

Mercer University School of Medicine

Master of Family Therapy Program Manual

2024-2025

This page intentionally left blank.

Mercer University School of Medicine

Student Handbook and Program Manuals

Students must read the Mercer University Student Handbook, the MUSM Student Handbook and the MFT Program Manual and acknowledge their understanding of their contents prior to beginning classes at the School of Medicine.*

The Mercer University Student Handbook, the School of Medicine Student Handbook, and the Program Manuals set forth the major policies and procedures affecting students. Because the University is a dynamic institution, changes are inevitable. This handbook will be revised as new policies and procedures are adopted. The latest edition will supersede all former editions. A majority of student policies and resources can be found in the Mercer University Student Handbook and the University Catalog found at <https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/handbook/>. The School of Medicine has additional information and policies that pertain to specific student populations that can be found in the MUSM Student Handbook and the Program Manuals also found at <https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/handbook/>. These resources, when taken as a whole, provide students with a basic understanding of the rights and responsibilities of Mercer students.

Links to specific documents are as follows:

Mercer University Student Handbook	https://studentaffairs.mercer.edu/www/mu-studentaffairs/resources/upload/University-Student-Handbook.pdf
School of Medicine Student Handbook	https://provost.mercer.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2022/07/MUSMHandbook_2022-2023.pdf

Students are encouraged to review these documents and to contact the Office of Student Affairs on their campus if they have any questions. Online copies will contain the most up-to-date versions of policies and supersede any printed copies should any discrepancies exist. These documents may be provided in an alternative format upon request. The provisions of the Mercer University Student Handbook supersede collegiate and campus policies and procedures.

Wherever the University has chosen to adopt policies and principles similar to or incorporating portions of statements of the American Association of University Professors or other external bodies, the University reserves the right to interpret such policies or principles for itself and is not bound by external interpretations.

All provisions, regulations, degree programs and course listings in effect when the Student Handbook went to press and/or are posted on the website are subject to revision by the appropriate governing bodies of Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM). Students pursuing degree programs when such changes are instituted are expected to comply with the revisions that relate to their programs. It should be understood that the statements in this Manual are for informational purposes only and should not be construed as the basis of a contract between MUSM and the student. Though the provisions of this Manual will ordinarily be applied as stated, MUSM reserves the right to change any provisions contained herein, including but not limited to academic requirements for graduation, without actual notice to individual students. Students are responsible for knowing all regulations and procedures required by MUSM and the advanced degree program being pursued. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because of ignorance of the regulation or of the assertion that the student was not informed by the advisor

or other authority. Students should consult frequently with school deans, chairs, or directors, as appropriate regarding current degree requirements.

The Mercer University School of Medicine is a Member of the Association of American Medical Colleges with full accreditation awarded by Liaison Committee on Medical Education. It is the purpose of the University to adhere to all the rules and regulations, course offerings, and financial charges as announced in the Bulletin or in other publications. The University, nevertheless, hereby gives notice that it reserves the right to withdraw any subject, to change its rules affecting the admission and retention of students or the granting of credit or degrees, or to alter its fees and other charges, whenever such changes are adjudged desirable or necessary. Attendance at Mercer University is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student whose conduct is adjudged as not being in harmony with the traditions, the policies, and the regulations of the University.

*A copy of the acknowledgement form will be provided to each student upon matriculation to the School of Medicine.



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Master of Family Therapy

MERCER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Receipt of Mercer University Student Handbook, MUSM Student Handbook and the MFT Program Manual

I, the undersigned, acknowledge receipt of 1) the Mercer University Student Handbook, 2) the School of Medicine Student Handbook and 3) the Master of Family Therapy Program Manual and agree to abide by the policies and procedures provided therein.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	6
General Information	11
<i>Program Description</i>	11
<i>Accreditation</i>	11
<i>Anti-Discrimination, Federal Disclosure, and Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Notifications</i>	11
<i>Federal Disclosure Requirements</i>	11
<i>Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy</i>	12
<i>Mercer University Mission</i>	13
School of Medicine Vision, Mission and Values.....	13
Mission	13
Vision.....	13
Values.....	13
Goals	14
Master of Family Therapy Program Mission Statement	14
Master of Family Therapy Program Goals	14
Master of Family Therapy Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).....	14
KNOWLEDGE: SLO1	15
DIVERSITY: SLO2	15
ETHICS: SLO3	15
PRACTICE SLO4	16
RESEARCH: SLO5.....	16
SLO6	17
<i>MUSM Diversity</i>	17
MUSM Definition of Diversity.....	17
MUSM Diversity Statement:.....	17
MFT Program Diversity	18
MFT Program Definition of Diversity	18
MFT Program Diversity Statement	18
<i>Athletic/Sports Facilities</i>	18
<i>Books and Supplies</i>	18
<i>Communication, Official</i>	19
Email Services.....	19
<i>Housing Information</i>	19
<i>Library</i>	19
<i>Parking</i>	19
Macon	19
Atlanta.....	20
Security.....	20
Macon	20
Atlanta.....	20
All Other Campus and Clinical Sites	20
Student Support Services	20
Office of Academic Affairs.....	21
Office of Diversity and Inclusion	21
Office of Student Affairs	22
Office of Student Financial Planning.....	22
Office of the Registrar	22
Academic Advising.....	22
Faculty Advisors	23
Academic Resource Center	23
Access and Accommodations Services for Students.....	23
How to Apply for Accommodations.....	23
Change of Accommodation Requests.....	24
Appeal of Accommodation Decision	24

Report Physical Access Barriers	24
<i>Career Advising</i>	24
<i>College Study Skills Online</i>	25
<i>Food Services (*Macon only)</i>	25
<i>Insurance Coverage</i>	25
Health Insurance	25
Malpractice Insurance	25
<i>Online Writing Lab (OWL)</i>	25
<i>Student Health Services</i>	26
Student Health Center.....	26
Mental Health Services.....	26
Wellness	28
Goals	28
Dimensions of Wellness	29
University-Wide Policies	30
<i>Statement of Institutional Standards of Behavior</i>	31
<i>Standard on Student Harassment and Abuse</i>	31
Standards of Teacher-Learner Relationships	31
Position	32
School Wide Policies	32
MFT Program Policies	34
<i>AAMFT Membership</i>	34
<i>Academic Advising</i>	34
<i>Academic Calendar</i>	35
<i>Academic Integrity</i>	36
<i>Academic Performance Standards</i>	36
Academic Warning	36
Academic Probation	36
Academic Exclusion	36
<i>Academic Program Governance</i>	37
Student Role in Program Governance	37
<i>Academic Year</i>	40
<i>Admissions</i>	40
Admissions Information	40
Application Process	41
International Applicants	41
Application Deadlines.....	41
<i>Attendance Policy</i>	42
<i>Changes in Program or Major</i>	42
<i>Climate of Safety, Respect, Inclusion, and Appreciation</i>	42
<i>Clinical Presentations</i>	43
<i>Course Cancellation</i>	43
<i>Course Changes</i>	43
<i>Course Numbering System</i>	44
<i>Course Sequence</i>	44
<i>Course Syllabi</i>	44
<i>Course Withdrawals</i>	44
<i>Credit Units</i>	44
<i>Credit, Extra-Collegiate Learning Programs</i>	44
<i>Credit, Graduate Transfer</i>	44
<i>Credit, Transient Status Mercer Student</i>	44
<i>Credit, Transient Status Non-Mercer Student</i>	45
<i>Enrollment/Curriculum Changes</i>	45
<i>Degree Completion Requirements</i>	45
<i>Degree Completion Timeframe</i>	45
<i>Enrollment Status</i>	45

<i>Evaluation of Courses</i>	46
<i>Evaluation of MFT Practicum Experience</i>	46
<i>Evaluation of Program</i>	46
<i>Grading System</i>	46
<i>Graduation Audits</i>	47
<i>Graduate Student Honor System</i>	47
Definition of the Graduate Honor System.....	47
Definitions of Violations	47
Procedure for Reporting Honor Code Violations	48
<i>Grievance Policies and Procedures</i>	48
Academic Grievances and Appeals.....	48
Nonacademic Grievances Policy.....	49
Other Grievances.....	51
<i>Information Technology</i>	51
Computers: User Guidelines.....	52
Technology Requirements.....	52
Technical Training.....	53
CAE Learning Space	54
Canvas	54
CourseEval.....	54
TheraNest.....	54
Supervision Assist.....	55
<i>Late Assignments</i>	55
<i>Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment</i>	55
<i>Licensure Portability</i>	55
<i>Recruitment</i>	57
<i>Registration</i>	57
<i>Remediation</i>	57
<i>Retention</i>	58
<i>Student Professionalism Policy</i>	58
<i>Surveys of Alumni</i>	59
<i>Urine Drug Screen Policy</i>	59
MFT Program Curricula	62
<i>Master of Family Therapy Curriculum</i>	64
<i>Academic Progression Recommendations Fall Admission</i>	65
<i>Academic Progression Recommendations Spring Admission (Macon only*)</i>	66
<i>Course Descriptions</i>	67
<i>Professional Development Seminar Series</i>	69
<i>Portfolio Requirements</i>	71
Timeline of Portfolio Completion within Program.....	73
Portfolio Components Linked to Student Learning Outcomes	73
<i>Practicum Experience</i>	74
<i>Understanding the Complex Nature of MFT Education at Mercer</i>	75
A Developmental Perspective	75
Self-of-Therapist	76
Dual Nature of Being a Professional in Training	76
Compromise vs. Compassion.....	77
Respecting One Another	78
<i>Practicum Course Description</i>	78
General Practicum Objectives	79
Direct Clinical Experience Hours Definitions.....	80
The Process of Practicum Placement	85
Changing Practicum Sites	88
Completing and Exiting Practicum.....	89
Practicum Supervision Process.....	90
Supervision Contact Procedures Between Semesters and/or During Emergencies	92

General Expectations of Practicum Students	92
Specific Responsibilities of the MFT Student:	95
Additional Expectations.....	95
Practicum Responsibilities.....	99
<i>MUSM Administration and Community Directory</i>	102
<i>Departmental & Program Directory</i>	104
Mercer Police Department Phone Directory	105

MERCER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Master of Family Therapy Program
Macon and Atlanta, GA

The Mercer University School of Medicine is a Member of the Association of American Medical Colleges, with full accreditation awarded by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

The Master of Marriage and Family Therapy program has been awarded accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). COAMFTE may be contacted at:

AAMFT
c/o COAMFTE
112 S. Alfred Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Email: coa@aamft.org
Fax: (703) 253-0508.

Mercer University is committed to providing equal educational and employment opportunities to all qualified students, employees, and applicants, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, age, or religion, as a matter of University policy and as required by applicable state and federal laws (including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Sections 503 and 504, ADEA, ADA, E.O. 11246, and Rev. Proc. 75-50). Inquiries concerning this policy may be referred to Mercer's Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer, Human Resources, 1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, Georgia 31207, telephone (478) 301-2786.

General Information

Program Description

The Master of Family Therapy (MFT) program is a 48-hour Commission on Accreditation for MFT Education (COAMFTE) accredited program that prepares students to lead as culturally competent therapists providing high quality mental health services to individuals, couples, and families in schools, agencies, hospitals, mental health clinics, and private practice settings. The program provides students with the knowledge and experience to provide associate level mental health services to families, couples, and individuals. Students are trained to address a spectrum of challenges including psychiatric disorders like depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia; relationship problems; family conflicts; parenting concerns; and behavioral problems facing individuals, couples, and families, including both children and adults. The Master of Family Therapy Program fulfills all educational requirements for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of Georgia, and prepares graduates to sit for the National MFT Licensing Exam.

Accreditation

Mercer University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097 or call (404) 679-4500 for questions about the accreditation at Mercer University. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently.

The School of Medicine Master of Family Therapy Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (COAMFTE).

For the most current information on Mercer University's accrediting bodies, please refer to the catalogs or online at <http://oie.mercer.edu/accreditations/accred-list/>.

Anti-Discrimination, Federal Disclosure, and Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Notifications

The MUSM Master of Family Therapy Program abides by all University and School of Medicine Anti-Discrimination, Federal Disclosure, and Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policies that, as noted below, prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age, or religion. In addition, the MFT Program further prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, relationship status, socio-economic status, health status and spiritual beliefs. All categories of discrimination mentioned apply with regard to the recruitment, admission, codes of conduct, hiring, retention, or dismissal of students, faculty, and supervisors or other relevant educators and/or staff.

Federal Disclosure Requirements

*From Mercer University Student Handbook
Last revision: September 2019*

Mercer University's Federal Disclosure Requirements are available on the University web site at <https://disclosure.mercer.edu/> . This report contains the following information:

- Campus Security: Jeanne Clery Disclosure for Campus Security, campus crime statistics, Campus Sex Crime Prevention Act, and fire safety
- Campus Emergency Procedures
- Drug and Alcohol Policies
- Financial Assistance and Cost of Attendance Information
- Health and Safety Information: immunization and missing persons information
- Institutional Information: accreditation, characteristics of students, degree programs, degree program improvement plans, disability support services, FERPA information, retention and graduation rates, peer-to-peer file sharing, post-registration, and satisfactory progress standards

Paper copies of these reports are available on request. Please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by mailing inquiries to:

Office of Institutional Effectiveness
 Mercer University
 1501 Mercer University Drive
 Macon, GA 31207

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy

*From Mercer University Student Handbook
 Last revision: September 2019*

Mercer University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and does not discriminate against employees or students on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age, or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is both permitted by law and deemed appropriate as a matter of University policy). This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training programs.

In addition, as a federal contractor, the University has adopted an Affirmative Action Plan in accordance with applicable legal requirements. This plan is reviewed and updated annually. Employees and applicants may access, upon request, the full affirmative action plan (absent data metrics) at locations and times posted in the Human Resources office.

Mercer University's EEO policy, as well as its affirmative action obligations, includes the full and complete support of all divisions of Mercer University, including its President.

Mercer University will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Mercer University prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment based on race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion.

Any employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor, the Equal Opportunity Officer, the supervisor of the person behaving objectionably, or for sexual violence/sexual harassment with the Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Civil Rights. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of any form of retaliation.

Mercer University maintains an audit and reporting system to determine overall compliance with its equal

employment opportunity mandates and to respond to any specific complaints applicants or employees file with the Mercer University's equal employment opportunity office. The Associate Vice President for Human Resources [1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, GA 31207, phone (478) 301-2786] is the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer and is responsible for monitoring and coordinating compliance with this policy and applicable laws and regulations, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Executive Order 11246, and along with Mercer University's Title IX Coordinator, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Mercer University Mission

-To teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve.

In fulfilling this mission, the University supports undergraduate, graduate and professional learning as well as basic research and its application in service to others.

As a university committed to excellence and innovation, Mercer challenges members of its community to meet and exceed high standards in their teaching, learning, research, scholarship and service.

Founded by Baptists in 1833, Mercer is an independent university that remains grounded in a tradition that embraces freedom of the mind and spirit, cherishes the equal worth of every individual, and commits to serving the needs of humankind. As a reflection of this heritage:

- We encourage our students to discover and develop fully their unique combination of gifts and talents to become leaders who make a positive difference in the world.
- We seek to inspire members of our community to live virtuous and meaningful lives by using their gifts and talents to serve the needs of humankind as an expression of their love for God and neighbor.
- We seek to enrich the mind and spirit by promoting and facilitating an open and rigorous search for truth and understanding, including an examination of the moral, religious and ethical questions of this and every age.
- We affirm and respect the dignity and sacred worth of every person and celebrate both our commonalities and our differences.

School of Medicine Vision, Mission and Values

Mission

To educate physicians and health professionals to meet the primary care and health care needs of rural and medically underserved areas of Georgia.

Vision

To resolve the grand challenges of rural health through education, research, and community engagement.

Values

- Integrity – Honesty. Professionalism. Accountability.
- Respect – Empathy. Civility. Transparency.
- Excellence – Service. Quality. Commitment.
- Diversity – Inclusive. Welcoming. Fair.
- Collaboration – Three Campuses. One School Community.

Goals

- Lead the state in educating physicians and health professionals who practice in rural areas.
- Provide leadership to help find solutions to the grand challenges in rural health.
- Be a great place to work, learn, and teach.
- Secure resources to enable investment in research, teaching, and community engagement.

Master of Family Therapy Program Mission Statement

Adopted: 2015, Last revision: 2018/2021

The Mercer University School of Medicine Masters of Family Therapy (MFT) program mission is to transform MFT students into competent, compassionate and ethical professionals who work collaboratively to meet the needs of individuals, couples, families and communities, including the rural and underserved. Emphasizing interactive and innovative teaching strategies, our student-centered faculty provides a conceptual and practical foundation that equips graduates to be discerning consumers and innovative producers of knowledge across a variety of medical and other clinical settings, as well as academic institutions. This foundation prepares clinicians to articulate and utilize a wide variety of philosophical perspectives, theoretical orientations, and clinical modalities, all with sensitivity and responsiveness to diverse contextual factors that impact therapist and client systems, as well as institutions and communities in which they participate. Through scholarship and clinical outreach, students and faculty work closely to have local, regional, national, and global impact.

Master of Family Therapy Program Goals

Last revision: 2017

Mercer MFT students, graduates, and faculty will:

1. Infuse systemic/relational and biopsychosocial/spiritual perspectives into academic work, clinical activities, service, and scholarship.
2. Recognize, articulate and be responsive to influences of diversity and contextual factors in academic work, clinical activities, service, and scholarship with a focus on building a program climate of safety, respect, and social responsibility (for all people, including diverse, marginalized, and/or underserved communities).
3. Adhere to legal and ethical regulatory standards in order to competently address moral/ethical/legal decisions faced by therapists, clients, supervisors, other health professionals, and/or scholars.
4. Conceptualize from a variety of theoretical and empirically informed frameworks and practice consistently from a chosen perspective (either pure or integrated) across clinical settings, diverse client populations, and presenting problems.
5. Have local, national, and/or global influence through reciprocal interdisciplinary scholarship, clinical outreach, and/or service learning projects.
6. Display both interpersonal and professional competence within clinical activities, service, scholarship, and collaboration with colleagues.

Master of Family Therapy Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

Last revision: 2017

*Some objectives will be measured by specific assignments, others by evaluations from peers, faculty, supervisors, site directors, etc., and/or portfolio activities.

Recognizing that full mastery of clinical core competencies is not expected until several years after graduation or at the time of full licensure, the following are expected learning outcomes for students

graduating from the Mercer MFT program.

KNOWLEDGE: SLO1 - Students have the basic core competencies to infuse systemic and biopsychosocial/spiritual perspectives into their academic work, clinical activities, service, and scholarship.

Objectives:

1.1. Students are able to identify and articulate the core concepts of systems theory and how to operate from a systemic/relational perspective.
1.2. Students can apply core concepts of systems theory to the clinical treatment of individuals, couples, families, and communities.
1.3. Students are able to assess and identify all of the components of the biopsychosocial/spiritual perspective.
1.4. Students can apply all components of the biopsychosocial/spiritual perspective to the conceptualization and treatment of individuals, couples, families, and communities.
1.5. Students can identify and articulate the intersection between neuroscience and interpersonal processes that shape human behavior and influence therapeutic interactions.

DIVERSITY: SLO2 - Students have the basic core competencies to recognize, articulate, and be responsive to influences of diversity and contextual factors in academic work, clinical activities, service and scholarship, in particular with diverse, marginalized, and/or underserved communities.

Objectives:

2.1. Students can identify and articulate how self of the therapist contextual and diversity factors may influence clinical activities and scholarship.
2.2. Students can describe how self of therapist own contextual and diversity factors intersect with peers, colleagues, and larger sociocultural groups.
2.3. Students can identify and articulate their own power and privilege within their social location.
2.4. Students can identify culturally competent practices in the current literature and integrate these practices into clinical activities and scholarship.
2.5. Students will participate in and reflect upon clinical activities and service learning projects that encourage cultural humility and responsiveness in the world around them, particularly with diverse, marginalized, and/or underserved communities.
2.6. Students will positively contribute to the creation of a safe and inclusive space that celebrates diversity, individuality, and the uniqueness of the human experience.

ETHICS: SLO3 - Students have the basic core competencies to adhere to legal and ethical regulatory standards in order to competently address moral/ethical/legal decisions faced by therapists, clients, supervisors, other health professionals, and/or scholars.

Objectives:

3.1. Students can identify and explain the role of ethics, values, and the law in various ethical issues, including the principles and sub principles of the most recent AAMFT Code of Ethics.
--

3.2. Students can summarize and evaluate a personal framework for ethical decision-making processes.
3.3. Students can apply ethics, values, and the law to the treatment of individuals, couples, families, and communities.
3.4. Students can create and defend a developed position on the issue of moral responsibility in psychotherapy.
3.5. Students can articulate and explain the requirements for Georgia MFT licensure as well as laws that govern the practice of Georgia MFTs, and understand that these requirements may be different in other states.

PRACTICE SLO4 - Students have the basic core competencies to conceptualize from a variety of theoretical and empirically informed frameworks and practice consistently from a chosen perspective across clinical settings, diverse client populations, and presenting problems.

Objectives:

4.1. Students have the conceptual knowledge to identify and understand theories from family science and human development fields that explain human behavior, healthy functioning, and social relationships.
4.2. Students can compare and contrast theories from family science and human development fields that explain human behavior, healthy functioning, and social relationships.
4.3. Students can identify and summarize models and theories from the MFT field.
4.4. Students can compare and contrast between MFT theories and models.
4.5. Students can demonstrate the ability to integrate larger family science and human development theories with MFT models and theories.
4.6. Students can articulate, defend, and apply a chosen theoretical perspective for clinical practice, which includes describing when and how theoretical models will be integrated across clinical settings, diverse client populations, and presenting problems.

RESEARCH: SLO5 - Students have the basic core competencies to be discerning consumers and producers of empirical research and/or program evaluation in their scholastic work and clinical services.

Objectives:

5.1. Students are aware of the current scholarship related to clinical practice.
5.2. Students can understand and articulate the use of a variety of research methodologies pertaining to clinical practice.
5.3. Students can critique professional research and assess for quality and applicability to clinical practice, including the influences of social position.
5.4. Students can design and implement a research informed process to determine the effectiveness of clinical practice and techniques.
5.5. Students can demonstrate and explain how clinical conceptualizations are informed by empirical research and/or evidenced based practice.

SLO6 - Students have the basic core competencies to display both interpersonal and professional competence within clinical activities, service, scholarship, as well as collaborate with colleagues in order to practice in a variety of settings and with diverse populations.

Objectives:

6.1. Students can demonstrate the ability to give and receive constructive feedback with peers, colleagues, faculty, and clients - especially when faced with interpersonal conflict and/or perceived differences.
6.2. Students can demonstrate the ability to regulate emotions and manage stress through the use of self-care strategies, use of therapy services, and appropriate communication with peers and faculty members.
6.3. Students can demonstrate the ability to complete the appropriate Georgia licensure application.
6.4. Students can successfully complete the MFT practice licensure exam.
6.5. Students can demonstrate professional presentation skills, including educational workshops and/or poster/research presentations, to peers, colleagues, faculty, community partners, and/or scholarly associations.
6.6. Students can demonstrate basic clinical skills including building an alliance, assessment, treatment planning, goals formation, session management, and tracking therapeutic progress.

MUSM Diversity

MUSM Definition of Diversity:

MUSM adopts a definition of diversity that embraces race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, religion, and sexual orientation, social and cultural attributes, rural or metropolitan background, and disability. The definition of diversity also includes life experiences, record of service and employment, and other talents and personal attributes that can enhance the scholarly and learning environment.

MUSM Diversity Statement:

From MUSM Student Handbook

Approved December 4, 2012 by the MUSM Executive Council/Reaffirmed on November 26, 2019

Mercer University School of Medicine is privileged to be located in Georgia, a state with a unique, diverse, and evolving heritage. Mercer is committed to serving Georgia by educating physicians and other healthcare professionals to meet the healthcare needs of the state's medically underserved.

Mercer University School of Medicine believes that an environment of inclusiveness, equal opportunity, acceptance, and respect for the similarities and differences in our community is essential for excellence in the fulfillment of our mission. An atmosphere where differences are valued leads to the training of a culturally competent healthcare workforce qualified to meet the needs of the varied populations of our state and enhances the development of professionalism in our students. Further, we believe that institutional diversity fuels the scholarly advancement of knowledge in an atmosphere of free inquiry and expression.

The School of Medicine adopts a definition of diversity that embraces race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, social and cultural attributes, rural or metropolitan background, and disability. The definition of diversity also includes life experiences, record of service and employment, and other talents and personal attributes that can enhance the scholarly and learning environment.

The School of Medicine seeks to attain a diverse learning environment through the recruitment, enrollment, hiring, and retention/graduation of students, faculty, staff, and leadership who meet this definition of diversity. We also seek to deliberately and thoughtfully utilize the benefits of diversity in our interactive, team-based educational programs.

MFT Program Diversity

Information about the diversity of program students, faculty and supervisors is found online at [Information Regarding the Diversity of Students, Faculty and Supervisors](#).

MFT Program Definition of Diversity

Adopted February 2020, Revised June 2021

Diversity encompasses the unique contextual dynamics and spectrum of human experience that exist with regard to race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, age, religious and spiritual beliefs and practices, ethnicity, relationship status, political views, socio-economic status, immigration status, and health status. This definition of diversity includes life experiences, history of service and employment, and other talents and personal attributes that enhance the scholarly and learning environment of our community. Diversity contributes to the richness and complexities of individuals, relationships, and human experiences.

MFT Program Diversity Statement

Adopted: 2016, Revised: 2018/2021

As a program, we strive to create a safe and inclusive space celebrating individuality and uniqueness of the human experience. To that end, we challenge our faculty, staff, and students to examine their own power and privilege within their social location, and to develop cultural humility and responsiveness in their own lives and in their interactions with the world around them. We do this through the development of a climate of safety, respect, inclusion, and appreciation of diverse, marginalized, and underserved/underrepresented populations. We do this through an emphasis on service learning, participatory action, and social justice.

Athletic/Sports Facilities

Macon- MFT students have access to the University Center. The facility has a coffee shop, food court, indoor track, indoor pool, weight room, cardiovascular room, varsity athletic team rooms, the Trustees' Dining Room, the Presidents' Dining Room, Heritage Hall and a 3,500-seat arena. In addition, students have access to intramural fields and an outdoor pool, and equipment is available for check out. Students will be asked to show proper identification when using facilities. <https://uc.mercer.edu/>

Atlanta - Sheffield Gym, located on the Atlanta Campus of Mercer University, offers Atlanta campus MFT students a multitude of ways for you and your family to stay active. From swimming and weight training to group fitness and recreational activities, you'll be sure to find what you need here! Students will be asked to show proper identification when using facilities. <https://sheffield.mercer.edu/>

Books and Supplies

The College Store (physically located on the Macon Campus with convenient internet access at all sites) stocks textbooks and supplies. Store hours are Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., as well as Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If a book is not available in the College Store, the store will order it. Books and supplies can be ordered on line through various vendors.

Communication, Official

Email Services

Upon matriculation, students are assigned an email address. **The Mercer Email address will be utilized for all official communication and students are expected to check their email on a daily basis.** Email is the primary means of communication between students and the university, School of Medicine, and MFT Program. For your convenience you may forward your Mercer Email to a personal Email account. The University and the School will use the Mercer email address for any official e-mail correspondence to students. In the event of an emergency, Mercer will utilize multiple methods, including emergency text phone messaging and email to notify students. Some official communication may occur via postal services.

Housing Information

The Offices of Student Affairs in Macon and Atlanta maintain a list of available apartments/houses and a list of those students who wish to secure roommates. You may contact their offices at any time to inquire about housing availability. In addition, new listings are posted on the bulletin boards in the student tutorial areas. Online information about housing is found at <https://campus-living.mercer.edu/>

Library

Students in the Master of Family Therapy Program have access to several Libraries listed below. The Libraries provide resources and services, both physically and virtually, to meet the research, educational, patient/client care, and information needs of MUSM students, faculty and staff.

- The Skelton Medical Libraries (Macon, Savannah, and Columbus campuses)
- Peyton T. Anderson Learning Resources Center (Navicent Health in Macon)
- Jack Tarver Library (Macon)
- Monroe F. Swilley, Jr. Library (Atlanta)

A full range of services is provided by the Libraries' faculty and staff. Reference services are offered weekdays in person, via phone or email. Classes and workshops on a variety of technologies and topics are taught and available on request for individuals, groups, and classes.

Librarians are available to help faculty and students in their scholarly activities, including but not limited to: literature searching; document delivery and interlibrary loan; finding appropriate journals to publish in; author instructions; citation management tools.

Online information about Mercer University libraries is found at <https://about-libraries.mercer.edu/>

Parking

Macon

All motor vehicles driven on campus must be registered with the University to aid in proper identification. Parking regulations on the city streets surrounding the campus are strictly enforced by the Macon Police Department while the Campus Police Department oversees only those traffic regulations which are necessary to the function of the University and the safety of the members of its community. Students are required to register their vehicles annually during orientation. Students must park only in designated lots according to their parking sticker and in clearly defined parking spaces.

Atlanta

Parking is available on the Cecil B. Day Graduate Campus of Mercer University. Parking around the Atlanta Administration and Conference Center (AACC) Building is available for MFT students. Parking regulations are enforced by the Campus Police Department. Students are required to register their vehicle at the Campus Police Department. Students must park only in designated lots according to their parking sticker and in clearly defined parking spaces. Campus Police Department is located in the north parking lot in between the bookstore and the mailroom.

Security

Mercer University places a high priority on keeping its campuses safe for its students, employees and visitors. The Mercer Police Department has the primary responsibility for the security of the campuses. All Mercer Police officers are certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council as having met the qualifications and training requirements for police officers in Georgia. Officers are authorized to exercise law enforcement powers, including the power of arrest on all campuses. Students, employees and campus visitors are subject to all federal, state, local and campus regulations. Mercer Police officers may arrest individuals suspected of campus crimes or may detain such individuals for arrest by the local police.

The Mercer Police Department is a service-oriented department. Officers are available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Officers will provide escorts at night as a safety measure upon request. Online information is found at <https://police.mercer.edu/>

All crimes and emergencies should be reported to Mercer Police regardless of which campus or clinical site at which the incident occurred.

Macon

All disturbances in or around the Thomas Jefferson Building and other campus facilities should be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301- 2970. Campus Security is located at 1765 Winship Street and also functions as the University’s Lost and Found Department. All incidents should also be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970 to ensure proper reporting for Federal Disclosure requirements.

Atlanta

All disturbances in or around the AACC Building on Cecil B. Day and other campus facilities should be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301- 2970. Campus Security is located at 1765 Winship Street and also functions as the University’s Lost and Found Department. All incidents should also be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970 to ensure proper reporting for Federal Disclosure requirements.

All Other Campus and Clinical Sites

All disturbances in or around any clinical training site should be reported to the local facility security or local law enforcement officers.

Student Support Services

Numerous student resources can be found at <https://studentlife.mercer.edu/>. Please note that students on the Atlanta campus of the MFT Program will utilize most resources in the Macon list because the School of Medicine is a Macon campus-based school.

Resource	Macon Students	Atlanta Students
----------	----------------	------------------

	Macon Campus	Atlanta Campus	Macon Campus	Atlanta Campus
Bookstore	X	X	X	X
Counseling and Psychological Services	X			X
Registrar	X		X	
Office of Admissions	X		X	
Office of Financial Planning	X		X	
Library	X	X	X	X
Office of Student Affairs	X		X	

Office of Academic Affairs

The Office of Academic Affairs oversees all aspects of the curriculum including development, revision, quality, delivery, and outcomes. This work is largely done through the direction of the Deans for Academic Affairs on each campus and through the faculty driven and student guided committees and sub-committees of Academic Affairs and the respective programs within the medical school.

Each academic program within the medical school is responsible for the management and oversight of their respective curriculum. Students are advised to reference their specific program of study manual for further details on the academic policies affecting them.

Academic Success Coaches, in collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, work with students who request or are identified as needing assistance academically. This assistance is provided through one-on-one counselling sessions and include developing study strategies, improving test taking techniques, and developing time management habits which can improve student performance in the classroom and life.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The Mission of the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#) at Mercer University is to cultivate a holistic learning environment dedicated to diversity and inclusion in an ever-evolving global society. The Vision is to raise awareness of diversity initiatives at Mercer University and create a culture of acceptance, equity, justice, and access for all Mercerians. Training and workshops are available in:

- Micro-aggressions - This workshop will help participants identify and define microaggressions. Participants will be provided tools, strategies and resources to help address and mitigate microaggressions.
- Bias - This workshop focuses on the implicit attitudes or stereotypes that shape how we engage others and make decisions. The session provides an understanding of how bias is formed in our unconscious, and specifically focuses on implicit bias in higher education.
- Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education - This an interactive and thought-provoking workshop helps participants to identify concepts such as diversity, inclusion, equity and access. The goal is for participants to increase their knowledge, cultural sensitivity and while examining their inclusive practices and policies.
- Inclusive Leadership - This workshop builds awareness of the value of diversity and inclusion in higher education particularly student leadership. It explores ways to recognize and challenge unconscious biases that inhibit diversity progress. The workshop includes a range of experiential activities to engage the hearts and minds of emerging leaders on campus.
- LGBTQ+ - This workshop works in conjunction with Rainbow Connection to educate Mercerians on LGBTQ+ history, terminology and campus initiatives. The goal is to create a more accessible and

welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs oversees many of the support services required by students during the course of their graduate curriculum. These include:

1. Oversee student health compliance in accordance with university policy.
2. Serve as clearing house for housing information.
3. Assists students applying for grants and scholarships that require a letter of recommendation from the Student Affairs Dean.
4. Serve as contact source for referral and follow-up for students presenting with emotional and academic difficulties.

Online information about Student Affairs is found at <https://studentaffairs.mercer.edu/>

Office of Student Financial Planning

Financial Aid is available to eligible students in all degree programs on all campuses to help reduce the cost of education (tuition, fees and living expenses). Personnel in the MUSM Office of Financial Planning are available to help students explore the financial aid resources available to meet their individual needs. Completion of the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA) is required annually in order to qualify for federal, state and institutional programs.

Because debt management is so important to students and graduates, the financial aid office conducts financial literacy sessions to provide important information about budgeting, credit, financial resources, loan terms, repayment options, etc. to help students plan their borrowing and loan repayment. Attendance at these sessions is MANDATORY for all students who have outstanding student loan balances. In addition, personnel in the Financial Planning Office are available for individual counseling sessions. Detailed information regarding the various programs may be obtained on the MUSM website at <https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/financial-aid/>. Please contact the Financial Planning Office at musmfinancialaid@mercer.edu if you need assistance.

Office of the Registrar

All students in the MFT Program utilize services of the Macon Registrar. **Atlanta students should not contact the Atlanta Registrar. Staff in that office will not be able to address Registrar related questions for MFT students.** Located in the first floor's Dean's Suite on the Macon Campus, the Office of the Registrar serves students in all programs on all campuses in various capacities. The Registrar is in charge of student registration, enrollment, issuance of transcripts, and certification of students for graduation. Cathy Groce serves as Registrar for the School of Medicine and may be contacted at 478- 301-5137 or at musmregistrar@mercer.edu.

Academic Advising

It is the desire of the MFT Program that each student has every opportunity to succeed. Important resources in this regard are Faculty Advisors and the Mercer University Academic Resource Center.

Faculty Advisors

1. Each incoming student will be assigned an academic advisor with the MFT program. The advisors will serve as resources for information and guidance on academic and career choice issues, as well as other issues related to graduate education as requested by the students.
2. Each incoming student will have the responsibility of scheduling a brief meeting with his/her advisor within the first half of the first semester of starting the program.
3. Students may change advisors at any time upon request and program approval. Reasons for changing advisors include but are not limited to prior acquaintance and/or personality conflict. To change your advisor, you must ask another faculty member to serve in the role of your advisor and submit your request in writing to the MFT Program Director. The Program Director will notify your previous advisor of the change. It is up to the student to decide if he/she wishes to notify the previous advisor, as well, of the change.
4. The advisor will NOT have the responsibility for monitoring advisees' academic progress.
5. However, the advisor can play a valuable role in helping students proactively identify and address evolving academic problems before these problems develop into serious academic difficulties. Students are advised to meet with their advisor regularly to discuss their academic performance. Advisors will have access to advisees' academic records for the purposes of academic counseling upon request.

Academic Resource Center

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) helps Mercer University students attain academic success and degree completion by promoting independent, active, and lifelong learning, scholarly achievement, and personal development. The ARC offers resources, such as quiet study areas and a textbook library, and services, ranging from peer and professional tutoring to individual study skills consultations, to support the academic endeavors of Mercer University students. Visit the website for more information: <https://arc.mercer.edu/>. Operation Hours: Sunday 2:00pm – 3:00am; Mon. – Thurs. 8:00am – 3:00am; Fri. 8 am – 5 pm; Saturday Closed. Location: ARC is located on the first floor of the Connell Student Center, across from the Admissions Office.

Access and Accommodations Services for Students

Mercer University is committed to making all of its programs, services and activities fully accessible to all students. Students requesting accommodations for a diagnosed physical, medical (chronic health condition), psychological or learning disability and temporary injuries must first self-identify by applying for accommodations with the [Office of Access and Accommodation](#). Student requests are reviewed on an individual case-by-case basis, after the submission of application, documentation and completion of an interview, in the order received. Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive in nature.

The Office of Access and Accommodation also offers voter registration information and assistance.

How to Apply for Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations must complete the verification process as outlined:

Verification Process

1. Students disclose a disability by completing the online application requesting accommodations found at <https://access.mercer.edu/students/new/>.
2. Students submit documentation from a qualified provider (to assist in gathering documentation you may download our disability verification form and have your treating professional complete).

Healthcare providers must note specifically what accommodations are needed for both the classroom and the clinical environment.

3. Meet with the Director/Coordinator for the School of Medicine (MD students) or the University (Graduate students) to discuss experiences, needs, and requested accommodations.

4. Following the review of all information meet with Director/Coordinator to discuss approval of accommodations (accepting accommodations and acknowledging policies and procedures), how the accommodations work and the process to implement in the learning environment and the testing environment.

Each semester - approved students must request their approved accommodations by logging into "Accommodate" and completing a semester request for accommodation forms. Student must meet with faculty/coordinators following the delivery of the accommodation form to discuss the implementation of the accommodations.

Change of Accommodation Requests:

At any time, students may request a change of accommodations by logging into their "Accommodate" account and submit a new accommodation request. Students will identify the requested accommodation and provide a description of the need related to their disability. Following the submitted request the Office of Access will review the request and documentation on file. Please know that additional discussions with the student may be requested as well as additional documentation and accommodations are not provided retroactively. Please know that depending on the time of year requests may take longer to review due to the volume of students applying. Students should contact the Access Office as early as possible (ideally just after acceptance) to begin our process.

Appeal of Accommodation Decision:

Students can appeal the decision of accommodations from the Office of Access through an appeal to the Dean of Student Affairs. An appeal should be submitted in writing and include requested accommodation and description of the need as it relates to the students disability.

Report Physical Access Barriers

Please report any problems for physical access, such as non-working elevators, to the Office of Access and Accommodation immediately. Students who believe they have been discriminated against or denied access to a program or service because of a disability should contact the Office of Access and Accommodation. Further information on policies, procedures and documentation requirements may be obtained by contacting the Director of Access and Accommodation at 478-301-2810. Students in the School of Medicine may contact the Dean of Student Affairs at 478-301-2531. Additional information including Disability Grievance Procedures may be found at <http://access.mercer.edu>.

Career Advising

MFT faculty integrate discussions concerning current and future career opportunities for graduates throughout their academic experience. The Professional Development Seminar Series specifically addresses numerous career related topics including but not limited to the licensure process, professional communication skills, managing conflict in the workplace, and making professional presentations. As job openings are brought to the attention of the faculty, these are shared with currently graduating students and/or alumni depending upon the stated qualifications of the position. Position openings are also posted on the bulletin board at the Mercer Family Therapy Centers. A network of contact is maintained with graduates, MFT educators and clinicians, and professional organizations such as AAMFT and GAMFT,

which facilitates awareness of available positions in the field of marriage and family therapy. Web access to AAMFT may be found at <https://www.aamft.org/> and web access to GAMFT may be found at <https://www.gamft.org/>.

College Study Skills Online

College Study Skills Online is designed to provide all Mercer University students with the resources needed to help themselves become better students. We encourage all students to explore the various study skills topics and to actively participate in addressing individually identified academic challenges.

Food Services (*Macon only)

MFT students have the option of purchasing a meal ticket through the Mercer University Cafeteria located in the Connell Student Center. Several plans are available and can be discussed by contacting the Food Management Services Director at extension 2925.

Insurance Coverage

Health Insurance

Due to the continuing need for all students to have adequate health care coverage, Mercer University **requires** that all Macon, Atlanta, Savannah and Columbus Campus students provide proof of health insurance coverage **each semester**. If you do not currently have health insurance, it is imperative that you acquire coverage before the beginning of your studies at Mercer.

Students are automatically charged by the University for health insurance every time they register for classes. Those students who already have health care coverage through other sources may have this charge removed from their account. This charge can be removed by completing the online waiver form before the end of the waiver period. To complete the waiver process, go to <https://bursar.mercer.edu/studentinsurance/> Students must complete the waiver before the stated deadline. Failure to complete this form before the deadline will result in insurance being purchased for you and charged to your account.

Malpractice Insurance

When students participate in clinical experiences that are approved as part of their program training they will be covered by the School's malpractice insurance policy. In addition to the formal curriculum, MUSM recognizes that other experiences and activities contribute to the education and development of a physician and health care professionals. The experiences and activities include but are not limited to shadowing of physicians and health-care professionals, participation in hospital and community health care and wellness activities, participation in charitable health care organizations such as free clinics, and participation in faith-based and non-faith-based medical functions such as medical missionary trips. Students are expected to participate in such activities and the Medical School considers these to be approved curricular activities.

Online Writing Lab (OWL)

The Online Writing Lab is staffed by professional tutors who can assist you with your writing for any course. Appointments are not required. The OWL is accessible through the Canvas course management system. To obtain access to the service, students must self-enroll in the OWL in Canvas. Successfully registered students will find the Online Writing Lab course listed among their other registered courses. Canvas allows students to

submit papers and receive comments from professional writing tutors, all within a secure, password-protected system. See this [link](#) for additional information.

Student Health Services

Student Health Center

The Student Health Center (SHC) provides health services for all Mercer students, regardless of insurance coverage. Care can be provided regardless of a student's location via telehealth. SHC is considered the primary healthcare provider for students that have the school insurance. Students who have this insurance should contact the SHC if appointments or referrals are needed prior to seeking other medical attention unless after hours or in cases of emergency. The SHC provides many services including health care for acute illnesses and injuries, allergy injections, immunizations, women's health, health education and various physical exams. Some students may be referred, depending on the illness/injury, at the discretion of the Student Health Center staff. The SHC can be reached at 478-301-2696 or studenthealthmacon@mercer.edu.

All students of the School of Medicine utilize the student health services located on the Macon campus for oversight of immunization and physical examination documentation.

Students on the **Macon campus** should use the SHC, which is located inside the Field House at 1327 Stadium Drive (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m). Two full-time registered nurses, one full-time nurse practitioner, one part-time family physician, and one part-time OB/GYN staff the clinic. Students may present to the nearest emergency room for after hours emergencies.

Students on the **Savannah campus** are served by South Coast Medical Group, which is 1.6 miles from the medical school campus. The office is open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. South Coast is a multi-specialty group with over 120 healthcare professionals. Students may present to the nearest emergency room for after hours emergencies.

Students on the **Columbus campus** are served by Mercer Medicine Harris County located at 138 N College Street in Hamilton, Georgia (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m) or by Piedmont UrgentCare – Uptown located at 101 13th Street, Suite 200 (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ; Saturday – Sunday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.) Students may present to the nearest emergency room for after hours emergencies.

Clinical care shall not be rendered by clinicians who will evaluate the academic performance of students seeking care. Clinicians who have rendered care to students will be required to disclose this information if asked to complete an academic evaluation and that evaluation will be excluded from the student's record. Additionally, students may report any potential conflict of interest that arises from the physician-student relationship to Academic Records. At no time will students seeking care be examined by fellow students that may be rotating through a clinician's office nor do students complete clinical rotations at the SHC.

Mental Health Services

Mercer University faculty and staff recognize that mental health concerns can impact academic performance and interfere with daily life activities. Because stress is a normal part of the educational experience, learning to manage stress effectively is crucial to your well-being and overall success. It is not uncommon for students to experience heightened levels of stress, insecurity and in some cases anxiety and depression while attending medical and graduate school. Under such circumstances it is a sign of strength for a person to seek help. In recognition of this, MUSM provides confidential psychology and counseling services at no charge to the student.

If experiencing academic difficulties resulting from stress please also notify your faculty member or academic advisor for academic assistance, as needed.

In order to protect confidential student health information, MUSM provides psychology care providers at sites separate from the teaching environment.

The following resources are available to students:

- **All Students:** Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 478-301-2862
CAPS can provide support if you're feeling anxious, overwhelmed, depressed, lost or are struggling with personal issues. Please call or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\) website](#) for more information. These services are free and confidential, and support non-traditional, graduate, and undergraduate students. Students may access CAPS at the location of their academic program: MACON – Counseling Center (formerly the Honors House), 478-301-2862; ATLANTA – 215 Sheffield Student Center, 678-547-6060. Students at other campuses can contact CAPS or other resources available on each campus.
- **Macon:** Coliseum Health System Life-Line (Macon), 800-548-4221
- **Savannah:** Robbins, Course and Associates, 912-665-6989
- **Columbus:** Pastoral Institute, 706-649-6500

The Deans of Student Affairs are available at all times if the student prefers.

- **Macon:** Dr. Candi Nobles-James, 478-301-2531 (daytime), 478-228-7678 (after hours)
- **Savannah:** Dr. Jane Kirkpatrick, 912-721-8146 (daytime), 828-429-1131 (after hours)
- **Columbus:** Dr. Kathleen Hughes, 706-223-5232 (daytime), 352-281-0985 (after hours)
- **School-wide:** Dr. Alice House, 706-223-5179 (daytime), 478-258-1573 (after hours)

Feel free to call any dean regardless of your campus affiliation.

If you believe you are in need of emergency care, call 911 or report to the nearest hospital emergency room or may call or text **988 to reach the National Suicide & Crisis Line**.

At MUSM, we have established a Crisis Support Line to help our students who may be experiencing a physical or mental health crisis across all of our campuses and programs. It is available 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. You can call the 24-hour **Crisis Support Line at 1-888-291-5802** for any urgent medical or mental health issue.

Students on any campus that are in crisis are instructed to call this toll-free number and they will be connected directly with a medical provider (e.g. MD or NP) who will assess the student's immediate needs. The provider will then connect the student with resources available on their specific campus or in their local community (e.g. local urgent care clinic, CAPS, etc.).

Within 48 hours of accessing the Crisis Support Line, the student will be contacted directly by a medical provider from Student Health to ensure that the appropriate course of action was taken to maximize the student's wellbeing.

Information about personal problems with substance abuse shared in a student-initiated request for assistance or shared with a personal therapist, whether a Mercer employee or not, will be treated as confidential information and will not be used in retention and/or promotion decisions.

When students are in academic difficulty and professional and behavioral lapses are identified by the School

and where evaluation and treatment are components of a School/student approved plan of action, it is expected that the student will permit the therapist to report whether or not the student is participating in the approved plan. The therapist's judgment will not be sought regarding the student's suitability to practice medicine, nor will completion of a treatment plan or failure to complete a treatment plan be the sole reason for a retention or promotion decision.

Wellness

The Student Wellness Program is designed to help MUSM students achieve and maintain optimal wellbeing. Beginning during first year orientation, the Wellness Program addresses five specific aspects of student wellbeing, including physical, emotional, spiritual, academic/professional and financial. Additional sessions occur during each Bears Prepare Student Affairs ½ Days which occur each semester of Years 1, 2, and 3. The Wellness program also provides a monthly Wellness Connection column in the Student Newsletter on topics chosen and authored by students. Additionally, the Wellness Program delivers Wellness Coffee Breaks on a quarterly basis. Topics discussed at these sessions are primarily student-driven.

Wellness is not simply the absence of illness, but rather the state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal. At MUSM, we believe wellness is an important goal for each of our students and we strive to nurture positive health behaviors to not only benefit students while they are in graduate or professional school, but throughout their lives and careers.

Medical and graduate education mark a pivotal period in the life of students and it is vitally important to ensure that both professional and personal growth is being nurtured during this time. When students experience intense academic pressure, many are inclined to give up all other activities that compete with academics — even activities of great personal importance. However, an essential aspect of becoming a professional is learning to take care of one's own health and maintaining an appropriate work-life balance. Taking care of oneself allows one to perform optimally in both their personal and professional endeavors.

The primary mission of this program is to develop and implement practices that improve the wellness of all students in the medical school through collaboration with various campus resources, including student health, chaplain services, and counseling/psychological services.

The Student Wellness Committee will consist of volunteer student wellness chairs and AIMSS representatives from each program within MUSM as well as the Wellness Director, The Dean and Associate Deans of Student Affairs, and the Associate Director of Student Affairs, who together will develop and implement the various programs throughout the year. Additionally, the student representatives on the Wellness Committee will serve as liaisons between the student body and the Wellness Program as a way to ensure that the wants and needs of our student interests in wellness are being met.

Goals

MUSM's Wellness Program is designed with specific goals to address the many needs of our diverse student body. The goals for this program are clearly outlined below.

Goals of the Wellness Program:

1. Promote the overall health and wellbeing of students in various target areas
2. Facilitate student learning of lifelong healthy habits and the potential impact of these behaviors
3. Foster professional development/identity of our students to include positive health behaviors
4. Model positive health behaviors which students can then incorporate in their future careers

Dimensions of Wellness

Mercer University School of Medicine's Wellness Program promotes five dimensions of wellness including Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Academic & Professional and Financial. The goal is to strive for balance in each dimension.



Physical Wellness- This dimension of Wellness is focused on freedom from illness, disease and the need for medications as well as the ability to function and regularly participate safely in a variety of activities. This area of Wellness will also include maintaining a balance natural diet and regular sleeping habits.

Emotional Wellness- This dimension of Wellness will help bring awareness to one's feelings and learning how to express one's emotions constructively. Students will have opportunities to learn about stress reduction, self-care, and the development of inner strength. An important aspect of emotional wellness is developing good communication skills and cultivating a support network of caring friends, family members and colleagues.

Spiritual Wellness- This dimension of Wellness will focus on helping our students reflect on the meaning of events in life and developing a strong sense of purpose. Students will have opportunities to connect with their faith, beliefs, values, ethics, principles and morals in meaningful ways.

Academic & Professional Wellness- This area of Wellness is to help our students in preparing and making use of their skills and talents in order to gain purpose, happiness and enrichment in their professional lives. The development of occupational satisfaction and wellness is related to one's attitude about their work.

Financial Wellness- This area of Wellness is to help our students obtain a state of financial well-being where they experience minimal financial stress, learn how to establish a strong financial foundation (e.g. minimize debt, budget etc.), and assist them in creating a plan that puts them on track to meet their future financial goals.

University-Wide Policies

Some policies are currently undergoing revision and the most recent version on the website should be followed.

Policies of the University govern all students of the university regardless of their School of Program affiliation. All University policies as noted below can be found in the Mercer University Student Handbook at <http://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks/>.

Accreditation
Federal Disclosure Requirements
Mission
Academic Integrity
ACCESS and Accommodation
Attendance
Bicycle, Rollerblade, and Skateboard Policy
Cell Phones and Pagers
Children and Guests
Communication, Official
Community of Respect
Conduct, Off Campus Behavior
Conduct, University Student Code of Conduct
Crime, Awareness and Campus Security
Crime, Campus Statistics
Crime, Reporting Crimes and Emergencies
Drug and Alcohol Policy
Drug Free Workplace and Campus Program
Emergency Preparedness Plan
Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy
Firearms, Weapons, Fireworks/ Explosives
Grievance Policies and Procedures
Health and Welfare of Students, Mental and Physical
Health Insurance
Honor System
Housing without Active Enrollment
Immunization
Information Technology
Intellectual Property
International Students
Missing Student
Motorized Vehicle
Parking and Traffic Regulations
Religious Observance
Rights of Students
Rights Pertaining to Educational Records
Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy
Tobacco and Smoke Free Environment
Voter Registration Requirements of the Higher Education Amendments
Withdrawals, Administrative or Medical

Statement of Institutional Standards of Behavior

Mercer University School of Medicine, consistent with accreditation standards and Mercer University policies and procedures, creates and maintains an educational community that fosters learning, nurtures learners and is a learning environment in which students, faculty and staff can work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. (For the purpose of this statement, relationships in the educational community include unequal power [teacher-learner or learner-teacher] as well as equal power [teacher-teacher or learner-learner] relationships).

Conduct such as violence, sexual harassment, and inappropriate discrimination based on personal characteristics are inherently destructive and will not be tolerated. Other patterns of unacceptable behavior by MFT faculty, staff, and students include habitual demeaning or derogatory comments that are belittling, insensitive, and/or crude; destructive criticism; student humiliation or dehumanization; rejection and alienation.

While the School recognizes the need for effective and constructive feedback/criticism as a part of the learning process, feedback does not have to be demeaning or dehumanizing.

Examples of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors in the learning environment are:

- Physical punishment or physical threats
- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, or disability
- Repeated episodes of psychological punishment of a student by a particular superior or equal (e.g. public humiliation, dehumanization, belittlement or derogatory comments, threats, intimidation, rejection, alienation, and removal of privileges)
- Grading or attention used to show favoritism or to punish a student rather than to evaluate objective performance
- Assigning tasks for punishment rather than educational purposes
- Requiring the performance of personal services
- Taking credit for another individual's work
- Intentional lack of communication
- Repeated annoying or humiliating conduct which offends a reasonable person to whom the conduct was obviously directed, including but not limited to, gestures, facial expressions, speech or physical contact or repeated inappropriate telephone or e-mail messages.
- Hate based language and activities

In keeping with this statement of standards of behavior, a concerted effort must be made to provide employees and students with an environment free of all forms of mistreatment and harassment.

Accusations of violations of this policy are serious and can have far reaching effects on the careers and lives of individuals. Allegations must be made in good faith and not out of malice. Any retaliatory action will be a violation of this policy.

Standard on Student Harassment and Abuse

Standards of Teacher-Learner Relationships

The University's guarantees of academic freedom presuppose that members of the faculty will act in a

professional responsible manner. The University expects that members of the faculty will be governed by the American Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics (1987), which declares;

“II. As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals, and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that their evaluation of students reflect each student’s true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment or disciplinary treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.”

In like fashion, students are expected to adhere to high standards of professional conduct. Students are to make every effort to behave respectfully towards faculty, staff, and peers. They should willingly take responsibility for their behavior. They should not make inappropriate demands or become abusive and critical during times of stress. MFT students should be able to accept criticism, when offered appropriately. They should be able to look at themselves objectively, and take whatever steps are necessary to overcome their shortcomings.

Position

Harassment and/or abuse are not acceptable at Mercer University School of Medicine. Such behaviors threaten to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail if the School of Medicine is to fulfill its purposes. It is the responsibility of every employee and student in the School community to strive to create an environment free of harassment and abuse. Students have the right to bring grievances against a faculty member, staff member or administrator. Such matters may be academic or professional.

School Wide Policies

Policies of the School of Medicine govern all students of the School of Medicine regardless of their Program affiliation. All School of Medicine policies as noted below can be found in the Mercer University School of Medicine Student Handbook at <https://provost.mercer.edu/resources/handbooks-and-publications/>.

- Academic Integrity
- ACCESS and Accommodations/ Technical Standards
- Attendance and Participation in National Meetings
- Community of Respect
- Conduct, Off Campus Behavior
- Conduct, University Student Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Criminal Background Check
- Dress Code and Identification Badges
- Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Fireworks, Weapons, Fireworks/Explosives
- Fund Raising Policy
- Grievance Policies and Procedures
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Holidays, School of Medicine
Honor Codes, Mercer University School of Medicine
 Graduate Student Honor System
Information Technology
Leave of Absence Policy
Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment Policy
Missing Student
Religious Observance
Rights of Students
Rights Pertaining to Educational Records
Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid
Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy
Tobacco and Smoke Free Environment
Urine Drug Screen Policy

MFT Program Policies

AAMFT Membership

Students are required to become student members in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) and the Georgia Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (GAMFT). Membership is required both for the professional advantages provided as well as for possible enhancement of job opportunities. To become a member of AAMFT please see AAMFT's website (www.aamft.org) and be sure to select GAMFT in the geographic interest networks section.

Intern therapists will be kept informed concerning dates for the Associations' chapter and meetings as well as national conventions. Therapists-in-training are encouraged to attend these meetings as volunteers, presenters, or both as a means of providing additional clinical instruction and valuable networking opportunities. These meetings are an opportunity for personal, professional, and clinical skill development. While not required, these are very good opportunities to earn continuing education required for graduation. Support for attendance at these conferences is sometimes available (but never guaranteed), and is linked to students' serving as conference volunteers or presenters. Students who volunteer to work at the national and state conferences are often provided free or reduced conference fees.

Academic Advising

Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. The advisor will assist students in selecting courses, devising strategies to meet career objectives, recommending resolutions to academic problems, and completing professional development and portfolio requirements. The advisor is to meet with the student to establish a written program of study outlining the course sequence that best fits with the student's capabilities and circumstances. The advisor is also to meet with the student on a regular basis to ensure progress toward graduation requirements including completion of professional development and portfolio requirements. The Program of Study Form is stored in the student's academic file.

Academic Calendar

The MFT Program is a year-round (fall, spring, and summer) professional degree program. Its academic calendar can be found in the School of Medicine Catalog. Referencing this catalog is particularly important to students on the Atlanta campus of the program who may otherwise mistakenly seek information related to Atlanta campus programs. Mercer University School of Medicine reserves the right to make changes to this calendar.

Academic Year 2024 – 2025

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Registration	August 16
First Day of Classes	August 19
Last Day of Drop/Add	August 26
Labor Day	September 2
Last Day for Course Withdrawal	October 23
Thanksgiving Holiday	November 28-29
Finals	December 2-6
Last Day of Classes	December 6

SPRING SEMESTER 2025

Registration	January 3
First Day of Classes	January 6
MLK Jr. Holiday	January 20
Last Day of Drop/Add	January 13
Application for Spring/Summer Graduation Due	January 31
Last Day for Course Withdrawal	March 12
Good Friday	April 18
Finals	April 21-25
Last Day of Classes	April 25
Commencement	May 3

SUMMER SEMESTER 2025

Registration	May 2
First Day of Classes	May 5
Last Day of Drop/Add	May 12
Memorial Day	May 26
Last Day for Course Withdrawal	June 22
Independence Day Holiday	July 4
Finals	July 21-25
Last Day of Classes	July 25

Academic Integrity

From Mercer University and Mercer University School of Medicine Student Handbooks

Mercer University strives to be a community of respect that includes respect for academic integrity. Students operate under an honor system and will exhibit the values of honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness regarding all academic matters. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to report any violations in the forms of, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty to the honor council appropriate for their campus and program.

Procedures related to Honor Systems and Academic Integrity are outlined in the specific handbooks for each campus and can be found on the Provost website at <https://provost.mercer.edu/resources/handbooks-and-publications/>.

Academic Performance Standards

A cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 is one of the requirements for graduation from the MFT Program. In addition to meeting the 3.0 GPA requirement for graduation, Masters students may have no more than two grades of “C” and/or “C+” in the entire graduate work. Grades below a “C” do not count toward a degree. Students not meeting the minimum academic standards will be placed on Academic Warning, Academic Probation, or Academic Exclusion as defined below. A student may repeat only one course to improve a letter grade of “C” or “C+”.

Academic Warning:

The student will be placed on academic warning upon receiving a first grade of C or C+.

Academic Probation:

The student will be placed on academic probation upon receiving a second grade of C or C+.

Academic Exclusion:

A master’s student will be permanently excluded from the program upon receiving a third letter grade of C or C+.

The academic record of these students will reflect academic exclusion, unless the student is able to avail themselves of the one opportunity provided to repeat one course in which they received a letter grade of C or C+. If a student is successful in improving the letter grade in the repeated course to a B or higher, then the student will be placed back on academic probation. Should a letter grade of C+ or lower be awarded in any course thereafter, the student will be permanently excluded from the program.

Master’s students receiving a letter grade of F will be permanently excluded from the program. Students are not permitted the retake option in a course in which they earn a letter grade of F.

Should a student file a Grade Grievance and be successful in improving any grade award, the rules for Academic Warning, Academic Probation, and Academic Exclusion as defined above will apply.

Academic Program Governance

To contribute to achievement of its mission, program goals, and student learning outcomes, students and faculty in the MUSM Master of Family Therapy Program are actively involved in program governance.

Student Role in Program Governance

It is the intention of the MUSM MFT Program that students contribute to program governance. Students are involved in student governance through the following mechanisms including, but not limited to:

- **Student Representative to the Faculty:** The Graduate Student Organization elects a Student Representative to the Faculty who participates in faculty meetings (with the exception of discussion regarding other students). The Student Representative to the Faculty solicits input from students regarding program strengths and concerns, student needs, and suggestions for improvement and represents this information to the faculty.
- **Review of Program Documents and Publications:** In the spring semester of each year, the Program Director contacts the GSO requesting review of the MFT Program Manual. The GSO Student Representative to the Faculty forwards recommendations to the Program Director for review and approval by faculty prior to inclusion in the Program Manual.
- **Written Surveys and Interviews:** Periodically, students' views and opinions are solicited by faculty through small written surveys or face-to-face interviews. Annually students complete a Program Survey, and at the end of their program of study, students are asked to complete the Program Exit Questionnaire. Both are used to inform program change. Students also provide informal feedback to faculty through spontaneous conversation.
- **Course Evaluations:** Course evaluations provide feedback that informs curriculum development, teaching strategies, and program and student outcomes. This information is used to inform changes made in the program.
- **Evaluation of Community Placement Sites**
- **Evaluation of Clinical Supervisors**

All students are encouraged to provide input through each of these mechanisms.

Faculty Role in Program Governance

The Mercer University Faculty Handbook outlines overarching authority and responsibility of the Faculty:

1.02 The University Faculty

The University Faculty consists of the President, the Provost, the Deans of the colleges and schools of the University, and all persons appointed to a full-time instructional or administrative position with the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Instructor.

The University Faculty may, subject to the approval of the President and the Board of Trustees, adopt rules concerning its own organization, governance, and procedures.

The University Faculty may consider any matter touching the effectiveness and quality of the educational program or the professional welfare of the faculty and may make recommendations to the President, the administrative officers of the University, or the collegiate faculties concerning any policies, programs or procedures which affect the educational program or faculty welfare.

1.02.1 Authority and Responsibility of the Faculty

The authority and responsibility of the faculty of Mercer University are delegated to it by the President under the authority of the Board of Trustees. Members of the faculty are appointed by the President, acting on the authority of the Board of Trustees.

The responsibilities of the faculty include the following:

1. To organize and conduct educational programs and courses of instruction in accordance with the policies of the Board of Trustees.
2. To admit candidates for degrees in accordance with the policies of the Board of Trustees.
3. To determine academic policies which effectively carry out the mission of the University within the policies of the Board of Trustees.
4. To evaluate student academic progress and to recommend candidates for degrees.
5. To assist in organizing and conducting programs and services for the support of student development.
6. To review the effectiveness of programs of instructional support and to make recommendations to the President for the improvement of these programs.
7. To contribute to the advancement of knowledge through open inquiry.
8. To make recommendations to the President concerning revision of the scope of educational programs and of the educational policies of the Board of Trustees.

In addition, the MUSM Faculty Handbook identifies duties and responsibilities of its Faculty:

1.6 Duties and Responsibilities of the Faculty

The duties and responsibilities of the Faculty shall include the following:

1.6.1 The Faculty has the authority to organize and conduct educational programs and to establish academic policies. This includes establishing the academic and admissions standards and standards for the evaluation of the academic performance of students; certifying students for graduation from the

programs of the School; and making recommendations to the Dean concerning the internal administration and the implementation of programs.

1.6.2 Faculty are expected to subscribe to the highest standards of teaching, research, and service in accordance with policies and procedures developed by the Executive Council in support of the School's academic mission, as well as the highest standards of conduct and ethical behavior.

Faculty roles in MFT Program governance include:

Program Director – The Program Director oversees and is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the MFT Program on the Macon and Atlanta campuses and represents the MFT Program to Mercer University Administration and all external communities of interest. The Program Director is responsible for achieving the goals of the program through direct oversight of the curriculum, clinical training program, fiscal and physical resources, services, and program quality.

Assistant/Associate Program Directors (Macon and Atlanta campuses) – The Assistant/Associate Program Directors are primarily responsible for clinical training, specifically through oversight of practicum, community placements, and the Mercer Family Therapy Centers. Secondary responsibility is for implementation of program curriculum and accreditation-related activities.

Clinic Coordinators (Macon and Atlanta campuses) – The Clinic Coordinators are responsible for administrative oversight of the day to day functions of the Mercer Family Therapy Centers making recommendations to the Assistant/Associate Program Directors and faculty for improvement.

Community Placement Coordinator – The Community Placement Coordinator is responsible for developing and maintaining clinical placement sites in the community with particular emphasis on site willingness and capacity to provide clinical training opportunities in systemic therapy and with diverse populations.

Faculty (Macon and Atlanta campuses) – Specific duties and responsibilities of faculty in program governance include but are not limited to:

- Teach courses in the MFT program
- Participate in faculty meetings and program reviews
- Participate in student interviews and admissions decisions
- Participate in student placement decisions
- Participate in Assessment Day
- Participate in faculty and staff hiring decisions
- Participate in curriculum development
- Participate in review and revision of program policies and procedures
- Participate in review and revision of program documents and publications
- Participate in scholarly activity
- Participate in service to the community
- Participate in oversight of the Mercer Family Therapy Centers
- Participate in program related events such as the Armour Family Therapy Lecture Series and Open House
- Participate in program, departmental, and/or university committees
- Serve as faculty advisors and mentors to students including oversight of completion of all portfolio related requirements
- Serve as Faculty Advisor to GSO Executive Committee: A faculty member attends and participates

in GSO executive committee meetings to find out needs and concerns of students and bring them back to faculty meetings

Community roles in MFT Program governance include:

Site Directors

- Orient students to community placement sites
- Train students in community placement site policies and procedures
- Provide feedback about student progress at community placement sites
- Participate as members of MFT program's Communities of Interest

Clinical Supervisors

- Participate in supervisor meetings with Assistant/Associate Program Director
- Meet weekly with assigned MFT students for individual and group supervision
- Provide feedback to students by grading assignments, using rubrics, and completing the Basic Skills Evaluation Device
- Review students' clinical cases at the MFTC and community placement sites,
- Complete training to utilize all clinical technology in practicum, such as Supervision Assist, Learning Space, and TheraNest.
- Complete grading requirements in Canvas
- Review and approve clinical and supervision activity logs in Supervision Assist

Academic Year

The academic year for all MFT Program students begins with the fall semester (16 weeks) followed by spring semester (16 weeks) and ends with summer semester (12 weeks). MFT Practicum will continue year-round (50 weeks).

Admissions

Admissions Information

Note: Admission into the MFT program does not guarantee completion of the Master of Family Therapy degree program. The Master of Family Therapy program is a professional program in which suitability and competency in the practice of marriage and family therapy is continually assessed through academic coursework and the clinical practicum experience. It is the responsibility of the clinical faculty, along with the program director, to assess each student's progress in all program areas. If, in the judgment of the clinical faculty, a student is not making satisfactory progress, one of the following or a combination of the following options may be required:

1. Additional clinical practica
2. Personal individual and/or family psychotherapy
3. Counseling out of the program into a more suitable course of study
4. Expulsion from the program

Students selecting the Master of Family Therapy must undergo a faculty review and assessment after completing twelve semester hours of academic work and/or one semester of clinical practicum. This review, by the program director and the clinical faculty, is for the purpose of assessing the student's clinical work and suitability for continuation in the Master of Family Therapy program.

Application Process

Applicants are required to submit the following admission requirements:

1. A completed graduate application form to Mercer University School of Medicine for the Master of Family Therapy program and a non-refundable fee of \$50. Apply on the [Master of Family Therapy Admissions](#) webpage. Official transcripts, sent directly from the college or university, for all college level work completed to earn a baccalaureate degree from a r e g i o n a l l y accredited college or university. If applicable, official transcripts are required for any courses or degrees completed beyond the undergraduate degree (i.e. masters and/or doctoral coursework).
2. Three letters of recommendation that speak to the applicants' academic aptitude and potential as a marriage and family therapist. Two of the three must be from either current or previous college professors and/or employers, the third may be a college professor, employer or friend.
3. A three-page (750 words), double-spaced, typewritten essay on the subject of the student's educational, career, and life goals.
4. An evaluative interview with the program faculty is required prior to acceptance.
5. An overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.50 or better, based on a 4.0 system, is required.
6. GRE Scores (optional): Applicants can choose to submit GRE scores. Official test results should be submitted to the university through ETS using the institutional code 5409 and department code 0000.
7. Scholarship Essay (optional): A 750-1000 word essay describing a personal hardship or significant life event. Further instructions in the application.

International Applicants

- Applicants who completed all or part of their education abroad are required to have their foreign educational credentials evaluated by an independent evaluation service such as [World Education Services](#) or [Educational Credential Evaluators](#). A Course-by-Course and Grade Point Average Equivalent Evaluation is required for admission
- Official reports should be submitted electronically directly from the evaluation service to musmadmissions@mercer.edu or by mail to:
MUSM Admissions, Mercer University School of Medicine, 1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, GA 31207.
- International students must also submit scores from one of the following
- TOEFL examination. The University's minimum proficiency level is a score of 20 on each section of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The minimum composite TOEFL score is 80 (Internet-Based TOEFL), 213 (Computer-Based TOEFL) or 550 (Paper-Based TOEFL).
- An IELTS score of 6.5 English proficiency
- Applicants must meet all other specific eligibility requirements and expectations as defined by the program and department.

Application Deadlines

The application deadlines for fall admissions are January 31 (early admission) and June 1. The application deadline for spring admission (contingent on space available) is November 1. Additional information is available on the [MFT Admission page](#).

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes each semester. Each class meets once per week, thus, missing one class is the equivalent of being out of school for a week. This is crucial because in a clinical training program, all materials and experiences target the development of patient care skills. However, should absences occur, the following provisions will be followed:

- For each absence: The student must submit an outline of the readings and class material for the class missed. This is to be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of the next class attended.
- 2 absences: In addition to the outline, the student must write a paper on the topic missed; the instructor must approve the length and content of the paper.
- 3 absences: In addition to the outline and the paper, the student will experience an automatic grade reduction by one letter grade.
- 4 absences: In addition to the outline and the paper, the student will not be awarded a grade of higher than a C.
- 5 absences: The student will automatically be awarded a grade of F.

Course instructors may exercise discretion to the above policy when absences are pre-approved or excused by the instructor. An excused absence is an absence that occurs due to personal illnesses, accidents, injuries, emergencies, etc. Students are expected to inform the instructor before class of the impending absence.

Changes in Program or Major

If a student enters as a non-degree seeking student and then decides to change to the degree-seeking program, he/she must meet the following requirements:

1. Have a GPA of at least 3.0 in all courses taken in the Program at that time.
2. Have demonstrated a record of academic, professional, and personal integrity.
3. Have completed all pre-requisite requirements of the Program to which admission is sought.
4. Complete a comprehensive interview with faculty advisor.

Climate of Safety, Respect, Inclusion, and Appreciation

The Mercer MFT Program is committed to a climate of safety, respect, inclusion, and appreciation. This commitment is evident in our curriculum and learning experiences, process of governance, evaluations of students, faculty, and program, and in the mission of both the MFT Program and the School of Medicine. Safety, respect, inclusion, and appreciation are evaluated each year in the Annual Program Survey for the overall program. At the individual level, faculty, supervisors, instructors, site directors, Clinic Coordinators, and the Program Director are also evaluated in the pursuit of this program commitment. In accordance with accreditation standards and COAMFTE, the MFT Program reviews annual three primary areas pertaining to safety, respect, inclusion, and appreciate, which include the following: 1) providing a multiculturally-informed educational experience, 2) ensuring a climate of safety, respect, and appreciation, and 3) supporting experiences with diverse, marginalized, and/or underserved communities.

For additional information about the commitment to a climate of safety, respect, inclusion, and appreciate see the Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment Policy below.

Clinical Presentations

Toward the end of a student's practicum experience, he or she will present a theory of therapy and change paper and representative video/audio clips of related clinical work to MFT faculty and students. This Clinical Presentation is evaluated using a rubric and a passing score is determined by the average of faculty members' scores. Successful completion of this presentation is a requirement for graduation.

Course Cancellation

The School of Medicine reserves the right to cancel a scheduled course due to unforeseen circumstances or if an insufficient number of students enroll for the course. Faculty advisors will assist students in the selection of alternative courses when a course is cancelled.

Course Changes

Adding and/or dropping courses must be accomplished on or before the dates specified in the academic calendar. Online registration is available several weeks in advance of each semester. Students who fail to register online during the open enrollment period must obtain required forms, have them signed by the faculty advisor and Program Director, then processed in the Registrar's Office. Courses dropped during this period will not appear on the student's grade report or permanent record.

Course Numbering System

The numbering system for graduate course work in the MFT program is 600-797. Each course appears in the MFT Program Handbook with the prefix MFT.

Course Sequence

The logical structure and sequence of the MFT Program curriculum represents a flow from broad context to specificity, from introductions of foundational theories and frameworks of family systems and human development to increasingly more specialized and sophisticated theory-to-practice linkages and skill development. As such, the course sequence is predetermined and courses are only taught once each year (with the exception of Practicum that is offered every semester) as outlined in the Academic Progression Recommendations section of this manual.

Course Syllabi

MFT students are provided a syllabus at the beginning of each course. The syllabus is to outline all expectations of the course including but not limited to required texts, supplementary readings, papers, projects, exams, attendance, and grading. Rubrics related to course assignments are provided. The professor(s) of the course will assign the student a grade in the course based upon the student's performance as outlined in the syllabus.

Course Withdrawals

A student may withdraw from a course with a grade of "W" on or before the last day for withdrawals as shown in the current academic calendar. Withdrawals are not used when computing grade point averages. Students should also read the Financial Information section within MUSM's website regarding possible loss of financial aid. To officially withdraw from a course, a student must fill out and submit an online withdrawal form located on the registrar's website. If the student elects to discontinue class attendance and academic performance and does not complete an official Course Withdrawal Form within the time limits described, a grade of "F" will be recorded on the student's official record.

Credit Units

The MFT Program at MUSM uses the semester hour as the basic unit of credit. Individual course descriptions indicate the number of credit hours awarded for each course.

Credit, Extra-Collegiate Learning Programs

No credit will be awarded for courses taken by correspondence or through other forms of life experiences. Courses taken in other graduate programs in which a degree was earned cannot be used for credit in the MFT Program.

Credit, Graduate Transfer

Because of the specialized nature of the MFT Program offered through MUSM, the amount of graduate course credits awarded by transfer will be evaluated by the Program Director on a case-by-case basis. The Program Director will make the final determination on the type and amount of transfer credits to be accepted. The maximum number of transfer credits for Master's students will be limited to six semester hours. Such transfer credits are further restricted to courses in which a grade of "B" or better was achieved. Transfer work will be calculated as part of the stated time limitations for the completion of the program.

Credit, Transient Status Mercer Student

Students who wish to earn transient credit from another college while currently enrolled in a MUSM graduate program must have prior approval from the Program Director for such credit to be accepted as part of the degree program. The maximum number of credits from transient and/or transfer course work that may be accepted for Master's students is a total of six semester hours. Such credits are further restricted to courses in which a grade of "B" or better was achieved. Transient work will be calculated as part of the

stated time limitations for the completion of the program.

Credit, Transient Status Non-Mercer Student

Students enrolled in another institution and/or individuals not enrolled in a degree seeking program who wish to obtain graduate credit for a course taken at Mercer University must complete the MUSM graduate program application, pay the appropriate application fee, and submit a letter setting forth the reasons for requesting the transient status. Transient status requests will be evaluated by the Program Director on a case-by-case basis. Transcripts and admission test scores are waived.

Enrollment/Curriculum Changes

From time to time, the program may elect to change the curriculum. Full-time enrollment is 6 semester hours. The academic year begins with the fall semester (16 weeks) and spring semester (16 weeks) and ends with summer semester (12 weeks). Practicum will continue year-round (50 weeks). A student must fulfill the educational requirements in effect during the academic year in which that student entered the program at MUSM unless he or she is not enrolled for two or more consecutive semesters. If a student is not enrolled for two or more semesters including summer, the student must fulfill the educational requirements in effect at the time of re-enrollment. Part-time enrollment will not be considered. Matriculating students are expected to enroll for the full-time academic load. Full-time enrollment is required for Financial Aid eligibility

Degree Completion Requirements

1. Successful completion of all academic course work with a minimum of 3.0 GPA. The student may have no more than two letter grades of "C+" or "C". Mercer University does not award a grade of "D." A letter grade of "F" may not be included in course work used for the MFT Program.
2. Successful completion of a one-year practicum experience (nine semester hours) in which the student must accrue 500 hours of direct clinical experience, with a minimum of 300 direct clinical contact hours (100 hours which must be with couples and/or families). A student must have taken additional practicum as needed in order to accrue the 500 hours of direct clinical experience, including a minimum of 300 direct clinical contact hours (of which 100 hours are with couples and/or families).
3. Accrual of a minimum of 100 hours of clinical supervision of which:
 - a. A minimum of 50 hours is in individual supervision.
 - b. A minimum of 50 hours of supervision must be conducted with raw data (live, video, or audio).
4. Successful completion of a clinical presentation to program faculty. Students must score the equivalent of 70% in order to pass.
5. A passing score on the Practice Test for the MFT National Examination offered online by the Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB).

Degree Completion Timeframe

The recommended academic progression sequence results in a student completing all degree requirements in two years provided all direct client contact hours are acquired in that timeframe. A student seeking the Master of Family Therapy degree must complete all program requirements within six years from the start of the program in MUSM. The time requirements begin when a student formally enrolls in his or her first graduate course in MUSM. A graduate student not enrolled in a course(s) for two consecutive semesters will be withdrawn from the graduate program unless he or she has received prior approval from the Program Director.

Enrollment Status

Full-time enrollment will be considered six (6) semester hours; half time will be considered three (3) semester hours.

Evaluation of Courses

Each semester students are required to complete Course Evaluations for all courses completed during the semester. The process for conducting course evaluations is as follows:

1. Students will login to the university online course evaluation system, CourseEval.
2. Each student will complete the online evaluation. The evaluation does not request any identifying data from the student in an effort to encourage honest feedback.
3. Upon completion, the student will click submit to register the information from the survey.
4. Results of the evaluations are provided to the Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, the Director of the Master of Family Therapy Program, and the course instructor via email.
5. The Director reviews the evaluation scores with the faculty to provide feedback and guidance concerning the course content, teaching style and success in the classroom.

Evaluation of MFT Practicum Experience

Each semester a MFT student is engaged in practicum, he/she is required to complete evaluations of him/herself, the practicum site(s) and practicum supervisor(s). See MFT Practicum Experience in this student handbook for additional details concerning the Master of Family Therapy Practicum Experience and related evaluations.

Evaluation of Program

Each year, all students, faculty, and communities of interest are asked to complete the Annual Program Survey that includes, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- The MFT program mission
- Support services available to students
- Fiscal and physical resources of the program
- Program publications
- Program curriculum and content
- Clinical training
- MFT faculty
- MFT administration
- Technological resources

Grading System

Letter grades are reported and recorded for all courses in which a student is enrolled except the Professional Development Seminar Series (PDSS). Grades of "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" are reported and recorded for the PDSS. Letter grades used in the MFT program are as follows:

Grade	Interpretation	Quality Points per Credit Hour
A	Excellent	4.00
B+	Good	3.50
B	Average	3.00
C+	Below Average	2.50
C	Below Average	2.00

F	Failure	0.00
ABX	Absence from Final Exam Excused	
AU	Audit	
IC	Incomplete	
IP	In Progress	
W	Withdrawal	
Z	Grade Not Reported	

The grade of “IP” is awarded only in graduate practicum or research project courses, which may extend beyond the end of a semester. A student is expected to finish “In Progress” work based on the timetable established by the professor issuing the “IP” grade, and at least by the last date to withdraw deadline of the following semester after the “IP” course work. If the student does not complete the required work within the time specified, the grade automatically converts to an “F”.

The grade of “ABX” denotes that the student was absent from the examination because of illness or another valid and compelling reason deemed satisfactory to the professor. A makeup exam must be completed by the last date to withdraw deadline of the following semester after the “ABX” course work. If the student does not complete the required work within the time specified, the grade automatically converts to an “F”.

The grade of “IC” indicates that a relatively small part of the semester’s course work remains incomplete because of sickness or reasons satisfactory to the professor. The work must be completed by the last date to withdraw deadline of the following semester after the “IC” course work. If the student does not complete the required work within the time specified, the grade automatically converts to an “F”.

The grade of “W” indicates that a student officially withdrew from the course on or before the last day for withdrawals as designated in the current Academic Calendar. Please see the Course Withdrawal section of this handbook for additional information.

Graduation Audits

Upon a student successfully completing all graduation requirements, he or she is ready to graduate from the Program. A Graduation Audit Report is prepared by the Graduate Program Specialist and reviewed by the Program Director. Once the Audit is complete and all academic and clinical information verified, the form is signed by the Program Director and forwarded to the Registrar. The Registrar’s Office orders the student’s diploma and the student is included as a graduate in the Graduation Ceremony held in the spring each year.

A student may be permitted to walk in the Spring Graduation Ceremony prior to completing all academic and clinical requirements and making the final Clinical Presentation provided the student demonstrates the ability to successfully complete all remaining Program requirements by the end of the following fall semester. In such event, the student will not be awarded the actual diploma until all Program requirements have been satisfied.

Graduate Student Honor System

These policies and procedures are duplicated from the Mercer School of Medicine Student Handbook

This document describes policies and procedures for dealing with infractions of the Honor Code by students matriculated in **Graduate Programs** under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Council of Mercer University.

Definition of the Graduate Honor System

The Graduate Honor System is a code established, interpreted, and administered by the Graduate Council of Mercer University. It is based on the Undergraduate Honor System and draws on the traditions of integrity and academic freedom which are embodied by that system. Like that system, the aim of the Graduate Honor System is to promote complete freedom within the academic community – a freedom which is based on a trust between students and faculty.

At Mercer University, the Honor System is subscribed to by everyone enrolling in any class, whether during the regular academic year, the summer term, or evening classes. The faculty subscribes to and supports fully the Honor System. The Honor System places responsibility for honesty where it belongs and ultimately must rest, on the individual. The individual is responsible for reporting any academic dishonesty he or she may observe as well as being responsible for his or her own honesty. By placing the responsibility on the individual, each student becomes the guardian of the Honor System.

As a pledge to uphold this responsibility, each student assumes the Honor Pledge.

Graduate Honor Panel

Policies and procedures regarding graduate student infractions of the Honor Code are established by the Graduate Council of Mercer University. To this purpose, the Graduate Council shall establish and maintain a panel of members of the Graduate Faculty who are available to adjudicate cases of infractions reported to the Council. The members of this Panel may be called upon to serve as an Honors Committee to judge violations of the Honor Code and to recommend penalties for those found guilty of infractions.

Each college or school which offers graduate programs falling under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Council shall select three members of its Graduate Faculty to serve on the Honor Panel. The Honor Panel members shall serve for staggered terms so as to provide for continuity of experience.

Definitions of Violations

Violations A violation of the Honor Code involves: (1) cheating, (2) plagiarism, (3) academic negligence, or (4) other acts of dishonesty in the area of academics and research. Perjury or willful omission of evidence during a COMMITTEE hearing is also a violation.

Cheating is the taking of credit for work which has been done by another person. The following are some of the more common instances of cheating:

1. using notes, textbooks, or reference materials on a test, daily quiz, or examination unless the use of such materials is specifically permitted by the professor;
2. copying ideas or facts from another's papers during a test situation in or out of class;
3. giving or receiving facts or ideas by any means whatsoever during a test situation in or out of class;
4. obtaining test questions which a teacher does not release for further reference;
5. obtaining or giving specific information which will be on a test before the test is administered

Plagiarism is defined as the use of ideas, facts, phrases, or additional material such as maps and charts from any source without giving proper credit for such material. Any material in a paper or report which is not acknowledged is understood to be the original work of the author.

Academic negligence is also a violation of the Honor Code. It is unacceptable conduct of a student during a testing situation. (This includes in-class tests, take-home tests, outside assignments, papers, homework, lab reports, etc.) It may include the student's failure to understand the instructor's specific instructions.

Perjury is the falsification of testimony or other evidence presented to the Council. Willfully omitting evidence may also result in a conviction.

Procedure for Reporting Honor Code Violations

Each student is responsible for reporting any and all infractions of the Honor Code. This responsibility is accepted when he or she enrolls in Mercer University and is expected of him or her as a vital participant in the Mercer University Honor System. The SYSTEM is so dependent upon this student responsibility that the shirking of this responsibility is considered a serious violation of the Honor Code. Faculty as well as students are responsible for reporting any and all infractions of the Honor Code which may come to their attention.

The procedure for reporting a violation is located in the Mercer School of Medicine Student Handbook (https://provost.mercer.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2022/07/MUSMHandbook_2022-2023.pdf).

Grievance Policies and Procedures

The following outline policies and procedures for formally and informally addressing student concerns, complaints, and grievances. These policies and procedures are duplicated from the Mercer University Student Handbook.

Academic Grievances and Appeals

Policy: Students have the right to bring grievances against a faculty member or an administrator and to appeal decisions concerning academic matters. A “grievance” is typically a complaint relating to some allegedly improper action or behavior. An “appeal” is typically a request for review of a routine judgment or decision. Such matters may include, but are not limited to, failure to abide by requirements described in the course syllabus, arbitrary awarding of grades, discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, age, or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is both permitted by law and deemed appropriate as a matter of University policy).

Time Frame: For grievances and appeals of any kind, students are required to initiate them with the appropriate faculty member no later than thirty (30) days from the completion of the term in which the course was offered. Grievances or appeals received after this period will not be honored.

Informal Resolution Procedure: Student grievance and appeal procedures encourage each student to handle complaints as close to the source as possible. If a student has a complaint against a faculty member, the student should first attempt to resolve the issue by an informal meeting with the faculty member involved. If this is not satisfactory, or if the student believes that he or she cannot discuss the complaint with the instructor, the student may follow the Formal Resolution Procedure.

Formal Resolution Procedure: The following protocol should be followed:

1. The student should meet with the appropriate department chair or program director after submitting to this person a formal written account of the grievance or appeal. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the instructor’s decision.
2. If the grievance or appeal is not satisfactorily resolved by the department chair or program director, the student should meet with the associate dean after submitting to the associate dean a formal written account. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the department chair’s or program director’s decision.

3. If the grievance or appeal is not satisfactorily resolved by the associate dean, the student should meet with the Provost after submitting to the Provost a formal written account of the grievance or appeal. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the associate dean's decision.

If the student has a grievance or appeal involving a dean, he or she should schedule an appointment with that dean in an attempt to resolve the matter. If the matter is not resolved or if the student believes that he or she cannot discuss the issue with that dean, the student may address the grievance or appeal to the Provost. In all academic grievance and appeal procedures, the decision of the Provost is the final University decision.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC). The details for filing a complaint with the GNPEC are located on their website and require a specific form. The student can access www.gnpec.org and click on "complaint form" for this information.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently. The student can access SACSCOC at www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp and click on "Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions" for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog. [Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between individuals and member institutions, or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.]

Nonacademic Grievances Policy:

Policy: Mercer University recognizes the importance of providing an efficient procedure for a timely and fair resolution of a nonacademic grievance. Students are encouraged to use the process to resolve allegations concerning (1) a University employee, (2) administrative policies or procedures, and/or (3) a University program, service, or activity.

Informal Resolution Procedure: Many grievances can get resolved via informal personal meetings, phone calls, or emails directly with the employee or office responsible for the grievance. Whenever possible, students are encouraged to exercise these avenues of communication first. However, should these avenues not rectify the grievance, or the student wishes to bypass the informal resolution process, then the formal grievance process below should be implemented.

Formal Resolution Procedure: When a student wishes to file a formal grievance that is nonacademic in nature and does not already have a stated appeal or grievance process as prescribed by law or the institution, he or she should follow this procedure:

1. The student should submit the grievance in writing to the supervisor of the University employee responsible for the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance. This statement should contain a brief statement of the grievance and the remedies sought, and be clearly labeled "Formal Grievance" for tracking purposes. A copy of the statement must also be presented to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs. The grievance should be submitted to

the employee's supervisor within ten (10) days of the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance.

2. The supervisor will meet with the respondent to discuss the grievance within ten (10) days of receipt of the written grievance. The employee's supervisor will reply in writing to the student with the results of the discussion and plans for further action, if any, within ten (10) days of the meeting. A copy of this reply will be provided to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the results from the supervisor and wants the grievance to be considered further, the student will have an opportunity for appeal as follows:
 - (a) In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature within a specific school or college, the student may appeal to the Dean with responsibility for the employee's unit and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the employee's supervisor has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Dean indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. A copy of the appeal and the response from the Dean must be provided to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, the student may appeal in writing to the Provost with responsibility for the school or college and request a meeting. The appeal must begin within ten (10) days of the date the Dean has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply by the Provost indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Provost with responsibility for the employee's unit will be the final University decision on the grievance. A copy of the appeal to the Provost and the Provost response will be copied to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC). The details for filing a complaint with the GNPEC are located on their website and require a specific form. The student can access www.gnpec.org and click on "complaint form" for this information.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently. The student can access SACSCOC at www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp and click on "Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions" for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog. [Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between individuals and member institutions, or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.]

- (b) In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature outside of the administrative organization of a specific school or college, the student may appeal to the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the employee's supervisor has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Vice President indicating the results of the meeting including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit will be the final University decision on the grievance. A copy of the grievance and their response will be submitted to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC). The details for filing a complaint with the GNPEC are located on their website and require a specific form. The student can access www.gnpec.org and click on "complaint form" for this information.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently. The student can access SACSCOC at www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp and click on "Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions" for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog. [Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between individuals and member institutions, or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.]

The Dean of Students or student affairs designee on each campus serves as a resource for students seeking assistance with grievance procedures.

Other Grievances

A number of specific grievance policies and procedures that are prescribed by law, accrediting body, or organization are available to students.

- Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy/Title IX (Contact Human Resources)
- Disability Policy and Grievance Procedure (Contact ACCESS and Accommodations)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) complaints are directed to the US Dept. of Education (Contact Office of the Registrar)
- Sexual Misconduct or Relationship Violence (Contact Title IX Coordinator)
- Accrediting bodies (Specific contact information for each accrediting body is listed in the Mercer Catalogs)

Information Technology

Computers: User Guidelines

The university's computing and telecommunications facilities are provided for the use of students in fulfilling their needs, which relate to the mission of the college. Other usage is not acceptable. Examples of unacceptable usage, which are also honor code violations, are:

1. Solicitation for charity or other benefits.
2. Activities related to the promotion or running of a person for-profit venture or other activities unrelated to the provision of an undergraduate education.
3. Using foul or abusive language on the network or any electronic communication.
4. Promoting and sending chain letters.
5. Harassing students or employees at the university or other institutions.
6. Sexual harassment comments directed to another person.
7. Racial comments directed to another person.

In a nutshell, usage should be businesslike and appropriate to the college mission. Complaints against any student for violation of the rules will result in immediate revocation of computing and telecommunications privileges. The complaint will then be provided to the student court for disposition and action. Computing and telecommunications privileges will be restored only at the request of the student court of the Dean of Students. The complete Information Technology and Access Use Policy is available online at https://it.mercer.edu/faculty/policy/access_and_use_policy.htm.

Technology Requirements

The Mercer University Information Technology Policy (the "Policy") contains Mercer's philosophy and requirements governing use of its information technology resources by students, faculty, staff, and others who have been given authorization, either explicitly or implicitly, to access those resources. Mercer University expects each member of the community to use Mercer's information technology resources, including connections to resources external to Mercer that are made possible by Mercer University's information technology resources, responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with the Policy, relevant laws, and all contractual obligations to third parties. The use of Mercer University's information technology resources is a privilege. If a member of the Mercer community fails to comply with this Policy or relevant laws and contractual obligations, that member's privilege to access and use Mercer's information technology resources may be revoked. The use of Mercer University's information technology resources to send communications to Mercer or non-Mercer persons or entities typically identifies the sender as belonging to the Mercer University community. Each member of the community should, therefore, recognize that any such communication might reflect on how Mercer University is perceived by not only the Mercer community, but also the public at large.

By adopting the Policy, Mercer University recognizes that all members of the Mercer community are bound not only by the Policy, but also by local, state, and federal laws relating to electronic media, copyrights, privacy, and security. Other Mercer University policies that relate to this Policy and also apply to Mercer University students, faculty, and staff (collectively, the "community") can be found in the Mercer University Student, Faculty, and Employee Handbooks. Each member of the Mercer University community is expected to be familiar with this and all other relevant policies. Mercer's Information Technology policies can be found at https://it.mercer.edu/faculty/about_it.htm.

The MFT Program utilizes several online services including but not limited to Canvas, Supervision Assist and TheraNest. Mercer University recommends that all computers purchased for student use meet the following criteria in order to be compatible with university networks. Students may purchase computers through the retail venue of their choice. Special student rates are available on certain computers from select retailers; for

more information see [Student Discounts](#). For more information about technology services, see [Getting Started](#).

Windows-Based Systems (IT Link)	
Recommended Configuration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intel Core i3, i5, or i7 CPU 2. 8GB RAM or greater 3. Hard Drive at least 256GB 4. Windows 10 or higher
Network Card	A wired and/or wireless network card. (Network cables may be purchased at Auxiliary Services .)
Network Configuration	Systems must have TCP/IP installed with configuration set to automatically obtain IP address from Mercer's DHCP server
Web Browser	Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Google Chrome.
Antivirus Software	Visit our Antivirus Software page for links to free antivirus programs.
Software	Microsoft Office is available for free to current students. For more information, see Free Software .
Network Access Assistance	For assistance with basic system configurations to establish access to the Mercer network, contact the Mercer IT Help Desk .

Macintosh	
Recommended Configuration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intel Core i3, i5, or i7 CPU 2. 4GB RAM or greater 3. Mac OS X 10.12 or greater (Mac OS X 10.11 is adequate)
Network Card and Cable	A wired and/or wireless network card. (Network cables may be purchased at Auxiliary Services .)
Network Configuration	Systems must have TCP/IP installed with configuration set to automatically obtain IP address from Mercer's DHCP server
Web Browser	Firefox or Google Chrome.
Antivirus Software	Visit our Antivirus Software page for links to free antivirus programs.
Software	Microsoft Office is available for free to current students. For more information, see Free Software .
Network Access Assistance	For assistance with basic system configurations to establish access to the Mercer network, contact the Mercer IT Help Desk .

Technical Training

It is the goal of the MFT Program to provide all students, faculty, supervisors and staff with technical training to facilitate success in their roles. Tutorials and trainings are available to all students, faculty and supervisors through the Information Technology website at http://it.mercer.edu/faculty/academic_technology/training&tutorials/index.htm. Training and tutorials address numerous software packages used by the program including Canvas and Zoom.

CAE Learning Space

CAE LearningSpace is a server-based digital audio/visual recording system used for live viewing, recording, and reviewing therapy sessions in the Mercer Family Therapy Centers. Because LearningSpace contains confidential HIPAA protected information, appropriate steps are taken to ensure the privacy and security of client data.

LearningSpace Access

1. LearningSpace is only accessible from desktop computers in the Mercer Family Therapy Centers. Students may not log in to LearningSpace using personal laptops or other electronic devices.
2. Students must log out of LearningSpace when not actively using the system.

Canvas

Canvas is a cloud-based learning management system used by the MFT program for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of courses. Students submit and faculty grade course embedded assessments through Canvas.

CourseEval

CoursEval is a web-based software used at the end of each semester to evaluate courses and course instructors.

TheraNest

TheraNest EHR is a web-based electronic system for completing clinical documentation for the Mercer Family Therapy Center. Because TheraNest contains confidential HIPAA protected information, appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the privacy and security of client data.

1. TheraNest Access
 - a. TheraNest is only to be accessed from desktop computers in the Mercer Family Therapy Center clinic office. Students may not log in to TheraNest using personal laptops or other electronic devices including mobile devices.
 - b. Students must log out of TheraNest when not actively using the system.
 - c. The Clinic Coordinator will monitor activity times and IP addresses of all users on the system to ensure that only approved computers are used.
2. Calendar Settings
 - a. Students are permitted to sync their TheraNest Calendar to Gmail, ical, or outlook calendars to allow for easy schedule management. Students may check these synced calendars using personal devices.
 - b. Students must enable "Show only client initials in Calendar" and "Show only client initials in synced calendars" options under "Calendar Preferences". These settings will be audited at random intervals to ensure compliance.
 - c. Students must rename family groups using case ID identifiers to ensure client privacy.
3. Downloads
 - a. TheraNest provides several options for downloading and printing clinical documents. Therapists should only download or print documents when required for clinical or academic purposes, and must immediately delete any downloaded documents upon completion.
 - b. Students will not email documents downloaded from TheraNest, or store them on other electronic platforms (Google Drive, etc.).

- c. Students may save downloaded documents to an encrypted USB drive for the purpose of transporting to a computer with printer access. However, upon printing these files must be deleted.

Supervision Assist

Supervision Assist is a web-based application for logging and tracking direct clinical experience hours. The system will also be used for evaluations during practicum, to schedule live sessions (clinical and/or supervision related), and to schedule telehealth sessions. Supervision Assist offers a HIPAA compliant and confidential cloud-based recording space to record session via telehealth or live in an off-campus location (when approved by the community placement site).

Late Assignments

The MFT program expects all students to submit course assignments by the date and time provided in course syllabi. Failure to meet this expectation may result in the assignment not being accepted for evaluation and grading. The specific conditions upon which an assignment is or is not accepted for evaluation and details regarding the consequences to grading are left to the discretion of the course instructor and found in the course syllabus.

Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

Mercer University is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. To that end, and in accordance with federal, state and local law and University policies, the University prohibits harassment of or discrimination against any person because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, sex (including pregnancy, child birth or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age, or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is permitted by law), or any other protected status or characteristic as defined by law. Mercer University is also committed to providing an educational and workplace environment free from all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, gender discrimination or harassment, sexual exploitation, stalking, or retaliation.

To uphold the University's values of fostering a climate of opportunity, mutual respect, and understanding and striving for a campus that is absent of discrimination and sexual misconduct, the Office of Equity and Compliance will address and remediate reported forms of discrimination and sexual misconduct and provide policies, training, and education in an effort to prevent discrimination and sexual misconduct. You may contact the Associate Vice President of Equity and Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at 478-301-2788 or at stellato_sl@mercerv.edu or learn more by visiting <https://equityandcompliance.mercerv.edu/>. All Mercer University employees are required to disclose information about suspected or alleged sexual misconduct or discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. If the Office of Equity and Compliance receives information about an incident of sexual misconduct or discrimination, they will reach out to provide information on your options, rights, and supportive measures that are available to you as a member of the Mercer University community.

Licensure Portability

Licensure for marriage and family therapists is regulated at the state level. A degree from the Mercer University School of Medicine Master of Family Therapy Program meets requirements of the [Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Clinical Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists](#) for

licensure as an Associate Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Additional requirements must be completed for independent practice as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. It is possible that moving to a state outside of Georgia will require additional coursework and/or additional clinical experience or practicum in order to acquire a license in that state. Applicants who are interested in becoming licensed in other states must review the state requirements for licensure from the state licensing board in that state. A listing of state licensure requirements and state licensing boards is available through the [Association of Marital & Family Therapy Regulatory Boards](#) (AMFTRB). As they note, always contact a state board for the most current information. Students receive information about federal disclosure at orientation to the MFT program. Additional information about licensure portability and disclosures can be located at: <https://disclosure.mercer.edu/professional-licensure/>

Recruitment

Mercer University School of Medicine and the Master of Family Therapy program demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion with particular emphasis on preparing students for clinical practice with rural and underserved populations of Georgia. Recruitment efforts combine this commitment with a fair and realistic assessment of the qualities needed to complete a rigorous academic program and succeed in the field of marriage and family therapy. Admission to the program requires a 2.5 undergraduate GPA, and demonstrated interpersonal ability. Completed applications include letters of reference, an admissions essay, and an in-person interview with faculty.

The program routinely attracts applicants referred from universities with which our faculty maintain relationships and from program graduates. Our goal is to enroll students from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, personal and professional experience, race, sexual orientation, class, gender, national origin and other characteristics. To achieve this goal, school admissions staff and program faculty attend graduate and career fairs at colleges and universities in rural and urban areas of Georgia, at HBCU's and other majority minority schools. The program offers open houses (virtual as well as physical) and routinely hosts visitors on campus.

Registration

All students are required to register for courses at the time prescribed in the MUSM calendar or in compliance with official notices issued by the Office of the Registrar at MUSM. Official course enrollment, which includes the completion of satisfactory arrangement for financial payments, is required for admission to classes. Completing and submitting a registration form in electronic or paper format commits a student for the courses requested and the corresponding fees and charges incurred. Any student who early-registers or registers during an official registration period and is unable to attend classes must notify the Registrar in writing prior to the first day of class. If a student misses the online registration deadline, they must contact the Graduate Program Specialist and complete a paper registration form. After the form is completed, it must be signed by the Program Director and forwarded to the Registrar. Please make every effort to register during the open online registration period.

Remediation

As noted in the Retention section of this Program Manual, assessment of students occurs throughout the program of study. When a student is not making satisfactory progress, he or she may be required to complete a Remediation Plan designed to promote success in the area(s) of concern. The remediation process is initiated by one or more faculty members, supervisor(s) or the program director, to address matters such as academic performance, clinical competency, and professional judgment. Depending on the nature of the concerns, or at the student's request, the student's academic advisor, the Assistant/Associate Program Director, or Program Director may meet with the student independently or as a group. In all instances, the student will be given opportunity to share his or her perspective about the concerns being expressed and provide additional contextual information. Remediation plans may vary to include small steps/objectives for minor concerns to multi-phased, complex plans for more serious concerns. If significant behavioral change is needed, a formal Remediation Plan for improvement may be established in collaboration with the student. Final approval of Remediation Plans rests with the Assistant/Associate Program Director and Program Director. Formal remediation plans will be conveyed to the student verbally and in writing. Failure of the student to adhere to the terms of the remediation plan could result in interruption of the program of study or termination from the program.

Remediation Plans must:

- Clearly describe the area(s) of deficiency.
- Identify specific, measurable steps/benchmarks the student must attain or perform to demonstrate success.
- Be focused on the student's area(s) of weakness.
- Identify the faculty member(s) who will be responsible for mentoring the remediation and approving the completion of the plan
- Contain an agreed upon timeframe for completion.
- Be signed by the student, Assistant/Associate Program Director, and Program Director.

Retention

Standards for satisfactory academic progress are detailed in the Academic Performance Standards section of this manual, the MUSM Student Handbook and the MUSM Catalog. Additional assessment of students' progress occurs throughout the program of study. Students' behaviors during structured activities (e.g., during class or advising meetings) or informal interactions (e.g., between class, impromptu conversations, etc.) contribute to faculty impressions about student progress. Students' academic performance, participation in class discussions, interactions with peers and other authority figures, the quality of their writing, anxiety and stress management skills, demonstrations of insight into themselves and others, ability to take personal responsibility for their actions without externalizing blame, and teamwork skills together constitute a non-exhaustive list of considerations essential for determining if a student is making satisfactory progress. These impressions along with other qualities are formally appraised by faculty in advising meetings and the three phases of the practicum placement process. Details of the practicum placement steps are provided in the Process of Practicum Placement section of this manual. If a student is not making satisfactory progress, faculty may determine need to complete a Remediation process. Details of this process are outlined in the Remediation section of this Manual.

Student Professionalism Policy

The Master of Family Therapy Program (MFT) in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage & Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) of the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT). The *AAMFT Code of Ethics* exists to promote integrity, competency, and responsibility in the practice of MFT. The *Graduate Honor System of Mercer University* sets forth the guiding requirements for academic honor for all graduate students of the University. Students enrolled in the MFT Program are not only "students" but also "MFTs-in training" and are, therefore, expected to adhere to both of these codes as the primary requirements for professional behavior in the classroom, in the clinic, and in the community.

It is the ethical responsibility of Marriage & Family Therapists to provide high quality mental health care that promotes and preserves the health and well-being of the individuals, couples, and families whom they serve. In order to provide a training and learning experience that fosters such quality of services, this Program places at the heart of both academic and clinical activities hands-on, interactive learning that emphasizes live and video-taped observation of clients, as well as case study presentations. Therefore, students will be called upon from the start of the Program to exercise a high standard of confidentiality and respect as clients and peers share their personal experiences in the classroom and in the clinical setting.

The dynamic interplay between the standards of *academic honesty, clinical competence, and interpersonal*

integrity shapes the ethical nature of the student experience in MFT training. The MUSM MFT faculty advocate that students must excel in their *efforts* to achieve these standards in order to progress satisfactorily through the Programs. Given the clinical nature of the Program, it is the ethical obligation of the faculty to monitor such progress in terms of both academic and clinical performance, as well as the level of professionalism in their behavior toward self, colleagues, peers, faculty, and community. Concerns of a faculty member about a student in any one of these areas will typically result in the faculty member addressing the concern with the individual student and other faculty members.

* Students are to become Student Members of AAMFT (703-838-9808 or www.aamft.org).

Surveys of Alumni

Mercer MFT Program Alumni are contacted on an annual basis (via email, telephone contact or other means) and asked to complete the Mercer MFT Alumni Questionnaire. Working with The Alumni Association, Mercer MFT Program alumni contact records are maintained and updated on an annual basis. Graduates and students are invited to attend the Armour Family Lecture Series to provide an educational, networking opportunity for students, alumni, and marriage and family professionals from the community. The Mercer MFT Alumni Questionnaire requests information on professional employment status, credentialing status, preparedness to function in the workplace and satisfaction with their educational experience in the MFT Program.

Urine Drug Screen Policy

Updated January 2020

The School of Medicine (MUSM) is committed to assisting members of its community in facing the challenges associated with alcohol abuse and illicit drug use. The drug testing policy provides an opportunity for early identification and intervention before consequences of drug abuse adversely impact a student's health, professional growth, and patient care. Early intervention can also provide for successful treatment without the involvement of formal disciplinary action or other sanctioning.

Background & Rationale

1. Health care providers are entrusted with the health, safety, and welfare of patients, have access to confidential and sensitive information, and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior. Thus, assessment of a student's suitability to function in a clinical setting is imperative to promote integrity in health care services.
2. Clinical facilities are increasingly required by the accreditation agency Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), to provide a drug screening for security purposes on individuals who supervise care, render treatment, and provide services within the facility.
3. Clinical rotations are an essential element in many degree programs' curricula. Increasingly, these clinical sites require drug screening before student participation at their site. Students with a positive drug screen may be barred from certain rotations and therefore unable to fulfill degree program requirements. Identification of such students prior to clinical rotations will enable appropriate assessment and indicated treatment and follow-up.
4. Navicent Health, HCA Memorial University Medical Center, HCA Coliseum Medical Center, Piedmont Columbus Regional Medical Center and St. Francis Hospital require drug screening of all employees. It is appropriate for clinical students to meet the same standards for the reasons stated above.

Policy

Drug testing is required of all students enrolled at MUSM prior to their clinical rotations. Any student may also

be required to have drug testing with cause (e.g., signs of impairment witnessed under supervision or violation of the University Drug and Alcohol Policy), and students tested with cause may later be subject to random drug testing.

Procedure

1. Students will be required to undergo a comprehensive urine drug screen within thirty days prior to attending a clinical campus, or upon request of Dean of Student Affairs when there is appropriate concern to warrant. The initial test, if positive, will trigger the reference lab to perform a confirmatory test before calling a positive result. The cost of these screens is the responsibility of the student.
2. Students will receive a general orientation via email for the routine drug-testing requirement prior to clinical duties. In cases of screening done for cause, the student will receive directions from the Dean of Student Affairs on the appropriate campus. Urine Drug Screen orders will be provided to each student and they will be performed per the policy of the individual campus.
3. Test results are sent to a Medical Review Officer and, once confirmed, returned to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs where they become part of your confidential record and may be kept by the Campus hospital. If a test is verified positive, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs will meet with that student and discuss the process for evaluation and treatment.
4. All students with a true positive test will be required to provide proof of a legal prescription that would result in a positive finding. A test positive for THC, regardless of whether the product was legal in the place that it was ingested or whether the product was a CBD product, is considered a positive test and the student will be required to undergo further evaluation.
5. All students with a true positive test will be required to have an evaluation by a mental health professional qualified in the assessment of addictive disorders. This individual will establish the appropriate follow-up, which could include referral to an addiction specialist for further evaluation and treatment, referral to an outside drug treatment program, or follow-up and treatment with a monitoring program. Given that an impaired student poses a risk to patient safety, non-compliance with a monitoring program or directed follow-up will require notification of the Student Affairs Dean and mandated medical leave.
6. If a student is already on a clinical rotation and evaluation or recommended treatment would interfere with their performance on that rotation, or if the evaluation indicates concerns about patient safety because of the student's impairment, then the appropriate Dean of Student Affairs will be notified and the student will be placed on medical leave. Students will be required to have an Administrative evaluation to return from leave.
7. If during or after treatment there is a question of the student's suitability for clinical work, s/he will be referred to an outside clinician for evaluation.
8. For students on clinical rotations, part of the assessment will be a report from that student's clinical preceptor regarding his/her performance (without disclosing the reason for the request). This report will be obtained by the appropriate Dean of Student Affairs and conveyed to the individual assessing the student (monitoring program or addiction specialist).
9. Students whose outside rotations require additional drug testing will also have tests performed as above. If one of these tests is positive, the rotation site must be notified and the student will not be able to participate in that clinical rotation. The appropriate Dean of Student Affairs will be notified that the student must be on medical leave and the student referred for assessment and treatment as noted above.
10. Drug screening reports will be held in strict confidence in the student's medical record unless released at a student's request or under the specific circumstances identified above.
11. Any results released to the Dean are also confidential and are subject to the Family Educational Rights

and Privacy Act [FERPA] regulations. For additional information:
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

MFT Program Curricula

Master of Family Therapy Curriculum

The Master of Family Therapy Program at Mercer University School of Medicine is accredited as a hybrid/blended program by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education. As such, twenty-seven percent of the program's coursework is taught in an online/synchronous format. Courses taught in this format are identified below with an asterisk (*).

<u>Required Courses</u>		Credit Hours
<u>Professional Development Seminar Series</u>		
MFT601	Professional Development Seminar I	0
MFT602	Professional Development Seminar II	0
MFT603	Professional Development Seminar III	0
MFT604	Professional Development Seminar IV	0
MFT605	Professional Development Seminar V	0
MFT606	Professional Development Seminar VI	0
<u>Core Curriculum</u>		
MFT610	Foundations of Family Studies	3
MFT615	Human Development*	3
MFT620	Diversity and Social Justice	3
MFT625	Theories of Family Therapy	3
MFT630	Assessment and Diagnosis in Family Therapy	3
MFT635	Foundational Skills in Practicum	3
MFT640	Clinical Treatment with Children, Adolescents, and Families (Pre-requisite MFT625)	3
MFT645	Addiction in Family Systems*	3
MFT650	Ethical, Legal, and Professional Practice in Family Therapy*	3
MFT655	Couples Therapy (Pre-requisite MFT 625)	3
MFT660	Clinical Family Therapy Research Methods	3
MFT665	Human Sexuality*	3
<u>TOTAL CORE HOURS</u>		36
<u>Electives (One required)</u>		
MFT680	Special Topics in Marriage and Family Therapy*	3
MFT681	Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan*	3
MFT682	Play Therapy*	3
MFT683	Group Therapy*	3
MFT690	Foundations in Integrated Behavioral Health and Medical Family Therapy*	3
<u>TOTAL ELECTIVE HOURS</u>		3
<u>MFT Practicum Sequence (three semesters minimum)</u>		
MFT702	Practicum II (Pre-requisites MFT625, 630, 635, Co-requisite MFT650)	3
MFT703	Practicum III ((Pre-requisite MFT702)	3
MFT704	Practicum IV (Pre-requisite MFT703)	3
MFT705	Practicum V (Pre-requisite MFT703)	3
MFT706	Practicum VI (Pre-requisite MFT703)	3
MFT707	Practicum VII (Pre-requisite MFT703)	3
MFT708	Practicum VIII (Pre-requisite MFT703)	3
MFT709	Practicum IX (Pre-requisite MFT703)	3
MFT710	Practicum X (Pre-requisite MFT703)	3
<u>TOTAL PRACTIUM HOURS</u>		9
<u>TOTAL DEGREE PROGRAM HOURS</u>		48

Academic Progression Recommendations Fall Admission

Fall Year One (9 credit hours)	Spring Year One (9 credit hours)	Summer Year One (9 credit hours)
<u>Coursework (9 credit hours)</u> MFT610 Foundations of Family Studies MFT615 Human Development MFT620 Diversity and Social Justice_	<u>Coursework (9 credit hours)</u> MFT625 Theories of Family Therapy MFT630 Assessment and Diagnosis in Family Therapy MFTXXX Elective – Choose One_	<u>Coursework (9 credit hours)</u> MFT635 Foundational Skills in Practicum MFT640 Clinical Treatment with Children, Adolescents, and Families MFT645 Addiction in Family Systems
<u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT601 Professional Development Seminar I	<u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT602 Professional Development Seminar II	<u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT603 Professional Development Seminar III
Fall Year Two (9 credit hours)	Spring Year Two (6 credit hours)	Summer Year Two (6 credit hours)
<u>Coursework (6 credit hours)</u> MFT650 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Practice in Family Therapy MFT655 Couples Therapy	<u>Coursework (3 credit hours)</u> MFT660 Clinical Family Therapy Research Methods	<u>Coursework (3 credit hours)</u> MFT665 Human Sexuality
<u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT604 Professional Development Seminar IV	<u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT605 Professional Development Seminar V	<u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT606 Professional Development Seminar VI
<u>Clinical Practicum (3 credit hours)</u> MFT702 Practicum II	<u>Clinical Practicum (3 credit hours)</u> MFT703 Practicum III	<u>Clinical Practicum (3 credit hours)</u> MFT704 Practicum IV
Fall Year Three		
<u>Clinical Practicum</u> Additional semester(s) of Family Therapy Practicum (if necessary)		

Courses on the Macon campus of the MFT Program meet at night Monday through Thursday, 5:30 – 8:30pm (fall and spring) or 5:30 – 9:30pm (summer) with the exception of Practicum that meets during the day Wednesday. Courses on the Atlanta campus of the MFT Program meet during the day Monday and Tuesday, 9:00 – 12:00pm and 1 – 4pm (fall and spring) or 9:00 – 1:00 and 2:00 – 6:00 (summer).

Academic Progression Recommendations Spring Admission (Macon only*):

Spring Year One (9 credit hours)	Summer Year One (9 credit hours)	Fall Year One (9 credit hours)
<p><u>Coursework (9 credit hours)</u> MFT625 Theories of Family Therapy MFT630 Assessment and Diagnosis in Family Therapy MFTXXX Elective – Choose One</p> <p><u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT61 and MFT602 Professional Development Seminars I and II</p>	<p><u>Coursework (9 credit hours)</u> MFT635 Foundational Skills in Practicum MFT640 Clinical Treatment with Children, Adolescents, and Families MFT645 Addiction in Family Systems</p> <p><u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT603 Professional Development Seminar III</p>	<p><u>Coursework (9 credit hours)</u> MFT610 Foundations of Family Studies MFT650 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Practice in Family Therapy</p> <p><u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT604 Professional Development Seminar IV</p> <p><u>Clinical Practicum (3 credit hours)</u> MFT702 Practicum II</p>
Spring Year Two (6 credit hours)	Summer Year Two (6 credit hours)	Fall Year Three (9 credit hours)
<p><u>Coursework (3 credit hours)</u> MFT660 Clinical Family Therapy Research Methods</p> <p><u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT605 Professional Development Seminar V</p> <p><u>Clinical Practicum (3 credit hours)</u> MFT703 Practicum III</p>	<p><u>Coursework (3 credit hours)</u> MFT665 Human Sexuality</p> <p><u>Professional Development Seminar (0 credit hours)</u> MFT606 Professional Development Seminar VI</p> <p><u>Clinical Practicum (3 credit hours)</u> MFT704 Practicum IV</p>	<p><u>Coursework (9 credit hours)</u> MFT615 Human Development MFT620 Diversity and Social Justice MFT655 Couples Therapy</p> <p><u>Clinical Practicum</u> Additional semester(s) of Family Therapy Practicum (if necessary)</p>

Courses on the Macon campus of the MFT Program meet at night Monday through Thursday, 5:30 – 8:30pm (fall and spring) or 5:30 – 9:30pm (summer) with the exception of Practicum which meets during the day Wednesday.

MFT 610 Foundations of Family Studies - This course introduces students to the field of family studies and provides a foundational understanding of family functioning and the family life cycle within a multicultural context. Students will explore the specific theoretical and philosophical frameworks of general systems theory and cybernetics.

*MFT 615 Human Development - This course surveys human development across the lifespan of the individual, from birth to death, with emphasis on the clinical relevance for family therapists. The course examines the biopsychosocial/spiritual theoretical underpinnings of human development. Students are introduced to various theories of human development and exposed to the diversity of the global human experience.

MFT 620 Diversity and Social Justice - The purpose of this course is to explore various topics of diversity and social justice in human development and lived experiences within family organization, structure, and values. Diversity concepts such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, family system, religion/spirituality, and geographic location will be explored as they relate to students individually and collectively. Students will discover how issues of power/privilege and oppression influence their lives.

MFT 625 Theories of Family Therapy - This course is a detailed examination of the major modern and post-modern theories of family therapy and their application to families, couples, and individuals. The course introduces students to both the theoretical framework and therapeutic practices that inform the field of family therapy. Students are invited to examine and reflect upon the assumptions underlying various family therapy approaches and how they are applied to diverse populations of clients. Current evidence-based practices and empirical research are explored.

MFT 630 Assessment and Diagnosis in Family Therapy - This course is a detailed examination of psychopathology within the family system. With a focus on the major psychiatric disorders, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the function of assessment and diagnosis will be introduced. Assessment and diagnosis of families, couples, and individuals will be introduced. Students learn psychopharmacological interventions often used in conjunction with psychotherapy.

MFT 635 Foundational Skills in Practicum - This course prepares students for clinical work with families, couples, and individuals in various settings with diverse populations. Students receive training in basic systemic clinical skills as well as policies, procedures, and administrative responsibilities of seeing clients in the Mercer Family Therapy Center (MFTC).

MFT 640 Clinical Treatment with Children, Adolescents, and Families (Pre-requisite MFT 625) - This course is a review of contemporary theoretical and empirically supported relational/systemic treatments for children, adolescents, and families. An ecological family-centered approach is used as a core perspective in the course. Students learn how certain models and interventions are appropriate for specific presenting problems. Underlying the entire course will be a focus upon building awareness and responsiveness to influences of diversity and contextual factors in working with a variety of family constellations and presenting problems.

*MFT 645 Addiction in Family Systems - This course examines the etiology, development, and progression of chemical and behavioral addictions in families. Systemic conceptualization and treatment implications are discussed within a multicultural context.

*MFT 650 Ethical, Legal, and Professional Practice in Family Therapy - This course introduces the ethical,

legal, and professional dimensions of family therapy practice. Specifically, the AAMFT Code of Ethics, GA/Federal law, and acceptable professional standards are emphasized. These rules and regulations are considered and integrated within multiple perspectives of ethical decision making, along with self-of-the-therapist factors, students will use in practice.

MFT 655 Couples Therapy (Pre-requisite MFT 625) - The purpose of this course is to learn how to work with couples and romantic relational systems in a therapeutic context. Students learn about evidence-based models, interventions, and special issues related to romantic dyad+ therapy. These components of couple therapy are addressed within a multicultural context.

*MFT 660 Clinical Family Therapy Research Methods - This course prepares students to design, critique, and apply research and published literature in clinical practice. Students are provided the skills needed to select and integrate current literature into their theory of therapy and clinical skill set. A working knowledge of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research methodologies is taught. Students develop the skills necessary to evidence efficacy in clinical treatment.

*MFT 665 Human Sexuality - This course is a detailed examination of sexuality as it pertains to human development. It provides students with information about human sexuality across the lifespan including sexual difficulties, diversity, and identity. Models of sex therapy are also presented.

Electives (One required)

*MFT 680 Special Topics in Marriage and Family Therapy

*MFT 681 Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan - This course will investigate the concepts of grief, loss, and trauma as they intersect with family therapy across multiple contexts and diverse populations. Students are encouraged to explore self-of-the-therapist factors as they relate to their clinical practice and their own experiences of trauma and loss.

*MFT 682 Play Therapy - This course is designed as a brief introduction to play therapy. This is a content and experiential based course designed to help you gain the rudimentary knowledge and skills for conducting play therapy. During the course, students will examine the rationale behind the use of play therapy, the various theoretical approaches to play therapy, and the techniques used for effective play therapy. The course will focus primarily on child-centered play therapy and family play therapy. This course will provide a foundation of knowledge and skills in play therapy that can be expanded with further training and education.

*MFT 683 Group Therapy - Students in this course will gain knowledge of the theory and practice of developing and running group psychotherapies. All types of group processes will be examined, including structured and unstructured, and topic specific modalities. Strategies for maintaining a systemic perspective will be emphasized, along with a focus on diversity and experience. Experiential learning activities and implementation-based projects will be a primary evaluation method.

*MFT 690 Foundations in Integrated Behavioral Health and Medical Family Therapy - This course examines the topics of health, illness, disease and disabilities as it pertains to individuals, couples, families, family therapy, and health care. Mechanisms of change from a systemic, cultural, and biopsychosocial perspective are used as a platform to discuss the social determinants of health. Students examine the mind/body dualism of western society and how this philosophy impacts our understanding of health and illness. Additionally, the course focuses on the intersection between integrated behavioral health and primary care. Interactional dynamics between medical family therapists, health care practitioners and patients are examined, including issues of collaboration and effective integrated care. This class will be relevant to both practitioners and researchers.

MFT Practicum Sequence (three semesters minimum)

MFT 702 Practicum II - This course is designed to enable the student to begin applying marriage and family therapy theory, core competencies and best practices to their own cases in therapy settings (both their community placements sites and at the Mercer Family Therapy Center). Students will begin analyzing their own clinical work through supervision and peer consultation and will grow in their ability to articulate and apply systemic principles in their own clinical work.

MFT 703 Practicum III - During this course, students will expand on the clinical experience they gained in Practicum II. Throughout the course students will continue to analyze their own clinical work, but will also begin to formulate their own theory of change and theory of therapy. Students will become more proficient at incorporating MFT theory and knowledge to support well-developed case conceptualizations consistent with their own theory of change. Practicum fee.

MFT 704 Practicum IV - In this course students will exhibit proficiency in conducting effective therapy sessions. Students will appropriately articulate and demonstrate their own theory of change/therapy in sessions. Students will be able to evaluate the strengths and contraindications of their individual therapeutic approaches. Students will also effectively demonstrate therapeutic best practices in their work and in supervision. Practicum fee.

MFT 705 Practicum V - This course is a continuation of practicum for students who have not completed the graduation requirements (i.e. 500 direct clinical experience hours and/or 100 supervision hours) during the traditional practicum courses (Practicum 1-4). In this course students will continue to demonstrate proficiency of all skills from previous practicum courses, and will continue to demonstrate strong clinical conceptualization skills. Practicum fee.

*Denote online course

Professional Development Seminar Series

The Professional Development Seminar Series (PDSS) introduces students to topics and issues that will enhance students' personal and professional development as future family therapists. Meetings occur through each of the six semesters of the students' academic program of study. The series will culminate in the preparation and presentation of a Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) that is submitted to and approved by the faculty. All requirements of the PDP must be completed and approved in order for the student to graduate from the program.

MFT601 – Professional Development Seminar I

Seminar – Professional Development Portfolio

Online – Developing a Professional CV and Cover Letter

Seminar – Application for Practicum Placement & the Practicum Placement Process

Seminar – Networking & Volunteering in MFT

MFT602 – Professional Development Seminar II

Seminar – Professional Interviewing Skills in MFT

Seminar – Introducing the Theory of Therapy and Change Paper

Seminar – Application for Phase II and Assessment Day

MFT603 – Professional Development Seminar III

Online – Training Mandated Reporter

Seminar - Professional Communication Skills in MFT/Surviving & Thriving in Placement

Seminar – Clinical Technology in Practicum

MFT 604 – Professional Development Seminar IV

Seminar – Managing Conflict with Colleagues

Seminar – Giving Professional Presentations

Seminar – Marketing Yourself as an MFT

Online – Theory of Therapy and Change Paper Part I

MFT 605 – Professional Development Seminar V

Seminar – Taking the MFT Licensure Exam

Seminar – Self-Care Strategies for MFTs

Seminar – Licensure Application and Process

Online – Therapy of Therapy and Change Paper Part II

MFT606 – Professional Development Seminar VI

Seminar – Completing the Professional Development Portfolio

Seminar – Finding a job in the MFT Field

Online – Completing the Theory of Therapy and Change Paper (Final Draft)

Portfolio Requirements

The Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) is designed to provide a thoughtful and summative comprehensive project that a student completes throughout their program of study. As a requirement of graduation, all students who wish to obtain a Master of Family Therapy degree must complete the PDP and receive a passing endorsement.

The portfolio is a continual project completed by the student throughout the length of the program. Many components of the portfolio are accomplished intermittently throughout the program in various courses and as a part of professional development outside of course content. The portfolio should be completed and a final PDF copy submitted *electronically* by the final clinical presentation date – set near the end of the final semester of enrollment.

Portfolio Components

1. Cover Page, Table of Contents, Statement of Intent

The portfolio is the culmination a student's master's degree program and should demonstrate his/her growth and development throughout the Master of Family Therapy Program. It should illustrate the highest quality work the student has produced during their matriculation. This final product should be neatly and professionally organized and structured. The portfolio should include an appropriate cover page and an accurate table of contents page outlining the entire document. In addition, students will include a Statement of Intent (SI). In the SI students will describe the purpose and contents of the portfolio and will declare that the submission of the portfolio to the program faculty serves to demonstrate the completion of the Professional Development Seminar Series requirements.

2. Signed Program Plan

Students will begin meeting with his/her faculty advisor during the first semester and will continue meeting as needed throughout the entire program of study. During these advisement meetings students will complete the Program of Study Plan which will be approved by his/her advisor. Students are responsible to ensure this form is completed, signed by his/her faculty advisor and included as part of the portfolio. This form should be completed no later than by the end of the student's second semester in the program.

3. Current Resume or Curriculum Vita

Students will construct a professional curriculum vita that will include an accurate overview of relevant degree(s) awarded, professional experience (i.e., presentations, publications, research/clinical experiences, etc.), honors/awards, service or volunteer experience, and professional references. Curriculum vita should be in APA format and should adhere to professional standards and appearance.

4. 15 Clock hours of Continuing Education in the field of Mental Health

Students will provide physical copies of Certificates from attendance at Continuing Education or Clinical Trainings, for which they have received credit. There is no specific topic or requirement for type of CEU or learning opportunity. Students are encouraged to seek training in their areas of interest. However, based on ongoing evaluation of student progress, faculty may require students to complete certain types of trainings to address areas of growth.

5. 15 Clock hours of Service to the Community

Students will provide a signed ledger (signed by student and community partner who can verify program/activity) indicating they have provided at least 15 clock hours of service to the community during their time of enrollment in the MFT Program. Service to the community can and may include

volunteer activities, specific educational programs created for the community, or any kind of specific activity that benefits an underserved and/or rural population or community. To receive credit, the student must propose and gain advance approval from their advisor for the work they would like to complete (informal process). Then, upon completion of the 15 hours of service, provide a written account of their experience, connected to their development as a family therapist and social change agent. This document should include the total number of hours provided, an outline of the activity/program, and the write up of the discussion mentioned previously.

6. Application for Community Placement

Students will begin preparing for the Community Placement component of the practicum experience during the first semester of their first year. To begin this process, students are required to complete and submit the Application for Community Placement to the Community Placement Coordinator no later than the last day of the first semester. Before submitting this form each student will meet with his/her faculty advisor for a faculty endorsement of their application form. Students are required to retain a copy of this form and include it as part of his/her portfolio.

7. Assessment Day

Each student should demonstrate clinical skills appropriate to a Master's-level graduate student. This includes clinical conceptualization, diagnosis, treatment planning and intervention. Prior to beginning the second (clinical) year of the program, students will meet with their faculty advisor and other faculty members on "Assessment Day." Faculty members will review and evaluate student's progress through the first-year courses and assess student's readiness to begin practicum. Each student must receive faculty approval to begin working at community placement sites. Each student is required to submit a copy of the "Assessment Day Certificate" as part of his/her portfolio.

8. Clinical Skills Checklist

A checklist form will be used to evaluate the achievement of a basic set of skills developed over the course of the practicum sequence. Students will earn approval for these skills as they are observed by clinical supervisors and/or core faculty. Each student is required to retain a copy of the checklist and include it as part of his/her portfolio.

9. Theory of Therapy and Change Paper

This integration paper should describe the development and revision of the student's preferred theory and practice of systemic change, drawing on historical and/or contemporary theories, and demonstrating knowledge of the appropriate application of the assumptions, concepts and skills of those theories. Each student is required to retain a copy of the paper and include it as part of his/her portfolio.

10. License Application (for state intending to practice in)

Licensure is required for recent graduates in many states, including Georgia. As part of this process, recent graduates are required to complete and submit a licensure application for the state in which they intend to practice. As part of the portfolio students are required to include a completed copy of the relevant license application for the state in which they intend to practice. Each student is required to submit a copy of the application and include it as part of his/her portfolio. This assignment will only be graded as complete/incomplete.

11. Copy of Portfolio Approval Form, completed

Once reviewed and approved by faculty, students will include a signed and dated copy of the *Portfolio Approval Form*.

12. Any additional materials or extra effort put into your development as a Couple and Family Therapist

Students may include any additional items they feel help demonstrate their growth, development, and/or mastery of MFT principles and concepts.

Timeline of Portfolio Completion within Program

<i>Portfolio Components</i>	YEAR ONE			YEAR TWO			ADD'L	
	FA	SP	SU	FA	SP	SU	+	+
Start Documenting, Construct Folder	■							
Signed Program Plan	■							
Curriculum Vita/Resume	■	■						
15 Continuing Education Units (CERTIFICATES)	ongoing							
15 Clock Hours of Service to Community	ongoing							
Application for Community Placement	■	■						
Assessment Day		■						
Clinical Skills Checklist			■	■	■	■		
Theory of Therapy and Change Paper				■	■		■	■
Associate License Application					■		■	■
Portfolio Due							■	■
Portfolio Approval Form							■	■
Additional Materials	ongoing							

Portfolio Components Linked to Student Learning Outcomes

Portfolio Component	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4	SLO 5	SLO 6
Curriculum Vita/Resume						X
15 Continuing Education Units (Certificates)						X
15 Clock Hours of Service to Community		X				X
Application for Community Placement						X
Assessment Day						X
Clinical Skills Checklist	X	X	X	X		X
Theory of Therapy and Change Paper	X	X	X	X	X	X
Licensure Application						X

Practicum Experience

The practicum experience for MFT Program students is where links are made between theory and practice, and the majority of the student learning objectives are enacted. This process is divided into four semesters for Master of Family Therapy students. The first semester, Foundational Skills in Family Therapy Practicum, in practicum functions primarily as a “pre-practicum” orientation during which students observe real cases, practice foundational helping skills and join clinical teams with active clients in the Mercer Family Therapy Centers (MFTCs). Thereafter, in addition to being in the MFTCs, MFT students spend a minimum of three semesters (approximately 50 weeks) in an approved community agency setting doing marriage and family therapy under supervision. The practicum typically begins during the summer between first and second year in the program, continues for one full year (typically fall, spring, and summer), and finishes at the end of the semester during which the student has accumulated 500 hours of direct clinical experience hours, 100 of which must be with “relational client units.” Relational client contact includes therapy with couples, families, and/or unrelated individuals such as roommates or co-workers who have on-going relationships outside of the therapy context and who come to therapy to focus on relational/systemic dynamics.

While emphasis is placed on relational therapy in the MFT Program, students also develop skills to work with individuals. Students also frequently gain experience providing group therapy. Groups count toward individual hours when participants start the therapy group without having any ongoing relationships outside the context of therapy with other group members. Students may accumulate up to a maximum of 100 direct client contact hours for “individual group therapy.” Therapy groups may count as “relational group” direct client contact if the group consists of two or more “relational client units” (as defined above) within the same group. No more than 50 hours of the 100 relational hours requirement may be earned doing group therapy. Finally, students may earn additional hours in audio-based therapy, case staffing, or case consultation.

In the beginning of placement, inexperienced therapy students may be able to see only three or four clients a week for whom they function as co-therapist with an experienced agency therapist. With experience, and by the second semester of practicum, the student will be the primary therapist for an average caseload of 10-12 clients per week. This will enable the student to provide a total of 500 hours of direct clinical experience hours to clients in the course of his or her Practicum.

Therapy students spend roughly 20-25 total hours a week in the community practicum placement and at the Mercer Family Therapy Center (MFTC), providing a combined average of 10 to 12 hours of direct clinical contact as therapist, co-therapist, and/or clinical team members. During this time students also participate in other activities deemed appropriate by the placement agency and/or MFTC. Students are required to see clients at the program’s Family Therapy Center to facilitate live supervision by Faculty Approved Supervisors with expertise in relationally-focused therapy and to participate in the supervision of other practicum students. Thus, while the majority of client contact hours potentially may be accumulated at the community placement site, time spent at the Mercer clinic is considered vital to the educational process and students need to prioritize their time at the MFTC accordingly.

Toward the end of a student’s practicum experience, they will be required to give a clinical presentation in front of MFT faculty and students of their theory of therapy and change and representative video/audio clips of their work. Additional information is located in the “Clinical Presentation” section of this handbook.

Faculty Approved Supervisors will provide no less than 100 hours of clinical supervision, including a minimum of 50 hours of individual supervision and a maximum of 50 hours of group supervision. Only supervision provided by an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or Supervisor Candidate contracted by Mercer

counts toward the 100-hour program requirement. At least 50 of the 100 hours of supervision must include either live observation or review of audio or video recordings of a students' clinical work. Students will receive regular supervision throughout their entire time in practicum.

The 100 hours of clinical supervision occur at the Mercer Family Therapy Center throughout the entire practicum experience. Individual supervision (i.e., one or two interns with one supervisor) occurs for 1 1/4 hours every week and group supervision (i.e., three to six interns with one supervisor) occurs every other week for at least 2.5 hours. Between academic semesters, Mercer supervisors continue to provide clinical supervision on a rotating basis, but schedules may vary based on unique circumstances.

See MFT Practicum Experience in this student handbook for additional details concerning the Master of Family Therapy Practicum Experience.

Understanding the Complex Nature of MFT Education at Mercer

We admitted you into our MFT program because of your potential to become a good therapist. Whether you live up to this potential ultimately has far more to do with you than the program as a whole or even individual faculty. As a program, we are partnering with you and will do everything we can to help you to succeed. However, merely paying graduate school tuition does not automatically entitle students to a degree. Paying tuition entitles students to the OPPORTUNITY TO EARN a graduate degree. You will learn that in therapy if the therapist is working harder than the client, the therapy becomes non-productive. The same can be said for education: For you to benefit, you must put forth the lion's share of the effort. In the final analysis, each student is responsible for his or her own education.

A Developmental Perspective

Beginning clinicians often have pictures in their heads of what it means to do good therapy and be good therapists. Then they compare themselves to the fully developed pictures in their heads and get discouraged when they don't measure up right away. If you do this, you may develop a tendency to hide your insecurities, to always try to appear to your peers and your professors to have it all together. This is natural, but not always the most helpful to your progress through the MFT program. Chances are good that if you have a question or are struggling with something, at least some of your peers do too. The MFT faculty expects you to have many questions. We worry more about beginning clinicians who do not ask for help and do not expect you to be a seasoned therapist.

Instead, we see your progress through a developmental lens and we encourage you to see yourselves in this way as well. Somebody who has just started playing T-ball is not expected to smack the ball over the back fence. Allow yourself to be the best therapy intern you can be *within each stage of development*. You were accepted into the Mercer MFT program because we believed in you, believed in your potential, believed in your dreams to help others. Now, believe us that you are not alone as you go through this program. The faculty is here to help. Stop by our offices or give us a call. We want to do everything we can to help you reach your goal of becoming an excellent therapist.

It is also important to remember that learning to do therapy is not the same as learning another academic topic. All of you are already top achievers or you would not have been accepted into this program. You have already figured out how to navigate academia successfully. This will be useful to you, but learning to be a therapist requires a completely different set of skills than the skills that allowed you to be so successful in your previous studies. Remember that Michael Jordan, who was a superstar at basketball, did not automatically transfer his superstardom to baseball. To learn the game of therapy, you will be required to use familiar intellectual, emotional and social "muscles" in new ways. You may feel uncoordinated at first as

you try to learn the basics and then combine the basics in increasingly complex patterns. You may discover “psychological muscles” you never knew you had or realize that an old “emotional muscle” injury is acting up again; but keep stretching yourself and practicing nevertheless. Be patient with yourself as you learn a whole new game, namely marriage and family therapy. As you look back over your first year in the program, you will be amazed at how far you have come!

Self-of-Therapist

Some people believe a distinction can be made between therapists who are “technicians” and those who are “clinicians.” Those therapists who are “technicians” do a great job applying their knowledge and skills to help “fix” people problems. They see little need for self-reflection beyond what is needed to meet ethical standards. There is nothing wrong with this and for many clients this is all that is needed. “Clinicians,” on the other hand, have the same skills as therapy technicians, but also open themselves up for a deeper journey. They go beyond theories and techniques by reflecting carefully on their own family dynamics, their own process and experience as they go through life, seeking to learn more about themselves any time they interact with others. When they do this “self-of-therapist” work, they increasingly become sensitized to nuances of personal experience that can provide insight into their clients’ problems beyond what can be learned from books or supervisors.

There may be differences between you and your peers, as well as between MFT faculty, as to the degree to which you and they value and want to pursue self-of-therapist issues. It is important to note that when supervisors address self-of-therapist issues, the focus is always on how your personal experience relates to your work with clients. While these insights may prove to be personally therapeutic to you, your supervisor should not take on the role of your therapist; instead, he or she may refer you to a therapist to work through the larger issues.

Some psychotherapy programs require students to be in therapy while participating in their training program. Here at Mercer we do not usually require this, though we highly recommend it for everyone for several reasons. First, we believe that therapy is a good and helpful process that can help anyone motivated to gain additional insight about oneself, one’s relationships and as a means to develop new skills. Second, working with other people’s pains and traumas can stir up your own unresolved issues (and none of us goes through life without some unresolved issues!). Having a place to sort out your personal challenges helps keep them from negatively impacting your work with clients. *[Please note: in the event that it becomes apparent to clinical supervisors that you may be struggling with personal issues to such an extent that they are hampering your work with clients, the clinical faculty may require you to get personal therapy in order to continue enrollment in the clinical practicum sequence.]* Third, putting yourself in the role of the client will give you increased sensitivity to what your clients may be experiencing when they come to see you for therapy. Fourth, experiencing good therapy for yourself will give you insights as you try to learn how to provide therapy with others. Fifth, graduate school in general and a therapy training program specifically can be especially stressful and being in therapy may give you an extra measure of emotional support as you go through your graduate training.

Dual Nature of Being a Professional in Training

The Mercer Family Therapy Center has three interrelated missions: (1) to provide high quality mental health services to individuals, couples and families; (2) to serve as an educational training facility for master’s level students in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences’ Master of Family Therapy Program; and (3) to contribute to the broader body of knowledge about therapy processes and outcomes through voluntary participation by clients, students, and faculty in scientific research. This is in keeping with the three missions of the Mercer University: teaching, outreach, and research. As much as possible, we

strive to operate in such a way that these three missions work in synch with one another, to the benefit of all. Sometimes, however, achieving balance can be difficult and there can be tensions that exist between the educational demands placed on students, the needs of the clinic which must meet the needs of clients, and the research demands placed on faculty.

Working toward an advanced degree and focusing on the development of clinical expertise creates unique challenges for MFT interns and clinical faculty. A professional training program is not the same as other academic programs. In academic programs that do not lead to professional certification or licensure (e.g., teaching or therapy), the primary purpose is the transmission of knowledge to the student. If the student does well or does poorly in a class, the immediate impact is usually limited to just that student (e.g., a high or low grade). Professional training programs are usually characterized by some sort of practicum or internship during which students practice their newly acquired skills and knowledge in real life circumstances. Whether they do well or do poorly can have immediate impact on the lives of others. For a therapist in training, this means that while your individual student needs are very important, you cannot focus on them *exclusively*; you (and the clinical faculty) must strive to *balance* your individual needs with the needs of clients and the facility serving those clients (e.g., the Mercer Family Therapy Center). When it comes to the needs of individual students and the collective needs of the Family Therapy Center, our attitude whenever possible is one of “both *me* and *we*” rather than “either *me* or *we*.”

As a student, everything you do is tied to a grade. As a professional-in-training, everything you do is also tied to agency expectations and a professional code of ethics, meaning that you are required to do what good professionals do, not just what is needed to earn the grade that is satisfactory to you. As a student, you are fairly autonomous insofar as most assignments are to be completed by you alone. As a professional in training your autonomy is limited by virtue of the fact that you are operating under the professional licenses of your clinical supervisors and they must retain careful oversight of your actions. Your autonomy is also constrained by your peers and the fact that together you form a clinical team that must operate collectively in order to sustain the Family Therapy Center clinic. Some of what you will be expected to do while in the MFT program will be directed at the individual level, whether for a specific client system or you as a specific MFT intern. Other expectations will be geared more toward the larger system level, whether clients in general, or the clinical team as a whole.

Another way that the Marriage and Family Therapy Program differs from other graduate programs is that you retain professional responsibilities even when classes are not in session. COAMFTE accreditation standards require that the Mercer Family Therapy Center is open to see clients twelve months a year; it does not follow the academic calendar. This means that you will continue to see clients and receive individual supervision on a weekly basis even if classes are not in session. This does not mean that you can never take a break or go on vacation, but rather that you are allocated a certain amount of vacation leave per twelve months that must be scheduled in consultation with and approved by the Clinic Director.

Compromise vs. Compassion

We find it helpful to distinguish between *compromise* and *compassion* as they relate to expectations. The MFT program and the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Mercer University have high standards. We believe that it is important to set the bar high enough that we are always pressing ourselves to be more than we thought we could be. This can feel very stressful in the short term, but is ultimately how we all grow. If the bar is set too high, however, we can become overwhelmed and give up. It is always a bit of a delicate balance to figure out how to set expectations high enough that we are motivated to stretch and grow, but not so out of reach that we become defeated. There is a temptation to want to *compromise*

standards by lowering expectations so much that we do not have to stretch beyond our comfort zone; this feels much better in the short run, but limits us in the long run.

Instead of compromising, we suggest having *compassion* with ourselves and with one another when we are trying our best, but can't quite make the mark. To have compassion as it relates to expectations is to recognize that sometimes life happens—we get sick, there is a family problem, the dog dies, we have a misunderstanding/miscommunication, we didn't get enough sleep, there is more to do than time to do it, and so forth. It is critical that we still agree that the standards that have been set are the appropriate expectations, and we are still accountable to accept the consequences for not meeting them, but compassion gives us emotional and psychological space to not beat ourselves or others up for failing to meet the benchmark. Compassion is acknowledging the limitations of the human condition insofar as excellence is achievable, but perfection is not.

Respecting One Another

Your experience in this program will in many respects be largely shaped by the relationships you develop with your peers and the faculty (both clinical and non-clinical). We all have different personality styles, background experiences, strengths, weaknesses, and ways of reacting to and coping with stress. We are all wired differently and see the world through our own unique vantage point. This presents a great opportunity to learn from one another, but doing so requires patience with others and ourselves. The good news and the bad news is that you, your peers and the faculty and staff at the Mercer Family Therapy Center, in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and across the University are all human beings. This means we will all have times of triumph deserving celebration and times of mistakes or disappointment deserving apologies and forgiveness.

During the course of your time at Mercer, each of us will likely both succeed and fail to meet our own expectations. Additionally, odds are good that we will each also exceed one another's expectations as well as disappoint and be disappointed by others along the way. Learning to accept and be okay with our own humanity and that of other people is one of life's most challenging, but also most rewarding, lessons. This lesson is also one we usually have the opportunity to practice over and over throughout our lives.

We think you will gain a lot from your time in the Mercer Marriage and Family Therapy program and are confident that you will find many rewards while working with clients and collaborating with your peers and supervisors in the Family Therapy Center. The more you put into this program at both the individual and the team levels, the more you will get out of it. We have great faith in your potential to grow into your dream of becoming a great therapist!

The rest of this manual will explain expectations, policies and procedures for working in the Mercer Family Therapy Center.

Practicum Course Description

Practicum is a multi-semester progressive course designed to enable the student to apply marriage and family therapy theory to cases in a therapy setting. At least three semesters must be completed in order to maximize therapeutic continuity for clients and development of clinical skills for students. Five hundred (500) Direct Clinical Experience hours comprised of Direct Clinical Contact, Clinical Supervision, and Other Clinical Experience over at least three semesters of practicum are required by the end of the practicum sequence. A minimum of 100 of the Direct Clinical Contact hours must be relational therapy with couples, families, or other relational constellations. The focus of Clinical Supervision hours will be on the raw client/patient data brought to supervision. These data will be from the caseload of families, couples,

and/or individuals which the student is seeing at the Mercer Family Therapy Center (MFTC) and at their Community Placement Site. Students must remain actively seeing clients throughout the entire sequence of practicum, though caseloads may be reduced (but not eliminated) once the 500 Direct Clinical Experience hour requirement has been reached. It is the students' responsibility to be familiar with the clinical content of all cases they are seeing and be prepared to discuss case documentation, clinical assessments, and audio / video recordings of therapy in the weekly practicum supervision class.

General Practicum Objectives

In Standards Version 12.5 adopted January 2022, the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) established Developmental Competency Components outlining the primary areas of professional learning and skill-development central to the effective and ethical practice of a future Marriage and Family Therapy professional. These Competencies include knowledge of the profession; practice of therapy; human diversity and social structures; professional identity, ethics, and law; and research and evidence-based practice. The Competencies are consistent with The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) core competencies that are essential to the provision of therapy with individuals, couples, and families. While it is recognized that full mastery of the COAMFTE Developmental Competency Components and AAMFT clinical core competencies is not expected until several years after graduation or at the time of full licensure, this multi-semester course is designed to facilitate the development of *foundational skills* needed for competency in the six domains of clinical activity described below. Each of the six domains includes five sub-domains, also described below. More detailed information is available at www.aamft.org.

Definitions of Core Competency Domains of Clinical Activity

[As listed at www.aamft.org and adapted from Gehart (2010)]

1. *Admission to Treatment* – All interactions between clients and therapist up to the point when a therapeutic contract is established (i.e., getting therapy started)
2. *Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis* – Activities focused on the identification of the issues to be addressed in therapy (i.e., assessing individual, couple, and family functioning).
3. *Treatment Planning and Case Management* – All activities focused on directing the course of therapy and extra-therapeutic activities (i.e., developing a plan of care and coordinating with other professionals).
4. *Therapeutic Interventions* – All activities designed to ameliorate the clinical issues identified (i.e., facilitating change in the therapy session).
5. *Legal Issues, Ethics, and Standards* – All aspects of therapy that involve statutes, regulations, principles, values, and mores of MFTs (i.e., understanding the moral, ethical and legal aspects of therapy practice).
6. *Research and Program Evaluation* – All aspects of therapy that involve the systematic analysis of therapy and how it is conducted effectively (i.e., knowing the relevant research and how to evaluate one's effectiveness).

Definitions of Core Competency Sub-Domains of Clinical Activity

[As listed at <https://www.aamft.org> and adapted from Gehart (2010)]

1. *Conceptual Skills* – Factual knowledge; what we expect to learn from books (i.e., developing a conceptual map based on theoretical and empirical concepts)
2. *Perceptual Skills* – Ability to perceive or see what is going on with clients and in the therapy process (i.e., ability to recognize the theoretical and empirical concepts learned from books as they manifest in actual therapy sessions, or where the clients are at on the conceptual map)
3. *Executive Skills* – Behavioral (verbal and/or non-verbal) actions by the therapist during the process of a therapy session (i.e., ability to 'execute' knowledge and produce change by

- following the conceptual map)
4. *Evaluative Skills* – Ability to assess one’s own abilities and performance accurately (i.e., how well is the therapist creating, recognizing, and executing the conceptual map in order to facilitate change with the client)
 5. *Professional Skills* – Ability to adhere to professional and workplace policies, procedures, and ethical standards

Direct Clinical Experience Hours Definitions

There are three primary categories of experience through which students acquire the 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours required for graduation. These categories of experience meet the requirements of both COAMFTE Accreditation Standards V12.5 and licensing rules of the Georgia Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists. Definitions of each type of Direct Clinical Experience Hours are summarized below and specific details follow.

1. Direct Clinical Contact Hours are defined as a therapeutic meeting of a therapist and client (individual, relational, or group) occurring synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by a video-based telehealth program. This category DOES NOT include therapy provided via telephone or other audio-only telehealth platforms. Students are required to earn a minimum of 300 Direct Clinical Contact hours of which 100 must be relational.
2. Clinical Supervision Hours are defined as meetings between students/supervisees and at least one Mercer AAMFT approved supervisor or supervisor candidate to review cases by oral/written report, video/audio recordings, and/or live supervision. Students are required to earn a minimum of 100 hours of Clinical Supervision of which 50 hours minimum must be in individual supervision and 50 hours minimum must be based on raw data (combination of video/audio/live).
3. Other Clinical Experience hours include therapeutic meetings by telephone or other audio-only telehealth platforms, case consultation, and case staffing. No more than 100 Other Clinical Experience Hours may be applied to the 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours required for graduation. Other Clinical Experience Hours can be earned in any combination that honors the maximum listed for that category:
 - a. Telehealth via Audio Only Platforms– 100 hours maximum may be applied toward graduation
 - b. Case Staffing – (at practicum site – i.e. treatment team meetings; clinical meetings with your placement site director/supervisor) – 50 hours maximum may be applied toward graduation
 - c. Case Consultation – (i.e. teaming, telephone contact for case coordination, etc.) - 50 hours maximum may be applied toward graduation

Direct Clinical Contact Hours definitions:

1. ***Direct Clinical Contact Hours*** are defined as a therapeutic meeting of a therapist and client (individual, relational, or group) occurring in-person synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by a video-based telehealth program. Assessments may be counted if they are in-person processes that are more than clerical in nature and focus. Also, therapy services delivered through interactive team modalities may provide direct clinical contact for specific team members who have in-person interaction with the client/system during the session. Therapy team members who engage the therapeutic process only behind the mirror may not count the experience as direct clinical contact. Activities such as case planning, observation of therapy, record keeping, trainings, role-playing, travel, administrative activities, consultation with community members or professionals, MFT relational/systemic supervision, and/or telephone contact are not considered direct clinical contact. Telephone contact that is administrative in nature does not count toward the 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours requirement (e.g. scheduling). This category DOES NOT include therapy provided via telephone or other audio-only telehealth platforms. Therapeutic meetings held by telephone are counted in the Other Clinical Experience Category. Telephone contact with other

professionals involved with the client system (physicians, lawyers, teachers, etc.) may be counted as Case Consultation Hours provided contact concerns case coordination for the client system.

As noted in its definition, Direct Clinical Contact Hours may be earned in three ways.

- 1) **Individual Direct Clinical Contact** is therapy with one client occurring synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology. Two hundred (200) hours or more may count toward the total 500 required hours.
- 2) **Relational Direct Clinical Contact** is therapy with two or more individuals conjointly, who share an ongoing relationship beyond that which occurs in the therapeutic experience itself. Therapy must occur synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology. Examples include family subsystems, intimate couple subsystems, enduring friendship/community support subsystems, and residential treatment, or situationally connected subsystems. A minimum of 100 hours is required. Relational Direct Clinical Contact Hours are earned in two ways:
 - **Couple Therapy** is therapy with two people involved in an intimate relationship. Therapy must occur synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology. Couple Therapy counts toward the minimum requirement of 100 hours of Relational Direct Clinical Contact.
 - **Family Therapy** is therapy with two or more biologically or legally related people (e.g., parent/child; siblings, foster/adoptive families), or two or more or unrelated individuals (such as roommates or co-workers) who have on-going relationships outside of the therapy context and who come to therapy to focus on relational/systemic dynamics. Therapy must occur synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology. Family Therapy counts toward the minimum requirement of 100 hours of Relational Direct Clinical Contact.
- 3) **Group Direct Clinical Contact** is group therapy with several individuals, couples, or families. Therapy must occur synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology. Group Direct Clinical Contact Hours are included in their respective Individual or Relational Hours category.
 - **Group Therapy that counts toward Individual Direct Clinical Contact** = Group therapy with individuals who, prior to the group therapy, had no on-going relationship with other participants. Therapy must occur synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology. Examples of groups comprised of individuals might involve people coming together for group substance abuse treatment or inpatient groups for treatment of bipolar disorder. A maximum of 100 hours may count toward the Individual Direct Clinical Contact hours
 - **Group Therapy that counts toward Relational Direct Clinical Contact** = Group therapy with multiple pairs of couples or with multiple sets of related family members or “relational client units” (as defined above). Therapy must occur synchronously, either physically in the same location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology. These are groups for relational systems, people who have relationships outside of (above and beyond) the group itself. This might include a group for couples working to improve communication or families learning to manage the impact of a presenting problem in the family. A maximum of 50 hours may count toward the Relational Direct Clinical Contact hours.

How to Count Direct Clinical Contact Hours

Direct Clinical Contact Hours are counted as earned. In other words, 15 minutes equals 15 minutes, 25 minutes equals 25 minutes, and 50 minutes equals 50 minutes. Twenty-five minutes is not rounded up to 30 minutes and 50 minutes is not rounded up to an hour (60 minutes).

Clinical Supervision Hours definitions:

Clinical Supervision Hours are defined as time spent with an AAMFT supervisor or supervisor in training in the practice of developing the clinical competencies and professional growth of the student as a supervisee, consistent with the MFT relational/systemic philosophy, ethics, and practices of the marriage and family therapy profession. Supervision is distinguishable from psychotherapy or teaching. MFT Relational/Systemic Supervision may be provided through virtual supervision via video-based technology.

- The words supervision and consultation (see Case Consultation Hours below) are often used interchangeably, and while both are equally important, there are significant and notable distinctions. Supervision and consultation differ in terms of the nature of the relationship and in the matter of legality. Supervision is about direction and education of a supervisee that is on a more continuous basis. Consultation is about advice that can be rejected by the consultee. Consultation happens in a specific incident that needs attention. The ongoing relationship of supervisor/supervisee is about feedback, evaluation, and performance reviews. The supervisor is legally responsible and any problems must be corrected regularly.

Clinical Supervision Hours are earned in two ways:

- 1) **Individual Supervision** is defined as Clinical Supervision in which at least one and no more than two supervisees meet with at least one supervisor or supervisor candidate to review cases by oral/written report, video/audio recordings or live supervision. Students must have three semesters of individual supervision, with a minimum of 50 individual supervision hours.
- 2) **Group Supervision** is defined as Clinical Supervision where at least three and no more than eight supervisees meet with at least one supervisor or supervisor candidate to review cases by oral/written report, video/audio recordings, or live supervision. Students must complete three semesters of group supervision. No more than 50 hours of group supervision may count toward the required 100 hours of Clinical Supervision.

Individual and Group Supervision are further defined in additional categories based on what is being reviewed (a live session, a video/audio recording, or oral/written report) and resulting nature of the data/content itself (raw data as reported by the student). Supervision by raw data involves the incorporation of live observation, video or audio recordings (or a combination) into supervision discussion.

- 1) **Live Supervision** = A therapist is in the room with a client at the same time a supervisor is observing that therapy session synchronously either in-person or via video-based telehealth technology. Live supervision can count for the therapist in the room as well as any other students engaged with the supervisor outside of the therapy room in the dyad or group. The supervisory experience involves an interactional process between the primary therapist(s), the observing students, and the supervisor(s). In live supervision, therapist(s) and supervisors participate in pre-session, mid-session, and/or end-session discussions about the case. If 50% or more of the supervision time is spent in live supervision, then the entire supervision session counts towards live supervision.
- 2) **Video/Audio Supervision** = A supervisee shows a supervisor a video or audio recording of all or part of a therapy session that took place prior to supervision and this video or audio provides the foundation of the supervisory conversation. Video/audio supervision can count for the other supervisees who are participating in the dyad or group. If 50% or more of the supervision time is spent in reviewing video/audio supervision, then the entire supervision session counts towards video/audio supervision.
- 3) **Case Report** = Supervision discussions incorporate only the supervisee's verbal descriptions of what happened in therapy or what is recorded in the client's case file. This category may also be used for the discussion during supervision of general topics related to the provision of

therapy services and/or professional development not tied to specific cases.

How to Count Clinical Supervision Hours

Clinical Supervision Hours are counted as earned. In other words, 15 minutes equals 15 minutes, 25 minutes equals 25 minutes, and 50 minutes equals 50 minutes. Twenty-five minutes is not rounded up to 30 minutes and 50 minutes is not rounded up to an hour (60 minutes).

Individual Supervision is recorded as follows:

- If a student is simultaneously being supervised and earning Direct Clinical Contact Hours, the time is counted as both Clinical Supervision and Direct Clinical Contact Hours provided there was conversation with the supervisor prior to the start of the session and feedback from the supervisor at the conclusion of the session.
- Even if an additional student is present when a supervisor is conducting live supervision, the therapist(s) meeting in person synchronously (in the same physical location or mediated by video-based telehealth technology) with a client (up to two therapists) may count the time as individual supervision.
- Supervision of two students is counted as equivalent to individual supervision.
- Supervision of one student is counted as individual supervision.

Group Supervision is recorded as follows:

- At least one supervisor is present with the students.
- There are at least three, but no more than eight, students present with a single supervisor.
- Even if additional students are present when a supervisor is conducting live supervision, the therapist(s) meeting in person synchronously (in the same physical location or mediated by video based telehealth technology) with a client (up to two therapists) may count the time as group supervision. Other supervisees present and watching the session with the supervisor categorize the supervision as group, live supervision.

Other Clinical Experience Hours definitions:

1. **Case Staffing Hours** are earned in treatment team meetings in which providers gather to review cases, identify client strengths, challenges, and needs, and propose and coordinate treatment solutions. These are formal meetings organized by a medical director, clinical director, or some other person with responsibility for oversight of clinical work being conducted at an agency or practice. No more than 50 Case Staffing Hours are permitted toward the 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours required for graduation. These hours will primarily be acquired at placement sites in the community.
2. **Case Consultation Hours** are earned through two primary methods: teaming of an ongoing case at the Mercer Family Therapy Centers or conversation with other health professionals for the purpose of coordinating care and treatment. Teaming is the active and on-going participation in a client's therapy by a therapist who observes live therapy and consistently provides input to the therapist directly responsible for the treatment. The teaming therapist **MUST** engage in case conceptualization/planning discussions with the primary therapist before and after each therapy session and view the session synchronously (i.e., as it is actually occurring) either using video-based telehealth technology or behind a mirror, in order to count as a Case Consultation Hour. Teaming hours are only earned at the Mercer Family Therapy Center. Case Consultation Hours, which are earned through phone calls with other professionals to coordinate care and treatment, may be earned at both the MFTCs and Community Placement Sites. Case Consultation is defined as separate and distinct from interactions which occur during live supervision. No more than 50 Case Consultation Hours may be included in the 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours required for graduation.

3. **Telehealth via Audio Only Platform Hours** are therapeutic meetings of a therapist and client (individual, relational, or group) occurring synchronously and mediated by telephone or other audio-based telehealth platform. Telehealth via Audio Only Telehealth Platform Hours are a category of Direct Clinical Experience Hours distinct from the Direct Clinical Contact Hours category outlined above, and, as such, it is not relevant to count them as relational even if more than two clients are present. No more than 100 Telehealth via Telephone Hours may be included in the 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours required for graduation.

How to Count Other Clinical Experience Hours

Other Clinical Experience Hours are counted as earned. In other words, 15 minutes equals 15 minutes, 25 minutes equals 25 minutes, and 50 minutes equals 50 minutes. Twenty-five minutes is not rounded up to 30 minutes and 50 minutes is not rounded up to an hour (60 minutes). Case Staffing and Case Consultation Hours are not considered relational contact and are counted in the Case Staffing or Case Consultation category, respectively.

Summary of Direct Clinical Experience Hours Requirements

Individual Direct Clinical Contact Hours Per COAMFTE Requirements	Relational Direct Clinical Contact Hours Per COAMFTE Requirements
200 or more	100 total (minimum)
Group = max of 100	Group = max of 50
Total Direct Clinical Contact Hours = 300 (minimum counted toward 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours) Per COAMFTE Requirements	
Total Clinical Supervision Hours = 100 (maximum counted toward 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours) Per Rules of the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Clinical Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists	
Total Telehealth via Audio Only, Case Staffing and Case Consultation Hours = 100 (maximum counted toward 500 Direct Clinical Experience Hours) Per Rules of the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Clinical Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists (max of 100 audio only, max of 50 case staffing, and max of 50 case consultation).	
Total Direct Clinical Experience Hours = 500	

Summary of Clinical Supervision Hours Requirements

Individual Supervision	Group Supervision
50 hours minimum	50 hours maximum
Total = 100 hours	
At least 50 hours of raw data are required.	

The Process of Practicum Placement

Practicum is a multi-semester progressive course designed to enable the student to apply marriage and family therapy theory to cases in a therapy setting. The practicum sequence begins with MFT 635 Foundational Skills in Practicum, which orients students to clinical and administrative policies and procedures, as well as giving students the opportunity to observe active clients and begin building their own caseload at the Mercer Family Therapy Center. MFT 702 continues the practicum experience at an accelerated and more in-depth rate over the span of at least three more semesters, known as Practicum II, III, and IV. Students must be engaged in this practicum sequence (i.e., I – IV) for 12 months. This helps maximize therapeutic continuity for clients and the development of students’ clinical skills, in addition to fulfilling a GA licensure requirement. Given that the regular calendar year does not exactly map onto Mercer’s academic semester schedule, it should be understood, that while Foundational Skills in Practicum may be included as part of the 12 months for purposes of licensure, students are still expected to consecutively complete no less than three full semesters of MFT Practicum.

All students see clients at two types of placement sites: (1) the Mercer Family Therapy Center, and (2) a community-based agency. The benefit of the Mercer clinic is that supervisors are readily available to give in-depth feedback and recommendations for how a student may improve their clinical skills. Supervision experiences in the community may vary across agency settings. There may also be differences among

students and between Atlanta and Macon regarding where students will likely accumulate most of their 500 hours—at the MFTC or in the community. What is most important to understand, however, is the value placed on students' having experiences in BOTH settings. Because the MFTC is more of a "controlled setting," students will begin their practicum experiences with observation and teaming in the MFTC and then move into the community setting upon faculty approval.

Ongoing assessment of students' readiness to enter both types of practicum sites begins as soon as they enter the MFT program. Students' behaviors during structured activities (e.g., during class or advising meetings) or informal interactions (e.g., between class, impromptu conversations, etc.) contribute to faculty impressions about practicum readiness. Students' participation in class discussions, interactions with peers and other authority figures, the quality of their writing, anxiety and stress management skills, demonstrations of insight into themselves and others, ability to take personal responsibility for their actions without externalizing blame, and teamwork skills together constitute a non-exhaustive list of considerations essential for determining if a student is ready to assume the demands and responsibilities of clinical placements. These impressions along with other qualities are formally appraised by faculty as described below.

There are three phases for which students must receive approval in order to proceed with the full practicum experience. Approval in one phase does not guarantee approval for subsequent phases.

Phase I: Readiness to Interview for Community Placement.

- Students may be competing for community placement practicum sites with graduate students from other mental health training programs; this is particularly true in Atlanta. As such, interviews at community practicum sites may take place early in the spring for placements that are not scheduled to start until the beginning of fall semester.
- The faculty believes that one partial semester during which to interact with a student serves as a good initial assessment, but is not sufficient to make a fully informed decision about a student's readiness to begin direct clinical contact. Therefore, readiness to interview should not automatically be equated with the readiness to start the four-semester practicum sequence. Instead this initial assessment should be understood as a first step, the timing of which primarily has to do with the typical timing of agencies in the community at which students often work toward completion of practicum requirements.
- By the end of the 11th week of classes during the first semester in the MFT program, students will prepare practicum application materials (available on-line), including their resume and cover letter, and upload them to the PDSS 602 Module 2 in Canvas.
- Academic Advisors will review and approve the application material to ensure quality and appropriateness for delivery to placement sites.
- Once all application materials have been reviewed and approved by Advisors (resume, cover letter, and application for practicum placement), students will make appointments to meet with the Community Practicum Site Coordinator during weeks 12-15 of the first semester to discuss the application materials and readiness to interview at community placement sites.
- Prior to these meetings, the Community Placement Coordinator (CPC) will solicit verbal feedback from all faculty about the perceived areas of strengths and growth edges of each first-year student. These conversations will then be documented in a written summary and reviewed by the MFT faculty.
- This written summary will be shared with each student during meetings with the CPC and/or the Assistant/Associate Program Director and the student will be given an opportunity to share their response to faculty feedback. A copy of this feedback will accompany the students' application materials to placement sites.

- *It is important to note that a student's acceptance by an agency to be an intern does not guarantee approval by the faculty for the student to actually begin that internship placement (Phase III). Since ultimate liability for clinical activities by Mercer students are the responsibility of the Mercer MFT Program, not the community agency; the program, not the agency, will give final approval for students to start a placement.*
- If during this feedback process any concerns about a student's readiness to interview for community placement are discovered, these concerns will be documented and discussed with the student in a meeting with the CPC and Assistant/Associate Program Director in order to gather the student's perspective prior to any formal decision being made to delay permission to interview.
- If interviews are delayed, the student and the faculty will collectively create a written action plan for resolving the concerns in a timely manner. This action plan must be approved by the Program Director. If approved as part of the action plan, the student may still submit materials for consideration to enroll in Foundational Skills in Practicum (MFT635) in order to begin observing and participating in clinical teams at the Mercer Family Therapy Center only.
- Once approval to interview for practicum placements has been granted, students will work closely with the Community Placement Coordinator to determine the appropriate placement opportunities. Students are actively encouraged to both explore new practicum placement possibilities as well as follow up on suggestions made by the CPC. All available placement opportunities will be provided on the Supervision Assist platform.
- Students will utilize the approved application materials on Supervision Assist to contact potential placement sites and site directors.
- Students and agencies indicate their preference to the Community Placement Coordinator to participate in the matching process.
- The site director will contact the student directly to set up in-person interviews for the position.
- During the first week of MFT702, Practicum II, the student and Site Director will execute the MUSM/MFT Contract and Guidelines for Practicum and Supervision document. The student will upload the signed document into Supervision Assist in the appropriate location.

Phase II: Readiness to Enter Practicum I (i.e., "pre-practicum/practicum orientation").

- One month prior to the end of the students' second semester (usually spring), all full time and adjunct faculty will complete the *Evaluation of Students Readiness to Enter Practicum* form for each and every student with whom they have had formal (e.g., in class) or reasonably significant informal contact. These evaluation forms are turned into the Assistant/Associate Program Director.
- At the same time, students also will have an opportunity to comment on their own self-perceived readiness to enter practicum by completing the form, *Students' Self-Evaluation of Global Readiness for Practicum*. This form must be turned into the Assistant/Associate Program Director by the end of the 12th week of the semester.
- On both forms, using a five-point scale (1= Problematic, 2= Struggling, 3= Average, 4= Above Average, and 5= Outstanding) the student is rated on 30 personal and interpersonal qualities/behaviors the faculty associate with good clinical practice.
- Depending on the nature and/or severity of concern expressed by faculty, if one or more areas on the evaluation form are rated as "problematic" a formal remediation plan may need to be created. The MFT faculty will meet to review both the student's self-evaluation and the feedback from faculty.
- If during this feedback process any concerns about a student's readiness to enter Practicum I: Foundational Skills in Practicum are discovered, these concerns will be documented and discussed with the student in a meeting with the CPC and Assistant/Associate Program Director in order to

gather the student's perspective prior to any formal decision being made.

- If entry into Practicum I: Foundational Skills in Practicum is delayed, the student and the Assistant/Associate Program Director (with input from the rest of the faculty) will collectively create a written action plan for resolving the concerns in a timely manner. This action plan must be approved by the Program Director.
- A student may not start a community placement until after completing Practicum I unless granted approval of the Program Director and/or the assistant/Associate Program Director

Phase III: Readiness to Start Community Placement

- During the summer semester prior to beginning Practicum II students will participate in Assessment Day. This is an oral exam/role play assessment wherein second year students serve as "standardized clients" with whom first year students must conduct a 45-minute intake session in front of at least 2 faculty/clinical supervisors.
- During this role play faculty are evaluating students' ability to join, instill hope, ask follow up questions, establish initial treatment goals, develop initial plan of action, etc. All students are evaluated using a rubric.
- After role play "standardized clients" give first year student feedback on their experience as clients and first year students can ask questions of the 'standardized clients' as well. After this, faculty gives verbal feedback to the student.
- Mercer MFT faculty meet to discuss the student's performance, determine if the student is ready to start seeing clients at the community placement, and create a written document detailing area of strengths, challenges, and recommendations for initial goals of supervision for the following semester.

Changing Practicum Sites

It is Program Policy that a student is assigned to one or more Practicum Site(s) and remains there for at least three semester or 12 months. Practicum sites are selected carefully with the student's needs in mind, the fit between the student and the site, and with the hope that the number of relational hours will be adequate. When an individual is assigned to a student as a client, the student can encourage the client to also bring in family members. It is very disruptive for the agency and for the student's client caseload, if a student leaves his/her practicum site before the end of the 12-month period. Therefore, a student should carefully consider a request to change Practicum sites. However, if for some critical reason a student believes a site change is necessary, the following protocol is to be followed:

- The student is to make an appointment to speak with his/her Practicum Supervisor to review the concerns the student is having and any solutions, which have been attempted. The Practicum Supervisor will meet with the Community Placement Coordinator to review the student's concerns. The student may be asked to participate in the meeting.
- The Community Placement Coordinator may wish to contact the Site Director for clarification. Should it be determined that the student should terminate the placement site and/or find a new placement site, the Community Placement Coordinator will notify the MFT Assistant/Associate Program Director and seek approval of the student's request.
- If it is determined that the student will not terminate the current site(s), the Practicum Supervisor and/or the Community Placement Coordinator will meet with the student during individual supervision or privately to discuss steps to be taken to correct problems at the current site. The Community Placement Coordinator may contact and involve the Agency On-Site Director in this process.
- If the student is to terminate the current site(s), the Practicum Supervisor will advise the student as

to how to write a letter of resignation and how to set up a meeting with the Agency On-Site Director to terminate professionally.

- The Community Placement Coordinator will meet with the student to select and establish a new placement site.

Completing and Exiting Practicum

It is expected that students will complete all 500 hours of direct clinical experience (including the 100 relational component) by the end of finals week their third consecutive semester of practicum (excluding the first “pre-practicum/orientation” semester). It is recognized, however, that sometimes circumstances beyond the students’ control may delay the completion of clinical hours. If, by the last day of finals week, a student has completed at least 450 total hours, consisting of 80 or more relational hours he or she may seek approval from the Assistant/Associate Program Director to be assigned an IP (“in progress”) instead of a traditional letter grade for the semester. An IP will allow the student to remain covered by Mercer’s liability insurance in order to complete their clinical hours during the weeks before the following semester begins.

Students with IPs are responsible for arranging another appointment with the Assistant/Associate Program Director no later than the day prior to the first day of the new semester to verify that they have completed their 500 hours (including the 100 relational hours). Students who do not complete their clinical hours prior to the first day of the new semester or who fail to contact the Assistant/Associate Program Director to make an appointment will be expected to re-enroll in practicum for another semester. However, those students who believe they will be able to complete all clinical requirements by the end of the second or third week of the new semester should still make an appointment to meet with the Assistant/Associate Program Director to verify remaining hours, assess the viability of the timely completion of those hours, and, if appropriate, arrange to drop the practicum class prior to the end of the drop/add period.

Students who have 449 total direct clinical experience hours or less and/or 79 hours or less of relational direct clinical contact by the end of finals week of their third consecutive semester of practicum (excluding the first “pre- practicum/orientation” semester) will be given a traditional grade for practicum and are expected to register for another full semester of practicum. They will be allowed to reduce their caseloads during the next semester once clinical requirements are completed, but they must remain clinically active the entire semester in order to receive course credit. During the final semester of the training program, when the student has reached the required 500 direct clinical experience hours, she/he will not accept new clients beyond mid- semester and will begin the process of termination or referral of their client caseload.

Steps for wrapping up direct clinical contact are as follows:

- Students will give advance notice to clients of the date of the termination date of their practicum placement and plan for termination or case transfer with their clients. Advance notice should be given at least four weeks in advance of termination or transfer.
- With the Agency On-Site Director’s permission, the student may continue to see those clients for whom this would be deemed particularly helpful beyond their termination date, but for only a brief number of sessions in order to terminate successfully.
- While enrolled in the program, students are not to see clients outside of agency settings without specific permission of the Assistant/Associate Program Director and Program Director.
- Malpractice insurance provided by MUSM for the MFT students will cease at the completion of the term in which the student achieves 500 hours of direct clinical experience. The student is encouraged to apply for his or her own malpractice insurance coverage at the beginning of the last

term of supervision. This will prevent a lapse in coverage of malpractice insurance on the part of the student. No student, under any circumstances, should agree to see clients without malpractice insurance coverage.

Practicum Supervision Process

The supervision process is a vital part of the growth and change necessary to develop into a competent family therapist. Supervision is the oversight of the trainee's interaction with clients in clinical therapy sessions. Supervision helps the trainee learn the process and skill of becoming a competent family therapist. During each semester, weekly DAP notes and Case Presentation Forms of ongoing cases are expected to be brought for supervision. Formal Biopsychosocial/spiritual Family Assessments will be required each semester. Students receive a minimum of fifty hours of supervision by means of direct observation. The Practicum Supervisor will direct the student regarding the number of recordings needed for individual supervision. Each student should plan to bring one recording to each group supervision class.

Please believe that your supervisors genuinely care about you and always have your best interest at heart. You can expect them to both nurture and challenge you. Please bear in mind that everyone is different and it takes time for supervisors to learn the optimal balance between nurturing and challenging that each student needs. Please let your supervisors know if you feel they need to adjust their attempts to balance between nurturing you and pushing you to grow. You can also expect MFT faculty to respect your abilities and aspirations from a developmental perspective, create an atmosphere for the pursuit of excellence in clinical and academic matters, share their interests with you, and encourage a questioning and objective approach to ideas presented in the context of practicum training.

You can expect MFT faculty to be available to you either for face-to-face consultation or by phone. There is a natural inclination among students to not want to bother professors, especially by phone. It truly is okay for you to call us. If we cannot talk with you at that moment, we will get back to you just as soon as we can. You are practicing therapy under your supervisors' professional licenses, which means that they are ultimately responsible for everything you do. It is in your best interest, your clients' best interests, and your supervisors' best interest that you not hesitate to ask questions and call a supervisor if none are available in person. You should call your individual supervisor first, your group supervisor second, the Clinic Director third, and the Program Director fourth.

Frequency of Supervision – Students will meet for individual supervision for 1.25 hours each week, plus meet every other week for 2.5 to 3 hours of group supervision.

- Weekly attendance at supervision is considered the equivalent of weekly attendance in any course in the Mercer MFT program, insofar as students are expected to adjust their personal and professional schedules (including clinical and administrative responsibilities at community placement sites) in order to attend. While we will make every effort to provide supervision options that will accommodate a wide variety of employment schedules, we cannot guarantee from semester to semester that group and individual supervision will accommodate the unique needs of each individual student. While the nature of clinical supervision is not the same as classroom instruction in didactic classes, it is essential to achieving the educational outcomes established by the Mercer MFT Program.
- Students are expected to attend all scheduled supervision sessions, to be punctual and to remain for the duration. Attendance at each class is mandatory and there will be no unexcused absences.
- With the exception of genuine emergencies, if a student needs to miss supervision, it is important to contact the supervisor in advance and *ask* if the absence will be excused; please *do not merely*

inform your supervisor of your absence, assuming that it will automatically be considered excused. If you do not get in touch with your supervisor in advance of your absence, the supervisor reserves the right to not excuse your absence and deduct points from your grade.

- If a supervisor has to cancel supervision for any reason, the supervisor will make reasonable efforts to arrange time with the student(s) to make up the missed supervision. However, if the student missed supervision, the supervisor *may, but is not obligated* to make up the missed supervision time.

In order to graduate, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to make sure that he or she reaches a minimum of 100 hours of clinical supervision (at least 50 of which must be in individual supervision and at least 50 of which must be based on raw data) by the end of the final semester of practicum.

- The program is responsible for offering regular supervision so that students may achieve the 100-hour requirement over the course of the entire practicum sequence, but it is the responsibility of the student to make sure that they are taking full advantage of these opportunities each semester.
- The program is not responsible for providing extra supervision opportunities if a student reaches the end of their practicum sequence and is falling short of the 100-hour requirement and/or the 50-hour raw data requirement.

AAMFT Approved Supervision:

- It is face-to-face interaction with the supervisor. The learning process is sustained and intense. It is recommended that the total supervision experience include more than one Practicum Supervisor; therefore, Faculty assignments are rotated each Practicum semester.
- MFT supervision emphasizes the raw data from a student's continuing clinical practice made directly available to the Practicum Supervisor through such means as direct observation, co-therapy, written clinical notes, or audio and video recordings.
- MFT supervision is a process clearly distinguishable from personal psychotherapy, and is contracted to serve professional/vocational goals.
- Supervision from a family member is not acceptable.
- Peer supervision is not acceptable.

Student Practicum Supervisory Relationship:

A supervisory relationship is a faculty/student relationship with the following dimensions:

- The supervisor evaluates and grades the trainee's work.
- The supervisor has special training and several years of experience in the practice of MFT.
- The supervisor has responsibility for guiding the trainee regarding intervention with clients.
- The trainee may be asked to look at the interface between her/his work and personal life. This may lead to a position of vulnerability because of personal information shared by the trainee. Supervisors are trained to be sensitive to this material and handle it appropriately.
- The trainee is responsible for his/her own therapy whether it is recommended by the supervisor or chosen by the trainee.
- The supervisor may raise personal issues with trainees as related to the trainee's work, but does not serve as therapist for the trainee.
- The supervisor who recommends that the trainee needs therapy to address personal issues which may be blocking the trainee's growth as a therapist will discuss it with the trainee.
- Supervisors and trainees should avoid dual relationships; trainees assume the right and the responsibility for the following: to raise concerns about their supervision with their supervisors, including, but not limited to: a) direct feedback about what is and is not helpful; b) the personal

reasons for blockages which are willing to be shared in supervision.

- Concerns not adequately resolved with the supervisor, are brought to the Assistant/Associate Program Director for further guidance.

Supervision in the practicum setting is not:

- Administrative supervision - for example, clinical practice performed under administrative rather than clinical supervision of an agency director or administrator.
- A didactic process wherein techniques or procedures are talked about or demonstrated in a classroom, workshop or seminar.
- Consultation, staff development, or orientation to a field or program.
- Role-playing of family relationships as a substitute for current practice in an appropriate clinical situation.

Supervision Contact Procedures Between Semesters and/or During Emergencies

Between academic semesters, Mercer supervisors continue to provide clinical supervision on a rotating basis, but schedules may vary based on unique circumstances. Toward the end of every semester, the Assistant/Associate Program Director will notify students who they should go to for supervision during semester breaks. Once a new semester starts, the newly assigned Practicum Supervisor will assume supervisory responsibilities with the students.

If a crisis arises during the academic semester related to a Mercer Client, the student should first contact his or her Mercer Practicum Supervisor. If the Practicum Supervisor cannot be reached, the students should contact the Assistant/Associate Program Director and then the Program Director as needed. If the crisis involved a client at a community practicum site, the student should first follow the agency's emergency procedures and then immediately notify his or her Mercer Supervisor, following the same chain of contact listed for Mercer clients. Whether the crisis is related to a Mercer client or a community client, the student is responsible for promptly informing his or her Practicum Supervisor of the nature of the crisis.

If a crisis occurs between semesters, students should contact the rotating faculty member on call as communicated by the Assistant/Associate Program Director. In Macon, if the Practicum Supervisor is not available, students may also call the Mercer Health Systems Answering Service at (478) 301-5930 and request that the Family Therapist on call be paged. The student should provide the answering service with the telephone numbers(s) at which the student may be readily available.

General Expectations of Practicum Students

Be Pro-active Regarding Supervision

- Students should be prepared to report to any supervisor on the status of all their cases at any time.
- Students should provide their Practicum Supervisors with lists of all cases on a regular basis.
- The lists should be updated as needed, per either student or Practicum Supervisor's initiative.
- Students should be prepared to present case material on all of their 500 (or more) case hours over three (or more) semesters.
- Students are required to report any crises with individuals or families that place persons at risk.
- Examples include but are not limited to suicide risk, homicide risk, abuse and chemical dependency. This may be done during Individual or Group Supervision, if the situation is stable/chronic. However, if the situation is acute, the student should report immediately to the Practicum Supervisor as well as the On-site Director or other appropriate persons.

Audio/Video/DVD Recording for Clinical Supervision

- Once Practicum placement begins you will be required to bring video or audio tape of your work to supervision each week. Many of the placements have equipment at their facilities for you to use. However, if a student does not have access to video equipment, it might be possible to check out equipment from Mercer, but this option is never guaranteed. For additional information concerning the equipment and its availability please see the MFT Graduate Program Specialist.
- All sessions at Mercer Family Therapy Center must be video-recorded.
- If video recording is not available at community placement sites, students must provide their own audio recording equipment and discuss with their community supervisors' procedures for recording sessions.
- While it is understood that some placements will make recording a difficult or impossible option, students should make every effort in consultation with their supervisors to record as many sessions as possible.
- Students are expected to obtain written informed consent to audio/video from every off-campus client using the documentation specified by their placement supervisors. Written permission to record sessions is embedded in the standard informed consent documents used at the Mercer clinic.

Case Management and Case File Documentation

- Students are expected to stay current on all paperwork required at their off-site practicum placement and at the Mercer Family Therapy Center.
- They are also expected to stay current with any case management needs (i.e., phone calls, consultations with other providers, etc.) that each case requires and/or as requested by any clinical supervisor.
- Students are expected to fully complete DAP progress notes for each therapy session held at Mercer Family Therapy Center and by the third session a Biopsychosocial/spiritual Family Assessment for each MFTC client and bring them to supervision for review.
- These will be assessed during part of regular client chart reviews by supervisors when staffing Mercer cases, by spot checks made by the Mercer Assistant/Associate Program Director, by verbal conversations between the Mercer Community Placement Coordinator and Community Supervisors, as well as end of the semester evaluations by Community Site Directors.

Transporting Client Files and/or Clinical Documents for Clinical Supervision

- In order to uphold the highest ethical standards, students are required to keep client files, other clinical documentation, and/or audio/video recordings in a secure locking file box while transporting. This may be a locking briefcase, a metal cash-box, or a heavy-duty money bag with a built-in lock.
- These locking file boxes are for temporary transportation purposes only and should not be considered permanent or long-term storage. Lockable space is available at the Mercer Family Therapy Center for long term storage of clinical materials while the therapist is in practicum.
- Mercer Family Therapy Center Files and DVDs may not leave the premises without direct permission from the Assistant/Associate Program Director.

Professional Attire

- Professional attire is expected whenever you are actively working with clients. As a general rule, this means avoiding blue jeans, casual shorts, tank tops, and anything that could be perceived by clients as provocative (i.e., very tight clothing, spaghetti straps or sleeve-less shirts, or blouses revealing more than just a hint of cleavage). Hair must be neatly done; it must also

- not be unnaturally colored. (e.g., hot pink, green or bright purple).
- You are expected to comply with the request of any clinical supervisor should they ask you to make changes in your attire, including but not limited to the use of camisole cover-ups.
- You are also expected to comply with the professional standards of dress as established by agency policies at your community placement site.

Weekly Logs of Therapy and Supervision Hours

- Students are expected to complete weekly logs of both clinical hours spent with clients and supervision hours obtained with the Faculty Supervisor using Supervision Assist. Instructions will be provided at the outset of the clinical experience. It is the students' responsibility to keep track of the number of direct clinical experience. While the program will keep copies of these records, students must keep ALL original documentation and cannot automatically expect the program to provide this information.

Evaluation of Clinical Skills

- The Basic Skills Evaluation Device (BSED) assesses 24 skills grouped in six categories (i.e., conceptual, perceptual, executive, professional, evaluative, and application of theory skills) and closely correspond to the AAMFT Core Competencies. Please note that the final group, "theory" can be evaluated either as "theories in general" or one or two specific theories if the student is actively focusing on the mastery of an identified theoretical model.
- At mid-term, students should complete the BSED as a self-evaluation and bring it to supervision for discussion. The purpose of the student's completion of the BSED is to facilitate self-reflection and a mid-point conversation about progress. *This mid-term BSED will not be graded beyond "completed" or "non-completed."*
- At the end of the semester, both the student and the supervisor will complete the BSED and compare their evaluations during a private supervision time during finals week. During this time, the student is free to discuss any concerns or disagreements with the supervisor's assessment of their clinical skills. The rating given by the supervisor (not the student) will contribute to the student's final grade.

End of the Semester Student, Agency, and Faculty Evaluations

- At the end of the semester, students are expected to complete evaluations of themselves, their placements, and supervisors. Points will be awarded for the completion of the evaluations, not based on the actual feedback given.
- Students should complete (1) a self-evaluation using the Basic Skills Evaluation Device, (2) an evaluation of their community placement site, (3) an evaluation of their Community supervisor (or supervisors if more than one) and (4) an evaluation of their Mercer supervisor (or supervisors if more than one within a single semester). Students should also print out the (5) form that Community Supervisors will complete for each student and give it to their community supervisors. These forms are available on Blackboard.
- *It is the student's responsibility to return feedback from community placement supervisors to their Mercer supervisor. This means that students must give their community placement supervisors evaluation forms at least two weeks in advance of this deadline.* This is so that community supervisors have time to complete and discuss their evaluation with the student prior to the Mercer supervisor's completing the student's final evaluation.
- All evaluations are to be turned into the Mercer supervisor NO LATER THAN THE START OF THE LAST WEEK OF CLASSES.
- *All evaluations of Mercer supervisors should be turned into the Assistant/Associate Program*

Director after your last supervision session for the semester. If your Mercer practicum supervisor is the Assistant/Associate Program Director, your evaluation should be turned in to the Program Director. Practicum supervisors do not have access to students' written evaluations of them until after semester grades have been submitted to the registrar's office.

- Students are encouraged to have open dialog with all their supervisors about what went well and what supervisors could do differently to improve the student's experience. However, given the power differential, students may feel free to reserve their feedback for the written evaluation that supervisors will see after grades have been submitted.

Student Vacations and Continuity of Client Therapy

- Students should be aware that the MFT Practicum continues for a minimum of three semesters annually (50 weeks).
- The student and Practicum Supervisor are responsible for their client sessions while in treatment.
- The assigned Practicum Supervisor in conjunction with the Assistant/Associate Program Director will help the student work out time off from the Mercer Clinic at Holidays and between semesters.
- Community agencies do not follow the Mercer academic calendar, so it is also imperative that students gain permission in advance before scheduling time away from community practicum sites.
- Students are responsible for making for clinical back-up for their clients while they are on vacation; these plans must be approved by Mercer and community supervisors prior to the students' vacation.

Specific Responsibilities of the MFT Student:

- To sign the Authorization for Release of Records & Information, the Student Applied Learning Experience Agreement and the MFT Guidelines for Practicum & Supervision for each Practicum site.
- To function ethically, competently and professionally as a member of the agency.
- To spend up to 20 hours per week (or number of hours agreed upon among the agency, student and Community Practicum Site Coordinator) in the Practicum placement for at least three consecutive semesters providing therapy and activities required by the placement site.
- To keep appropriate records required by the placement agency and by the MFT program.
- To advise the Agency On-Site Director if caseload needs are not being met.
- To adhere to all agency requirements regarding client confidentiality
- To be responsive to the Agency On-Site Director on all matters of legal responsibility for clients.
- To provide the Practicum Supervisor with recordings of therapy sessions as specified in the syllabus each semester. When possible to arrange for at least one session each semester to be supervised live.
- To participate in Practicum supervision with faculty supervisors of the MFT training program plus additional on-site supervision if required by the Practicum placement.
- To participate in all other training experiences as requested by the Practicum site's policies. The student should keep the Community Placement Coordinator informed of all arrangements.
- To learn the office procedures of the Agency and to adapt to the values and organizational style of the agency in which the student is placed complete evaluations of supervision sessions each Practicum semester to provide feedback to the Practicum Supervisor.
- To complete an Agency Evaluation Form each semester for each site the student is engaged in the Practicum experience.

Additional Expectations

You are expected to know and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook and look to faculty, not other students, for clarifications. While it is often more convenient and more comfortable

to ask a more senior student how to do something, it is ultimately your responsibility to make sure that you have verified any answers you have received from another graduate student with your supervisor.

You are expected to attend and participate in clinic meetings. Clinic meetings are held regularly throughout the semester and represent an important time for the exchange of information regarding the day to day operation of the clinic. This is an invaluable opportunity for students to offer feedback and contribute new ideas for improving the clinic and clinical training.

You are expected to adhere to the ethical standards of the profession. These include the [Ethics Code of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy](#), the Georgia State Code of Ethics for Marriage and Family Therapists, and Mercer Family Therapy Center policies and procedures related to maintaining client privacy and confidentiality. Breach of any of these ethical standards may result in dismissal from the practicum and/or other consequences deemed appropriate by the Program Director.

You are expected to help contribute to a clean, organized and appealing physical space for your clients and your peers. Please make sure that the waiting room and each of the therapy rooms are tidy at all times. All therapists will assume responsibility for keeping the observation room clean and well organized. If you walk by the waiting room and see something out of place, please correct this. If you use toys or move furniture during a therapy session, it is important that you leave the room straightened and completely set up for the next therapist. Toys should be arranged neatly on the shelves, not just casually tossed there. Adults and children frequently come to therapy when their lives have become too chaotic or unmanageable. Providing an orderly environment for clients can contribute to their sense of safety and confidence in the therapy process.

It is especially important that therapists leave time in their sessions with children to have them help clean up. Not only does this teach them responsibility, but it is also a clinically significant step in their therapy experience. Children work through their issues via the symbolic world of play; they open up their vulnerable side to the therapist while playing. Clean-up time allows them to “re-pack” their vulnerabilities by giving them the opportunity to transition from their inner symbolic world back into the outer world of everyday life.

Your lives as students can also be overwhelming at times, so it is also important that you respect the need for order in the break room space and the intern office. At home, some of us are neat freaks and some of us are slob. At the clinic the neat freaks will need to tolerate a bit more clutter and the slob will need to put in extra effort to keep things picked up. Be sure to always clean your dishes promptly since this is a shared space and dirty dishes can create a health hazard.

You are expected to contribute to the visibility of the Mercer Family Therapy Center through your participation in formal and informal marketing efforts. To maintain enough cases for clinicians, the services of the Family Therapy Center may periodically need advertising. All therapists-in-training are expected to participate in these marketing efforts which include, but are not limited to, distributing brochures, posting fliers about treatment or support groups, and/or making presentations about Family Therapy Center services across campus or in the surrounding community. The need for such marketing may vary from year to year. Alumni from our program have reported that such marketing experience was valuable to later efforts to establish their own clinical practices. Since marketing is part of agency practice, employers also value skills in this area.

You are expected to seek out educational and clinical reading materials beyond those assigned to you as part of your formal coursework. Therapists in training must actively and independently pursue

learning in areas of interest and/or weakness. Completing readings or activities assigned in your courses will only serve as a starting point for all you need to do to become a successful therapist. There is no way to predict in advance the problems faced by the clients that will be assigned to you. It may be that you will need to read up on an issue before you actually get to that topic in one of your courses, or even if covered in class, you may need to read more on your own. We have an excellent library at the Mercer Family Therapy Center and you are encouraged to check out materials on your own. You need to remember that being a marriage and family therapist will require independent reading and continuing education throughout your career. You should keep your supervisor informed of outside reading you are doing so that they may guide you on the implementation of ideas and techniques that you are discovering on your own.

You are expected to keep documentation in client files up to date at all times. This is especially important in the event that something happens (e.g., a car accident, or being out of town) that results in your supervisor not being able to reach you or leaves you suddenly unable to continue providing therapy. Your supervisor must have access to have an up to date written record of all your interactions with your clients. Keeping up with paperwork is more of a challenge for some of us than for others of us, depending on our personalities and organizational work habits. Nevertheless, now is the time, while you are at the start of your career, to develop a working system for yourself that facilitates your staying on top of documentation requirements. Developing such skills now will be benefit to the rest of your career; not doing so will create a burden.

You are expected to contribute to the financial viability of the Family Therapy Center through the consistent collection of client fees. The Mercer Family Therapy Center is a self-sustaining unit within the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. This means that all costs associated with operating the clinic are paid for by funds generated by client fees and contacts for clinical services. It is imperative that you enforce the policies and procedures set forth in the Financial Agreement signed by your clients (see section on Family Therapy Center Forms). Fees should be mentioned during the intake phone call and the Fee Agreement discussed in depth during the intake session. In a procedural change from the past, we are now training MFT interns to collect fees at the start of each session to help protect clients from getting behind in their fees. DO NOT let clients accumulate unpaid balances. Your primary supervisor may discuss fee collection practices in weekly individual supervision sessions to ensure that you are charging for sessions and no-shows as well as keeping your outstanding balances low. The Clinic Coordinator and the Clinic Director will also be monitoring this issue.

It can often feel very uncomfortable for beginning therapists to have to focus on the “business” side of therapy. You may experience feelings of inadequacy such that you don’t believe your time is valuable, because you are still learning. Trust us; your time and skills are valuable!! You will know more about the therapy process within a month of being in the program than the majority of your clients. If that doesn’t convince you of the value of your services, consider also that your clients are not only paying for your great work, but also the time, skills, and insights of your licensed supervisors!

Attending to client’s financial situation goes beyond simply paying for therapy. Personal finance can be one of the greatest sources of stress for individuals, couples, and families. When clients have trouble paying for services, it is not simply a “business” issue; it is a clinical issue as well. Clients with significant financial difficulties may need referral to community resources with expertise in financial management.

You are expected to give and receive feedback from colleagues in a constructive manner. One of the advantages of a group practicum is the opportunity it affords to give and receive feedback among

therapists-in-training. Reports from therapists in the field indicate that they miss the advantages afforded by such feedback. They find that the lack of it slows professional development. Another advantage of the practicum is that it allows the therapist-in-training to experiment, take risks, and try new interventions in a protected environment. Thus, the more open you are to receiving and contributing constructive feedback about your own or others' strengths and areas of growth, the better.

You are expected to keep your supervisors fully informed as to what is happening in your cases. It is important that you are as thorough as you can be when discussing your case in supervision so your supervisor has as much information as possible about the case in order to effectively guide you. Supervision is NOT the time to put on appearances, though sometimes when we feel insecure we might be tempted to do so. Being 150% honest and transparent during supervision will maximize your learning and your supervisor's effectiveness. It is your responsibility, not the supervisor's, to make sure that each of your cases is discussed in supervision at least once each month. If you need more time to cover all your cases, let your supervisor know so that he or she may either schedule extra time with you or adjust how time is managed during already scheduled supervision sessions.

You are expected to follow instructions given to you by your supervisors. Research has indicated that the most effective supervision contains a balance of positive and challenging feedback. Most often you and your supervisor will collaborate and co-construct interventions for you to implement with your clients. There may be times, however, especially during live supervision when time is of the essence, that you will be asked to simply trust the guidance of your supervisor and do what they ask, whether or not it makes complete sense to you at the moment.

Your supervisors have years of experience and a deeper grasp of theory and technique than you are expected to have during your training. It is from this deep well of knowledge and experience combined with a genuine concern for the well-being of clients and your professional growth that they make their recommendations. It is certainly okay to disagree with your supervisor and, in fact, you are encouraged to express your thoughts and opinion as part of a constructive dialog, but in the final analysis the decision of the supervisor must be respected. The expectation that you follow all directives given to you by your supervisors also includes issues related to case management and professionalism.

Practicum Responsibilities

Responsibilities of MFT Program:

- (a) To adequately screen and train students to function as marriage and family therapists in training.
- (b) To provide student malpractice insurance.
- (c) To provide quality clinical opportunities.

Responsibilities of MFT Assistant/Associate Program Director:

- (a) To receive completed Practicum applications.
- (b) In consultation with Practicum Supervisors and Program Director, to assign students to Practicum Supervisors and Practicum Groups.
- (c) To act as contact for the Site Director when the agency needs to discuss the student's clinical behavior.
- (d) To survey students' Practicum needs and be sure they are being met.
- (e) To inform agency about provision of insurance and provide a copy of the face sheet to the policy when requested.
- (f) To be available to the Community Placement Coordinator for consultation and assistance in establishing and maintaining community practicum placement sites.

Responsibilities of Community Placement Site Coordinator:

- (a) To explore new possibilities for practicum sites.
- (b) To suggest Practicum sites for students and to contact the Practicum site by telephone.
- (c) For a first-time placement of a student at a Practicum site, make a personal visit to establish a working relationship with the Agency On-Site Director and to get the MUSM/MFT Contract and Guidelines between the Program, student and the agency signed.
- (d) To discuss student needs with the Agency On-Site Director.
- (e) To explain program expectations, including Practicum Supervisor responsibilities.
- (f) To evaluate agency site for appropriateness and quality of Practicum experience.

Responsibilities of Mercer Clinical Supervisor:

- (a) To focus on raw data (audio, video, live) from student's clinical practice as much as is reasonably possible.
- (b) To review and discuss the MFT Practicum Materials with the student.
- (c) To assess student competency level.
- (d) To act as a source of information re:
 - a. Georgia Composite Board Law & Rules for Licensure
 - b. Ethics and Professional Practice
 - c. AAMFT Core Competencies
 - d. Clinical hours and supervision requirements
 - e. How to write case notes, family and individual assessments, and how to keep records.
 - f. Monitor and assist student's integration of DSM V diagnoses with family systems understanding of clients.
 - g. Assure student of proper referral procedures to psychiatrist, medical specialist, service agencies, etc. towards end of facilitating a collaborative model of care.
 - h. Evaluate student's use, as appropriate, of common family therapy/mental health assessment instruments.
- (e) To evaluate student ethics and professionalism as well as use of theory and its clinical application to family therapy.
- (f) To be sure that office and agency procedures are adhered to by the student at the practicum site.

- (g) To encourage student's availability for case conference or team meetings.
- (h) To monitor availability of ten or more cases weekly for student and report to Assistant/Associate Program Director and/or Community Placement Coordinator when student needs are not being met.
- (i) To inform student that program forms are available in the Department Office.
- (j) To evaluate write-ups, audio or videotapes of students and to be sure that all three supervision media are used by all students in Practicum group.
- (k) To ask weekly about suicidal or homicidal ideation and intention among student's cases and urge student to inform the Agency On-Site Director of potential at risk clients.
- (l) To review and sign the Weekly Record of Therapy & Supervision form submitted by the student each week.
- (m) To collect all Practicum evaluation forms from the student at the end of each semester.
- (n) At the end of each semester, to complete the Basic Skills Evaluation Device on each student and discuss it with the student.
- (o) To inform MFT faculty when a student is in trouble and to discuss options for rehabilitation, etc.
- (p) To evaluate student's case management skills.
- (q) To evaluate student's use of systems theoretical approach to treatment.
- (r) To evaluate student's communication with clients, professionals, and colleagues.
- (s) To evaluate student's use of supervision.
- (t) To follow the student's client load and make suggestions for planning therapeutic strategies and developing interventions.
- (u) To make suggestions for personal therapy when appropriate.
- (v) To avoid dual relationships, i.e. friend/therapist.
- (w) To use four media to supervise; audiotape, videotape, case notes, live supervision.
- (x) To be available in any crisis situations.
- (y) To provide appropriate feedback.
- (z) To support the student by identifying strengths and confronting changes to be made.
- (aa) To maintain confidentiality.
- (bb) To suggest appropriate and relevant reading material.

Responsibilities of Site Director at Community Placement Site:

- (a) To sign the MUSM Student Affiliation Agreement and the MFT Guidelines for Practicum & Supervision.
- (b) To provide the student with an appropriate space which is confidential, safe, clean and professional for the student to see clients.
- (c) To provide an orientation for the student as to the Agency's policies, procedures, requirement for paperwork & physical facilities.
- (d) To provide a sufficient number and type of clients or 12 successive months as required for the training of a marriage and family therapist, half of which should be families and/or couples. The difficulty of the cases assigned should reflect the experience level of the trainee.
- (e) To provide direction of the student's work, including assignment of cases, to the degree deemed appropriate by the agency, and retain legal responsibility for the clients (MUSM carries malpractice insurance on students).
- (f) To communicate with the Community Placement Coordinator and/or Assistant/Associate Program Director concerning the case variety and level of difficulty for the student's ability.
- (g) To involve the student in Agency case conferences and/or team meetings.
- (h) To ensure that either the Agency On-Site Director or an appropriate agency representative is in the building at all times the student is engaged in therapy with a client.

- (i) With appropriate safeguards for confidentiality, to permit the student to audio tape or video tape a minimum of six of his/her therapy sessions with clients each semester and transport the recordings to the MFT Family Therapy Center for supervision with the student's Practicum Supervisor.
- (j) To permit the student, once or twice a semester, to request that one of his/her client families be available for "live" consultation with the Practicum Supervisor, if this is feasible.
- (k) To permit the student to do therapy with another therapist in the room; however, it is appropriate for a beginning therapist to do co-therapy up to a period of one semester.
- (l) To communicate with the Practicum Supervisor, Assistant/Associate Program Director or Community Placement Coordinator regarding the student's work whenever necessary and understand that the Practicum Supervisor is responsible for the student's growth and development as a therapist.
- (m) To complete an Agency Evaluation Form to provide an evaluation of the student's work at the agency each semester.
- (n) To contact the Assistant/Associate Program Director or Community Placement Coordinator immediately should a student violate Agency policies or procedures or the Practicum Contract & Guidelines.
- (o) o. To agree that students usually cannot charge for their services; however, if the Agency chooses to do so, the MFT Program does not object.

MUSM Administration and Community Directory

Dean's Office

Jean Sumner MD, Dean 478-301-5570
Julie Green, Administrative Assistant 478-301-5570

Academic Affairs Office

Academic Affairs Main Number 478-301-2433

Student Affairs Office

Student Affairs Main Number 478-301-8147

Admissions Office

Admissions Main Number 478-301-5425

Financial Planning Office

Financial Planning Main Number 478-301-2512
Susan Lumsden, Director of Financial Planning 478-301-2539

Registrar's Office

Registrar Main Number 478-301-4053
Cathy Groce, Registrar 478-301-5137
Priscilla Hicks, Assistant Registrar 478-301-4053

International Student Information

Mercer University Office of International Programs
Julie Strecker, Coordinator, Study Abroad Program 478-301-4444

Mercer University Offices and Services

Skelton Medical Library – Macon 478-301-4056
Jack Tarver Library – Macon 478-301-2961
Monroe F. Swilley Jr Library – Atlanta 678-547-6284
Learning Resources Center – Macon 478-301-4149
Bear Card Office 478-301-2929
Bookstore 478-301-2945
Information Technology Help Desk 478-301-2922
Student Health Center (Macon) 478-301-2696
Student Health Center (Atlanta) 678-547-6130
Counseling and Psychological Services (Macon) 478-301-2862

Counseling and Psychological Services (Atlanta) 678-547-6060

Emergency Numbers

On-campus Emergency Number		2911
Ask a Nurse (daytime only)		478-746-4646
Mercer Police		478-301-2970
From a Macon Campus Phone	Dispatcher	HELP (4357)
From a Macon Campus Phone	Emergency Line	2911
From an OFF-CAMPUS Phone in Macon	Dispatcher	478-301-4357
From an OFF-CAMPUS Phone in Macon	Emergency Line	478-301-2911
From an Atlanta Campus Phone	Dispatcher	6358
From an Atlanta Campus Phone	Emergency Line	6911
From an OFF-CAMPUS phone in Atlanta	Dispatcher	678-547-6358
From an OFF-CAMPUS phone in Atlanta	Emergency Line	678-547-6358
Community Crisis Line (24 hours)		478-301-4484
Macon Police		478-301-7505
Atlanta Police		
Navicent Hospital Information		478-633-1000

Mercer University Online Directory..... <http://apps.mercer.edu/directory/>

Departmental & Program Directory

Leadership

Angela Hale, MD Associate Professor Chair, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences	478-301-2218 hale_aj@mercer.edu
Adam Albrite, PhD, LMFT Associate Professor Program Director, Family Therapy	912-503-9396 albrite_a@mercer.edu
Andrew Benesh, PhD, LMFT Assistant Professor Assistant Program Director & Clinic Coordinator (Macon)	478-301-4078 benesh_as@mercer.edu
Jetlexis Carlos, PhD, LMFT Associate Professor Associate Program Director (Atlanta)	860-639-3201 carlos_j@mercer.edu
<u>Staff</u>	
Karen Hall, B.S.S.S. Academic Support Specialist (Macon)	478-301-4048 hall_kj@mercer.edu
Erin Russell, BS Academic Support Specialist (Atlanta)	678-547-6881 russell_e@mercer.edu
<u>Faculty</u>	
Nakita Carroll, PhD Assistant Professor	478-301-2208 carroll_nm@mercer.edu
Sorita Ann, PhD Assistant Professor	478-301-4098 ann_s@mercer.edu
Gabriela Jacob, PsyD, AMFT Assistant Professor	678-547-6788 jacob_gc@mercer.edu
Denice Clark, PhD, LMFT Assistant Professor & Clinic Coordinator (Atlanta)	678.547.6786 clark_dc@mercer.edu
Janette Carter, EdD	

Instructor

Community Placement Site Coordinator

478-301-4033 carter_jm@mercer.edu

Mercer University

Mercer Police Department Phone Directory

MACON CAMPUS

From a Campus Phone

- Dispatcher — HELP (4357)
- Emergency Line — 2911

From a Non-Campus Phone

- Dispatcher — (478) 301-4357
- Emergency Line — (478) 301-2911
- E-mail — mercerpolice@mercer.edu

ATLANTA CAMPUS

From a Campus Phone

- Dispatcher — 6358
- Emergency Line — 6911

From a Non-Campus Phone

- Dispatcher — (678) 547-6358
- Emergency Line — (678) 547-6358
- E-mail — atlpolice@mercer.edu