

Marriage and Family Therapy Program Technical Standards

Earning a degree from the SCSU MFT Program requires mastery of a coherent body of knowledge and skills. MFT students must acquire substantial competence in the discipline standards as specified by American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy Accreditation and CT Licensure guidelines. As such must be able to relate and communicate appropriately and effectively with clients/patients, fellow students, faculty and staff members, and other health care professionals. Combinations of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, intellectual, and communication abilities are required to perform these functions satisfactorily. These skills and functions are not only essential to the successful completion of the MFT Program, but they are also necessary to ensure the health and safety of clients/patients, fellow students, faculty and staff members, and other health care providers.

The following technical skills **are required** for admission to the program. After admission, if there is evidence of compromise to these standards the student may not be able to continue in the program such as in the case of deterioration of mental health, ability to communicate or to function safely in the class or clinic room, in onsite or offsite placements. The program reserves the right to hold and evaluate a candidate for admission and graduation to these technical standards.

In addition to required academic achievement and proficiency, the Technical Standards described below set forth non-academic qualifications for the MFT degree. Therefore, in order to be admitted to, to successfully progress through, to be approved for internship, and subsequent graduation from the Program, applicants for admission and current students must satisfy these Technical Standards and are so evaluated throughout the program. Students who are unable to meet these standards may be recommended for remediation or may be terminated from the program, consistent with policies articulated in the MFT Program Handbook.

I. Attitudinal, Behavioral, Interpersonal, and Emotional Attributes

MFT students must be able to relate to clients/patients, fellow students, faculty and staff members, and other health care providers with honesty, integrity, and dedication and in a non-discriminatory manner. They must be able to understand and use the power, special privileges, and trust in the therapist-client/patient relationship for the client/patient's benefit and to know and avoid the behaviors that constitute misuse of this power. MFT students must demonstrate the capacity to examine and deliberate effectively about the social and ethical questions that define MFT roles and to reason critically about these questions. They must be able to identify personal reactions and responses, recognize multiple points of view, and integrate these appropriately into clinical decision making. Student trainees must demonstrate thoughtful and logical responses to supervision and to the work of the self of the therapist throughout the program. MFT students must be able to collaborate well with others on joint projects and meet deadlines. They must receive sufficient reviews on the MFT Attitudes and Dispositions Measure as well as their clinical competency rubric. At all times standards of confidentiality must be maintained.

A MFT student must also be of sufficient emotional health to utilize fully their intellectual ability, to exercise good judgment, to complete client/patient care responsibilities promptly, and to relate to clients/patients, families, fellow students, faculty and staff members, 2
MFT students must be able to analyze and synthesize information from a wide variety of sources and must demonstrate critical thinking skills. They must be able to learn effectively through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to: classroom instruction,

and other health care providers with courtesy, compassion, maturity, safety, and respect for dignity. The ability to participate collaboratively and flexibly as a member of an inter-professional team is essential. MFT student must maintain and display stable health in spite of multiple and varied academic, and training responsibilities, in addition to clinical training expectations. MFT students must be able to modify behavior in response to constructive criticism. They must be open to examining personal attitudes, perceptions, and stereotypes (especially those that may negatively impact client/patient care and professional relationships). MFT students must be able to take responsibility for their behavior, which includes being open to feedback from their supervisors, academic instructors, and advisors. MFT students must be open and empathic with others and show respect for different viewpoints, perspectives, and opinions. They must strive to work collaboratively with others in the classroom, laboratory, clinic, and in all other academic or professional settings. They must convey genuine interest in other people and demonstrate affect tolerance (i.e., appropriately manage and contain emotions in academic and professional settings). As an essential part of clinical practice, MFT students effectively tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity. They must be emotionally mature (e.g., intellectually and emotionally open to and appropriate when receiving feedback). MFT students must be able to advocate for their own needs without being inappropriately aggressive. Any formal discipline at the University or outside of it is subject to violation of this technical standard. Students with assistants under Title 2 accommodations, whether those accommodations are technical, animal or human, are responsible for the actions of that assistant, at no time can an assistant interject or interfere with the therapy or educational process. The study and ongoing practice of clinical work often involves taxing workloads and appropriate management of stressful situations. A MFT student must have the physical and emotional stamina to maintain a high level of functioning and communication the face of multiple demands on their time and energy and to be clear headed in cases of emergency.

II. Intellectual Skills

MFT students must possess a range of intellectual skills that allow them to master the broad and complex body of knowledge that comprises MFT training and education.

MFT students must be able to use theory to inform the conceptualization, design, and interpretation of theory, clinical assessment, note writing, make case conceptualizations, write at the level of a Master's level student and to under analyze and understand research. They must be able to critically analyze professor and supervisor feedback and demonstrate its application to their professional growth. Clinical supervision, small group discussion, individual study of materials, independent literature review, preparation and presentation of written and oral reports, and use of computer-based technology in order to gain knowledge and take on line classes.

Because the practice of AAMFT is governed by the ethical principles set forth in the current MFT Ethics Code and by current state and federal laws, MFT student must have the capacity to learn and understand these ethical standards and legal requirements and to perform consistent with those principles and mandates as a student in the MFT Program. MFT students must carry clinical liability insurance.

III. Communication Skills

Therapists must have a mastery of the language in which their agency practices, they must have the ability to deliver speech clearly and in a timely manner to maintain the process of therapy. As such, MFT students must be able to ask effective questions, to receive answers perceptively, to record information about client/patients, and to provide effective psychoeducation to clients/patients. Effective includes, accuracy, timely and coherent. They must be able to communicate clearly and effectively and efficiently with clients/patients, their families, fellow students, faculty and staff members, clinical supervisors in varied internship sites, agencies and Universities. This includes verbal and non-verbal communication (e.g., interpretation of facial expressions, affects, and body language). Mastery of both written and spoken English is required, although applications from students with hearing and speech disabilities will be given consideration. In such cases, use of a MFT

trained intermediary or other communications aide may be appropriate if this intermediary functions *only as an information conduit and does not serve integrative or interpretive functions*. Students who are English as a second language must pass the TOEFL exam.

Commitment to Non-Discrimination

The University is committed to equality of educational opportunity. The University does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

A MFT student with a diagnosed psychiatric disorder or other physical, mental, or emotional disability may participate in the MFT Program so long as the condition is managed sufficiently with or without reasonable accommodation to permit the student to satisfy the requirements of the MFT Program, including these Technical Standards. Students who seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities must contact the University’s Disability Resource Center (DRC). The Office will determine a student’s eligibility for and recommend appropriate accommodations and services under Title II. This applies to students with learning disabilities as well. In the event of deteriorating function, it is essential that a MFT student be willing and able to acknowledge the need for and to accept professional help before the condition poses a danger to the student, client/patients, other students, faculty and staff members, or research participants.

V. References

- AAMFT Code of Ethics
- SCSU Graduate Student Handbook
- SCSU MFT Program Handbook
- Technical Standards of the UNC Clinical Psychology Program

I read and understand the MFT Program Technical Standards in the MFT Program Handbook:

Student’s Printed name

Student Signature

Date