marriage\\_and\\_Family\\_Therapists.aspx?hkey=1c77b71c-0331-417b-b59b-34358d32b909](https://www.aamft.org/About_AAMFT/About_Marriage_and_Family_Therapists.aspx?hkey=1c77b71c-0331-417b-b59b-34358d32b909)
- AAMFT information about having a career as a MFT  
[https://www.aamft.org/build\\_your\\_career/default.aspx?hkey=49ad945c-d27a-48ae-898d-a398f8b92d73](https://www.aamft.org/build_your_career/default.aspx?hkey=49ad945c-d27a-48ae-898d-a398f8b92d73)
- Information about MFT as a career, including salary information  
<http://www.allpsychologyschools.com/psychology-careers/career/marriage-family-therapist>
- Interesting information about a variety of topics in MFT education, licensure, etc.  
<http://www.psychotherapynotes.com/>
- To apply for a student membership with AAMFT click on the following link  
[https://www.aamft.org/AAMFT/Membership/Join\\_AAMFT/Shared\\_Content/Membership/New\\_Join\\_Application/Join\\_AAMFT.aspx?hkey=b16a4aa7-0e1e-47d4-b47f-5fb8ebdd28a9](https://www.aamft.org/AAMFT/Membership/Join_AAMFT/Shared_Content/Membership/New_Join_Application/Join_AAMFT.aspx?hkey=b16a4aa7-0e1e-47d4-b47f-5fb8ebdd28a9)

### 2. What are the entrance requirements for Northcentral Marriage and Family Therapy Master's degree program?

Admission to our [MFT Master's degree program](#) requires a Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited or approved international institution. Applicants are also required to submit additional information (e.g., Statement of Intent, etc.) and be interviewed by an administrative MFT faculty member via a one-on-one Skype or phone interview. Admission to the general program does not guarantee admission to the clinical phase of the program.

We do not require that students take the GRE, GMAT or other graduate school entrance examination.

For more information on our application and admission process, visit the Northcentral University [Master's Degree Admissions website](#).

### **3. Is it necessary to have a Bachelor's degree in a related area to be admitted into the MFT Master's Program?**

It can be beneficial if you have earned your Bachelor's degree in a related field, such as Family Studies or Psychology, but it is not required. All of the content necessary to train as a Marriage and Family Therapist is included in our MFT Master's program. Apart from having a specific undergraduate degree, it is just as valuable to have a strong dedication to this challenging field of study.

### **4. What is the structure of a typical Northcentral University MFT course?**

Our MFT coursework is designed to be highly practical, allowing you to gain knowledge and experience that is both professionally beneficial and personally relevant. Each course includes a variety of learning activities and assignments, and incorporates multiple study materials including required textbooks, journal articles and scholarly online information.

Most courses require participation in online discussion forums in which students and Faculty write and respond to questions and comment on given topics related to the course. Discussions are asynchronous. Faculty and students work together in completing, submitting and receiving grades and feedback for course assignments -- including reflection and research papers, case studies, literature reviews, presentations, and experiential exercises.

Class discussions, assignments and other learning activities can be completed online, asynchronously, each week within the 12-week course period.

For Group Practicum and Internship, NCU Faculty Supervisors provide times for groups to meet weekly online (via video conferencing) throughout the course.

### **5. When are MFT student in the Master's program expected to start seeing their own clients?**

Though not required, students in the master's program can begin seeing clients as soon as the ninth Fundamental courses are completed. Some students decide to complete all the content courses first and then start the practicum experience. Students can begin the pre-practicum process, which is designed to evaluate readiness to see clients, after they have completed their sixth course.

Once pre-practicum is completed, it's expected that the student begin and continue to actively see clients until the required 500 hours (including the 250 relational hours) of direct client contact and 100 hours of supervision are completed.

It takes at least one year (at least 52 weeks) to complete the practicum and internship courses and finish the required hours of direct client contact and supervision. When possible, we recommend that the student consider completing these clinical requirements concurrently with the last four content courses. However, some people are not able to devote the time needed to both work on a content course and participate in the clinical training, in which case it is best to finish all of the content courses and then begin practicum.

## **6. How is the practicum process completed online?**

Students participate in direct client contact and supervision in their local area. During the Practicum I and Practicum II courses, students also participate in weekly group practicum sessions with a qualified faculty member and other students in the program. These practicum sessions are conducted online via secure Internet video conferencing, in order to maintain confidentiality and security of client records and meet HIPAA regulations.

With guidance from Northcentral Faculty, students establish a local practicum site with a qualified supervisor that meets regulations outlined by students' local licensure boards. The local supervisor must be trained in MFT and state requirements to supervise MFT students.

In addition to working with a local supervisor, clinical work is reviewed during the group practicum sessions by an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Supervisor Candidate on the MFT faculty at Northcentral University.

## **7. Can faculty help students find a place to do practicum hours near where they live?**

Yes, the MFT Clinical Training Administrative Team at Northcentral University can assist students, but each student is ultimately responsible for finding a local practicum/internship site and a qualified local supervisor. We have a list of sites where current and past students have completed their clinical training. This list may include specific locations in a specific student's area or may serve as an example of types of sites one could consider in finding a placement.

## **8. During Practicum and Internship, can I work in a paid placement or do I need to volunteer?**

Some of our students volunteer and some are paid for their time. Either is acceptable. Whether a student is paid or not depends on opportunities available in her or his local area. Some states may specifically require volunteer work while enrolled as a student rather than a paid placement.

## **9. Does the supervisor for the practicum and internship in the Master's program have to be an AAMFT Approved Supervisor?**

No. Although an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or Supervisor Candidate is preferred. However, the specific minimum requirement is that local supervisors must be licensed and trained as MFTs and must meet any additional requirements that are established by the local licensure board for supervisors of MFT applicants. Students can check local licensing regulations to determine the supervisor requirements. These requirements are typically outlined in the licensure rules about post-degree clinical experience. We require that students work with a supervisor that meets the regulations to supervise post degree hours so that if the student decides to stay in your internship site following graduation the hours will count toward full licensure.

## **10. How do I find a qualified supervisor in my area?**

The AAMFT website has an “Online Directories” section that includes a list of Approved Supervisors: [Approved Supervisor Directory](#). Also, you can search the AAMFT Therapist Locator service which will show people that are licensed/trained MFTs in your area: <http://www.therapistlocator.net>. Many of the local divisions of AAMFT (e.g. the state association) offer assistance in finding supervisors and some even have lists of local supervisors available on their websites. Finally, many states post a list of licensees (and sometimes supervisors) on their websites. The directory of state licensure boards gives you a link to each board’s website and also offers email and phone contact information for each board: [https://www.aamft.org/Directories/MFT\\_Licensing\\_Boards.aspx](https://www.aamft.org/Directories/MFT_Licensing_Boards.aspx)

## **11. How long does it take to complete the MFT degree online at Northcentral University?**

The MFT Master’s program requires completion of 45 - 60 credits (depending on the state or jurisdiction in which one wishes to be licensed) of coursework and clinical experience.

All of the courses in the program are three credits except for the internship which is a series of three 1-credit courses. MFT Master’s-level students must complete the equivalent of 15 or 20 three-credit courses, including clinical experience requirements.

We encourage our students to complete 6-8 courses in a year. At that rate, it takes approximately 4.5 years to complete our Master’s in Marriage and Family Therapy degree program. Some students find it necessary to complete the program at a slower pace due to other responsibilities and time constraints. In any case, students must complete the master’s program within six years.

All of the courses in the program are three credits except for the internship courses.

## **12. What is COAMFTE accreditation?**

Northcentral University is regionally accredited by [WASC Senior College and University Commission](#). Beyond this regional accreditation, many professions have specific accrediting bodies for individual programs that train those people who will enter the profession. COAMFTE accreditation is one such specialized or professional accreditation. The [Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education](#) (COAMFTE) is the accrediting body for the [American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy](#) (AAMFT).

### **13. Are the MFT programs at Northcentral University COAMFTE accredited?**

The Master's program at Northcentral was developed following COAMFTE Marriage and Family Therapy Educational Guidelines and designed to meet [COAMFTE accreditation standards](#).

The MAMFT was granted COAMFTE accreditation in December of 2012. We are pleased to be the first online MFT program to be accredited by the COAMFTE.

Although, in most states, licensure does not require graduation from a COAMFTE accredited program, it is always looked at favorably by licensing boards.

### **14. After I graduate from the MAMFT program, will I be eligible to pursue state licensure?**

*Licensure requirements vary from state to state*, although most state educational requirements are fairly similar. In order to help you prepare for licensure, please review Northcentral University's [Seeking MFT Licensure](#) webpage.

*You are responsible* for taking the required coursework and preparing for and meeting the licensure requirements in your state.

*You may have to take additional courses* beyond what we require for graduation in order to meet your state's licensure requirements. For example, in Florida, licensure applicants are required to take a course in Theories of Personality and Addictions. Northcentral does not require this course in its MFT program; however, we do offer it as an elective.

*Some states require 60 semester credits* of coursework to qualify for licensure. Northcentral can offer students those additional courses beyond our required 45 credits if necessary to meet your state licensure requirements – or if you simply wish to take additional courses to supplement your training.

*Some states will not accept a degree from Northcentral.* Specifically, *Kansas and New Hampshire* have specifically indicated that they will not accept online courses to meet their educational requirements for licensure.

*Our MA degree plan has been pre-approved by the BBS in California.* Throughout 2010, we went through a review of our curriculum and training requirements with officials from the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) in California. In December 2010, we received official approval of our degree program as a licensure qualifying program in that state. Northcentral University is now listed on [California's BBS website](#) as an accepted program. Students in California must complete the California Licensure Track MAMFT program.

*A list of links to various state and other licensure boards* is available through the AAMFT website in their [Directory of MFT Licensure and Certification Boards](#).

**15. After graduating from the NCU MAMFT program, will I be qualified to obtain clinical membership in AAMFT?**

AAMFT determines the qualification for Clinical Membership. It is best to review the [Membership section on AAMFT's website](#) to determine qualifications.

**16. What is the tuition cost for Northcentral University's MFT Program?**

Tuition costs for the MFT program can be reviewed on our public website. The total cost for the MFT program depends on the number of credits you have to complete after your transfer credits are applied.

For additional information about tuition and fees, visit the [Tuition & Fees page](#) of the [Course Catalog](#)

**17. Who can I contact if I have additional questions about Northcentral University?**

For questions can be sent to the [mfs@ncu.edu](mailto:mfs@ncu.edu) email, and questions will be routed, based on the content of your question, to the most appropriate person.

For general information call **866-776-0331**, or visit [www.ncu.edu](http://www.ncu.edu).

## APPENDIX D – NATIONAL EXAM TEST DOMAINS

### TEST SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE AMFTRB EXAMINATION IN MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY PRACTICE DOMAINS

#### **Domain 01: The Practice of Marital and Family Therapy (24%)**

This domain encompasses tasks related to incorporating systemic theory and perspectives into practice activities, and establishing and maintaining ongoing therapeutic relationships with the client\* system.

#### **Domain 02: Assessing, Hypothesizing, and Diagnosing (15.5%)**

This domain encompasses tasks related to assessing the various dimensions of the client system, forming and reformulating hypotheses, and diagnosing the client system in order to guide therapeutic activities.

#### **Domain 03: Designing and Conducting Treatment (24.5%)**

This domain encompasses tasks related to developing and implementing interventions with the client system.

#### **Domain 04: Evaluating Ongoing Process and Terminating Treatment (12%)**

This domain encompasses tasks related to continuously evaluating the therapeutic process and incorporating feedback into the course of treatment, as well as planning for termination.

#### **Domain 05: Managing Crisis Situations (10%)**

This domain encompasses tasks related to assessing and managing emergency situations and intervening when clinical indication and/or legally mandated.

#### **Domain 06: Maintaining Ethical, Legal, and Professional Standards (14%)**

This domain encompasses tasks related to ongoing adherence to legal and ethical codes and treatment agreements, maintaining competency in the field, and professionalism.

\* The term client refers to the individual, couple, family, group, and other collaborative systems that are a part of treatment.