

## Applicant Guidelines for North Carolina MFT Licensure

Welcome and thank you for your interest in becoming licensed to practice marriage and family therapy (MFT) in North Carolina. Our state has a long history in the field, as the fourth state in the nation to adopt licensure. We are excited to share this information that will help you through the licensure process.

The role of the North Carolina Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure Board has always been to protect the public from unprofessional, unauthorized, and unqualified individuals. Due to this vital role, the Board takes licensure seriously and thoroughly reviews each application submitted.

Applications are approved based on compliance with the North Carolina Statutes and Administrative Codes for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

This document gives details and answers many of the questions the Board receives from applicants. Outlining differences in the application processes will help you understand what qualifications and experiences are required for licensure.

For information on maintaining your license in North Carolina, please visit [NCMFTLB.org/Licensees](http://NCMFTLB.org/Licensees) for details and further information.

We look forward to reviewing your application.

Paola Learoyd, Executive Director, NCMFTLB  
Katie Gilmore, Associate Director, NCMFTLB

## Overview of Licensure Process for Recent Graduates



### To become licensed in North Carolina, you must:

1. Apply and be accepted to graduate school in MFT
2. While completing your program, make sure that your practicum hours are supervised by an AAMFT-approved supervisor for those hours to count towards licensure in North Carolina.
3. Following completion of your graduate degree, apply for the *National Marital and Family Therapy Examination*. The exam is administered by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards  
You apply through the [www.ncbmft.org](http://www.ncbmft.org) website.
4. Complete a supervision contract with an AAMFT-approved supervisor in North Carolina to oversee your work as an associate licensee.
5. Submit the complete LMFTA application packet to the NCMFTLB office, taking note of the deadlines for everything to be received in time for the next review.

After you submit your application, remember to wait for approval to be given by the board before working and practicing as a marriage and family therapist. State laws require that anyone in North Carolina providing MFT must be licensed or in an exempt setting. Exempt settings are typically when you are completing your graduate program or working for the military. Once you have been approved as an LMFTA, meet with your supervisor at least monthly while accruing the remaining hours for licensure and submit reports to the Board as required.

## Overview of Licensure Requirements

Licensure in North Carolina, whether as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associate (LMFTA) or as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), requires a minimum of a master's degree in MFT or a master's degree in a related degree (provided the required coursework has been completed). A passing score on the *National Marriage and Family Therapy Examination* is also required.

Applications for either the LMFTA or the LMFT license will not be considered for Board review until **all requirements have been received and confirmed**.

## Education Requirements

Educational requirements are the same for LMFTAs or LMFTs. Accredited MFT programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) typically have these educational requirements built-in to their programs.

Educational requirements *for those enrolled on or after October 1, 2011 are:*

- **Assessment and Diagnosis (3 semester hours)**
- **Human Development and Family Relations (3 semester hours)**
- **Practice of MFT (6 semester hours)**
- **Professional Identity and Ethics (3 semester hours)**
- **Research in MFT (3 semester hours)**
- **Theoretical Foundation in MFT (6 semester hours)**
- **Clinical Practicum (9 semester hours)**
- **Additional Core Coursework (12 semester hours)**

Educational requirements *for those who were enrolled before October 1, 2011:*

- **General Family Studies (6 semester hours)**
- **Marriage and Family Therapy Theory (6 semester hours)**
- **Psychopathology (3 semester hours)**
- **Clinical Practicum (9 semester hours)**
- **Additional Core Coursework (12 semester hours)**

## Clinical Experience Requirements

Clinical experience towards licensure comes from practicums and internships during the graduate course of study, along with experience post-graduation. All documented hours of experience **must** be supervised and signed-off by an AAMFT approved supervisor. No hours can be counted towards either license if this requirement is not met.

A total of 1,500 hours of clinical experience must be completed in order to apply for the LMFT license.

- No more than 500 hours can count from your master's program.
- A minimum of 500 relational hours must be completed.

**Clinical experience:** "Clinical experience" means face-to-face therapy between a therapist and a client, whether individuals, couples, families, or groups, conducted from a larger systems perspective that relates to client treatment

plans, is goal directed, and assists the client in affecting change in cognition, behavior, and affect.

**Larger systems:** “Larger systems” means any individual or group that is a part of the client’s environment and that potentially impacts the client’s functioning or well-being and potentially can assist in the development and implementation of a treatment plan.

**Relational hours:** “Relational hours” means therapeutic contact between a therapist and more than one person at a time, such as meeting with a couple, a family, an individual and an extended family member, or an individual and a member of their larger system, such as a student and a teacher.

### **Program Accreditation**

Many MFT graduate programs are also accredited by groups that assure the quality of the training you will receive, specifically in regards to working with individuals, couples, and families. [The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage & Family Therapy Education \(COAMFTE\)](#) assess programs to see what they teach, how they teach it, and how the students and their clients respond.

Not all MFT graduate programs have program accreditation.

While it is **not required to attend an accredited program** to be licensed in North Carolina, it can help make the process easier to achieve the required standards as outlined by state law.

If you attend a program that is not accredited by COAMFTE, then your education must include the following:

- **Assessment and diagnosis (3 semester hours)**
- **Human development and family relations (3 semester hours)**
- **Practice of MFT (6 semester hours)**
- **Professional identity and ethics (3 semester hours)**
- **Research in MFT (3 semester hours)**
- **Theoretical foundation in MFT (6 semester hours)**
- **Clinical practicum (9 semester hours)**
- **Additional core coursework (12 semester hours)**

In order to be licensed, these courses must show up on your transcript. If they are not offered in your program, you may need to consider taking another course from another institution that fits the description. All courses must be at the graduate level to be considered

No license can be issued without meeting **all of the criteria** outlined in the state statutes. These laws protect the public and ensure that professionals who hold themselves out as MFTs are

qualified to work with clients. It is the duty of the licensure board to enforce the statutes and to make sure that every approved application meets the standards outlined by the law.

**SUPERVISION.** To count hours within your practicum or internship you must ensure you are supervised by someone in your state who [holds current “supervisor” status](#) from the American Association of Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT). At least 200 hours of on-going supervision, completed concurrently while accruing the necessary 1,500 hours of clinical experience, are required for licensure as a LMFT.

If you received 200 hours of supervision while in your degree program, then you must have at least 25 additional hours of supervision between completion of your degree program and submitting your application to become a LMFT.

Only supervision hours from an AAMFT approved supervisor, who was overseeing your work at the time it was completed, are eligible to meet the supervision requirement.

**RECIPROCITY.** If an applicant is moving to North Carolina and has been licensed as a marriage and family therapist in their state for five or more continuous years, if their licensure is in good-standing, and they have passed the *National Marriage and Family Therapy Application*, they may complete the LMFT via Reciprocity. License verification and official copies of the examination score will be required.

**Note:** *North Carolina does not have “automatic” reciprocity with any other state or jurisdiction. You must apply hold a NC license to practice in NC. Other state licenses do not allow you to practice in NC.*