

CHAPTER 31 – MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY LICENSURE BOARD

SECTION .0100 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

21 NCAC 31 .0101 EXECUTIVE

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.45; 90-270.46; 90-270.49; 90-270.51(b);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Repealed Eff. April 1, 1989.*

21 NCAC 31 .0102 ADDRESS

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Repealed Eff. May 1, 1996.*

21 NCAC 31 .0103 RULEMAKING AND ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING PROCEDURES

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 150A-11; 150A-14;
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Repealed Eff. April 1, 1989.*

21 NCAC 31 .0104 FEES

*History Note: Authority G.S. 12-3.1(c); 90-270.51(b);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. April 1, 1989;
Repealed Eff. May 1, 1996.*

SECTION .0200 - APPLICATION FOR LICENSING

21 NCAC 31 .0201 CREDENTIALS REQUIRED

An applicant for licensure shall submit the following to the Board:

- (1) Notarized application form and application fee;
- (2) Official graduate college transcripts sent directly to the Board by the training institution(s) evidencing:
 - (a) completion of a master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy from a recognized educational institution, or
 - (b) completion of a related degree from a recognized educational institution with course of study encompassing an appropriate course of study as defined in 21 NCAC 31 .0501;
- (3) Copies of course catalog and syllabi reflective of the year the course was passed shall be required;
- (4) Reports from American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) approved supervisors using Board forms, verifying clinical experience, supervision;
- (5) Evidence of good moral character, which shall include three endorsements for licensure, using Board forms, from persons familiar with the applicant; and
- (6) Evidence of a passing score on the National Marriage and Family Therapy Examination.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.52; 90-270.54(a)(1)and(2);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. October 1, 2011; March 1, 1996; April 1, 1989.*

21 NCAC 31 .0202 REVIEW PROCEDURE

(a) Copies of all materials required by Rule .0201 of this Chapter shall be mailed by the applicant to the Board Office on Board provided forms for receipt one month prior to the scheduled meeting during which the application will be reviewed. Applications shall be reviewed by the Board at scheduled meetings or special meetings called for such purpose by the Board Chair.

(b) If the educational requirements are met, and the application is approved by the Board, the Board shall inform the applicant of the approval, and shall give the applicant information regarding the National Marriage and Family Therapy Examination.

(c) If the education requirements are not met, or the application is otherwise not approved by the Board, the Board shall inform the applicant of the disapproval, with an explanation of the areas which are deficient. Applicants may remedy deficiencies within two years from the date of notification of such without having to reapply. After two years of application inactivity, the file shall be closed and a new application and fee is required.

(d) If during the review process, questions arise from any source which may pertain to the applicant's qualifications for licensing, the Board may seek to resolve the questions by communication with the person who made the comments or any other person(s), or may refer the matter to counsel or to a member or employee of the Board for investigation.

(e) If an application is denied, the grounds for denial shall be given to the applicant in writing. An applicant who has been denied licensure may file a request for hearing pursuant to G.S. 150B-38 within 15 days of notice of the denial. In lieu of a hearing, the applicant may present additional written material in support of the application, which shall be reviewed at the next scheduled Board meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011; March 1, 1996; April 1, 1989.

21 NCAC 31 .0203 ISSUANCE OF LICENSE

An applicant shall be granted a license when all requirements for licensing are met. The license shall display the applicant's name, licensing date, license number, the signatures of at least the chairperson and vice-chairperson, and the official seal of the Board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b)(d); 90-270.54;
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. March 1, 1996.

SECTION .0300 - EXAMINATION

21 NCAC 31 .0301 WRITTEN EXAMINATION

(a) Licensure as a North Carolina Marriage and Family Therapist or as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associate requires passing the National Marriage and Family Therapy Examination.

(b) The examination shall be given at least biannually.

(c) The passing score on the examination shall be determined by the Board in collaboration with the testing agency.

(d) The examination may be taken after the Board approves the application.

(e) Special Administrations. Applicants with disabilities which meet compliance requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) may request accommodations for testing. Special test administrations shall be as comparable as possible to a standard administration. The applicant shall contact the Board to request any accommodation four weeks in advance of the testing to give sufficient time to process the request.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.55;
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011; March 1, 1996.

21 NCAC 31 .0302 REPORTING OF SCORES

21 NCAC 31 .0303 FIRST REEXAMINATION

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.55(e);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. March 1, 1996; April 1, 1989;
Repealed Eff. July 1, 2011.

SECTION .0400 - RENEWAL

21 NCAC 31 .0401 LICENSURE RENEWAL FORM

(a) Licensees shall provide documentation of compliance with Rule .0701 of this Chapter to the Board on the forms provided by the Board.

(b) The Board shall waive the license application renewal fee for any individual who is currently licensed by and in good standing with the Board if the individual is serving in the armed forces of the United States and if G.S. 105-249.2 grants the individual an extension of time to file a tax return. The waiver shall be in effect for any period that is disregarded under Section 7508 of the Internal Revenue Code in determining the taxpayer's liability for a federal tax.

(c) The Board shall extend the deadline for filing a license renewal application for any individual who currently holds a license and is in good standing with the Board if the individual is serving in the armed forces of the United States and if G.S. 105-249.2 grants the individual an extension of time to file a tax return. The extension shall be in effect for any period that is disregarded under Section 7508 of the Internal Revenue Code in determining the taxpayer's liability for a federal tax.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.58; 93B-15;
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011; March 1, 1996.

21 NCAC 31 .0402 SECOND NOTICE

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.58; 150B-3(b);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. April 1, 1989;
Repealed Eff. March 1, 1996.

21 NCAC 31 .0403 REINSTATEMENT AFTER EXPIRATION

(a) A license which expired for non payment of renewal fees or failure to comply with continuing education requirements will be reinstated, if within two years of expiration, the reinstatement fee is paid and satisfactory evidence of completing continuing education requirements is submitted.. The continuing education requirements documented at the time of reinstatement must equal the hours required had the license not expired.

(b) A license which has expired for a period of more than two years will not be reinstated. A new license may be granted pursuant to paying the applicable fees and meeting the licensing requirements under Sections .0200 and .0300 of this Chapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.58A;
Eff. March 1, 1996.

21 NCAC 31 .0404 RETURN FROM INACTIVE STATUS

The Board shall consider requests for a return to active status on an individual basis.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.58B;
Eff. March 1, 1996.

SECTION .0500 - DEFINITIONS

21 NCAC 31 .0501 APPROPRIATE COURSE OF STUDY

(a) Training required for an applicant with a related degree in G.S. 90-270.54(1)a is a graduate degree that includes marriage and family therapy content including coursework in theoretical foundation of marriage and family therapy, assessment and diagnosis, practice of marriage and family therapy; human development and family relations; professional identity and ethics, clinical research, and supervised clinical practicum or internship.

(b) Applicants who were enrolled in a master's degree program on or before October 1, 2011 shall also be considered for licensure with coursework that includes specific marriage and family therapy content including coursework in general family studies, marriage and family therapy theory, psychopathology/abnormal behavior, theories of personality, and supervised clinical practicum or internship.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.47(1); 90-270.51(b); 90-270.54(1)a;

Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. October 1, 2011; March 1, 1996; April 1, 1989.

21 NCAC 31 .0502 ONGOING SUPERVISION

(a) On-going supervision as contained in G.S. 90-270.54(a)(1)b means face-to-face conversation with an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, or a person who otherwise meets the standards set forth by AAMFT which are incorporated by the Board by reference. These incorporated standards include subsequent amendments and additions. A copy of these standards may be obtained at no charge by writing the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy at 112 Alfred Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3061 or at their website, www.aamft.org.

(b) On-going supervision shall focus on the raw data (quantitative information about the client) from the supervisee's continuing clinical practice, which shall be available to the supervisor through a combination of direct observation, co-therapy, written clinical notes, and audio and video recordings.

(c) None of the following constitutes ongoing supervision:

- (1) Peer supervision, i.e., supervision by a person of equivalent, rather than superior, qualifications, status and experience;
- (2) Supervision by current or former family members of your immediate or extended family, or any other persons where the nature of the personal relationship prevents or makes difficult the establishment of a professional relationship;
- (3) Administrative supervision - clinical practice performed under administrative rather than clinical supervision by an institutional director or executive;
- (4) A primarily didactic process wherein techniques or procedures are taught in a classroom, workshop or seminar; or
- (5) Consultation, staff development or orientation to a field or program or role-playing of family interrelationships as a substitute for clinical practice in a clinical situation.

(d) Applicants for licensure must have accumulated a minimum of 200 hours of approved ongoing supervision concurrent with the completion of the 1,500 hours of clinical experience required by G.S. 90-270.54(a)(1)b. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associates must remain under on-going supervision for at least one hour monthly until licensed as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

(e) Graduates of marriage and family therapy programs who have completed 200 hours of approved ongoing supervision within their degree shall complete a minimum of 25 hours of approved ongoing supervision concurrently with the completion of the remaining hours of post-degree clinical experience required by G.S. 90-270.54(a)(1)b. Graduates of marriage and family therapy programs may apply up to 500 hours of direct client contact obtained during their program toward the 1,500 required as long as those hours were obtained under the direct supervision of an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Supervisor Candidate. Applicants for the Marriage and Family Therapy license must have documented a minimum of 500 relational hours toward their required 1,500 hours. Relational hours are defined as hours spent providing therapy with more than one client in the room who are all part of the same treatment plan. Relational hours may also include face to face communication with members of the larger system who are also working in direct collaboration with the same client(s). This contact may only be counted if it is authorized via written release by the client(s) or required by law for the purpose of developing and carrying out a treatment plan.

(f) Supervision Reports shall be submitted on supervision report forms provided by the Board. Supervision report forms are contained within the licensure application packet which may be obtained at no charge by writing the Board at their current address of Post Office Box 37669, Raleigh, North Carolina 27627 or downloaded from www.nclmft.org.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.54(1)b;
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011; May 1, 1996; April 1, 1989.

21 NCAC 31 .0503 EQUIVALENCY

(a) An appropriate course of study for an "equivalent" degree under G.S. 90-270.47(6)e is defined as a minimum of or quarter hour equivalent to a 45-semester hour graduate program. Thirty-three semester hours or their quarter hour equivalent, shall consist of the following content and clinical training:

- (1) Theoretical Foundation of Marriage and Family Therapy (six semester hours);
- (2) Assessment and Diagnosis (three semester hours);
- (3) Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy (six semester hours);
- (4) Human Development and Family Relations (three semester hours);

- (5) Professional Identity and Ethics (three semester hours);
- (6) Research in Marriage and Family Therapy (three semester hours); and
- (7) Supervised Clinical Practicum or Internship (nine semester hours).

The remaining 18 semester hours shall consist of course work appropriate to the disciplinary specialty in which the degree is granted.

(b) Applicants who were enrolled in a related degree program on or before July 1, 2011 shall be considered for licensure in accordance with this Paragraph. An appropriate course of study for an "equivalent" degree under G.S. 90-270.47(1)e is defined by the Board to consist of a 45 semester hour graduate program. Twenty-seven semester hours consist of the following content and clinical training:

- (1) General Family Studies (six semester hours). This category is a broad and inclusive one which may include courses in marriage, family relations, child development, family sociology, or other such related topics in which the marriage and family content is evident.
- (2) Marriage and Family Therapy Theory (six semester hours). This category includes specific and extensive content in systems theory as well as other theoretical approaches to marriage and family therapy. In addition, the Board shall consider course work in this category which exceeds six semester hours to be applicable toward meeting the requirements for General Family Studies.
- (3) Individual Studies. Theories of Personality (three semester hours), and psychopathology or abnormal behavior (three semester hours).
- (4) Clinical Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy (nine semester hours or 20 hours per week for 12 months).

The remaining 18 semester hours shall consist of course work appropriate to the disciplinary specialty in which the degree is granted.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.47(1)e; 90-270.51(b); 90-270.54(1)a;
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011; March 1, 1996; April 1, 1989.

21 NCAC 31 .0504 ALTERNATIVE TO CLINICAL PRACTICUM

In lieu of the clinical practicum requirements under Rule .0501 or Rule .0503 of this Section, the Board shall accept evidence of a supervised clinical practicum defined as at least 120 clinical contact hours with at least 24 hours of supervision obtained subsequent to the granting of a related degree in an equivalent course of study provided the supervision meets the requirements of "approved supervision" under Rule .0502 of this Section. The hours of supervision must be reported to the Board on the Board forms.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011; March 1, 1996.

21 NCAC 31 .0505 NON-DEGREE GRANTING POST GRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAMS

(a) In assessing the applicant's fulfillment of the educational requirements for licensure, the Board shall accept evidence of the applicant's completion of postgraduate training in marriage and family therapy from non-degree granting institutions or programs providing that:

- (1) The program has a specified curriculum in marriage and family therapy;
- (2) The program is ongoing and additive, i.e., offered at the same place over a specific period of time and is available on an ongoing basis;
- (3) The program is attached to an identifiable institution, training facility or agency; and
- (4) Documentation is maintained by the institution, training facility, or agency regarding a person's satisfactory involvement in and completion of the program. Such documentation must include approved clinical supervision and performance evaluation.

(b) Workshops, seminars and general continuing education events do not qualify as postgraduate training under this Rule and shall not be considered.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.54(1)a;
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. March 1, 1996; April 1, 1989.

21 NCAC 31 .0506 DIRECT CLIENT CONTACT

(a) As used in this Chapter, direct client contact is defined as face-to-face (therapist and client) therapy with individuals, couples, families, or groups from a systemic perspective and includes relational hours as defined in 21 NCAC 31 .0506(d). Direct client contact must:

- (1) Relate to client treatment plans;
- (2) Be goal directed; and
- (3) Assist client to affect change in cognition, affect and behavior.

(b) Assessments (intake and otherwise) may be counted up to 250 hours of direct client contact. Assessment is a clinical encounter that involves gathering of current and historical data from a client that is then used to determine what type of therapeutic service is most appropriate. If the individual who conducted the assessment does not provide the therapeutic service, it is considered an assessment hour only.

(c) Client psycho-education may be counted up to 250 hours direct client contact. Psycho-education refers to a treatment approach that provides education for individuals and families in assistance with emotional, mental, social and relational disturbances.

(d) The following are not direct client contact and may not be counted:

- (1) Observing therapy without actively participating in follow-up therapy at some point during immediately following the session;
- (2) Record keeping;
- (3) Administrative activities;
- (4) Supervision; and
- (5) Client contact while not receiving supervision.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.54(1)b;
Eff. March 1, 1996;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011.

SECTION .0600 - CODE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

- 21 NCAC 31 .0601 RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS**
- 21 NCAC 31 .0602 COMPETENCE**
- 21 NCAC 31 .0603 INTEGRITY**
- 21 NCAC 31 .0604 CONFIDENTIALITY**
- 21 NCAC 31 .0605 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- 21 NCAC 31 .0606 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- 21 NCAC 31 .0607 RESEARCH RESPONSIBILITY**
- 21 NCAC 31 .0608 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.60(5);
Eff. August 1, 1984;
Amended Eff. April 1, 1989;
Repealed Eff. March 1, 1996.

21 NCAC 31 .0609 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

(a) The Board adopts the code of ethical principles of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) published as the AAMFT CODE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS by reference including subsequent amendments and editions. The current code is published on the AAMFT's website (www.aamft.org).

(b) Each applicant or licensee shall follow this code of ethics.

(c) A copy of this code of ethics may be obtained at no charge by writing the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 112 Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3061 or from www.aamft.org.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.60(5);
Eff. March 1, 1996;

Amended Eff. July 1, 2011.

SECTION .0700 - CONTINUING EDUCATION

21 NCAC 31 .0701 REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

(a) Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associates shall submit each year with the license renewal forms evidence of 20 hours of continuing education credits in marriage and family therapy continuing education obtained subsequent to the prior license renewal. Evidence of completion shall consist of a certificate of attendance and completion signed by the continuing education provider and shall include date(s) of attendance, number of hours, name of attendee, and name of course.

(b) Continuing education units that by title and content deal with marriage and family therapy practice and therapeutic issues, ethics and supervision of marriage and family therapy shall be approved by the Board.

(c) Ongoing supervision by an AAMFT approved supervisor or AAMFT supervisor candidate may be utilized for up to 12 hours of continuing education. Written documentation of the supervisor's status shall be provided to the Board via a copy of the AAMFT supervisor or supervisor candidate verification form.

(d) Three hours of ethics training in the provision of professional mental health services is required (as part of the required 20 hours of continuing education) for each renewal period.

(e) The maximum number of hours of continuing education credits for presenting a continuing education course in marriage and family therapy or teaching a course in marriage and family therapy at a recognized educational institution is five.

(f) Continuing Education credit shall not be accepted for the following:

- (1) Regular work activities, administrative staff meetings, case staffing or reporting;
- (2) Membership in, holding office in, or participation on boards or committees, business meetings of professional organizations, or banquet speeches;
- (3) Independent unstructured or self-structured learning, defined as learning which is undertaken by the licensee without peer or other guidance, review, input, supervision or monitoring;
- (4) Training related to policies and procedures of an agency; or
- (5) Non-therapy content programs such as finance or business management.

(g) If a person submits documentation for continuing education that is not identifiable as dealing with marriage and family therapy practice and therapeutic issues, ethics or the supervision of marriage and family therapy, the Board shall request a written description of the continuing education and how it applies to professional practice in marriage and family therapy. If the Board determines that the training cannot be considered, the individual shall be given 90 days from the date of notification to replace the hours not allowed. Those hours shall be considered replacement hours and shall not be counted during the next renewal period.

(h) If evidence of completion of marriage and family continuing education is not presented to the Board within 90 days from the date of notification, the license expires automatically.

(i) The Board shall waive the continuing education requirements in this Rule for any individual who is currently licensed by and in good standing with the Board if the individual is serving in the armed forces of the United States and if G.S. 105-249.2 grants the individual an extension of time to file a tax return. The waiver shall be in effect for any period that is disregarded under Section 7508 of the Internal Revenue Code in determining the taxpayer's liability for a federal tax.

(j) If the evidence of completion is not postmarked by July 1, the evidence of completion shall not be accepted by the Board, and the license will expire effective July 1.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270-58C; 93B-15;
Eff. March 1, 1996;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2011.*

SECTION .0800 - ASSOCIATE STATUS

21 NCAC 31 .0801 LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY ASSOCIATE CREDENTIALS REQUIRED

(a) An applicant for licensure as a marriage and family therapy associate shall ensure the submission of the following to the Board:

- (1) Notarized application form and application fee;
- (2) Official graduate college transcripts sent directly to the Board by the training institution(s) evidencing completion of a master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy from a recognized educational

institution, or completion of a related degree from a recognized educational institution with course of study encompassing coursework as defined by the Board in 21 NCAC 31 .0501. Additional documentation (copies of course catalog and syllabi) of qualifying coursework shall be required if the Board has questions about course content;

- (3) Evidence of good moral character which include three endorsements for licensure, using Board forms, from persons familiar with the applicant;
- (4) Evidence of a passing score on the examination required by the Board pursuant to G.S. 90-270.54(a)(2); and
- (5) Evidence of an agreement with a supervisor who meets the requirements of Rule .0502 for ongoing supervision.

(b) All complete application materials shall be received within two years from the date of the application or the file shall be closed.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.48(b)(1); 90-270.51(b);
Eff. March 1, 1996;
Amended Eff. October 1, 2011.

21 NCAC 31 .0802 LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY ASSOCIATE

For purposes of G.S. 90-270.54A(c) special circumstances are defined as events beyond the control or fault of the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associate, including illness of self, partner, spouse or child, or death of life partner, spouse or child. Persons who are licensed as Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associates must disclose to their clients that they are required to practice under on-going supervision, and the name of their supervisor.

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.54A;
Eff. July 1, 2011.

SECTION .0900 - RECIPROCITY

21 NCAC 31 .0901 RECIPROCAL LICENSE

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.51(b); 90-270.56;
Eff. March 1, 1996;
Repealed Eff. July 1, 2011.

SECTION .1000 - FEES

21 NCAC 31 .1001 FEES

The Board sets the following fees:

(1)	Each license examination	\$ 50.00
(2)	Each license application as a marriage and family therapist	\$200.00
(3)	Each license application as a marriage and family therapist associate	\$200.00
(4)	Each reciprocal license application	\$200.00
(5)	Each renewal of license	\$100.00
(6)	Each reinstatement of an expired license	\$200.00
(7)	Each application to return to active status	\$200.00
(8)	Each duplicate license	\$ 25.00
(9)	Each annual maintenance of inactive status	\$ 50.00
(10)	Each application to extend associate license	\$ 50.00

History Note: Authority G.S. 90-270.57;
Eff. July 1, 2011.

21 NCAC 31 .1002 FUND SUSPENSION

In the event the Board's authority to expend funds is suspended pursuant to G.S. 93B-2, the Board shall continue to issue and re-new licenses and all fees tendered shall be placed in an escrow account maintained by the Board for this purpose. Once the Board's authority is restored, the funds shall be moved from the escrow account into the general operating account.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 93B-2(d);
Eff. July 1, 2011.*