MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY — M.S.

The Master of Science (M.S.) in Marital and Family Therapy Program is designed to give students an excellent clinical and academic background, based on Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) guidelines, as well as professional practice for working with individuals, couples, groups, and families in a variety of settings. The program emphasizes systemic and relational practice, and couples and family therapy. These include but are not limited to medical, legal, educational, mental health, managed care, public and private agencies, church settings, and private practice. The program is available to students online and on campus.

Students may also complete a certificate in drug and alcohol counseling (https://llucatalog.llu.edu/behavioral-health/drug-alcohol-counseling-certificate/) or a certificate in play therapy (https://llucatalog.llu.edu/behavioral-health/play-therapy-certificate/) (please consult with advisor). A separate application is required for each of the certificate programs.

Mission, vision, and values

The program's mission: educating marital and family therapy (MFT) students to provide effective and competent care to diverse families in local, national, and international communities.

The program's vision: MFT students will learn how to "make diverse families whole." The definition, configuration, and experience of family vary widely; students are trained to regard, respect, and value human difference and family types so as to work successfully with all who seek the services of a marital and family therapist.

The program has adopted four Loma Linda University values as central to the values of this program:

Compassion—Reflects the love of God with respect, mercy, and empathy.

Integrity—Carries out actions with honesty and trustworthiness.

Excellence—Provides service that exceeds expectations with effectiveness, reliability, and efficiency.

Justice—Commits to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Licensure and program accreditation

Marriage and family therapy is established by law in California as a profession requiring state licensure. Persons who desire to enter the profession must have the academic and clinical preparation, and must pass required licensing examinations. Clinical license requirements vary by state and include additional hours of supervised clinical practice beyond those hours that are completed while studying for the graduate degree. The Board of Behavioral Sciences determined that Loma Linda University's master's degree in marital and family therapy meets the Senate Bill statutory requirements for marriage and family therapy under Business and Professions Code section 4980.36 and 4980.37 (www.bbs.ca.gov).

The program offered by Loma Linda University is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education, the accrediting body for the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. The national commission ensures that academic and clinical training programs adhere to the highest standards of the profession.

Marriage#and Family Therapy is a profession that leads to licensure in all 50 states; however, each state has its own laws and regulations about what is needed to become licensed as an MFT in that state. Not every state will accept a degree, and supervised hours earned in another state. Students must review license requirements in the state they intend to practice so that they understand what may or may not be accepted across state lines. The American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT.org) provides information to each state's licensure resources:MFT State/Provincial Resources

The MFT program coursework, 90 quarter units, is designed to meet California licensure requirements for marriage and family therapy. Students who want to sit for both the Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC) and the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) exams in the state of California have the option to enroll in 4 units of coursework above the 90 required units for the MFT program. These units may not be covered by financial aid. Students interested in this option should consult with the M.S. MFT program director and the LLU Office of Financial Aid for more information.

Conduct or disciplinary actions

Applicants should view "instruction for completing application for registration as a marriage and family associate" at the Board of Behavioral Science Examiner's website for possible issues that may prevent them from obtaining a marital and family therapy license in the state of California, or any state in which a license is sought. A person who completes a graduate degree in MFT may be denied licensure due to prior convictions. This should to be clearly considered before pursuing studies or licensure.

Clinical training

In addition to successful completion of 90 quarter units of academic coursework, students in the MFT program must complete field experience at clinical placement sites. Upon completion of 18 quarter units, the student will be evaluated by the teaching faculty to determine if they will continue the program and be permitted to enter the program's clinical phase. Students have numerous choices of placement sites in which to gain required clinical experience. These sites include community mental health centers, private and public agencies, school and hospital settings, and the School of Behavioral Health's Resiliency Clinic.

Students must complete the minimum requirements for clinical hours and supervision as established by COAMFTE, the program's national accrediting body. To meet this requirement, students must complete clinical hours that are relational (e.g. with couples, families, and/or relational systems) prior to graduation. Students must also receive on-going clinical supervision, which includes the use of observable data, of their clinical work. Field experience must occur over a minimum of twelve months.#All clinical requirements must be met to successfully graduate from the program.

- 300 direct face-to-face client contact hours required. 100 of the 300 hours must include relational/systemic hours. Relational hours is a category of direct client contact hours in which a clinician delivers therapeutic services with two or more individuals conjointly, who share an ongoing relationship beyond that which occurs in the therapeutic experience itself.

- It is expected that while in clinical placement, students will engage in regular and consistent clinical supervision. For every week in which clients are seen, the student must have at least one hour of individual supervision.A minimum of 100 hours of clinical supervision is required. At least 50 of the 100 hours of clinical supervision must include supervision utilizing observable data. Observable data may include the use of audio, video or live session data.

- The ratio of supervision hours to treatment hours must not be less than one hour of supervision to five hours of clinical contact.

- If for any reason the supervision schedule is interrupted, students will work with the Program Director, Director of Clinical Training and/or the Online Clinical Coordinator to assure access to supervisory support.

- Students enrolled in the program should consult theMFT Clinical Training Manualregarding clinical training requirements.

Degree completion

The M.S. degree in Marital and Family Therapy may be completed in either full-time or part-time status, as follows:

1. On-campus program: 2 years of full-time study or at least 3 years of part-time study.
2. Online program: 2.5 years of full-time study or at least 3.5 years of part-time study.

Students have up to five years to complete the degree. In order to maintain full-time status, students must take a minimum of 8 units during Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer Quarters. First-year students most often attend classes on Tuesday and Thursday, and second-year students attend classes on Monday and Wednesday. Full-time employment is discouraged when a student is enrolled for full-time study. Clinical training experiences are usually on days students are not in class. In order to participate in the June commencement exercises, students must complete all program requirements, including coursework and clinical training.

Financial assistance

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

Students accepted into the Marital and Family Therapy Program may receive financial assistance through merit-based awards, such as teaching fellowships and a variety of research and student service assistantships, or through need-based financial aid, such as a loan or the University's work-study program. On a limited basis, students receive financial assistance during their clinical traineeships.

Educational outcomes

The program's educational outcomes include program outcomes and student learning outcomes. These are congruent with the missions of the University and the program, and are appropriate to the profession of marriage and family therapy.

Program goals

Program goals integrate the University's commitment to diversity and quality training of health-care professionals, with the need for diverse master's degree-level practitioners in the field of MFT.

1. The program will prepare students to gain knowledge of the MFT relational systemic principles and engage in theoretical clinical practices required for MFT licensure eligibility.
2. The program will graduate a diverse student body prepared to practice ethically with underserved/underrepresented clinical populations.
3. The program will train students in evidence-informed practice and current research in the MFT field.

Program learning outcomes

The University emphasizes whole-person care. Each of the six program learning outcomes for the M.S. in MFT supports this mission with a specific emphasis on advancing systems/relational theory and practice in diverse societal contexts. The student will learn to promote the emotional health and well-being of individuals, couples, families, organizations, and communities. By the end of this program, the graduate should be able to:

1. By the end of the program, graduates should be able to:

    a. Students will demonstrate an understanding of their MFT identity, by utilizing systemic perspectives in MFT theory, conceptualization, and techniques required for MFT licensure.
    b. Students will apply their knowledge of various systemic principles and skills of MFT clinical language and practices.
    c. Students will demonstrate their awareness of contextual issues in therapy attending to intersectional identities within a multidisciplinary context.
    d. Students will demonstrate their ability to evaluate and apply ethical and legal principles with diverse clinical populations.
    e. Students will analyze current research relevant to MFT and apply their knowledge in the therapeutic process.
    f. Students will utilize evidence-informed practices and relevant research to formulate their clinical application of systemic and relational treatment.

The M.S. degree in Marital and Family Therapy engages in ongoing review of program outcomes and uses this information to improve program effectiveness. Data on program outcomes are collected through aggregate scores on quarterly evaluations of clinical competency as well as results of final oral and comprehensive examinations, client session and outcome data, and exit surveys and interviews of students at graduation.

Alumni surveys are also conducted every two years to track graduates' attainment of marital and family therapy licensure, data on employment, and feedback regarding how well the program prepared graduates for their job responsibilities. Program faculty also maintain regular contact with community agencies and educational institutions in the region to obtain input into curriculum planning and improvements in clinical training.

Program Accreditation

The program is fully 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). Renewal of Accreditation will occur in 2029. The national commission

functions to ensure academic and clinical training programs adhere to the highest standards of the profession. They may be contacted at 112 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3061; telephone: 703/838-9808; email: coamfte@aamft.org.

Admissions

In addition to Loma Linda University (https://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/admission-policies-information/#admissionrequirementstext) admissions requirements, admission to the on-campus and online M.S. in Marital and Family Therapy Program are governed by the policies and procedures established by the School of Behavioral Health (https://llucatalog.llu.edu/behavioral-health/#generalregulationstext).

Additional admission requirements include:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college. The department assesses the liberal arts preparation of each of its applicants in the balance of coursework, in three liberal arts (see Liberal Arts Preparation).
- At least three letters of recommendation from an academic or employment source.
- Meet the minimum academic and professional compatibility criteria established by the program.
- A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above (on a 4.0 scale) in bachelor's coursework.
  - Applicants with grade point averages as low as 2.75 may be considered if the last 45 quarter credits (30 semester units) of coursework are 3.0 or higher or if they have additional attributes that demonstrate preparedness and an appropriate fit for marital and family therapy education. They may submit verified work and volunteer experiences that provide evidence for the potential to successfully complete the program. Employer/supervisor verification statements must be submitted on official agency stationery.
  - Further consideration will also be given to individuals who provide evidence of additional certifications and/or training that illustrate commitment to careers in marriage and family therapy.
  - Those admitted to the M.S. in Marital and Family Therapy with a cumulative G.P.A. below 3.0 will be required to participate in an individualized academic assessment and a targeted learning assistance program.
- Interviews are scheduled with department faculty members. Applicant interviews are scheduled January through May. Interviews may be in person or in virtual meetings in either a group or individual applicant format.
- Show evidence of professional compatibility, personal qualifications, and motivation to complete a graduate program by obtaining a passing score on the admissions interview with the department's admissions committee. Evaluation criteria for the interview include:
  - verbal communication skills
  - congruent with the values and mission of Loma Linda University
  - critical thinking ability
  - comfort/willingness to work with people from diverse backgrounds, language, culture and abilities
  - intuitive judgment & skill, talent, and self-awareness
  - understanding of the field
  - commitment to the field

No academic credit is given for life experiences or previous work experience for any part for the Marital and Family Therapy degree program. Admission is granted to the in-person or online programs in autumn quarter only.

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

- Once admitted, students complete Loma Linda University health clearance requirements, including TB testing and current vaccinations
- Once admitted, students complete the Loma Linda University background check requirement. Additionally, clinical placement sites and licensing boards may require criminal background checks and make independent determinations regarding eligibility. Findings that arise from a background check may impact clinical placement or licensure, and students are responsible for addressing any resulting limitations.

Program requirements

A grade of B or better indicates that a student has mastered the knowledge, skill, and professional practice performance competencies outlined by the program. In order to progress successfully and complete the degree, students must meet both course and cumulative G.P.A. standards. The University allows students to repeat two courses per degree. Course repeat expectations set by the School of Behavioral Health may be found in the general regulations (https://llucatalog.llu.edu/behavioral-health/#generalregulationstext) section of this CATALOG.

Foundations of relational/systemic practice, theories & models		
MFAM 551	Family Therapy: Foundational Theories and Practice	3
MFAM 553	Family Systems Theory	3
MFAM 564	Family Therapy: Advanced Foundational Theories and Practice	3
Clinical treatment with individuals, couples and families		
MFAM 515	Crisis Intervention and Client Advocacy	3
MFAM 552	Couples Therapy: Theory and Practice	3
MFAM 638	Substance Use Disorders, Relationships, and Recovery	3
MFAM 644	Child Abuse and Family Violence	3
MFAM 674	Human Sexual Behavior	3
Diverse multicultural and/or underserved communities		
MFAM 528	Culture, Socioeconomic Status in Therapy	3
MFAM 567	Treating the Severely and Persistently Mentally Ill and the Recovery Process	3
MFAM 604	Social Context in Clinical Practice: Gender, Class, and Race	3
Research and evaluation		
MFAM 501	Research Tools and Methodology: Quantitative	3
MFAM 502	Research Tools and Methodology: Qualitative	3
Professional identity, law, ethics & social responsibilities		
MFAM 614	Law and Ethics	3
MFAM 635	Case Presentation and Legal Issues	3
Biopsychosocial health and development across the life span		
COUN 675	Dynamics of Aging	1
MFAM 547	Social Ecology of Individual and Family Development	3

MFAM 584	Advanced Child and Adolescent Development	3
Systemic/relational assessment and mental health diagnosis and treatment		
MFAM 524	Psychopharmacology and Medical Issues	3
MFAM 556	Psychopathology and Diagnostic Procedures	3
MFAM 624	Individual and Systems Assessment	3
Contemporary issues		**8**
Select from the following:		
CFSD 540	Introduction to Medical Family Therapy	
CFSD 544	Health and Illness in Families	
COUN 574		
COUN 575	Counseling Theory and Applications	
COUN 576	Exceptional and Medically Challenged Children	
COUN 577	Assessment in Counseling	
COUN 579	Career Theories and Applications	
COUN 678	Consultation and Program Evaluation	
COUN 680		
MFAM 516	Play Therapy	
MFAM 539	Solution-Focused Family Therapy	
MFAM 549	Christian Counseling and Family Therapy	
MFAM 555	Narrative Family Therapy	
MFAM 559	Cognitive-Behavioral Couples Therapy	
MFAM 576	Mastering Each New Direction Theory and Practice	
MFAM 605	Gestalt Family Therapy	
MFAM 606	Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy	
MFAM 645	Advanced Treatment Strategies – Substance Use Disorders	
MFAM 654	Practicum in Drug and Alcohol Counseling	
MFAM 665	Structural and Multidimensional Family Therapy	
MFAM 694	Directed Study: Marriage and Family	
Community intersections and collaboration		
MFAM 535	Case Presentation and Professional Studies	3
MFAM 536	Case Presentation and Documentation	3
MFAM 537	Case Presentation	3
MFAM 636	Case Presentation and Client-Centered Advocacy	3
MFAM 637	Case Presentation and Global Practices	3
MFAM 731	Clinical Training [1]	
MFAM 735	Case Presentation Extension	0
Religion		
RELR 540	Wholeness and Health [2]	3
Group		
MFAM 568	Groups: Process and Practice	3
Total Units		**90**

[1] 700-numbered courses do not count toward total didactic units required for the degree

[2] Fulfills service learning requirement

Degree requirements

Requirements for the M.S. degree in marital and family therapy from Loma Linda University include the following:

- A minimum of 90 quarter units of graduate work, which includes credit received for core courses, electives, and a three-unit religion course.
- Clinical training in marriage and family therapy - students are required to complete the minimum clinical training requirements established by COAMFTE including relational client contact hours and live supervision.
- For every week in which clients are seen, the student must have at least one hour of individual supervision. The ratio of supervision hours to treatment hours must not be less than one hour of supervision to five hours of clinical contact. Students enrolled in the program should consult the MFT Clinical Training Manual regarding clinical training requirements.
- Successful completion of a written comprehensive examination (taken before advancement to candidacy) and an oral examination (taken at the end of the program).

Normal time to complete the program

1. MS MFT campus program - Two (2) years (seven [7] academic quarters) — based on full-time enrollment
2. MS MFT online program - Two and a half (2.5) years (nine [9] academic quarters) – based on full-time enrollment.