

MASTER OF ARTS IN MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPY (M.A.)

Purpose

The Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy program is designed to lead to professional licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) as outlined by most state boards of marriage and family therapy. (The 60-hour M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy is designed to meet the Virginia Board of Counseling educational requirements for LMFT.) The faculty provide quality professional training from a faith-based perspective. The purpose of the program is to produce ethically and spiritually aware marriage and family therapists who possess the knowledge, values, skills, and personal disposition to promote the mental health and holistic wellness of individuals and families across diverse populations. This purpose is achieved, in significant measure, through offering rigorous academic programs, dynamic online interaction with faculty, and carefully structured practicums and internships.

Program Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

- Apply the ethical and professional principles, standards, and expectations that are integral to a professional counselor's role and identity.
- Apply the social and cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills required to work with diverse populations at all developmental stages across the lifespan in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner.
- Assess the individual and group counseling skills necessary to establish and build a therapeutic relationship and will form a preliminary theoretical framework when counseling individuals at all developmental stages across the lifespan.
- Use developmentally appropriate assessment relevant to the client's academic/education, career, personal, and social development and identify ethical, social, and cultural factors related to assessment.
- Evaluate research and apply it to their counseling practice in accordance with best practices, and identify social and cultural implications for interpreting and reporting results.
- Integrate faith and spirituality into counseling where appropriate in an ethically competent manner
- Synthesize theories of family systems and dynamic into a comprehensive systems approach to counseling that informs assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning for marriage, couples, and family client(s) with a broad array of presenting problems.

Program Specific Admission Procedures

In addition to the General Admission Procedures outlined in this Catalog, Master's applicants to the Marriage and Family Therapy program must have:

1. Apply online or download application for admission and submit via mail.
2. Fax/scan unofficial college transcripts.
 - **Please Note - Unofficial transcripts can be used for acceptance purposes with the submission of a transcript request form.**
3. Mail official college transcripts (sealed, unopened copy).

- Regionally or Nationally accredited bachelor's degree with at least a 2.7 GPA for good standing. Applicants who have earned a master's degree or at least 12 graduate credits from an accredited institution may be assessed on the basis of the master's-level degree work. NOTE: Once accepted into the program, a 3.0 graduate GPA is needed to maintain good academic standing in the program.

4. Students without the following coursework on their undergraduate transcript will be required to complete the following class upon admission to the program:
 - 3 credit hours in Statistics (can be MATH 201 Introduction to Probability and Statistics (3 c.h.))
5. Admission to this program requires:
 - a. Contact information for two recommenders (login required). As a part of the application process, we require contact information from two professional sources (i.e., not family/friends but individuals who have supervisory or evaluative knowledge of your work, volunteer, church, or academic experience). These individuals should be qualified to address the applicant's ability to complete graduate level coursework, their disposition and ability to become a counselor, and their maturity, motivation, and ethics. Some examples of individuals that may be suitable include professors, employers, or leaders in an organization where the applicant volunteers.
 - b. Prompts for statement of purpose, please address each of the following items:
 - i. Please describe in 200-250 words why you desire to become a counselor and indicate the type of counselor certification you plan to seek after graduation?
 - ii. Describe in 200-250 words an occasion in which you have interacted with an individual or a group of individuals **from another culture**. Identify the cultural differences which were present and **how you demonstrated respect** for those differences.
 - iii. Describe in 200-250 words **how** you form effective interpersonal relationships with others in individual and group settings.
6. Students seeking to be admitted into this program and plan to finish it outside of the US will be required to sign an International Disclosure Agreement.

Students must agree to the Department of Counselor Education and Family Study's Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy Mission Statement and Diversity Statement, which is available at the following link: <https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/>.

Notification of Admission

Admission decisions normally are made within a few days following the receipt of **all** of the student's documentation. Official notification of admission, and of any conditions attached to that admission, is sent by letter to the applicant by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Correspondence or notification from other sources does not constitute official notice of admission. The term for which the applicant is admitted is stated in the official admission letter from the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Transfer of Credit

Students may transfer up to 30 hours of coursework into the 60-hour Marriage and Family Therapy program. For a transferred course to

replace a Liberty University course, the following requirements must be met:

1. The school at which the course was taken must be appropriately accredited.
2. The course credit must be at least three semester hours or five quarter hours.
3. The student must have earned a grade of B- or better in the course.
4. The course must overlap one of Liberty's courses by at least 80%.

Courses related to counseling that meet all but the last criterion may be transferred in as elective courses. Course work must have been completed within the previous ten years. Transfer credits will not be accepted for the following courses:

Code	Title	Hours
CEFS 500	Orientation to Counselors Professional Identity and Function	3
CEFS 501	Ethical & Legal Issues in Addiction Counseling	3
CEFS 505	Counseling Techniques and the Helping Relationship	3
CEFS 506	Integration of Spirituality in the Helping Professions	3
CEFS 512	Group Counseling	3
CEFS 602	Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning in Marriage and Family Counseling	3
CEFS 698	Practicum	3
CEFS 699	Counseling Internship	3

Credit will not be awarded for life experience or continuing education workshops.

Students in the 60-hour Marriage and Family Therapy program are required to take CEFS 505 Counseling Techniques and the Helping Relationship (3 c.h.) and CEFS 512 Group Counseling (3 c.h.) in residence (on campus).

Licensure

Liberty University's the Department of Community Care and Counseling provides academic course work in all areas required by the Virginia Board of Counseling for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT). The 60-hour M.A. degree program has been designed to meet licensure requirements established by the Virginia Board of Counseling and Marriage and Family Therapists for licensure as a Family Therapist (LMFT) in Virginia.

The program meets state licensure in many other states other than Virginia. Information on the requirements of each state and the programs' compatibility with those requirements can be found at <http://www.liberty.edu/statelicensure>.

Additionally, students are encouraged to visit their state licensure board to further familiarize themselves with the process, requirements, and post-graduation policies and procedures.

Evaluation and Retention

Students are responsible for meeting the academic and professional standards of Liberty University and the counseling profession. The following requirements apply to all students:

1. Students are expected to use the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) "Code of Ethics", American Counseling Association "Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice," the American Association of Christian Counselors "Code of Ethics," this Catalog, the Graduate Student Honor Code, and the *Liberty Way* as guides for their behavior throughout their program. Each of these documents is available for reading and downloading from the respective organizational web sites. Students will undergo periodic evaluation by the Counseling faculty for suitability as students and prospective counselors.
2. Students must remain in good academic standing, are required to maintain high ethical standards, and must demonstrate evidence of functional competency in fulfilling the professional roles required by the discipline.
3. Students must pass a comprehensive examination that requires an ability to deal with more than individual course content. Satisfactory completion of comprehensive examination requires analysis, synthesis, and integration of the content within the counseling discipline.

Consult specific program sections of this catalog for additional requirements.

Course Requirements

The **M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy** program consists of a minimum of 60 hours of counseling courses that provide students with a thorough background in the areas of integration of faith and practice; individual and group counseling theories and skills; clinical practice; ethical, professional, and legal issues in counseling; social and cultural factors in counseling; human development across the lifespan; work, leisure, and career development theories and interventions; appraisal and assessment issues in counseling; and the application of research methodology and statistics to understand mental health issues. Marriage and Family Therapy students take an additional 12 hours of specialized coursework in marriage and family therapy, see Marriage & Family Therapy (M.A.) program of study.

Students' internship experiences must consist of work with couples, families, and individuals from a systems perspective, with the majority of the direct service clock hours occurring with couples and family units (review Virginia requirements for number of hours for direct couple/family counseling). These courses and internship experiences prepare those seeking licensure as Marriage and Family Therapists (MFT), national certification, for careers in mental health agencies, hospital programs, private practices, ministry-related counseling centers, and other public and private facilities.

Detailed information, policies, and procedures regarding the various programs offered are provided in the Student Handbook. Students should familiarize themselves with the Student Handbook before they begin their studies and before they register for classes every semester.

Comprehensive Examination

Students enrolled in the Marriage and Family Therapy program must take a comprehensive examination. The examination should be taken after the student has completed at least 39 hours of graduate coursework, including all of the 500-level core coursework and COUC 667 Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3 c.h.) or CEFS 602 Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning in Marriage and Family Counseling (3 c.h.). Students will be given three attempts to successfully complete the exam. Students who have failed the CPCE® twice are required to

complete a CPCE® Third Attempt Plan (CTAP) form and prepare an additional minimum of one semester before registering for their final attempt. If after three attempts, a student has not been able to pass the comprehensive examination, the student will not qualify for a master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. At that point, students may choose to apply to the Human Services Counseling program for possible conferral of the MA in Human Services Counseling degree.

This examination is offered periodically throughout the year. (See the *Study Guide for the Counseling Comprehensive Examination* for scheduling). The study guide is available online on the Comprehensive Exam website at <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=24247>. To register for the Comprehensive Exam, please contact the Comprehensive Exam Coordinator 30 days prior to the exam date (See the *Counseling Comprehensive Examination* website for specific scheduling information).

Administrative Dismissal

Students will be eligible for Administrative Dismissal from the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy if any of the following are true:

1. It will be mathematically impossible for them to raise their cumulative Graduate GPA to 3.00 with their remaining required courses.
2. They do not have a cumulative Graduate GPA of at least a 2.7 after completion of early core counseling courses (Gate 2) and/or a 3.0 at Practicum.
3. They have three (3) grades or three (3) courses of C+/C/C- applying to their degree and they have applied the repeat policy for the maximum allowed nine (9) hours or three (3) courses, and they earn two (2) or more additional grades or courses of C+ or lower.
4. They earn two (2) grades of D+ or lower.

Program of Study

Delivery Format: Online Only

- Marriage & Family Therapy (M.A.)

Career Opportunities

- In-patient or out-patient hospital programs
- Mental health agencies
- Church or ministry-related counseling programs
- Counseling centers
- Private practice as a Marriage and Family Therapist
- Residential treatment facilities