MFT Educational Guidelines

1. **Standard Curriculum**

1.01 The program will document that all students have completed, or will complete while in the program, all coursework and clinical requirements of the Standard Curriculum, or equivalents thereof. A transcript of completed requirements will be kept on file.

1.02 A master's degree program will offer to its students the entire Standard Curriculum as presented in these guidelines, or equivalents thereof.

10. **Standard Curriculum Didactic Area Requirements**

10.01 Programs are expected to infuse their curriculum with content that addresses issues related to diversity, power and privilege as they relate to age, culture, environment, ethnicity, gender, health/ability, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, spirituality, and socioeconomic status.

10.02 The Standard Curriculum will address appropriate collaboration with other disciplines.

101. **Area I: Theoretical Knowledge**

101.01 Area I content will address the historical development, theoretical and empirical foundations, and contemporary conceptual directions of the field of marriage and family therapy.

101.02 Area I content will enable students to conceptualize and distinguish the critical epistemological issues in the profession of marriage and family therapy.

101.03 Area I material will provide a comprehensive survey and substantive understanding of the major models of marriage, couple, and family therapy.

102. **Area II: Clinical Knowledge**

102.01 Area II content will address, from a relational/systemic perspective, psychopharmacology, physical health and illness, traditional psychodiagnostic categories, and the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of major mental health issues.

102.02 Area II content will address contemporary issues, which include but are not limited to gender, sexual functioning, sexual orientation, sex therapy, violence, addictions, and abuse, in the treatment of individuals, couples, and families from a relational/systemic perspective.

102.03 Area II material will address a wide variety of presenting clinical problems.
103. **Area III: Individual Development and Family Relations**

Area III will include content on individual and family development across the lifespan.

104. **Area IV: Professional Identity and Ethics**

Area IV content will include professional identity, including professional socialization, scope of practice, professional organizations, licensure, and certification.

Area IV content will focus on ethical issues related to the profession of marriage and family therapy and the practice of individual, couple, and family therapy. A generic course in ethics does not meet this standard.

Area IV will address the AAMFT Code of Ethics, confidentiality issues, the legal responsibilities and liabilities of clinical practice and research, family law, record keeping, reimbursement, the business aspects of practice, and familiarity with regional and federal laws as they relate to the practice of individual, couple and family therapy.

105. **Area V: Research**

Area V content will include significant material on research in couple and family therapy.

Area V content will focus on research methodology, data analysis and the evaluation of research.

Area V content will include quantitative and qualitative research and its methods.

106. **Area VI: Additional Learning**

Additional learning will augment students’ specialized interest and background in individual, couple, and family therapy. Additional courses may be chosen from coursework offered in a variety of disciplines.

20. **Standard Curriculum Clinical Experience Requirements**

201. **Contact Hours**

Direct client contact is defined as face-to-face (therapist and client) therapy with individuals, couples, families, and/or groups from a relational perspective. Assessments may be counted as direct client contact if they are face-to-face processes that are more than clerical in nature and focus. Psychoeducation may be counted as direct client contact.

Traditionally, programs have required students to complete 500 supervised, direct client contact hours. The program may choose to uphold the 500 client contact
hour standard. Alternatively, the program may demonstrate that graduating students achieve a competency level equivalent to the 500 client contact hours. The program must define this competency level and document how students are evaluated and achieve the defined level. The program demonstrates a consistent set of evaluation criteria for achieving the defined level of competency across all students.

201.03 At least 250 hours (of the required 500 hours of client contact or alternative procedures outlined in 201.02) will occur in clinical facilities for which the program has broad, but not necessarily sole, responsibility for supervision and clinical practice of individual, couple, and family therapy as carried out by the program. The facilities will offer services to the public.

201.04 At least 250 (of the required 500 hours of client contact or alternative procedures outlined in 201.02) will be with couples or families present in the therapy room. If the program chooses to require less than 250 relational hours it must use the alternative procedures outlined in 201.02.

201.05 Published promotional materials will inform applicants that they must complete 500 direct client contact hours or apply alternative procedures outlined in 201.02.

201.06 The program will publish and adhere to criteria for determining when students are prepared for clinical practice.

201.07 Students will work with a wide variety of people, relationships, and problems. Specifically, the program will demonstrate that students have the opportunity to work with clients who are diverse in terms of age, culture, physical ability, ethnicity, family composition, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.

202. Supervision

202.01 Supervision of students, when conducted in fulfillment of clinical requirements of these standards, will be face-to-face or live supervision conducted by AAMFT Approved Supervisors, Supervisor Candidates, or the equivalent.

202.02 A program may designate a person who is not an AAMFT Approved Supervisor as equivalent to that status, for purposes of supervision if the person is an AAMFT Supervisor Candidate. A program may designate a person who is not an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or Supervisor Candidate as equivalent to an AAMFT Approved Supervisor for purposes of supervision, if (1) the program documents that the equivalent supervisor has demonstrated training, education and experience in marriage and family therapy. This may be demonstrated by state MFT credential, AAMFT clinical membership or other documentation of training, education and experience in individual, couple, and family therapy, and (2) demonstrated training, education and experience in individual, couple, and family therapy supervision. This may be demonstrated by state credential to provide MFT supervision, completing coursework or continuing education in MFT supervision, significant MFT supervised supervision experience, or more than 10
years experience supervising MFT students. (Equivalency criteria must include training in MFT supervision.)

202.03 Individual supervision is defined as supervision of one or two individuals.

202.04 Group supervision is required and will not exceed ten students per group.

202.05 Supervision will be distinguishable from psychotherapy and teaching.

202.06 Students will receive at least 100 hours of face-to-face supervision. If the program chooses to require less than 100 supervision hours it must use the alternative procedures outlined in 201.02.

202.07 Students will receive at least one hour of supervision for every five hours of direct client contact.

202.08 Supervision will occur at least once every week in which students have direct client contact hours.

202.09 Individual supervision will occur at least once every other week in which students have direct client contact hours.

202.10 Students will receive at least 50 hours of supervision based on direct observation, videotape, or audiotape. At least 25 hours of this supervision will be based on direct observation or videotape. If the program chooses to require less than 50/25 hours of supervision as outlined above it must use the alternative procedures outlined in 201.02.

3. **Doctoral Programs**

30. **Didactic Requirements**

30.01 Doctoral programs will have available and will offer the Standard Curriculum to all students who have not graduated from a master's program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

300. **Areas VII, VIII, IX: Theory, Clinical Practice and Individual Development and Family Relations**

300.01 Areas VII, VIII, IX are continuations of Areas I, II, and III, respectively, at a doctoral level of sophistication.

310. **Area X: Clinical Supervision**

310.01 Area X course content will be didactic and experiential, and will include current literature, research and major issues related to supervision in the profession of marriage and family therapy.
311. **Area XI: Research**

311.01 Course content in Area XI will provide comprehensive coverage of the critique and execution of couple, marriage, and family therapy research, statistics, research methodologies, and computer analysis and interpretation, in qualitative and quantitative research.

311.02 Students will take a minimum of one course with a specific focus on couple, marriage, and family therapy research.

312. **Area XII: Additional Courses**

312.01 Additional courses will augment students' specialized interests and backgrounds in couple, marriage, and family therapy. Additional courses may be chosen from coursework offered in a variety of disciplines.

313. **Doctoral Dissertation**

313.01 The doctoral dissertation topic will be in the field of marriage and family therapy or a closely related field (e.g., family studies, family science, human development, child development, gerontology) and include a comprehensive discussion of implications for the field of marriage and family therapy.

320. **Clinical Experience**

320.01 Before graduating from the doctoral program, doctoral students will have completed 1000 hours of direct client contact equivalent to that which they would be receiving from an accredited program. If the program chooses to require less than 1000 hours it must use the alternative procedures outlined in 201.02.

320.02 The program will have established criteria for accepting direct client contact and supervision hours accumulated prior to entering the doctoral program. These criteria are consistent with the requirements set forth in the Standard Curriculum.

330. **Internship**

330.01 There will be an internship, not to be counted toward the didactic course requirements.

330.02 The internship is to provide doctoral students with a supervised full-time experience of at least nine months duration, emphasizing relationally focused practice and/or administrative/academic/research.

330.03 The majority of requirements in Areas VII, VIII, IX, and XI will be completed before the beginning of the internship.

330.04 An AAMFT Approved Supervisor, State Approved Supervisor, or the equivalent will supervise the intern’s clinical work.
340: Site Requirements

340.01 The program will maintain clear and ongoing relationships with all internship site(s), which will be specified in a written document.

340.02 Activities of each intern will be documented at the internship site(s). These records will be made available to the marriage and family therapy program.

340.03 The institution sponsoring the internship site(s) will have been in operation for at least two years.

340.04 Internship site(s) will provide adequate facilities and equipment for the intern to carry out designated responsibilities.

340.05 Mechanisms for student evaluation of internship site(s) and supervision, and site evaluation of the intern's performance, will be demonstrated.

340.06 Documentation of liability insurance for interns will be confirmed. Liability insurance may be provided by the internship site(s), the marriage and family therapy program, or the intern.

340.07 Internship site(s) will publish and adhere to policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

340.08 The internship supervisor will be available to the intern for at least one hour of supervision per week.

340.09 The internship supervisor will be clearly senior in experience to the intern.