



Marriage and Family Therapy

Doctorate of Marriage and Family Therapy (DMFT)

Program Handbook

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.

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Department of Marriage and Family Sciences

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Profession of Marriage and Family Therapy	3
Overview of the DMFT Program	4
University Vision, Mission, and Values	4
Department of Marriage and Family Sciences (SMFS) Mission, Vision, and Goals	4
Program Mission	5
General Program Policies and Procedures.....	6
https://www.ncu.edu/student-experience/info/new-students	15
Appendix A - Frequently Asked Questions.....	19

Dear Northcentral Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Student,

Welcome to Northcentral University's Doctorate of Marriage and Family Therapy (DMFT) program. We are pleased to welcome you as a student and colleague in the pursuit of knowledge in the field of MFT. Northcentral University is one of only a few institutions offering several online graduate MFT training programs. Our MFT programs have seen considerable growth within the past several years. This *Program Handbook* has been developed to assist you as you begin and progress through your studies. We wish you the best and look forward to your participation in, and contribution to, the DMFT Program at Northcentral University.

Sincerely,

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Introduction

This handbook has been prepared to serve as a guide for students enrolled in the DMFT 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 consistent with national MFT standards of training and practice, including the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#).

Please read this handbook carefully, as you are expected to know this information. If you have any questions, please contact the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences or the Director of the MFT Doctoral Programs (you can e-mail either of them at 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, 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.

The Profession of Marriage and Family Therapy

The profession began as a number of psychologists and psychiatrists began to see limitations in treating many 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 clients' 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 their methods and techniques of clinical work.

Overview of the DMFT Program

The DMFT program at Northcentral University is designed to provide a high quality and rigorous education and training experience for students who wish to prepare for professional life as marriage and family therapists. A high standard of excellence is expected. In support of this, program faculty are selected for their expertise and ability to support students and facilitate exceptional educational attainment. The program is focused on developing research capabilities, advanced skills, and personal and professional growth for effective contributions to the field of marriage and family therapy. The doctoral program offers advanced clinical education and training, research coursework and opportunities, and supervision training and experience. Graduates of the doctoral program will be prepared to carry out advanced clinical work and supervision and/or education and research in the field of marriage and family therapy.

There are six specializations within the DMFT program. The program website provides further detail about each specialization ([Click Here](#)) to learn more about each specialization) below:

- Child and Adolescent Therapy
- Couple Therapy
- General Family Therapy
- Mental Health Administration
- Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship
- Therapy with Military Families

University Vision, Mission, and Values

Please visit the [Northcentral University Catalog](#) for the University's Vision, Mission, and Values.

Department of Marriage and Family Sciences (SMFS) 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 unite a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students to improve the human condition through research and practice.

Department Goals

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

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

Program Mission

The mission of Northcentral's DMFT 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 programs at Northcentral University 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. Prepare students 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.

Student Learning Outcomes: Doctorate of Marriage and Family Therapy

It is our goal that students achieve the following outcomes as they complete the DMFT:

1. Develop competence in working with *diverse populations* in academic, clinical, supervision and research settings. (SLO #1)
2. Appraise *clinical skills* and *ethical behaviors* in systemic therapy and supervision. (SLO #2)
3. Produce applied *research* in the field of marriage and family therapy through independent research. (SLO #3)
4. Develop professional expertise in an *area of specialization* related to the field of marriage and family therapy. (SLO #4)

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 their program director to seek clarification.

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 ethical guidelines will be presented to students in various courses and 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.

Academic Integrity (Authenticity of Student Work)

Refer to the Academic Integrity section of the Northcentral University Catalog for information about Academic Integrity policies.

Admission Policy

Admission to the Northcentral DMFT program requires a conferred clinical master's degree from a regionally accredited institution. In addition, a current resume or curriculum vita and a copy of degree transcripts are required. Additionally, DMFT applicants must participate in a one-on-one synchronous interview with current MFT faculty. Applicants will also complete an application packet that reviews the program requirements and expectations. The packet requires applicants to review the DMFT Program website, the Northcentral University Catalog, regarding the requirements for pursuing licensure, and program/graduation requirements for DMFT training.

Although students achieving licensure is not a goal of the DMFT program, applicants who desire to become fully licensed as an MFT (i.e., LMFT) may want 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. In addition, as the DMFT curriculum is not designed for licensure purposes (that's the role of the master's degree in MFT), students who desire licensure should discuss the education requirements for the state in which they desire to become licensed to determine how the program might support them in meeting those requirements.

Applicants are also required to respond to a series of questions referred to as a "Statement of Intent" so that MFT program faculty may evaluate the applicant's interest in and readiness for the DMFT program, as well as to see a brief sample of their writing. Applicants must 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 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 non-licensed student from some clinical internship placement sites, thereby making it likely the student will be unable to complete the requirements of the MFT degree programs. After submitting all required materials and completing a one-on-one interview with program faculty, the applicant will complete a background check prior to enrollment.

What follows is an outline of roles and responsibilities once the student is accepted.

Responsible Party	Action
Academic and Finance Advisor (AFA)	Provides the student access to the NCUOne Course Room 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 and Finance Advisor (AFA) 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 or phone calls.
Student	Utilizes NCUOne 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, the Commons, and the IT Service Desk. Using NCUOne, 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 NCUOne.
Student	Begins courses and also begins to submit assignments in a timely manner. "Bulk uploading" is generally prohibited. The student must

	receive 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 24 - 48 hours and they must grade and submit detailed feedback for all work submitted within four calendar days.
Student	Takes advantage of this asynchronous model to work at his or her convenience, within allowable timeframes for course participation and faculty member responsiveness. Students are encouraged to also set time to talk via Zoom, Skype or phone during the first week of each course and, thereafter if additional mentoring or support is needed.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

The MFT Programs abide 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 of and appreciation for diversity is an important element of this growth. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, academic and professional background, race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationship status, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religion and spiritual beliefs and/or affiliation, national origin, veteran status, and belief systems. This policy applies to recruitment, admission, codes of conduct, hiring, retention or dismissal of faculty, student, and supervisor other educators.

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 is seen in the actual diversity of our students, faculty, and supervisors, as well as being evident throughout our curriculum, clinical training, and our aspirational educational outcomes.

Codes of Conduct

Northcentral University has established a Code of Conduct for all students and faculty in the University community, including applicants, and alumni. Students in the PhDMFT program are expected to abide by this code at all times. This code can be found in [Code of Conduct](#) section of the [Northcentral University Catalog](#). In addition MFT students and faculty are expected to follow the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#). 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.

Complaints and Grievances

Complaint Procedure. 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 member. Engaging in a respectful interchange of ideas and concerns with peers and supervisors is an important part of a student's professional development. Learning to address concerns in a professional manner is an important graduate student skill.

If students experience 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.

Step	Academic/Clinical Concerns	Administrative Concerns
Level 1	Faculty/Professor	Academic and Financial Advisor
Level 2	MFT Program Director, when addressing concerns regarding clinical training first contact the Clinical Director (clinical@ncu.edu)	Associate Director Student and Financial Services
Level 3	DMFS Department Chair,	Senior Director of Student and Financial Services
Level 4	DMFS Assistant Dean of Students	Ombudsman or Office of Legal Affairs
Level 5	SSBS Dean	Formal Grievance
Level 6	Ombuds or Legal Affairs	
Level 7	Formal Grievance	

Confidentiality Policy and Student Acknowledgement

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 professional.

In addition, faculty and local clinical supervisors work collaboratively for the benefit of the students and the MFT program. Therefore, the MFT 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 MFT clinical faculty, supervisors, and staff as needed (deemed pertinent for students' and/or the MFT 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.

Credit Hour Requirements

The DMFT degree requires a minimum of 60 credit hours at the graduate level beyond the master's degree. Northcentral University may accept a maximum of 12 semester credit hours in transfer toward the doctoral degree for graduate coursework completed toward a non-conferred doctoral degree at an accredited college or university with a grade of "B" or better. Transfer credit is only awarded for course work that is evaluated to be substantially equivalent in content with the required course work for the DMFT program.

DMFT Program Clinical Training

In marriage and family therapy, the terminal degree that makes one eligible for licensure is the master's degree. Accordingly, the DMFT is not designed to meet licensure requirements. Students with questions about pursuing licensure should consult with NCU faculty about this matter by emailing clinical@ncu.edu.

Many of our DMFT students are already LMFTs or licensed in another mental health discipline. Other students have completed a master's degree and are working on completing the post-degree experience for licensure. Whatever the specific situation, clinical training at the doctoral level requires that students grow both in skill competence and in theoretical analysis and synthesis.

The DMFT Clinical and Professional Practice Handbook provides the relevant information pertaining to the Practicum and Internship components of the DMFT. **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 regulations for licensure, if they intend to use this degree or experience for licensure purposes.

Supervision Coursework - In addition to advanced coursework in marriage and family therapy, students in the DMFT must complete a course in MFT supervision methodology. DMFT-8970 can count for the 15-hour didactic portion of the AAMFT Fundamentals of Supervision course. However, DMFT students will be required to complete the remaining 15-hour interactive portion of the Fundamentals of Supervision course from another AAMFT-approved provider. Accordingly, we encourage DMFT students to complete the course with AAMFT (https://aamft.org/Supervision/supervision_fundamentals.aspx). Upon documentation of course completion we will waive MFT-8970.

Not all requirements will be completed for the students to achieve the Approved Supervisor designation while in the program at Northcentral University. Students will have to complete the direct supervision and supervision mentoring requirements outside of the program in order to qualify for the Approved Supervisor designation.

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 DMFT degree, students must complete the requirements for DMFT-8951.

Faculty

The faculty in the DMFT program are professionals who have been trained in systemic theory and practice. Currently, 100% of the faculty hold doctorate degrees. All faculty are trained marriage and family therapists, currently 89% are licensed and clinically active as MFTs (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 200 years of experience teaching in the field of family therapy with over 300 years of clinical experience. The faculty is made up of diverse professionals with a variety of cultural and professional backgrounds. The program is made up of full-time and part-time (adjunct) faculty, with the majority of students being taught by the full-time faculty.

A list of faculty in the School of Social Behavioral Sciences is also available at this [link](#).

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.

In part because of the larger size of the MFT 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, teaching faculty weekly (i.e., Student Success Summit) to discuss the needs of students and any changes needed in the program to better support new students. Faculty teaching practicum/internship courses meet with the members of the Clinical Team 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 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 regularly with the Dean, Department Chair, and Program Directors to discuss and review program procedure and policies topics. In all of 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, biweekly, and monthly faculty

meetings, twice a year the entire faculty including all directors, staff, the 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 MFT faculty participate on a variety of program and university level committees and taskforce. Current formal meetings/committees that support faculty governance in the MFT program include but not limited to:

- DMFS Adjunct Faculty Council
- Weekly Administration MFT Faculty Meetings
- Monthly MFT Faculty Focus Meeting
- Weekly MFT Student Success Summits
- Weekly Clinical MFT Faculty Meeting
- Biweekly University Academic Affairs Committee
- University Assessment Committee
- University IT Committee
- Faculty Search Committee
- Scholarship Committee
- Foundations Course Revision Committee
- Ad hoc Accreditation Support Committees

Student Governance

Student governance is a critical 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 MFT programs are encouraged to participate in governance through the following methods:

- The Commons
- MFT Student Advisory Board
- MFT Student Association
- Post-Course Surveys
- School/Department conference calls or Town-hall Meetings
- Appeal and Grievance procedure

Grading/Assessment

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

Graduation Policy

Upon completion of all program requirements, students will contact their Academic and Finance 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 and Finance Advisor. The advisor then verifies that all general requirements have been met to earn the degree. An additional audit is performed by the Chair of the Department 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

For doctoral students, degree requirements include:

- A minimum of 51 credit hours of graduate instruction must be completed through Northcentral
- Satisfactory completion of a Comprehensive Exam or Portfolio Process
- University Approval of Dissertation Manuscript and successful completion of the Oral Examination
- Submission of the approved final Dissertation Manuscript to the University, including the original unbound Dissertation Manuscript and an electronic copy

Program Specific Requirements include:

- Completion of all coursework
- Completion of all clinical training requirements

Once the Academic and Finance Advisor and Assistant Dean 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.

Liability Insurance

When enrolled in Practicum or doing a clinically-focused Internship, each student is required to obtain student level liability insurance. Students can buy this through CPH & Associates (www.cphins.com). AAMFT Student Members in good standing can receive free professional liability insurance through AAMFT. **Students must have liability insurance before they can begin seeing clients.**

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 DMFT program at Northcentral is not 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 at 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 the Northcentral DMFT program meets their educational needs.

Membership in the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy

All students in the DMFT program are strongly encouraged to join the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapist (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. Visit aamft.org, [CAMFT](http://camft.org), or [IFTA-familytherapy.org](http://ifta-familytherapy.org) and browse the resources that are available. Also, look into the requirements and 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 (the exception to this is if you are already licensed as a MFT, which would then qualify you for a Clinical Membership).

Minimum Technology Requirements

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>

New Student Resources

This link provides information on what students can expect as they begin their studies at NCU:

<https://www.ncu.edu/student-experience/info/new-students>

Northcentral MFT Student Association and Student Advisory Board

The MFT Student Advisory Board (SAB) and the MFT Student Association (MFTSA) have been established. The SAB 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 SAB serves as a liaison between students, faculty, and administration. SAB members work together to evaluate and provide recommendations to MFT policy and programs, as well as work toward increasing student awareness and participation with MFT opportunities. More specifically, this board is expected to identify issues important to the future of the University and the MFT program, as well as provide feedback and recommendations regarding the program.

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 MFT Program; 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); and 6) Sponsoring the MFT honor society.

Notification 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 western cultures (particularly the United States). Therefore, much of the practice, literature, and research in the field continues to be conducted in contexts 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.

Portability of degree

The DMFT degree is not designed to provide students with the coursework required to meet typical state educational requirements for licensure. However, students who are not yet licensed MFTs should determine what courses they lack for licensure and explore with their Academic and Finance Advisor and/or the Director of the MFT Doctoral Programs if these classes can be incorporated into their program of study at NCU.

In addition, two 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.

Responsibilities

Notification will be given to unlicensed applicants to NCU MFT doctoral programs who live in an identified state that may not currently accept Northcentral University's (NCU) Marriage and Family Therapy degree for licensure.

Scope of the 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 MFT 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.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the standard by which NCU 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 NCUOne as well as an email to the 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 [here](#) in the NCU Catalog.

Remediation and Dismissal

Program probation & remediation

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 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.

A student placed on probation will, in consultation with the MFT faculty, develop a remediation plan (Guided Action Plan). Remediation plans are structured to assist students in working through whatever difficulties they are experiencing with the ultimate goal of achieving their professional goals. These plans will specify, in writing, the basis for the probation, the term of the probationary period, and the conditions which must be met in order to be removed from probationary status. 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 and meet the requirements of their remediation plan, without incurring any additional complaints or problems, in order for probationary status to be removed. Removal from probation requires satisfactory progress of the remediation plan as determined by 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.

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 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. For additional information regarding Dismissal Policies students can reference the NCU Catalog: [Academic Dismissal](#) or [Administrative Dismissal](#).

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 NCU Course Room 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. Please consult the [Northcentral University Catalog](#) for specific information pertaining to the following services:

Enrollment Services
Academic and Finance Advising
Disability Services Office
Educational Materials and Resources
Northcentral University Library Services
Academic Success Center
Alumni Services
Registrar
IT Service Desk Team

Time Limits for Degree Completion

Northcentral University allows 7 years to complete doctoral programs requiring 60 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 School Dean or designee. Exceptions to the policy are determined on a case-by-case basis and, if granted, are granted only once.

Tracking Student Progress

As a student completes each course, the Faculty Member will post a grade and complete the **Student Progress Evaluation** form regarding the student's performance. These forms are reviewed by the MFT Administrative Faculty during the Clinical Readiness Evaluation Process. When issues arise, a remediation plan and behavioral contract may be created that will be signed by the student as well as the respective Program Director. Students are free to withdraw from the program any time they determine that they do not wish to comply with faculty recommendations.

University Course Policies

Please consult the current version of the Northcentral University Catalog for information regarding the following policies. Please note that 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
Ethical Conduct: Academic Integrity

Appendix A - 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 who 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 information about MFTs: [Learn about MFTs](#)
- Information about MFT as a career, including salary information : <http://www.allpsychologyschools.com/psychology-careers/career/marriage-family-therapist>
- To apply for a student membership with AAMFT click on the following link: [Student Application](#)

2. Can you describe 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.
- Through their weekly feedback, faculty mentor students 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 assignments and other learning activities can be completed online, asynchronously, each week within the designated course period (DMFT courses are 4, 8, or 12 weeks in length).
- For Group Practicum, faculty coordinate a time for groups to meet together weekly online (through video conferencing) throughout the course.

3. When are MFT students in the DMFT program expected to begin the clinical portion of the program?

Though not required, students in the DMFT program can begin seeing clients as soon as they have completed the two Foundation courses (DMFT-7101 and DMFT-7102), the two Core courses (DMFT-7201 & DMFT-7202), and the first Portfolio course (CMP-9600M). Students must also have completed the Practicum Preparation Process (which should be completed at least one month prior to when they plan to begin practicum).

4. How is the practicum process completed online?

Students participate in direct client contact and supervision in their local area. During the Practicum course, 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.

5. Can program faculty help students find a place to do practicum hours near where they live?

Yes, the MFT Clinical Coordinator 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.

6. 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.

7. Does the local supervisor for the practicum and internship in the DMFT 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 who meets the regulations to supervise post degree hours so that if the student decides to stay in an internship site following graduation the hours will count toward full licensure.

8. How do I find a qualified supervisor in my area?

The AAMFT website a list of Approved Supervisors: [Find an Approved Supervisor](#). Also, you can search the [AAMFT Therapist Locator](#) service, which will show people that are licensed/trained MFTs in your area. In addition, many states post a list of licensees (and sometimes supervisors) on their websites. AAMFT's list of [MFT Licensing Boards](#) gives you a link to each board's website and also offers email and phone contact information for each board.

9. How long does it take to complete the DMFT program online at Northcentral University?

The DMFT program requires completion of 60 credits of coursework and clinical experience.

- Most of the courses in the program are three credits except for the Portfolio and Internship courses.
- We encourage our students to complete 4 - 6 courses in a year. At that rate, it takes approximately 4 - 5 years to complete the DMFT 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 DMFT program within seven years.

10. Is the DMFT program at Northcentral University accredited?

Northcentral University is regionally accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). See this [link](#) for more information.

The DMFT program at Northcentral was developed following the best practices for MFT online education, but the DMFT does not have any additional programmatic accreditation.

11. After I graduate from the DMFT 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 document entitled "Pursuing Licensure in Marriage and Family Therapy."

- **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 personality theory or general counseling theory and techniques. Northcentral does not require either of these courses in its MFT program; however, we do offer a course in personality theory as an elective.
- **Some states will not accept a degree from Northcentral.** Specifically, **Kansas** and **New Hampshire** have specifically indicated that they will not accept degrees that are more than fifty percent online to meet their educational requirements for licensure.
- **A list of links to various state and other licensure boards** is available through the AAMFT website in their list of [MFT Licensing Boards](#).

12. After graduating from the NCU DMFT program, will I be qualified to obtain clinical membership in AAMFT?

- Clinical Membership (Clinical Fellow) in AAMFT is typically obtained by completing the requirements for licensure in your home state.
- In locations and countries without an approved licensure process, individuals may pursue AAMFT Clinical Fellow status through the Evaluative Track in lieu of licensure.
- Please check out [AAMFT Membership Information](#) site for more information.

13. 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 any transfer credits are applied.
- For additional information about tuition and fees, visit [NCU's Tuition and Fees](#) (click on the **School of Social & Behavioral Sciences: Department of Marriage and Family Therapy** bar).

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

- MFT program-related questions can be sent to the 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.