

# CERTIFICATE IN SCHOOL-BASED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

The School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy (SB-MFT) certificate program prepares candidates to fulfill the requirements for certification with the State Board of Education to work in the public school system. The program is available to current MFT master's students and to licensed graduates of COAMFTE-accredited programs.

## State Certification as a School Marriage and Family Therapist

In 2007, Connecticut passed the first school certification law for MFTs in the country. Connecticut State Board of Education Regulations require applicants to meet specialized training and experience requirements for school MFT certification. Applicants must be licensed by the Department of Public Health, meet test requirements (required of all educators), fulfill a minimum of 300 hours of supervised experience in public schools, and complete graduate coursework in special education, developmental, learning and school-based systems theory.

Section 10-145d-566d of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies specifies:

To receive an initial educator certificate to serve as a school marriage and family therapist, the applicant shall meet the following requirements:

1. Holds a bachelor's degree from an approved institution
2. Holds a master's degree from an approved institution with a planned program in marriage and family therapy accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE)
3. Has successfully met test score requirements
4. Holds a valid license from the Connecticut Department of Public Health pursuant to Section 20-195c of the Connecticut General Statutes to practice marriage and family therapy
5. Has completed graduate coursework in the following areas:
  - a. Child and adolescent development
  - b. Learning theories
  - c. School-based systems theory
  - d. Federal and state education laws including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), Americans with Disabilities Act Section 504, professional ethics and code of professional responsibility for educators, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and statutory requirements for mandated reporting, suspensions and expulsions, and school and district accountability
  - e. 300 hours of school-based marriage and family therapy practicum jointly supervised by faculty of a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) and a special service staff member of a board of education
6. Has completed a course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than 36 clock hours which shall include study in understanding the growth and development of exceptional children, including handicapped and gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and methods for identifying,

planning for and working effectively with special-needs children in the regular classroom

## Admission and Matriculation Requirements

1. Please contact Dr. Nicole O'Brien by email (nobrien@fairfield.edu) for information on how to apply for the School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy certificate.
2. To complete the application, candidates must take the PRAXIS CORE, SAT, ACT or the GRE. Candidates who do not have passing scores on one or more sections of the test may be required to remediate any deficient area. Remediation may include re-taking and passing the sections that were not passed, taking additional coursework, or other remediation activities. If additional courses are required, the candidate must complete the coursework at a grade of B (3.0) or above and provide an official transcript to the Dean's office. Please see advisor for additional details and recommendations. When you take the Praxis Core exam, use the University's code of 3390 and provide ETS with your social security number so that your scores will be sent to the Dean's Office and uploaded into the system. Information on applying to take the Praxis Core examination can be obtained at ets.org.
3. Fingerprinting/background check requirement: Students registering for coursework with a fieldwork component will be required to adhere to the requirements of the district where the fieldwork takes place: Check with the Program Director or faculty advisor for more information.

## Requirements

The seven required courses may be taken concurrently with the candidate's master's program or after completion of the degree. Completion of the master's degree and certificate are noted on the student's transcript. The courses required for the certificate are as follows:

| Code                 | Title   | Credits   |
|----------------------|---|-----------|
| EDUC 5442            | Educational Psychology  | 3         |
| EDUC/PSYG 6534       | Theories of Learning  | 3         |
| MFTH 5447            | Lifespan Human Development  | 3         |
| MFTH 6555            | Foundations of Marital and Family Therapy   | 3         |
| MFTH 6570            | School-Based Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy                                   | 3         |
| SPED 5403            | Foundations in Research and Evaluation of Psychoeducational Issues in Special Education | 3         |
| SPED/TSLA 5419       | Special Learners in the Bilingual/ESL Classroom   | 3         |
| or TSLA 5477         | Culture and Second Language Acquisition   |           |
| <b>Total Credits</b> |   | <b>21</b> |

### Notes:

- MFTH 5447 and MFTH 6555 are core courses in the regular MFT master's degree program and are taken as part of the MA curriculum. These courses will count toward the certificate program as well.
- EDUC 5442, EDUC 6534/PSYG 6534, MFTH 6570, SPED 5403, SPED 5419/TSLA 5419, and TSLA 5477 may be taken by MFT

master's degree candidates *only* after completing a brief paper application for the SB-MFT certificate and providing passing test scores on the Praxis Core, SAT, ACT, or GRE.

- Completion of the SB-MFT admission application does not commit the student to completion of the certificate program. It does ensure that, if the certificate program is completed, notification will be posted on the student's transcript after graduation from the MFT master's degree program.
- MFTH 6570 may be taken concurrently with or after completion of EDUC 5442 and SPED 5403. Candidates must receive approval prior to enrollment in MFTH 6570. Approval is obtained from the Department Chair after the Department Chair verifies with all instructors that the candidate demonstrates both interpersonal and academic suitability for work in the public school system. Any candidate who is denied permission to take MFTH 6570 may not continue in the program or receive the certificate of completion. Candidates also will not receive endorsement from the program faculty or administrators for certification with the State of Connecticut. Interpersonal suitability refers to all dispositional characteristics that might interfere with the candidate's ability to function effectively in the capacity of a school-based marriage and family therapist. Academic suitability refers to the demonstration of sufficient aptitude conceptually and in coursework to function effectively as a school-based marriage and family therapist.
- Any candidate who does not receive approval to enroll in MFTH 6570 will be unable to use all courses completed at Fairfield University towards certification from the Department of Education.