

MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY – D.M.F.T.

Program director

Heather Beeson

The Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy (D.M.F.T.) program is the only online D.M.F.T. program in the United States that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). The program is fully online, and online delivery utilizes synchronous and asynchronous formats.

The curriculum adopts the practitioner-administrator-evaluator approach and focuses on applied skill development for use in clinical practice and administrative positions. Graduates of the D.M.F.T. program develop expertise in applied research methods. The goal of the curriculum is to prepare students to apply evidence-based standards to the systemic/relational principles of marriage and family therapy as they design, evaluate, and administer programs that impact a clinical population. Graduates of the D.M.F.T. program use a multicultural lens and are well-prepared to serve as ethically competent leaders who advance the marital and family therapy profession. Alumni most often work as program directors, grant proposal writers, program evaluators, advanced clinicians, clinical supervisors, and university faculty members and adjunct professors.

The 78-unit D.M.F.T. degree curriculum requires a minimum of three years of full-time study for completion. This includes coursework, a doctoral project, and supervised professional development experiences.

Knowledge and skills promoted

Theory and practice

Students study the work of the original thinkers in marital and family therapy, as well as the most recent developments in the field—such as social constructionism, evidence-based practice, and global perspectives. D.M.F.T. students will develop skills in applying marriage and family therapy principles and frameworks to public and private clinical practice settings. They will develop a critical understanding of the theoretical and philosophical foundations of marriage and family therapy, be conversant with the current issues in the field, and use this knowledge to develop programs and services.

Personal development

The program encourages students to develop a clear understanding of themselves, and invites reflection and consideration of the impact of their personal values, social positions, and contexts on their clinical, administrative, and program development practices. Students are supported in the development of their strengths as they create an epistemological framework and ethical consciousness that guide their approach to professional practice in their lives. They are also encouraged to engage beyond their local communities to include experiences in wider cultural and global contexts.

Practice and supervisory skills

Students will apply an in-depth understanding of theory as it relates to the practice of marital and family therapy interventions and program activities at family, community, and societal levels—drawing on the core marriage and family therapy frameworks. They will develop sophistication in clinical, administrative, and supervisory skills necessary for multisystemic engagement. Since it is COAMFTE-accredited, the D.M.F.T. program offers students the opportunity to complete the

requirements for becoming AAMFT-approved supervisors prior to graduation. Students are responsible for ensuring they are following the AAMFT Approved Supervisor application processes and submitting their application directly to AAMFT. The application is not a requirement of the D.M.F.T. program.

Evaluation skills

Students will develop skills and understanding of the process of applied research related to marital and family therapy programs and services. This includes the ability to apply research findings to clinical practice and to utilize research findings in creative ways for the benefit of the general population. D.M.F.T. students will focus on evaluation of program performance and outcomes in practice-based settings.

Program goal and outcomes

The goal of the D.M.F.T. program is to prepare doctoral-level marital and family therapists to serve as program developers, as well as evaluators/administrators, who will promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities by utilizing applied research methods. This goal works in combination with the larger University mission of advancing health services that attend to the whole person by developing practiced-based knowledge in marriage and family therapy.

There are two overall program outcomes. These outcomes integrate the University's commitment to diversity and quality training of health-care professionals with the need for diverse doctoral-level practitioners skilled in program development/evaluation and administration. The program outcomes are as follows:

1. The program will graduate a diverse student body prepared with the knowledge of diverse perspectives to advance the field of marriage and family therapy through practice-based leadership, founded on the consumption and production of current and reliable research.
2. The program will prepare doctoral level family therapy professionals in the practice of systemic/relational principles to develop, evaluate, and administer ethically competent programs, through the use of applied research, that contribute to MFT practice.

Program learning outcomes

By the end of this program, the graduate should be able to:

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 - a. Develop a professional identity as a doctoral-level marital and family therapist aligned with national and COAMFTE practice standards.
 - b. Become adept in systems/relational practice, demonstrating sophistication as a therapist, program developer, evaluator, and administrator of marital and family therapy services.
 - c. Use marital and family therapy, human development, and family science research literatures to design and evaluate programs, clinical protocols, organizational structures, and service-delivery processes utilizing applied research methods.
 - d. Further benefit families and communities by demonstrating the ability to use research and evaluation methodologies to improve human service program performance and outcomes.
 - e. Be responsive to the societal, cultural, and spiritual contexts in which health and well-being are embedded.
 - f. Develop an ethical consciousness that guides their practice in all aspects of professional work.

Advanced standing policy

National accreditation and certification processes ensure that degrees are comparable across institutional boundaries. This advanced standing policy recognizes the value of these professional review processes on the part of the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences, and facilitates cooperation in professional training within the marital and family therapy discipline. The policy ensures that 60 percent of doctoral academic credit will be earned at Loma Linda University, while enabling cooperative relationships with other accredited programs.

Guidelines

Advanced standing may be granted for previous coursework, equivalent in content and scope to required counseling and family sciences courses. This reduces the number of units to be taken at this University. Advanced standing may be granted for previous course work equivalent in content and scope to required Counseling and Family Sciences courses. This reduces the number of units to be taken at LLU. Advanced standing is determined only after a formal review of coursework and letter of agreement based on the following guidelines and may not reduce total units earned at LLU below 47 units:

1. Determination of equivalency.
 - a. Credits applied to advanced standing must be graduate-level courses earned at an accredited institution. No credit may be applied for grades lower than a "B."
 - b. Students seeking advanced standing based upon units earned at other institutions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with COAMFTE standards.
 - c. Advanced standing is not granted for religion courses.
 - d. Doctoral courses taken more than seven years prior to enrollment as a student in the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences may be considered for advanced standing only if the content has been used professionally on a regular basis, and the student can demonstrate current knowledge in the field.
 - e. A master's degree in marital and family therapy or clinical counseling that leads to licensure as a LMFT or LPCC in the student's state of residence is a prerequisite for the DMFT

program. Courses earned in completion of the student's master's degree are not eligible for advanced standing.

2. Approval process.

Students seeking advanced standing should meet with their program director prior to admission or within the first two quarters of study, supplying copies of each syllabus of prior coursework and relevant transcripts. Following the course review, the student will initiate an academic variance specifying the coursework and/or work experience, with documentation of coursework and experience for every course submitted for advance standing.

Financial assistance

For information regarding funding opportunities, see Student Aid (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/financial-policies-information/>) in the financial polices section of this CATALOG.

Students who are accepted into the D.M.F.T. degree curriculum in marital and family therapy may apply for work-study and department-funded research, teaching, and administrative assistantships awarded by the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences. Departmental awards are contingent upon the availability of funds. Only students residing in California are eligible for work study compensation. Students may also apply for need-based financial aid, such as federal student loans. The D.M.F.T. program is an aid-eligible program and all accepted students may qualify for federal financial aid based on individual qualifications as determined by the Department of Education. Students may also apply for the School of Behavioral Health-based scholarships offered each year. Students accepted into the D.M.F.T. degree curriculum in marital and family therapy are eligible for and encouraged to apply for the AAMFT minority fellowship. Visit <http://www.aamft.org> for more information.

Program Accreditation

The Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy degree program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), the accrediting body for the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), 112 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone: 703/838-9808; email: coa@aamft.org.

Admissions

Applicants must meet Loma Linda University (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/admission-policies-information/#admissionrequirementstext>) and School of Behavioral Health (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/behavioral-health/#generalregulationstext>) admissions requirements; and provide evidence of academic ability, professional comportment, and mature judgment. The Doctor of Marital and Family Therapy degree curriculum represents advanced study over and above a standard master's degree curriculum in the field. Admission is based on an integrated evaluation of the following criteria:

- Completion of the online application.
- Master's degree in Marital and Family Therapy/Couple and Family Therapy or Clinical Counseling. Must be a qualifying degree for licensure (LMFT or LPCC) in the applicant's state of residence.
- Grade point average (3.3 minimum).
- Structured oral interview with department faculty (virtual group interview).

- Three letters of reference (two academic and one professional preferred).
- Background check.

No GRE admissions requirement.

Pre-entrance clearance (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/admission-policies-information/#preentrancerequirementstext>):

- Health clearance.

Anti-discrimination policy (<http://behavioralhealth.llu.edu/programs/counseling-and-family-sciences/dmft-marital-and-family-therapy/>)

In the department of Counseling and Family Sciences, we adhere to University policy (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/introduction/affirmative-action/>) and do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of socioeconomic or relationship status.

Program requirements

Theory and practice

CFSD 504	Advanced Family Theory	3
CFSD 506	Foundations of Systems Thinking: Theory and Application	3
CFSD 519	Teaching in Higher Education	3
CFSD 546	Multicultural and Global Mental Health ³	3
CFSD 634A	Practicum in Couple and Family Therapy	3
CFSD 634B	Practicum in Couple and Family Therapy	3
CFSD 634C	Practicum in Couple and Family Therapy	3

Supervision

CFSD 501	Fundamentals of Supervision in Marital and Family Therapy	3
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Program development and administration

CFSD 524	Marital and Family Therapy Administration: Organizational Structure, Process and Behavior	3
CFSD 526	Advanced Marital and Family Therapy Assessment	3
CFSD 555	Organizational Development and Change	3
CFSD 624	Program Development for Families and Communities	3
CFSD 625	Grant Writing	3
CFSD 626	Program Evaluation and Monitoring for Families and Communities	3
CFSD 628	Needs Assessment for Families and Communities	3

Spirituality

RELE 5__	Graduate-level ethical studies elective	3
RELR 5__	Graduate-level relational studies elective	3
RELT 5__	Graduate-level theological studies elective	3

Research

CFSD 545	Research and Practice with Couples and Families	3
CFSD 605	Advanced Quantitative Methods	3
CFSD 611	Qualitative Research Methods I	3
CFSD 627	Statistical Analysis for Program Evaluation	3

Doctoral project

CFSD 695	Project Research	12
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Total Units **78**

Professional development and practice ²

CFSD 786	Professional Development Proposal	0
CFSD 786A and 786B total combined units ¹		36
CFSD 786A	Professional Development Doctoral Portfolio	
CFSD 786B	Professional Internship in Couple and Family Therapy	

Total Units **36**

¹ Course repeated to fulfill total unit requirement

² 700-numbered courses do not count in total didactic units required for the degree

³ Fulfills service learning requirement

Noncourse requirements

Doctoral degrees in Marital and Family Therapy will be awarded when students have completed all required coursework and the following non-course requirements:

- Professional development consistent with leadership in the field of marriage and family therapy. Activities can include, but are not limited to, teaching in higher education, supervision of MFT trainees, advanced clinical training, MFT administration, grant writing, and research.
- A written qualifying examination.
- An oral defense of the doctoral project.
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Normal time to complete the program

Three (3) years (eleven [11] academic quarters) – based on full-time enrollment