

Revised 05/14/12 – Please watch the Board’s website for updates.

Application Process to Apply for Initial Licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist

The Rules and Regulations can be located on the Board’s website at www.dos.state.pa.us/social.

These FAQs are not intended to substitute for reading the Rules and Regulations.

- Q: Where can I find the application for licensure as a marriage and family therapist?
A: The application is available on the Board’s website at www.dos.state.pa.us/social, then click on “Licensure Information” and then click on “Board Forms” and then click on “Application for a License by Examination to Practice as a Marriage and Family Therapist”.

Please note that it is important to review the application as many questions can be answered on the instructions as well as the forms provided.

- Q: How do I know if my education meets Pennsylvania’s requirements?
A: Meet **ONE** of the following education requirements under Section 7(e) (2) Act 136 – 1998--on website www.dos.state.pa.us/social , click on Rules and Regulations, Chapter 48 (Licensure of Marriage and Family Therapists

- a. Has successfully completed a planned program of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of graduate coursework which is closely related to marriage and family therapy, including a master’s degree granted on or before June 30, 2009, in marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution or a master’s degree granted on or before June 30, 2009, in a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution, with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy acceptable to the board from an accredited educational institution or from a program recognized by a national accrediting agency, and has met specific course requirements listed in Section 48.2.

(ATTENTION APPLICANTS WITH LESS THAN A 48 SEMESTER OR 72 QUARTER HOURS MASTER’S DEGREE IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY OR A RELATED FIELD:

An applicant with less than a 48 semester or 72 quarter hours master’s degree may qualify for licensure if the master’s degree was completed on or before June 30, 2009. The additional hours needed to reach the required 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours in marriage and family therapy or a related field may be completed after the granting of the master’s degree. Please be aware that the master’s degree must be from an accredited educational institution, with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy from an accredited institution or from a program recognized by a national accrediting agency.

- b. Has successfully completed a planned program of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of graduate coursework which is closely related to marriage and family therapy, including a 48-semester-hour or 72-quarter-hour master’s degree in marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution or a 48-semester-hour or 72-quarter-hour master’s degree in a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of marriage and family therapy from an accredited

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educational institution, with graduate level course work in marriage and family therapy acceptable to the board from an accredited educational institution or from a program recognized by a national accrediting agency and has met specific course requirements listed in Section 48.2.

- c. Holds a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution or holds a doctoral degree in a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy acceptable to the board from an accredited educational institution or from a program recognized by a national accrediting agency and has met specific course requirements listed in Section 48.2.

Q: What coursework must my degree contain?

A: The following coursework is required as per Section 48.2 of the regulations (the regulations may be located on the Board’s website at www.dos.state.pa.us/social):

- (1) **Human development** (3 courses minimum-9 semester or 12 quarter or 135 didactic contact hours).
 - (i) Courses in this area shall provide knowledge of individual personality development and its normal abnormal manifestations.
 - (ii) Coursework shall cover human development across the life span, including special issues that affect an individual’s development (that is, culture, gender and human sexuality).
- (2) **Marriage and family studies** (3 courses minimum-9 semester or 12 quarter or 135 didactic contact hours). Courses in this area shall be a fundamental introduction to family systems theory.
- (3) **Marriage and family therapy** (3 courses minimum-9 semester or 12 quarter or 135 didactic contact hours).
 - (i) Courses in this area shall have a major focus on family systems theory and systemic therapeutic interventions.
 - (ii) This area shall provide a substantive understanding of the major theories of systems change and the applied practices evolving from each theoretical orientation.
- (4) **Professional studies** (1 course minimum-3 semester or 4 quarter or 45 didactic contact hours).
 - (i) Courses in this area shall contribute to the professional development of the therapist.
 - (ii) Areas of study shall include the therapist’s legal responsibilities and liabilities, professional ethics as a marriage and family therapist, professional socialization, and the role of the professional organization, licensure or certification legislation, independent practice and interprofessional cooperation.
- (5) **Research** (1 course minimum-3 semester or 4 quarter or 45 didactic contact hours). Courses in this area shall assist students in understanding and performing research.
- (6) **Practicum** (minimum 1 years, 300 hours of supervised direct client contact with individuals, couples and families). (1 year is equal to 3 semesters).

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Q: I hold less than a 48 semester credit or 72 quarter credit masters degree. Am I eligible for licensure?

A: Yes, as long as you have successfully completed a planned program of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of graduate coursework which is closely related to marriage and family therapy, including a master’s degree granted on or before June 30, 2009, in marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution or a master’s degree granted on or before June 30, 2009, in a field determined by the board by regulation to be closely related to the practice of marriage and family therapy from an accredited educational institution, with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy acceptable to the board from an accredited educational institution or from a program recognized by a national accrediting agency, and has met specific course requirements listed in Section 48.2.

(ATTENTION APPLICANTS WITH LESS THAN A 48 SEMESTER OR 72 QUARTER HOURS MASTER’S DEGREE IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY OR A RELATED FIELD:

An applicant with less than a 48 semester or 72 quarter hours master’s degree may qualify for licensure if the master’s degree was completed on or before June 30, 2009. The additional hours needed to reach the required 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours in marriage and family therapy or a related field may be completed after the granting of the master’s degree. Please be aware that the master’s degree must be from an accredited educational institution, with graduate level coursework in marriage and family therapy from an accredited institution or from a program recognized by a national accrediting agency.

Q: When may I begin my 3,000 hours of supervised clinical experience?

A: The 3,000 hours of supervised clinical experience shall be obtained after the completion of 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours of graduate coursework (Section 48.13(a)(4)(i) of the regulations). **Please be advised that the practicum is part of the educational requirements and cannot be counted towards the 3,000 hours of supervised clinical experience.**

Q: How many hours of supervised clinical experience are required and how long do I have to complete my hours for licensure as a marriage and family therapist?

A: 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience are required. Under Section 48.13(b)(9) of the regulations; **the supervised clinical experience shall be completed in no less than 2 years and no more than 6 years, except that no less than 500 hours and no more than 1,800 hours may be credited in any 12-month period.**

Q: How many hours per week must I work in order for the supervised clinical experience to be accepted?

A: Under Section 48.13(b)(8) of the regulations; supervised work activity will be counted toward satisfying the experience requirement only if it takes place in a single setting for at least 30 hours per week but no more than 50 hours per week during at least a 3 month period or at least 15 hours per week for a period of at least 6 months.

Q: How many hours per week must I meet with my supervisor?

A: Under Section 48.13(b)(5) of the regulations; the supervisor, or one to whom supervisory responsibilities have been delegated, shall meet with the supervisee for a minimum of 2 hours for every 40 hours of supervised clinical experience. At least 1 of the 2 hours shall be with the supervisee individually and in person, and 1 of the 2 hours may be with the supervisee in a group setting and in person. A total of 150 hours of supervision must be

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completed. At least 75 hours must be individual supervision and the other 75 hours may be group supervision.

Example: For every 40 hours of clinical experience you must have at least 1 hour of individual supervision and 1 hour may be group supervision. Example: If working 20 hours per week – 1 week you must have 1 hour of individual supervision and the next week you may have one hour of group supervision.

Q: How long do I have to complete my 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience?

A: Under Section 48.13(b)(9) of the regulations – The supervised clinical experience shall be completed in no less than 2 years and no more than 6 years, except that no less than 600 hours and no more than 1,800 hours may be credited in any 12-month period.

Q: What duties must my supervised clinical experience contain?

A: Under Section 48.13(b)(1) of the regulations: At least one-half of the experience (1,500 hours) shall consist of providing services in one or more of the following areas:

- (i) Assessment
- (ii) Couples therapy
- (iii) Family Therapy
- (iv) Other systems interventions (psycho-education)
- (v) Consultation
- (vi) Individual therapy
- (vii) Group therapy

Please note the above 7 experiences should involve direct client contact. The remainder of the clinical experience must be related to work with clients. **Example: case documentation and recordkeeping activities; supervision of another marriage and family therapist related to practice; group or peer supervision related to practice; court testimony related to work with client(s); advocacy on behalf of client(s); other activities that involve, support or enhance work with clients.**

Please be advised that administrative duties cannot be counted towards the 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience. Example: administrative supervision of another individual, completing human resource and/or budget documentation, etc.

Please refer to Section 48.13(b) of the regulations for the supervised clinical experience requirements.

Q: What are the qualifications for a supervisor to supervise the 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience?

A: For supervised clinical experience completed prior to January 1, 2010, 1500 hours must be completed either under an individual who holds a current license as a marriage and family therapist and has received certification as an approved supervisor or supervisor-in-training by the AAMFT (Section 48.3(1)) OR under an individual who practiced as a marriage and family therapist, has completed a 1-semester graduate course in marriage and family therapy supervision (at least 30 contact hours) or the equivalent and has 5 years of experience within the last 10 years as a marriage and family therapist (Section 48.3(3)). The other 1500 hours may be completed under an individual who holds a current license and has at least a master’s degree in a related field and has 5 years of experience within the last 10 years in that field (Section 48.3(2)), as per Section 48.13(b)(2) of the regulations.

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For supervised clinical experience completed after January 1, 2010, 1500 hours must be completed under an individual who holds a current license as a marriage and family therapist and has received certification as an approved supervisor or supervisor-in-training by the AAMFT (Section 48.3(1)) and the 1500 hours may be completed under an individual who holds a current license and has at least a master’s degree in a related field and has 5 years of experience within the last 10 years in that field (Section 48.3(2)), as per Section 48.13(b)(2) of the regulations.

Supervised clinical experience completed in another state may be counted towards meeting the Pennsylvania supervised clinical experience requirements as long as the experience meets Pennsylvania requirements.

Please also refer to Section 48.14 of the regulations for the Standards for Supervisors.

Q: What documentation am I required to maintain while I am completing my supervised clinical experience?

A: You and your supervisor must maintain records as defined in Section 48.14 (Standards for supervisors). You and your supervisor would devise a form to use to maintain your records. The Board may request these records if it becomes necessary.

Q: How many individuals completing the supervised clinical experience requirements may a supervisor supervise?

A: Under Section 48.13(b)(6) of the regulations – A supervisor shall supervise no more than 6 supervisees at the same time. If this provision creates an undue hardship on a supervisee, the supervisor and supervisee may request an exception to this provision. The request shall state, in writing, the reasons why this provision creates a hardship on the supervisee and why the supervisee is not able to obtain a supervisor who meets the requirements of this provision. **Please be advised that in certain circumstances the Board may require a personal appearance by the supervisee and supervisor.**

Q: If I am unable to locate my supervisor or my supervisor is deceased, how do I have my supervised clinical experience verified?

A: If you do not hold a marriage and family therapy license in another state, you can have another individual who can attest to the fact that the supervised clinical experience has occurred submit the following documentation:

- (1) A notarized statement by the applicant indicating why the supervisor cannot complete the supervised clinical experience forms.
- (2) A notarized statement, by the individual attesting to your supervised clinical experience, indicating how that individual can verify that the supervised clinical experience occurred and indicating why that individual is completing the supervised clinical experience forms instead of your supervisor.
- (3) The supervised clinical experience forms, completed by the individual attesting to your supervised clinical experience, indicating your supervisor’s name and qualifications and all other documentation.

If you hold a marriage and family therapy license in another state, you may request that copies of the supervised clinical experience on file with the other State Board be forwarded to the PA State Board for review.

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Q: I am licensed in another state as a marriage and family therapist. What is the procedure for licensure?

A: The application is available on the Board’s website at www.dos.state.pa.us/social, then click on “Licensure Information” and then click on “Board Forms” and then click on “Application for a License by Endorsement without Examination to Practice as a Marriage and Family Therapist”. Follow the instructions for submitting the application form, required documentation and fees. **Please note that you must hold a license as a marriage and family therapist in another state and have been actively engaged in the practice of marriage and family therapy for 5 of the last 7 years immediately preceding the filing of this application for licensure by endorsement. If you do not meet the requirements for licensure by endorsement, you must complete the Application for a License by Examination to Practice as a Marriage and Family Therapist.**