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Department Educational Model and Goals

The MFT Program

The Master’s of Arts in Clinical Psychology, Marital and Family Therapy specialization (MACP MFT) is a practitioner-scholar model program that requires 48 units of course work and successful completion of a comprehensive examination. In addition, students complete a 250 hour clinical practicum in which they receive supervision from their site supervisors and case consultation from Chicago School faculty in a seminar format. The MACP MFT program in Southern California meets the requirements set forth by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) which regulates licensure for Marriage and Family Therapists in the state of California. Additional requirements beyond the completion of the master’s degree must be completed in order to obtain licensure, primarily post-degree supervised clinical experience.

Students may fulfill their practicum, traineeship, and internship hours at The Chicago School’s Counseling Centers in Westwood and Irvine. Developed around an innovative apprentice model, the centers offer students the opportunity to work side by side with senior clinicians in the psychology and marriage and family therapy fields as they apply classroom theories in a real-world environment. The model is unique in the breadth and depth of experience it offers; students are not limited to a single treatment philosophy and instead are exposed to a wide variety of therapeutic approaches and clinical interventions. They work with populations that are diverse in background, socioeconomic status, age, gender and treatment needs, and develop a working knowledge in a variety of clinical sub-specialties, such as child and adolescent psychology, substance abuse assessment and treatment, intensive outpatient therapy, and more. During their internships and practicum placements, students benefit from an unusually rich learning experience that includes intensive mentoring by seasoned practitioners, and that prepares them to work in variety or professional environments or to launch private practices of their own.

The degree can be completed in two full years with varying delivery options depending upon the campus. At the Los Angeles campus, students may select either two evenings a week or one full day a week. At the Westwood campus, students may select two days per week or every other weekend and at the Irvine Campus, students may select two evenings a week or every other weekend.

Under the umbrella of the practitioner-scholar model, the program organizes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for high quality clinical practice into seven competencies that correspond to our institutional goals of scholarship, diversity, professional behavior and ethics, and professional practice. The NCSPP’s Core Competency Model (McHolland, 1992) offers the foundation upon which the program based its own articulation of competency.

In addition, the program adheres to the core competencies as outlined by the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT) which are as follows:

1) Admission to Treatment – All interactions between clients and therapist up to the point
when a therapeutic contract is established.

2) **Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis** – Activities focused on the identification of the issues to be addressed in therapy.

3) **Treatment Planning and Case Management** – All activities focused on directing the course of therapy and extra-therapeutic activities.

4) **Therapeutic Interventions** – All activities designed to ameliorate the clinical issues identified.

5) **Legal Issues, Ethics, and Standards** – All aspects of therapy that involve statutes, regulations, principles, values, and mores of MFTs.

6) **Research and Program Evaluation** – All aspects of therapy that involve the systematic analysis of therapy and how it is conducted effectively.

The MA in Clinical Psychology, Marital and Family Specialization introduces students to basic clinical skills that enable them to serve the mental health needs of populations with diverse backgrounds. Students who use the master’s degree as a means of entering a professional career receive theoretical background and professional training under the supervision of a highly qualified, practitioner-oriented faculty. The graduates of this program are then able to apply theoretical and clinical knowledge to individuals and groups in need of mental healthcare. The Master of Arts degree often serves as a preliminary step to the doctorate degree. For these students, the program serves as a foundation for work beyond the master’s degree level and enables them to determine their interest in, and suitability for, the pursuit of more advanced study.

Finally, the program meets the recommendations of the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS), the licensing agency for Marriage and Family Therapists, for inclusion of the following into the curriculum:

- Focus on wellness, recovery, resilience
- Cultural competence
- Consumer/family driven services
- Consumer/family members integrated throughout the mental health system
- Community collaboration.

**TCSPP Individual and Cultural Differences**

**The MFT Profession**

The MACP MFT prepares students to become marriage and family therapists, with an emphasis on family systems and recovery and resilience. MFT’s are distinct from other types of mental health professionals in several ways: 1. an emphasis on treating individuals within
the context of their relationships; 2. an emphasis on the way in which relational dynamics as they are exhibited in the family system contribute to present day difficulties; and 3. a focus on an interpersonal response to mental health issues that includes the family, community and other important relationships to the client. Graduates of MFT programs work in agencies, community mental health counseling centers, private practices, school systems and are also qualified to work in the Veterans Administration mental health programs. Many students also go on to do doctoral work. For more information about the profession, visit the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) or California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) websites.

Following are definitions of the MACP MFT program competencies.

**Scholarship**

*Research and Evaluation:* Competency in research and evaluation is indicated by the ability to organize, synthesize and interpret scholarly information; the ability to design and critique approaches to systematic inquiry; the awareness of limits of certainty in different types of clinical inquiry; the understanding of foundational scientific knowledge in the field; and the recognition of scholarly knowledge production as a social, cultural and political process. Finally, scholarly findings should guide/direct clinical practice/interventions.

*Consultation and Education:* Competency in consultation and education is indicated by effective presentation skills and the ability to teach others through oral or written presentation of material; the ability to provide feedback regarding a client or system issue to multiple sources; an understanding of the means of facilitating and evaluating the growth of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a learner; effective peer consultation and constructive feedback; and the development of productive relationships within community helping networks.

**Diversity**

*Cultural and Individual Differences:* Students recognize that culture is best understood from a broad perspective and includes, but is not limited to, identities related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, religious belief, and ability. It is evidenced by the ability to articulate one’s personal culture and its impact on held values, relationships and worldview; an understanding of worldview, and the psychological impact of privilege, prejudice, oppression, culture and sociopolitical structures; the ability to differentiate between individual variation, characteristic variation across culture and human dysfunction in development, attitudes and reactions; and appreciation for the impact of culture on the historical and philosophical foundations of psychology.

**Professional Behavior and Ethics**

Competency in ethical and professional behavior is evidenced by the ability to apply ethical and professional standards to relationships with clients and with others (peers, supervisors, faculty, professionals in other disciplines, etc); socialization into the profession through advisement, modeling and education and membership in professional organizations; an understanding of legal obligations that may or may not
conflict with ethical guidelines; the development of skills in self-awareness, reflective practice and quality control; effective functioning in multiple professional roles; and commitment to life-long learning.

Professional Practice

*Relationship:* Competency in relationship is indicated by the capacity to develop and maintain a constructive therapeutic alliance with clients and a constructive working alliance with others (including peers, faculty, supervisors, professionals in other disciplines, etc); openness to feedback and accurate self-reflection; an appreciation of the use of self in a therapeutic relationship; the development of empathy, respect for others, and interpersonal relatedness; and an understanding of cultural values, worldview, and history in cross-cultural relationships.

*Assessment:* Assessment is conceptualized to include both formal and informal assessment activities. Competency in assessment is indicated by proficiency in the interpretation of standard assessment tools; the collection and incorporation of information from multiple sources to inform decision making and diagnosis; effective clinical inference that links gathered data with resulting diagnosis and recommendations; effective communication of assessment results and recommendations; the identification and conceptualization of client strengths and limitations; and culturally sensitive choice of assessment methods that will comprise a formal assessment.

*Intervention:* Competency in intervention is indicated by the ability to develop and present plausible formulations for understanding psychological phenomenon using theory; use theory to guide formulations regarding the conditions that create, maintain, and change behavior or distress; effectively implement and revise treatment strategies; evaluate the effectiveness of a chosen intervention approach or strategy; recognize the limitations of theories as they relate to individual and system functioning and change; and adjust traditional models of treatment and treatment planning to better meet diverse clients’ needs.

Ethics and Professional Behavior

The Chicago School expects that all clinical MFT students will be knowledgeable of and adhere to the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct", as published by the American Psychological Association, as well as the "Code of Ethics" of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. In addition, no student shall obtain part- or full-time employment that is beyond the scope of their cumulative training in the field of psychology or MFT and shall not use titles governed by licensure statutes, unless so licensed by the state. A student who fails to adhere to this policy or otherwise fails to demonstrate the appropriate ethics required for practice in the field of professional counseling is subject to discipline and possible removal.
Typical Course Load

On average a student will take 8 units per semester, with a range between 7 and 9 units. Students should plan to dedicate 3 hours of study for every 1 hour in the classroom, including activities such as site visits, role plays, research and writing. Though the program is designed to allow students to work while they attend school, flexibility is required particularly in the area of practicum placement. Courses are determined by a pre-determined course sequence designed to insure that students are learning the materials in they need to be successful in subsequence courses and in the program as a whole.

MFT Licensure in California

Requirements for obtaining an MFT license are determined by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) in Sacramento. The BBS also issues licenses to practice. Licensing requirements change periodically and students are urged to sign up for email updates issued by the BBS. While the MACP MFT program attempts to disseminate the most current licensing requirements to its students, ultimately students are responsible for remaining informed. The best way to do this is to join the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) as well as the local area chapter. Information for membership can be found on the CAMFT website a [www.camft.org](http://www.camft.org).

Current requirements for licensing include:

1. A Master’s or Doctorate degree with a specialization in Marital and Family Therapy. The MACP MFT degree at the Chicago School campuses in Southern California meets the educational requirements for California licensure.
2. 3000 hours of supervised experience. The supervisor must be licensed for a minimum of 2 years as an MFT, a licensed psychologist, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) or a psychiatrist. The 250 practicum hours count toward the 3000 hour total. Pre-graduate hours must be done in an agency setting. Post-degree hours can be done with a supervisor in private practice if desired.
3. Upon completion of the degree and the supervised hours, the candidate must pass two licensing examination given by the BBS and pay the appropriate fees.

Students are encouraged to do volunteer work in community agencies throughout their program as this will not only enrich their understanding of the field but may assist in placement in practicum and internship sites.
MFT Practicum

The practicum experience is designed to meet both the BBS requirements as well as to enhance the learning experience of the student through practical application of didactic classroom instruction. The practicum require three credit hours for two semesters - a total of six credit hour during which time the student participates in a clinical training field placement where the student accumulates a minimum of 250 face to face hours of supervised clinical experience in a mental health setting. In addition, the student is required to attend a regularly scheduled practicum seminar during which students will participate in clinical case consultation, case presentations and complete a clinical case report. At the end of the second practicum seminar, students will complete a Clinical Competency Evaluation (CCE) which consists of a full clinical case report, tape and transcripts as well as a presentation of this case to the class and instructor. The CCE provides an important assessment of a student’s competency in meeting key programmatic outcomes

Establishing Readiness for Practicum

During the semester prior to starting practicum, students will take a Readiness for Practicum Examination. Permission to take the Readiness of Practicum exam is predicated upon successful completion of courses with a B- or better taken in the first year. This is a one hour written examination in which students respond to a clinical vignette and answer questions related to four key areas: 1. Law and Ethics; 2. Diagnosis; 3. Theory and application; and 4. Treatment planning. Students can earn up to 3 points per question, with a minimum of 7 points total to pass the exam. Students must earn a minimum of 1 point in Law and Ethics in order to pass, regardless of the total points otherwise earned. If a student fails the examination, they must wait until the next semester to re-take the examination and postpone practicum. Generally this means the student will need to go through the practicum placement procedure again.

Transfer of credit for the practicum is not granted and practicum requirements are never waived. Further details regarding this area are found in the Practicum/Internship Manual available from the director of clinical training.

Requirements for Beginning Practicum

Among other requirements, students will need to complete the following before beginning practicum:

1. Complete with a grade of B- or better a minimum of 24 hours of credit units before beginning their practicum experience.
2. Pass the Practicum Readiness examination.
3. Approval of the faculty. If it is determined that a student is not ready to start practicum, a meeting will be scheduled with the student, faculty advisor and the clinical training department to discuss an alternative plan.
4. Attend the practicum orientation meeting prior to starting the practicum placement process. During the meeting you will be told about the various sites, and about the procedures for interviewing for these positions.

**Practicum Placement**

Students must express their intent to apply for practicum and traineeship in writing to the Office of Applied Professional Practice. Students will participate in practicum placement prior to their completion of their first year but are expected to successfully pass all their pre-requisite coursework and pass the Practicum Readiness examination prior to beginning work at their practicum site. If any of the first year courses are not passed with a grade of B- or better, they must be retaken within 12 months and successfully completed with a grade of B- or better.

**Dismissal from the Practicum Site**

Students are strongly advised to treat practicum as they would any other professional obligation. Students have an ethical duty to their clients and to their sites and are expected to seek consultation from their supervisors and faculty if difficulties are encountered. The earlier a student seeks appropriate consultation, the better the outcome will be. Dismissal from a practicum is considered extremely serious, will result in immediate referral to the Placement and Training Committee, and may result in dismissal from the school.

**Practicum Seminar**

Practicum seminar (MM610 and MM615) is a 2 semester sequence that is completed during the student’s final year of the program. While enrolled in Practicum, students work in a community agency seeing clients with supervision from agency supervisors and clinical consultation from faculty. Students will receive one hour of supervision for each five hours of clinical work at the site. Both individual and group supervision may be offered at the site. During the year, students are expected to acquire 250 hours of experience at their sites.

**Counseling Competency Examination (CCE)**

Students are assessed at various times throughout the program to ensure that programmatic outcomes are being met throughout the curricula. These are as follows:

1. **Course outcome assessments.** At the end of each course, instructors complete a course outcomes assessment that evaluates each student in light of program outcomes. Instructors assign a numerical value ranging from 1-4 for each outcome for each student in the course. This helps to insure alignment of each course with programmatic and institutional outcomes.

2. **Practicum Readiness Examination.** Toward the end of their third semester, students will take a Practicum Readiness Examination to assess their basic knowledge of 4 key areas of clinical practice: law and ethics, diagnosis, theory and application and treatment planning. This examination must be passed with a minimum score of 7 out of a possible 12, and a minimum score of 1 on the Law and Ethics question.
3. Clinical Competency Evaluation (CCE). At the end of their second practicum course, students will have completed a Clinical Competency Evaluation (CCE) comprised of a Clinical Case Report, tape and 10-minute transcript, and a formal oral presentation of that case to the seminar students and instructor. Students must pass the CCE in order to pass practicum. The CCE assesses a student’s competency in all areas of clinical treatment and application.

4. Written Comprehensive Examination. Once students toward the end of their final semester, students will take a written comprehensive examination which is designed to assess competency in all programmatic outcomes. Students must pass the comprehensive examination in order to graduate.

Rationale

In awarding the Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology Marital & Family Therapy Specialization, The Chicago School certifies that the graduate has attained a high level of competency in assessment, case formulation, treatment planning, and implementation, as well as the knowledge and skills base that underlie these abilities.

Preparation

The student should have a foundational understanding of issues pertaining to human development and developmental assessment, family life cycle development, group dynamics, individual assessment, social and cultural foundations of behavior, maladaptive behavior and diagnosis, ethical practice and decision making, treatment planning, and substance abuse where appropriate. Review these areas as needed.

Components of CCE

- Clinical Competency Evaluation (CCE)

During the practicum seminar, students will conduct a formal case presentation and submit a 10-minute transcript and tape of an actual client session. In MM610 Practicum I a clinical case presentation outline will be completed and turned into the instructor along with the tape and transcript. For MM615 Practicum II the student will complete a Clinical Competency Evaluation (CCE) which consists of a Clinical Case Report, a tape and transcript as well as a formal oral presentation of the case to the class and instructor. The CCE results will determine if a student successfully passes practicum. If a student does not pass the first time, the student will be able to submit a second CCR, tape and transcript using a different interview. Students are advised to meet with their seminar instructor to review the first CCE and prepare to pass the CCE the next time. Failure to pass a second CCE means that the student has failed practicum and the student will need to complete practicum again.
• Written Comprehensive Examination (WCE)

All students are required to successfully complete the Written Comprehensive Exam. The information tested by the exam covers the program competencies. The comprehensive examination is generally administered twice a year and taken during the last year of enrollment in academic coursework. Students must be in good academic standing to be eligible to take the Written Comprehensive Examination. Additional information regarding registering, qualifying, format and dates of the exam can be obtained from the Department Chair of the program. Students who are unable to pass the Written Comprehensive Examination will be allowed to retake the exam a maximum of two additional times. The exam may be retaken during the next scheduled administration of the exam. Students will receive information from their faculty advisor concerning their performance on the examination. Assistance from faculty in constructing additional experiences and instruction aimed at enabling them to pass this program requirement can be offered. Any student who fails the Comprehensive Examination a third time is automatically dismissed from the program.

Frequently Asked Questions about the MACP MFT program.

1. What are the strengths of the program?

The program as a strong practitioner-scholar emphasis. This means that you are learning from instructors who have demonstrated scholarly research as well as clinical expertise. In addition, the program works to insure that each course offers a blend of theoretical understanding with practical application. As a result, you will graduate from our program with a strong foundation in clinical skills, theory and treatment planning that are suited to the needs of today’s mental health profession.

The program offers a rich and diverse educational and clinical experience. A hallmark of our program is the emphasis on diversity and the rich multicultural environment in which our campuses are located. Beginning with your first course in cultural diversity, you will find that multicultural issues will be addressed in each course throughout the curriculum. Our counseling centers as well as the agencies in which you will be placed for practicum offer an opportunity to experience a wide range of services to individuals, couples and families. And the opportunity to work with clients from diverse backgrounds.

The program offers a commitment to high quality education. All of our faculty are committed to excellence in teaching and to insuring that our students develop to their highest potential. All of our faculty have clinical experience and a majority are currently working in clinical practice. In addition to clinical expertise, our faculty uphold the highest standards of academic work at the graduate level combined with a willingness to assist students in reaching those standards. Class sizes are limited in order to promote meaningful engagement between faculty and students.
The program offers opportunities for international study through The Chicago School Educational Systems’ International Affairs department. The International Affairs department’s mission is to global opportunities for faculty and students. This includes:

- Student Exchanges
- Faculty Exchanges
- Field Experiences
- Academic Partnerships
- Student Recruitment
- Community Service (Global Hope)

Through their growing network of international liaison offices, the International Affairs department is working to expand opportunities in Peru, Brazil, Kigali and Hong Kong. Directors of these offices will work to develop activities across all relevant pillars. The Global Hope Training Initiative, the train-the-trainer program addressing collective trauma and born out of the “Rwanda Project,” is gaining traction and will certainly present concrete opportunities for international service learning as it is developed.

They are also working diligently to create consistent policies and procedures that will help lay the ground work for institutional international activities including study abroad, faculty exchange and international academic partnerships.

2. What kind of clinical training will I receive from the MACP MFT program?

Student obtain clinical hours by taking practicum in their final year of the program. During this time students will work in community agencies, counseling centers, school based sites and other appropriate sites seeing clients with supervision from the agency and clinical consultation from their practicum instructor. The Office of Applied Professional Practice (OAPP) facilitates practicum placement in coordination with the program faculty. The OAPP has developed relationships with sites throughout the Southern California area that offer a broad range of client populations and presenting problems.

3. What financial resources are available to attend The Chicago School of Professional Psychology?

We recommend that you contact the Financial Aid office if you are interested in learning more about financial aid options. You can call them at (312)329-6699 or email at finaid@thechicagoschool.edu

4. When are the courses scheduled?

There are several options depending on the campus you attend. Courses at the Los Angeles campuses are held either 2 evenings a week or 1 full day a week. Courses at the Westwood campus are held either 2 days a week or every other weekend. Courses at the Irvine campuses are scheduled either 2 evenings a week or every other weekend.

MFT Professional Organizations
Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) – This is the state board that oversees and regulates the licensing and practice of Marriage and Family Therapists, as well as Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW's) and Licensed Educational Psychologists (LEP's). It is highly recommended that you become familiar with this website and the various rules and regulations that will govern your professional career.

Board of Behavioral Sciences  
1625 N. Market Blvd., Suite S-200  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
Phone: 916-574-7830  
www.bb.ca.gov

California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) – This is the largest organization of Marriage and Family Therapists in the United States as over 50% of MFT's in the country are located in California. We strongly recommend that you join CAMFT as soon as you begin your studies since they will assist you in numerous ways to build your career through licensure, networking, conferences and local chapter organizations. Fees for students are very reasonable. Most internships and jobs will be found through networking and CAMFT, and especially your local chapter, are the best means by which you will move forward in your career. Their bi-monthly journal, The Therapist, is also an excellent resource and contains a special column for trainees and interns.

California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists  
7901 Raytheon Rd.  
San Diego, CA 92111-1606  
Phone: 619-292-2638  
www.camft.org

Los Angeles chapter: www.lacamft.org  
San Fernando Valley chapter: www.svfcamft.org  
San Gabriel Valley chapter: www.sgvcamft.org  
Orange County chapter: www.occamft.org

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) – This is the national association for the MFT profession and represents MFT's in all 50 states. AAMFT provides services and advocacy for family therapists and also helps to define the standards for the profession. Most recently AAMFT was instrumental in opening doors for MFT's to work for the Veteran's Administration and they are currently at working hard to open up opportunities for MFT’s to work in the California state prison system. Student membership is very reasonable and opens up opportunities for career development as well.

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
112 South Alfred Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3061  
Phone: 703-838-9808
CPH and Associates – This is the CAMFT recommended professional liability insurance carrier for students and licensed therapists. Rates are extremely reasonable.

CPH and Associates
711 S. Dearborn, Suite 205
Chicago, IL  60605
Phone: 800-875-1911
www.cphins.com