



# IONA UNIVERSITY

NEWYORK-PRESBYTERIAN  
IONA SCHOOL of HEALTH SCIENCES

**Marriage and Family Therapy Program  
Masters of Science**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

Revised: 09/12/22

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## History of the MFT Program

The Marriage and Family Therapy Program traces its origins back to the early 1960s, when a group of mental health practitioners from Psychiatry, Psychology and Clinical Social Work (at the urging of Brother John Egan, CFC) began offering a series of lectures and seminars on counseling to local clergy in the New York area. When these seminars proved to be so popular and highly successful, a 54 credit Masters in Pastoral Counseling was developed, registered with the New York State Education Department, and offered at then, Iona College, now Iona University.

In the 1980s, the faculty recognized the relevance of the emerging field of family therapy and added a family counseling specialty to the already existing pastoral counseling program. Both specialties were offered until the late 1990s when the faculty was commissioned by Iona to pursue accreditation of the marriage and family therapy program by the Commission On Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), the national accrediting body for such programs in the United States and Canada.

As a necessary step in the accreditation process, a decision was made to restructure the two specialties, pastoral and family counseling, offered by the department. This restructuring was accomplished by constructing two separate and distinct curricula, as well as different supervised clinical experience requirements. In 2002, the restructuring was approved by the University governance and submitted to the New York State Education Department for approval. In August of 2002, the family counseling program was officially reregistered as a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy.

In December of 2002, legislation creating the profession of Marriage and Family Therapy was passed and signed into law by then-Governor Pataki. In December of 2003, the department submitted its CANDIDACY SELF-STUDY to COAMFTE. In May of 2004, COAMFTE conducted a 3-day site visit at Iona College, and on January 1, 2004, the Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy was awarded Candidacy Status by COAMFTE through June 30, 2009. In June of 2005, The State Education Department, after reviewing the curriculum and supervised practicum requirements, designated the Iona College Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy as "Licensure Qualifying."

In the Fall of 2007, the department submitted its initial accreditation self-study, and a COAMFTE Site Visit was scheduled for May 2008. On January 31, 2009, COAMFTE awarded the Iona Master's in MFT "Initial Accreditation" for six years through June 01, 2015. On May 1, 2015, the Iona Master's in MFT was awarded Re-Accreditation by COAMFTE for six years through May 01, 2021.

In Spring of 2021, the department submitted the self-study for reaccreditation with COAMFTE and will complete the COAMFTE site visit in April of 2022.

### Current MFT Faculty Members

Program Director: Christiana Ibilola Awosan, PhD., LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor

Clinical Director: Marc Fernandez, M.S., LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor  
Faculty Members: Yaliu He, PhD., LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor  
Will Hutter, PsyD., LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor  
Adjunct Members: Bob Burns, PhD., LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor  
Andrew Vispo, M.S., LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor candidate

### [Mission of Statement of the MFT Program](#)

The mission, goals, and objectives of the MFT Program are congruent with those of Iona University and are formed by Professional Marriage and Family Therapy Educational Guidelines and Core Competencies. The Iona University Mission Statement adopted May 2, 2012, reads as follows: Iona University is a caring community, inspired by the legacy of Blessed Edmund Rice and the Christian Brothers, which embodies opportunity, justice, and the liberating power of education. Iona University's purpose is to foster intellectual inquiry, community engagement, and an appreciation for diversity. In the tradition of American Catholic Higher Education, Iona University commits its energies to the development of graduates recognized for their ethics, creativity, and creative problem-solving abilities, and their enduring integration of body, mind, and spirit.

### [The mission of the MFT Masters of Science Program at Iona University is:](#)

To prepare entry-level Marriage and Family Therapists, utilizing academic training that is: holistic, systemic, relationally based, with varied clinical experiences that enhance the application of systemic theory in clinical practice and preparation for working in diverse community settings. The overall goal is to graduate ethical, competent, caring MFTs, who will be able to address complex relational dynamics across the family life cycle, and who are committed to working with a multicultural mindset. Our graduates will be prepared to pass the national licensing examination in Marriage and Family Therapy, and with additional supervised clinical experience in the community, to become Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists.

The following professional influences guide our mission, goal, and objectives/expected outcomes:

- [Professional Marriage and Family Therapy Educational Principles](#)
- [AAMFT Core Competencies](#)
- [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#)
- [Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Board \(AMFTRB\) Guidelines](#)
- [New York State Mental Health Practitioners Laws, Rules, and Regulations: Marriage and Family Therapy License Requirements](#)

The MFT program will maintain the Standards of Accreditation as determined and promulgated by the Commission On Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) to fulfill our mission, goal, and objectives. The theoretical base of the program is systemic and relational, and all faculty are thoroughly grounded in this approach, both conceptually and clinically. The structure of the program includes the study of one's own family of origin and personal growth opportunities, exploration of multicultural, diversity and social justice issues, general professional studies, marriage and family studies, practical clinical experiences, exploring research, individual and group supervision, on-site live supervision of couples and families.

To achieve a set of clearly specified educational outcomes that are congruent with the institution and program's mission, and appropriate to the profession of Marriage and Family Therapy, the faculty has delineated the following set of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

#### Student Learning Outcomes:

- SLO 1: To understand apply relational/systemic clinical knowledge.
- SLO 2: To assess problems in human and family development and interaction.
- SLO 3: To establish an identity as a professional MFT with an awareness of, and adherence to, AAMFT Ethical Standards.
- SLO 4: To acquire licensure preparedness, experience in research, contribution to the profession, and membership in professional organization. To understand the theoretical constructs of MFT.
- SLO 5: To cultivate an understanding and respect for issues surrounding social justice, and diversity/inclusion.

From these Student Learning Outcomes, the faculty has also integrated a set of Program Outcomes (POs) and Faculty Outcomes (FOs):

#### Program Outcomes:

- PO 1: Prepare students to become entry level clinicians, with a professional identity as MFTs, who will be prepared to serve individuals, couples, and families.
- PO 2: Graduate ethical MFTs.
- PO 3: Prepare graduates to pass the national licensing exam.
- PO 4: Provide an environment that recognizes and respects all aspects of diversity and inclusion.

#### Faculty Outcomes:

- FO 1: Apply the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Code of Ethics to professional behavior and the teaching, supervision, and practice of Marriage and Family Therapy. The faculty will supervise learners according to the Professional Marriage and Family Therapy Principles and Educational Guidelines.
- FO 2: Communicate with sensitivity, understanding, respect, and a systemic perspective in all professional interactions.
- FO 3: Be actively involved in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy; maintaining Clinical Fellow status and Approved Supervisor designation in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, as well as being a New York State Licensed MFT.
- FO 4: Attend conferences, workshops and fulfilling the continuing education requirements of the New York State Education Department, Office of the Professions, and promoting the importance of professional identity as an MFT.

## Program Goals and Associated Student Learning Outcomes

### Program Goal 1

- Prepare students to become entry-level clinicians, with a professional identity as MFTs, who will be prepared to serve individuals, couples, and families.
  - Associated Student Learning Outcomes to Program Goal 1:
    - SLO#1: To understand and apply relational/systemic clinical knowledge.
    - SLO#2: To assess problems in human and family development and interaction.

### Program Goal 2

- Graduate ethical MFTs.
  - Associated Student Learning Outcome to Program Goal 2:
    - SLO#3: To establish an identity as a professional MFT with an awareness of, an adherence to, AAMFT ethical standards.

### Program Goal 3

- Prepare graduates to pass the national licensing exam
  - Associated Student Learning Outcome to Program Goal 3:
    - SLO#4: To acquire licensure preparedness, experience in research, contribution to the profession, and membership in professional organization. To understand the theoretical constructs of MFT.

### Program Goal 4

- Provides an environment that recognizes and respects diversity and inclusion and all its aspects.
  - Associated Student Learning Outcome to Program Goal 4:
    - SLO#5: To cultivate an understanding and respect for issues surrounding social justice, and diversity/inclusion.

## Program Description

The Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy is a 54-credit program consisting of 42 credits in didactic courses (14), combined with 12 credits in supervised clinical experience. It is expected that the program can be completed in a three-year time frame, with a maximum allowable time of five years.

The program curriculum and clinical requirements were reviewed by the NYS Education Department, resulting in the program being designated as “Licensure Qualifying.” The program is currently accredited by COAMFTE through May 1, 2021. At present, the faculty and staff of the program are in the process of Reaccreditation.

**Graduation Requirements:** Students are required to complete all didactic and clinical requirements of the program, as described in this Student handbook and the Iona University Catalog of Graduate Programs, within the maximum allowable time frame (5 years). The requirements also include maintaining a minimum cumulative G.P.A of 3.0, completing all supervision and clinical contact hour requirements, and completing a Capstone Project. New



York State requires the completion of a Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training. This requirement is completed as part of the Ethics course (MFT880). Students are advised to keep a secure copy for their own records since it must be submitted with their licensing application.

A GPA below a 3.0 may trigger consequences such as not being considered in good academic standing; not being allowed to move into or maintain clinical placement; or to be considered for dismissal from the program. If you carry an INC (Incomplete) in any course, please note that you may not receive the financial aid you may have expected.

#### Program Course Requirements and Sequence of Courses:

**\*\*All classes will require a grade of B or higher or you must retake the course\*\***

#### Curriculum Sequence for MS MFT Program

| Academic Year | First Semester (Fall)   |           | Second Semester (Spring)                     |           | Summer   |
|---------------|---|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 1st Year      | MFT 509<br>Introduction to MFT                                    | 3 Credits | MFT 551 Pre-Practicum Seminar                | 3 Credits | Sign up for MMC (summer supervision) * (Optional)  |
|               | MFT 531 Group Dynamics in the Family                              | 3 Credits | MFT 795 Marriage, Family, Friendship Therapy | 3 Credits | MFT-551 Professor will tally students interested in MMC to provide registration code by April of the Sprint Semester |
|               | MFT 540<br>Fundamentals of Assessment and Diagnosis in Psychiatry | 3 Credits | MFT 880 Ethics in MFT                        | 3 Credits | There is a non-refundable registration fee for MMC   |
| Total         |   | 9 Credits |  | 9 Credits |  |
| 2nd Year      | MFT 740 Intimate Relationships                                    | 3 Credits | MFT 510 Principles of Life Span Development  | 3 Credits | Sign up for MMC (summer supervision) * (Required)  |
|               | MFT 895<br>Research in MFT  | 3 Credits | MFT 794 Family Approaches to Therapy         | 3 Credits | Program Director will provide registration   |

|          |   |             |  |             |  |
|----------|---|-------------|--|-------------|--|
|          | MFT 6510 Case Seminar (Group Supervision I)                     | 1.5 Credits | MFT 6520 Case Seminar (Group Supervision I) (continuation)                     | 1.5 Credits | code by April of the Spring Semester<br><br>There is a non-refundable registration fee for MMC |
|          | MFT 6710 MFT Practicum: Field Placement I (Dyadic Supervision)  | 1.5 Credits | MFT 6720 MFT Practicum: Field Placement I (Dyadic Supervision) (continuation)  | 1.5 Credits |  |
| Total    |   | 9 Credits   |  | 9 Credits   |  |
| 3rd Year | MFT 630 Relational Psychopathology                              | 3 Credits   | MFT 741 Parenting  | 3 Credits   |  |
|          | MFT 743 Human Sexuality   | 3 Credits   | MFT 796 Symposium in Family Therapy  | 3 Credits   |  |
|          | MFT 7510 Case Seminar (Group Supervision II)                    | 1.5 Credits | MFT 7520 Case Seminar (Group Supervision II) (continuation)                    | 1.5 Credits |  |
|          | MFT 7710 MFT Practicum: Field Placement II (Dyadic Supervision) | 1.5 Credits | MFT 7720 MFT Practicum: Field Placement II (Dyadic Supervision) (continuation) | 1.5 Credits |  |
|          |   |             | Capstone Project**   |             |  |
| Total    |   | 9 Credits   |  | 9 Credits   |  |

\* Good academic standing and successful completion of clinical readiness/evaluation to see clients at the Iona Family Therapy Center (IFTC) and Field Placement is required.

\*\*See below for further details

#### Attendance and Conduct:

Students enrolled in the program are expected to attend all class sessions, group, and individual supervisions, except for the most serious of reasons. Where an absence is unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility to notify his/her/their instructor and/or supervisor directly of the absence. Absences are especially critical during the practicum experience because of their impact on client/s, the supervisory process, and the therapy process itself. Where the student is participating as a co-therapist, this is especially critical to attend all therapy sessions, since the program's policy is that both members of the team must be present for a therapy session to occur. Any exceptions will be up to the discretion of the supervisor. If circumstances arise that prevent a student from fulfilling their role as a co-therapist, the following procedure is to be followed:

- Inform the co-therapist as soon as possible (preferably within 24 hours).
- Inform the client(s) that the session will be canceled and, if possible, offer an alternative time
- Inform the Clinic Director and Clinical Supervisor(s).

Additional specifics of attendance requirements will be listed on each course syllabus.

### **Dress Code Policy**

While enrolled in the program, students are expected to conduct themselves maturely and professionally. Arriving well before a class/client session or supervision session is to begin is expected and training for future professional endeavors. Good grooming and appropriate dress are expected of all students regardless of the season or weather. Recognizing and appreciating that there are differences in cultural and generational preferences, students are reminded to dress accordingly. Clothing that is too revealing, recreational, or work-related is to be avoided. Business casual is the preferred/recommended approach. Any clarification of this may be discussed with the supervisor.

### **Remote Courses and Therapy Session Policy**

All students must have their cameras on during class at least 90% of each class meeting. Additionally, students must abide by each course policy regarding remote learning and class participation. Students are not permitted to record video, audio or images of any remote course. During remote classes and therapy sessions, students are required to be in a private location to ensure that class meetings or therapy sessions are confidential and not overheard or interrupted by others. Students are encouraged to wear headphones or earphones to increase confidentiality. Students must adhere to the professional and ethical standard of privacy and confidentiality (AAMFT Codes of Ethics) with regards to remote class meetings and therapy sessions. Additionally, students must be aware of and adhere to the [AMFTRB's Teletherapy and Telesupervision Guidelines II](#). Before seeing clients at the IFTC center and engagement in Tele-supervision, all students must sign and adhere to the Iona Family Therapy Center Tele-Therapy Student Agreement (see appendix). Any student who violates the Program's Remote Courses and the Iona Family Therapy Center Tele-Therapy Student Agreement may face dismissal from the Program.

### **Assessment of Student Learning and Clinical Skills:**

Student performance in coursework and clinical practicum is assessed via a variety of methods. Didactic courses: quizzes, exams, classroom presentations, class discussions, special projects, video and journal reviews, and Blackboard assignments are used throughout the program. These will vary from course to course and from instructor to instructor. These will be identified in each course syllabus along with grading rubrics. Clinical work: role-playing, written case presentations, audio presentations, video/digital recording, reflecting team, clinical readiness evaluation and live supervision. Since we are a COAMFTE accredited program, our supervised clinical experience requirements are derived from the current version of the Accreditation Requirements. Responsibility for documenting the aggregated client contact, supervisory, and direct observation hours rests with each student as well as with the Clinical Director. Meeting all the "Supervised Clinical Experience Requirements" is the responsibility of each student. In addition to course and teacher evaluation required by the university, students will be

required to provide feedback related to various program/course outcomes per COAMFTE requirements via surveys and other means.

**Academic Review:** At the end of each semester, each student's academic progress in the program is reviewed by the faculty in an Academic Review meeting. These plans are intended to support the individual needs of students in order to succeed in the program. Where the faculty deems it necessary, a "Performance Improvement Plan" (PIP) will be drawn up based on the concerns voiced in the meeting. A copy of the "Performance Improvement Plan" will be placed in the student's file and sent via e-mail to the student and may be discussed, where needed, in a meeting attended by the program director, the student's mentor, and one other faculty member. Academic Review "Performance Improvement Plan" will be developed if student earns less than a B in any course. If a student has less than a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) per semester and/or exhibits failure to make satisfactory academic progress toward the degree student may be in danger of dismissal from the program.

**Clinical Review:** At the end of the second semester of students' first year of study, students will receive a clinical review based off observation from their Pre-practicum course instructor. The Pre-practicum Clinical Readiness Evaluation completed by the course instructor for each student to assess students' clinical readiness to start seeing clients at IFTC and apply for external internship sites. Similarly, at the end of each semester of the second and third year, the clinical progress of each student enrolled in clinical work is evaluated by the faculty at the Clinical Review meeting, using external (internship site) field placement supervisor and internal (Iona MFT program) group supervisor evaluations. Students are required to earn a '3 or above' on all competencies of their Internal and External Clinical Evaluations to be considered in good Clinical standing. If students earn below a '3' on at least 3 competencies, specifically in the areas of legal/ethics or professionalism of their Internal and External Clinical Evaluations a "PIP" will be drawn up, a copy will be placed in the student's file and sent to the student via e-mail and may be discussed with the student in question. If students earn below a '3' on at least 5 competencies, including areas of legal/ethics or professionalism, student may be in danger of dismissal from the program. Faculty may also choose to suspend the student's clinical work, require Continuing Education (CE), or have the student repeat the Ethics Course or take an additional supervision section. In serious cases, the student may be dismissed from the Program.

These plans are intended to support the individual needs of students in order to succeed in the program. The Program Director, Clinical Director, and either the group supervisor or individual supervisor will be present for the meeting. Additionally, the faculty will view each student's clinical experience with clients of diverse, marginalized, or underserved populations. If a student is lacking a diverse client case, the Clinical Director will prioritize the assignment of one internally through the Iona Family Therapy Clinic (IFTC), and work with the student's site to do the same. Students will see this, and any other suggested or required actions listed in their Clinical Review Letter.

**Capstone Project:** At the end of the second year of study, students begin what will be their last and most comprehensive evaluation/demonstration of their progress by preparing their Capstone Project. The Capstone Project requires a student to present a case study from his/her/their clinical experience utilizing several written case forms, along with a genogram and video/digitally

recorded segments from the treatment of the case. To begin the process of preparing the Capstone, students must be on target for reaching 400 total face-to-face client contact hours (200 of which must be relational) and 40 hours of direct observation supervision by the end of the fall semester of their third year in the program. Upon being eligible to start your Capstone Project (400 Total Hours, 200 Relational Hours, 40 Direct Observation Hours), the Clinical Director will reach out to you to inform you of this eligibility, share who your Capstone mentor is and provide you with Capstone project forms. Upon receipt of this communication, the student is expected to reach out to their Capstone mentor to set up a first meeting. The student's mentor will provide an overview of the Capstone process along with a timeline for its presentation, review by Capstone mentor, and the final presentation. A date for the Capstone presentation will be decided on by the mentor when the mentor assesses the student is ready for presentation.

### Student Dismissal for Academic, Non-Academic, or Unethical Behavior

The faculty have a responsibility to you, the program, the Commission on Accreditation (COAMFTE) and the profession to evaluate on an ongoing basis the readiness and competency of your role as a marriage and family therapy trainee as well as your progress in developing the conceptual, ethical, cultural aware and sensitivity as well as practical skills needed to engage in an independent practice of the profession of Marriage and Family Therapy. To this end, students in the MFT program may be dismissed from the program at any time for the following reasons:

- Failure to maintain the established grade point average and other academic standards. Students are expected and required to maintain a cumulative G.P.A. of at least 3.0 throughout the program. Failure to do so can result in automatic dismissal from the program.
- Academic dishonesty and Plagiarism. Please refer to the Iona Human Resources webpage for the specifics of the Graduate Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty at <https://www.ion.edu/students/student-handbook/academic-dishonesty>. The academic progress/standing of each student is reviewed at the end of each semester in Academic Review Meetings.
- Failure to make satisfactory progress toward the degree.
- Violations of AAMFT Code of Ethics. As student members of AAMFT, all students are bound by the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Any violation of this Code of Ethics may result in a student being dismissal from the program, regardless of academic standing. Please refer to the AAMFT website and also to the AAMFT Code of Ethics for further details on ethical behavior.
- Failure to complete time limits for the degree as set by the MFT Program and the School of Health Sciences.
- Failure to make satisfactory progress in clinical skills and competencies.
- Failure to resolve personal and interpersonal issues which interfere with the delivery of satisfactory services to clients and/or puts other students, faculty, and staff in danger.
- Lack of professionalism, shown by disrespect of faculty, students, or clients and series of serious defensive behaviors towards faculty's feedback.
- External clinical site dismisses a student due to unprofessional and unethical conduct.

### Procedure for Student Dismissal from the Program:

A student will be notified, in writing, by the Director of the program that the student is being considered for dismissal from the program and the reason for the dismissal (Academic/Clinical/Ethical violations/Program Time Limit). From the time of notification, the student will not be allowed to continue to see current clients nor to receive new clients. If the reason/s for dismissal is related to the safety of fellow students and faculty members, the student will not be allowed to continue to attend and participate in current class and/or classes.

A student who wishes to challenge the dismissal may do so by:

1. Providing documentation in writing as well as written arguments as to why the dismissal should not be put into effect within 14 business days of the notice.
2. If the student challenges a dismissal, the said student would be given an opportunity to appear before a committee of faculty members and supervisors chosen by the Program Director within 14 business days of the student's written challenge of dismissal and documentations. Members of this committee may be from outside the Department. The committee will meet with the student, hear arguments, and make a recommendation to the Director, who will make the final decision, no less than 7 business days and no more than 14 business days following the student's meeting with the committee.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the committee's review and Program Director's decision, that student will have the opportunity to file an appeal in writing, within 7 business days of notice from the PD's final decision to the Associate Dean of the School of Health Sciences.
4. If the student is not satisfied, the student will then be able file an appeal in writing to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences, within 7 business days of notice from the Associate Dean.

### Grievance Process on Academic and Non-Academic Issues

**Grade Appeals:** The MFT department follows the stated policies and procedures found in the Catalog of Graduate Programs. If a student feels that an error has been made in assigning a grade, the student should:

1. Discuss the basis on which the grade was made with the instructor and put his/her/their concern in writing.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the assigned grade after this review of the grading criteria and her/his/their performance in the course, an appeal can be made to the Department Chair/Program Director. This appeal should be made in writing, stating the basis upon which the grade is questioned.
3. Following this review, if the student is not satisfied with the chairperson's/PD's decision, an appeal may be made, in writing, to the Associate Dean, and if not satisfied with the Associate Dean's decision, the student may then make an appeal in writing to the Dean.

In the School of Health Sciences, an appeal must be filed in writing with the instructor no later than 30 days after the start of the next term, excluding summer sessions.

**Non-Academic Complaints:** a student who feels that there is a grievance concerning non-academic/grade matters with an instructor/supervisor/field placement site should discuss the grievance first with the instructor/supervisor/field placement site director in question.



1. If the student is not satisfied with the response at this level, the student should put their concern in writing and submit them to the Chair/Program Director for appeal and review.
2. If the student is not satisfied with this review, the student should file an appeal, in writing, to the Associate Dean, and if not satisfied, to the Dean. Students also have the opportunity at the end of each semester to register for an evaluation of the supervisor/faculty member via the CTE – Course/Teacher/Evaluation. These evaluations are anonymous and reviewed by the faculty and the Program Director.

### Whistleblower Hotline

In addition to the above policies and procedures, Iona University provides a procedure known as “Whistleblower,” which allows employees to report serious violations or infractions and remain anonymous. Please refer to the Iona University Human Resources web-site pages for the specifics and procedures of this program. 877-472-2110 Reports @ lighthouse\_services.com

### Substance Use/Abuse Policy

As you are in a professional training program, students are expected to consistently demonstrate professional behavior, which also includes abstaining from substance use while in class or while providing therapy services. We are committed to cultivating an environment in which student therapists are held to the same expectations that they will be held to by the state of New York upon gaining temporary/permanent licensure. Students/therapists are prohibited from unlawfully consuming, possessing or using controlled substances while in class, before coming to class, or during/before therapy session. In addition, students/therapists may not be under the influence of any controlled substance, such as drugs or alcohol, while on campus, while working at the Iona Family Therapy Clinic or any external clinical field placement. Prescription or over-the-counter medications, taken as prescribed, are an exception. Anyone violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

### Supervised Clinical Experience and Requirements

Supervised Clinical Experience at the Iona MFT Program is defined as the experience you will gain working with clients at the Iona Family Therapy Center (IFTC) and at an External Field Placement while receiving supervision from an approved supervisor at each location.

It is in the supervised clinical experience that students begin to work with individuals, couples, and families. The goal of your supervised clinical experience is to provide you with opportunities to integrate clinical practice and theory, to develop the necessary and required clinical skills to become marriage and family therapists, and to begin to formulate a personal style and therapeutic orientation. Some of the general goals include the following:

- Learning the professional use of self as a change agent
- Maintaining an active client caseload
- Integration of systemic family therapy theories into practice
- Knowledge and use of the Marriage and Family Therapy Code of Ethics
- Professional presentation
- Awareness of the student role in the group process
- Appreciation of Marriage and Family Therapy literature

- An openness to the great diversity among people as well as cultural sensitivity
- Learning principles of case management
- Learn how to maintain accurate records of client contact and supervision hours.

Students enrolled in field placement need to learn to prioritize their clinical duties, which includes:

- Client contact
- Reflection on self-of-the-therapist issues
- Adherence to tele-mental health standards
- Effective use of individual and group supervision.

Beginning supervised clinical experience involves a transition from an academic classroom orientation to a hands-on and real-life clinical orientation. The Iona MFT program is a pre-professional, licensure qualifying program. Supervised clinical experience provides the opportunity to integrate theoretical and academic material through supervised clinical experiences. In essence, it is the heart and soul of the program.

### Requirements to Begin Supervised Clinical Experience

In order to begin the supervised clinical experience a student must successfully complete the following:

- Successful completion of the six didactic courses offered in the first year of study (fall and spring semesters).
- Demonstrate emotional maturity and integrity: based on instructor feedback provided in each first-year student's academic review at the end of each semester, and an interview with the Clinical Director\*.
  - \*An interview with the Clinical Director is scheduled to gain a better understanding of your areas of interest for your field placement, availability for the IFTC, and to assess your "office space" for remote session. These interviews are held towards the end of the Spring semester of the student's first year of study.
- Ability to meet time commitment: 24 continuous months (encouraged summer before 2nd year in program; required summer before 3rd year in program).
  - minimum of 10 hours per week (between IFTC and Field Placement)
  - Complete 500 total clinical hours (250 of which must be relational) along with 100 total supervision hours by an AAMFT Approved Supervisor. Please note that all Iona MFT Clinical Supervisors are AAMFT Approved Supervisors.
- Availability for in-person and remote sessions at the Iona Family Therapy Center (IFTC).
- Complete and sign the field placement agreement form between program representative, student, and field placement. This form will be made accessible to you in your clinical hours tracking software (Tevera) during your Spring semester of your first year.
- Complete and sign the tele-mental health agreement form. This form will be made accessible to you in the clinical hours tracking software system during your Spring semester of your first year.



- Become a student member of the AAMFT, which is a requirement of the Program's Ethics Course (MFT 880) and obtain Student Liability Insurance (malpractice insurance) at the rate of \$1,000,000 per incident / \$3,000,000 aggregate. A copy of your AAMFT student membership and Certificate of Malpractice Insurance must be submitted to the Clinical Director. Please note that you will also be submitting a copy of your proof of AAMFT student membership to your Ethics professor as a mandatory assignment for that course.
  - AAMFT Link to Register as a Student Member:  
<https://www.aamft.org/Membership/Membership.aspx>
  - AAMFT Link for FAQs related to Student Liability Insurance (Malpractice Insurance):  
[https://www.aamft.org/membership/Student\\_liability\\_FAQS.aspx](https://www.aamft.org/membership/Student_liability_FAQS.aspx)
- Read, understand, and adhere to this Student Handbook and Field Placement Guidelines at all times. You will be prompted to read and sign the latest version of the Iona MFT Student Manual in your Clinical Hours Tracking Software account.

As of the 2021-2022 Academic School Year, the Clinical Director & Field Placement Coordinator will also be your professor for MFT 551 (Pre-Practicum Seminar). This course is offered during the Spring semester of your first year and it prepares you for your clinical experience. Your clinical experience can begin as early as the summer following your first year of study. During MFT 551, you will be introduced to and guided through the process of securing an external field placement. You will also be prepared to see your first clients at the IFTC by the following summer or Fall semester.

During your MFT 551 course Pre-Practicum Seminar, you will be granted access to set up your clinical hours tracking software account (Tevera). Within this account, you will have access to a detailed list, maintained and updated by the Clinical Director, of external field placements approved or in the process of approval by the MFT Program. **Please note** that you are responsible for researching additional sites should you not find a site that replies to your inquiries or works for you (i.e., location, scheduling, etc.). No student may begin to see clients at a field placement site without the prior approval of the Clinical Director. This approval is contingent upon all paperwork being signed and on file.

#### Practicum Courses in your Second and Third Year of the Program:

##### Second Year Students:

##### MFT 6510 (Fall) / 6520 (Spring) -- Supervised Case Seminar

MFT 6510 is the group supervision course you will register for once you have successfully completed your first year of study and have met all the requirements to begin your supervised clinical experience. This time slot listed on PeopleSoft refers to your Group Supervision Course. You will also be contacted by your supervisor to schedule a recurring meeting for this group supervision course.

##### MFT 6710 (Fall) / 6720 (Spring) -- Marriage and Family Practicum Field Placement I:

MFT 6710 is the Practicum Field Placement course you will register for when you successfully complete your first year of study and have met all the requirements to begin your supervised

clinical experience. These courses indicate that you are connected to an External Field Placement and that you will be receiving individual (dyadic) supervision. Dyadic supervision means that your supervision course may include another student. According to COAMFTE, two students (dyadic) in one supervision meeting with a clinical supervisor does count as an individual supervision hour.

### Third Year Students:

#### MFT 7510 (Fall) / 7520 (Spring) -- Supervised Case Seminar

MFT 7510 is the group supervision course you will register for when you successfully complete your second year of study. This time slot listed on PeopleSoft refers to your Group Supervision. You will also be contacted by your supervisor to schedule a recurring meeting for individual supervision.

#### MFT 7710\*\*\* (Fall) / 7720 (Spring) -- Marriage and Family Practicum Field Placement II:

MFT 7710 is the Practicum Field Placement course you will register for when you successfully complete your second year of study and are in good academic and clinical standing. These courses indicate that you are connected to an External Field Placement.

\*\*\*Benchmark to Register for MFT 7710: You must accrue 200 Total Hours, 100 Relational Hours and 5 Direct Observation Hours by the last day of registration for the Fall semester of your third year.

**After Third Year:** If at the completion of MFT 7710 and 7720 a student has not reached the clinical graduation requirements, they must register for MMT (Maintaining Matriculation) until the student meets their graduation requirements. The student must meet graduation requirements no later than 5 years after the student started the program.

A student who registers for MMT, can only then register for 2 back-to-back semesters of MMT to finish the program. Students registering for MMC, MMT or MMG must submit a written letter (via email) to the Program Director and Clinical Director indicating a request to register for MMC, MMT or MMG.

### MMC (Summer Registration)

MMC is encouraged for beginning second year students to see clients at the Iona Family Therapy Center (IFTC) throughout the summer. MMC is required for incoming third year students. The summer semester for MFT Graduate Students does not align with the summer session calendar on the Iona University website. This is due to the nature of our training program's clinical requirements which we expect you to be able to work towards year-round. MMC generally starts two weeks after the last day of the Spring semester and ends the week before the Fall semester begins.

There is a \$400 fee that covers supervision and clinic use for those four months since there is no actual class for it. Students must inform the Clinical Director by April 15th a student plans on registering to work with clients over the summer at the IFTC. Once the list of students is compiled, each student will be contacted by the Graduate Admissions department and provided with a registration code for MMC.

Given the clinical nature of our program, MMC does not follow the “summer session” schedule on the Iona University Graduate School for Arts & Sciences calendar. For the MFT Program, the exact start date, which is typically two weeks after the last day of Spring semester classes, will be provided for you during your MFT 551 class. Please note that the IFTC closes each year for summer break during the first two weeks of July. No clients in-person or remote are to be seen during this time. Clinical planning for this summer break is discussed during your MMC supervision.

#### **MMT (Maintaining Matriculation)**

As noted above for “After Third Year”, a student would register for MMT if they have not met their clinical requirements within three years of starting the program. The MMT status will allow the student to continue at their external field placement for two consecutive semesters to meet their clinical requirements. Students registered for MMT will not be allowed to work with clients at the IFTC because the priority for client assignment is shifted to the incoming second- and third-year students. MMT associates a student to Iona University in lieu of being registered for any class. Your academic/clinical review at the end of your third year will indicate whether you will be registered for MMT by the Program Director.

#### **MMG (Leave of Absence)**

A student would register for MMG if they are taking a Leave of Absence. A student registered for MMG may not be simultaneously registered for any classes, work with any clients at the IFTC nor would they be allowed to maintain an external field placement.

If you are planning to take a Leave of Absence (LOA) from the Program, you are expected to contact the Program Director and provide a written letter requesting the LOA. MMG is granted per semester. Thus, a student will have to register for MMG in the Fall and Spring semesters if requesting a Leave of Absence for one academic year.

#### **Requirements for Clinical Supervision**

Students are required to meet supervision requirements from two entities: New York State Education Department and the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE).

**New York State Education Department:** students enrolled in a “licensure qualifying Marriage and Family Therapy program” may be supervised in clinical experience by a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a Licensed Psychologist, a Licensed Psychiatrist, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and a Registered Nurse Practitioner with training in marriage and Family Therapy. All Iona MFT faculty/supervisors are licensed marriage and family therapists. All Iona MFT faculty/supervisors are AAMFT Approved Supervisors or are in the process of completing their AAMFT Approved Supervisor designation.

**COAMFTE supervision requirements for graduates of COAMFTE accredited MFT programs:** students enrolled in a COAMFTE accredited program must receive at least 100 hours of

supervision from an AAMFT Approved Supervisor. An AAMFT Approved Supervisor is a clinician who has undergone additional training, including supervision of their supervision, in order to be accredited as supervising from a relational/systemic perspective. All Iona MFT faculty/supervisors are either AAMFT approved supervisors or completing the requirements for this designation. The following are the MFT Program's Supervision Requirements:

### Supervision Hour Requirements

- Students will receive at least 100 hours of face-to-face supervision by AAMFT Approved Supervisors in their MFT 6710/6720 and MFT 7710/7720 courses.
- Of those 100 hours received, students are required to receive at least 50 hours of supervision based on raw data, which consists of previously recorded video or audio that must be approved by your supervisor and reviewed with you during supervision. Moreover, at least 25 hours of those 50 hours must be Live Direct Observation, meaning that a supervisor is observing you conducting therapy live (in-person or remote).
- Individual Supervision will occur at each Field Placement at least every week in which students have direct client contact hours. The requirement for supervision is one hour of supervision for every 5 hours of client contact session. In certain circumstances, a Field Placement may remain in compliance by offering supervision every other week.
- Group Supervision, which is required, will occur once a week of each semester of the clinical experience. Students must register for Supervised Case Seminar I – Group Supervision (MFT 6510 & 6520) during Practicum I. Once completed, the student must meet the benchmarks to be cleared to register for Supervised Case Seminar II – Group Supervision (MFT 7510 & 7520). You can count 1 hour of Group Supervision both at IFTC and Field Placement with a group of 6 – 8 supervisees.
  - \*\*\*Benchmark to Register for MFT 7710: You must accrue 200 Total Hours, 100 Relational Hours and 5 Direct Observation Hours by the last registration day for the Fall semester of third year.
- All students, in addition to their Field Placement, must commit time to see clients at the Iona Family Therapy Center (in-person and remote). This requirement is in place for the following reasons:
  - The availability of AAMFT Approved Supervisors (as opposed to NYS supervisors who are approved) in the mental health community surrounding Iona University is quite limited, thereby making it necessary to make this additional requirement. During the first practicum year at Iona Family Therapy Center, a student receives at least 40 hours of supervision with an AAMFT approved supervisor. With the additional 60 hours from the two group supervisions (MFT 6510/6520 & MFT 7510/7520), this guarantees all students will accumulate 100 hours with an AAMFT approved supervisor.

By establishing this requirement, it assures all students that they will begin supervised clinical experience under the supervision of an AAMFT-approved supervisor with a relational/systemic perspective and that there will be opportunities to have clinical experience with diverse, marginalized, or underserved populations.

#### Forms of Supervision may be the following:

- Supervision behind a one-way mirror: Students, observing another student(s) clinical work either via CCTV or a one-way mirror, will receive live-group supervision, provided an appropriate supervisor is present, and the students are actively participating in the session. Passive observation of the other student's work is not counted as supervision. Up to two students seeing a client while being observed via CCTV or a one-way mirror may concurrently receive a client contact hour, a live hour, and an individual supervision hour provided the supervisor is actively supervising the case (i.e., phone-ins, consultations, etc.).
- Video during individual and group supervision: when a student presents a video in group supervision, the student receives video group supervision. The additional students receive group supervision provided they are involved in the process.
- Group Supervision: Group supervision consists of a supervisor and a group of students.
  - Therapy and supervision involving supervisors and supervisees: If a supervisor and no more than two supervisees are physically present in the treatment room, the supervisee/s may receive client contact (if the supervisor and supervisee are co-therapists), or supervision, but not both. The role of the supervisors (as supervisor or co- therapist) must be clearly defined prior to the session.
- Direct Observation Supervision- Live, Video & Audio: Students will need to conduct a live session, show video, or play audio within three (3) months of beginning your practicum at the Iona Family Therapy Center.

#### External Field Placements (Internship)

##### External Field Placement Sites Requirements:

The program maintains a list of approved clinical sites that should be sufficient in providing both the appropriate client contact and supervision hours. Please note that supervision must be provided weekly at the field placement site at the required ratio of 1 hour of supervision for every 5 hours of client contact. For 1 hour of Group Supervision, there must be a group of 6-8 supervisees within the group. Also, note, it is impossible to assure students of a steady client load at any clinical site. Client cancelations, inclement weather, technical issues (remote sessions), illness, overtime, family emergencies are all possibilities and usually occur – thereby reducing the number of clinical contact hours scheduled to the actual number of kept appointments. Students are encouraged to secure two placement sites provided the site can meet all accreditation and NYS licensure requirements. Accreditation standards require certain conditions to be met by field placement supervisors. All site supervision must be provided by individuals who are either employees of the agency/organization/practice or are paid for by the agency/organization/practice.

A signed agreement between the Iona MFT Program, the student, and the external site supervisor must be on file prior to the student beginning the Field Placement at the Site. It is also required that the Field Placement supervisors create an account with Iona MFT's clinical hours tracking software (Tevera), complete their Tevera profile by submit an updated Resume/CV, a copy of their license, a copy of the AAMFT Approved Supervisor certificate (if applicable), and proof of post-graduate training in Family Systems (if applicable).

The Field Placement agreement has an “effective on” and an “in force until” date on it. Once this agreement is signed, leaving a site early without following site termination protocol could result in a failing grade for Field Placement.

The following is the protocol that a student needs to implement for early site termination:

1. A student must identify in writing to the Clinical Director the reason/s for early site termination.
2. Within 5 business days of the notice to the Clinical Director, the student is responsible for organizing a meeting with the Clinical Director, Field Placement Supervisor, Individual Supervisor at Iona and the Program Director to obtain permission for early termination as well as to develop a plan to ethically terminate from the Site.
3. Within 1 business day of the above meeting, the student must sign an Early Site Termination notice with an effective date identified as well as the ethical protocol for early termination that will be placed in the student’s file.

In addition to a Field Placement, a student must dedicate several hours at the Iona Family Therapy Center relative to his/her/their Field Placement caseload. For example, if you are maintaining a large caseload (15-20 clients) at your Field Placement, you will only be expected to dedicate a minimum of 2 hours per week at the IFTC. If a student is struggling to maintain a large caseload at his/her/their Field Placement, the student will be expected to dedicate more than two hours per week at the IFTC for a block of time for Group supervision and to be part of an observation/reflection team. Although there has been an increase in teletherapy services, the program is committed to train students to provide in-person Marriage and Family Therapy.

Once a student has begun a Field Placement, it is expected that the student will remain at the site until the end of the academic year (unless otherwise agreed upon in their field placement contract) and complete the practicum. Upon entering a Field Placement, client contact experience is the most crucial aspect of the training program because it requires entering a therapeutic relationship with another person or persons. It is expected that there will be moments of tension and confusion when the beginning student attempts to integrate theory with actual practice. There will be challenging moments when interactions and behaviors are questioned and challenged in supervision.

#### Completion of Field Placement:

At the completion of each practicum, all trainees are required to complete written evaluations of the supervision experience and to evaluate the field placement site. This evaluation will be made available to you on Tevera.

Furthermore, there will be periods when factors regarding “self-of-the-therapist” will emerge in the consulting room or in supervision. These can be tumultuous times but also opportunities for growth both as a person and as a therapist. Students are urged to speak with their Clinical Supervisor regarding a possible referral in a situation such as this. At such times students may feel the need to remove themselves from the stress-producing situation and seek another Field Placement. In such cases, students are not allowed to leave without notice. Students must set up a meeting with both the CD and their Field Placement supervisor with a view toward



understanding the underlying issues and coming to a resolution. Students leaving a Field Placement site without having first discussed their concerns with both sets of supervisors will receive an Incomplete for the Practicum and will be required to repeat at least one semester. However, there will be times when a change of site may be necessary and advisable. When this is the case, determined by supervisors, the CD, and the PD, a student will be permitted to change field placements. As part of this resolution, it may be necessary for the student to pursue other measures the program deems necessary.

At the completion of each semester, Field Placement supervisors will complete clinical evaluations on student intern's performance which will be considered in your overall grade for your practicum course and clinical skills performance. This evaluation will be available in Tevera. At least once each year, the CD will conduct remote and/or in-person field placement site visits to ensure, to the best of the Program's ability, that the field placements being offered to Iona MFT students meet all the requirements of the Program.

#### Field Supervisor's Requirements and Responsibilities

Your supervisor must be licensed and registered in New York State to practice Marriage and Family Therapy, medicine, as a physician assistant, psychology, licensed clinical social work, or as a registered professional nurse or nurse practitioner and competent in the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy, or must have the equivalent qualifications as determined by the Department for experience completed in another jurisdiction.

Source: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/mhp/mftlic.htm>

#### Termination/dismissal from a field placement

Termination from a first site will result in the site termination documentation being added to your student files, a meeting with the Clinical Director, Program Director, Iona Supervisor, and one other faculty member where a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be drawn up based on the concerns voiced in the meeting.

The PIP will be sent via e-mail to the student, and the student will need to sign off on the PIP and return the signed document to the Clinical Director within 5 business days of receiving the document. Termination from a first site may also result in receiving an "F" grade for your Field Placement Practicum Supervision course for the semester.

Termination from a second site will result in the site termination documentation being added to your student files and a meeting to discuss your dismissal from the program. A student will be notified, in writing, by the Director of the program that the student is being considered for dismissal from the program and the reason for the dismissal (Clinical/Ethical violations). From the time of notification, the student will not be allowed to continue to see current clients nor to receive new clients.

The MFT program may withdraw a student from his/her/their Field Placement site at any time during the clinical practicum contract period for the following reasons:

- The student is not receiving adequate clinical hours at the site.
- The student is not receiving adequate supervision at the site.
- The student is being placed in potentially dangerous situations at the site.

- The student is being requested to perform personal and/or professional functions that are not in line with the AAMFT Codes of Ethics.
- The student is not following the proper procedures set forth by the site and/or program in regard to practicum experience.
- The site is uncooperative in complying with the requirements of the Marriage and Family Therapy practicum/internship experience.
- The student is not receptive to supervisory feedback and direction.
- The student is not demonstrating competent clinical practice.
- The student is behaving in an unethical manner.

#### Clinical Experience Policies:

**Liability:** Students are required to obtain and keep up-to-date malpractice insurance. This is obtained through student membership in AAMFT. Students are responsible for keeping their insurance up to date, renewed annually and to submit a copy of your current malpractice face-sheet to the Clinical Director at each renewal.

- AAMFT Link to Register as a Student Member:  
<https://www.aamft.org/Membership/Membership.aspx>
- AAMFT Link for FAQs related to Student Liability Insurance (Malpractice Insurance):  
[https://www.aamft.org/membership/Student\\_liability\\_FAQS.aspx](https://www.aamft.org/membership/Student_liability_FAQS.aspx)

**School/Agency Holidays and Vacations:** Students are not required to attend their field placements on university holidays, during winter break, spring break and during the two-week summer break. However, there may be occasions when the University is closed, but the agency is open. In this instance, the student is expected to be at the agency. During the break between semesters, the student may take two weeks away from the field agency with approval but must attend field placement during the other weeks. The student and the supervisor must agree which two weeks are selected, considering the agency schedule and the needs of the clients. At all times, the required minimum hours must be maintained, and you must keep track of your accumulated hours.

**Student Absences:** If a student is absent due to illness or a death in the family, he/she/they is expected to notify the agency and plan for client needs. The student does not need to make up the days missed if the minimum number of clinical contact hours are met.

**Student's Personal Growth:** The Marriage and Family Therapy Program recognizes the value of therapy and encourages students to participate in this personal growth experience whenever possible. If a student is interested in pursuing personal therapy and/or family therapy, or if a supervisor feels that therapy will be of benefit to the supervisee, appropriate therapy resources are available which are generally geographically and financially accessible. Referrals will not be made to any of the program's faculty. All discussions between supervisor and supervisee are confidential regarding a referral for personal therapy.

**Conduct and Attire:** It is imperative that MFT students conduct themselves in their field placement sites with professionalism. Arriving on time at one's field placement site, and for all client and supervisory appointments is always required. Lateness is both unprofessional and



inconsiderate of those awaiting us. A student's attire is equally important and should always be proper, i.e., at least business casual when conducting clinical work. Attire such as shorts, sweatsuits, and flip-flops and those that are too revealing are not appropriate for a professional setting. Please always be aware of the attire criteria for each specific field placement site.

### Ethical Behavior

A culture of mutual trust and inter-dependency among students, mentors, and supervisors/faculty is critical to the success and safety of a clinical training program. Therefore, therapists, mentors, and supervisors are expected to be familiar with and adhere the AAMFT Code of Ethics Code of Ethics (aamft.org) to guide ethical decision making in clinical practice training and in Iona University policy as it relates to consensual amorous relationships among students, mentors, and faculty. Serious breaches of the Code may result in termination from the Program, probationary status, or other actions.

### Relationships

Therapists, clinic administrative staff, and supervisors should be aware of their position of influence as a mentor in the IFTC and avoid to the degree possible mutual relationships that can potentially exploit the trust and dependency of supervisees or student interns, as discussed in Standard IV of the AAMFT Code of Ethics.

Specifically, the following relationships are not allowed to exist:

- Consensual amorous relationships between supervisors and their supervisees, including student interns.
- Consensual amorous relationships between student supervisors and their supervisees.
- Consensual amorous relationships between other clinic mentors, i.e., coordinators or advanced student therapists and their mentees (including student interns).
- Consensual amorous relationships between student therapists/interns are strongly discouraged, as the possibility of relational issues may interfere in the learning and supervision experience. Additionally, adhering to the guiding principle of Beneficence in the Code, discord in a co-therapy team may not be in accordance with what is best for clients.

Should a consensual relationship occur while in the Program or exist as defined above prior to the assignments made for supervision or mentoring, the supervisor, student supervisor, or mentor must disclose the relationship to the CD or PD immediately so they can be reassigned.

Should consensual relationships develop throughout the course of the defined supervisory or mentored relationship, these should be disclosed immediately to the CD or PD so that reassignment options can be evaluated.

Failure to disclose relationships in such a way that an ongoing mentoring or supervisory relationship is allowed to continue while in a consensual amorous relationship could result in probationary status with the program, termination, or other actions as defined in accordance with Iona University policy.

\*\*\*References: 1. AAMFT Code of Ethics section (Standard IV – Responsibilities to Students and Supervisees)

## Policies and Procedures Regarding the Transportation, Storage, and Transmission of Confidential Media from External Field Placement Sites.

MFT students engaged in clinical work at external field placement sites are subject to the same requirements regarding confidentiality and portability of client confidential materials. Policies for the digital recording of client contact may vary from external agency to agency. Thus, it is essential to discuss and receive permission for recording at an external agency where digital recording is permitted at an agency, students will first discuss the possibility of digitally recording a session with the client and will receive written permission for the same before beginning any recording. MFT students will discuss the nature of the recording process, storage, transportation, and uses of their media materials, including the nature of supervision. Each MFT student in the Marriage & Family Therapy program will be responsible for preserving, transporting, storage, safety, and confidentiality of his/her confidential media materials.

- Confidential media material will not be left unattended on a desktop, or in a video/audio player.
- Unauthorized persons will not be allowed to view/hear any recorded materials.
- MFT students will not utilize any client identifying data on recorded materials.
- All confidential recorded materials are to be identified by the MFT student's initials.
- If an MFT student is reviewing confidential media materials by themselves for training purposes, the student must take all steps to ensure privacy and confidentiality are maintained: i.e., doors closed, white noise machine turned on, and no unauthorized persons present.
- The only acceptable and HIPAA compliant digital recording device is an "ENCRYPTED USB." Recordings of tele-mental health sessions at the IFTC may only be conducted by a supervisor on their HIPAA compliant Zoom account.
- When transporting confidential recorded materials from an off-campus field placement site, MFT students will always safeguard both the confidentiality and the custody of the material: i.e., recorded materials are not to be left out in the open or unattended at any time.
- If confidential media material is to be given to a supervisor for review, it must be hand-delivered, not left in a mailbox, or on a desk.
- At the completion of all treatment, all confidential media material is to be erased, except in cases where the IFTC has specifically requested and received written permission from all clients involved in the video to retain the tape for training purposes.
- At the end of a student's Capstone presentation, all digitally recorded case materials are to be handed over to the CD for erasure/disposal.
- All confidential recorded material that is the product of the IFTC or an off-campus field placement site will be stored under lock and key in the CD's office.

### Substance Abuse Programs as Field Placement Sites:

Many substance abuse programs do not provide our students with the quality of therapeutic interaction that is preferred by our program. For example, they may only allow for discussion groups instead of therapy groups. For this reason, choosing a substance abuse program as your primary field placement may only yield "alternative hours"- which again, must be pre-approved and are limited to 100.

### Clinical/Client Contact Hours

Regarding supervised clinical hours, students are required to meet two separate but related benchmarks to graduate:

- The New York State Department of Education requires 300 hours of direct client contact while enrolled in a master's program (non-accredited) for license eligibility as a Marriage and Family Therapist.
- Graduates of COAMFTE accredited programs, of which Iona University Masters is one, are required to accumulate 500 supervised clinical hours while enrolled in the program. The 500 supervised hours are to be direct client contact hours.

**Direct Client Contact Hours:** are defined as face-to-face (define face-to-face to include remote) (therapist and client in the room for the therapeutic hour) therapy with individuals, couples, families, and/or groups. Activities such as telephone contacts, case planning, record keeping, travel, administrative activities, consultation with community members or professionals, or supervision, are not considered direct client contact. Client Assessment may be counted as direct client contact if they are face-to-face as this process is more clinical in nature and focus. In addition, of those 500 hours of direct client contact, 250 hours must be "Relational" with either couples or families in-person or a combination of in-person/remote sessions.

**Alternative Hours:** Students may submit and apply for up to 100 hours of "alternative hours", which may consist of "alternative" therapeutic contact, which must be systemic and clinical in nature. Students must supply a brochure or written summary of what will be taking place. Alternative hours, in all instances, must involve client contact. Alternative hours are determined by the department, and therefore, the student must submit a request in writing for authorization of those hours, prior to beginning any potential program. Of these 100 alternative hours which can be considered for approval, students cannot accrue more than 10 allowable alternative hours per month.

*The Clarification of Terms section in the Accreditation Standards (p. 52) has the following definition of Alternative Hours:*

Alternative Hours is a clinical activity involving a therapist and person(s) receiving the alternative service in the same physical space and a therapeutic meeting that is more than clerical in nature and focus. Examples may include interactive experiences that are therapeutic, psychoeducational, or assessment in nature and designed to support a therapeutic goal. All therapeutic activity completed as alternative hours must be evaluated for student competency and included in the clinical student's supervision process.

Another Examples of Alternative Hours:

Interactive experiences with specific diverse or marginalized populations designed to be responsive to the therapeutic needs of the persons involved and offered in a manner that is respectful of the person and context. Interactive activity, individually or in a group, structured to promote specific therapeutic goals such as PTSD symptom management skills, parent-child attachment, couple/family relationship skills, trauma/abuse/domestic violence recovery, or community disaster stress management/support. Short-term assessment focused activity using a

structured interview process, instrument, or task (e.g., genogram) as part of a personal/relational enrichment experience.

#### **Iona Masters in MFT: Recruitment, Retention and Resources:**

**Recruitment:** Iona University utilizes a variety of media to advertise and recruit students to the Masters in MFT, including print media and holding several Graduate Open Houses. Admissions: refer to the Admission Office website at Iona.edu. Retention: our retention rate is 86% over the 2009-2010 – 2015-2016 cohorts.

**Minimum Technological Requirements of Students:** basic computer literacy skills are required: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Blackboard, SmartBoard: tutorials, all of which are provided by Ryan Library staff. An Electronic Health Records system is utilized for clinical record keeping, and an online Video recording system is utilized for recording therapy sessions for which tutorials are provided at the beginning of the clinical sequence in the second year. Iona's Academic and Artistic Freedom Statement: can be found on the Provost's webpage @ Iona.edu.

**Anti-Discrimination Policy:** Iona University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, socio-economic status, national origin, marital/partnership status, ancestry, past or present history of mental disorder, intellectual/learning disability and/or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression or genetic information in its programs, services, and activities. In addition, the University does not discriminate in employment on the basis of veteran status or criminal record. The following individual has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Jennifer Morris, University Title IX Coordinator, 914-633- 2643, [jmorris@iona.edu](mailto:jmorris@iona.edu), Iona University 715 North Avenue, New Rochelle, New York 10801.

#### **Iona University Accessibility Statement**

If you are a student with a disability seeking reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is important that you contact the Accessibility Services Office (ASO) at [Access@Iona.edu](mailto:Access@Iona.edu) for further information on how to apply for accommodations. After receiving your application, an ASO staff will arrange a meeting to review your application and discuss reasonable accommodations that are available at the post-secondary level. These may include extended time for exams in a separate location and the use of assistive technology for note taking. Once accommodations are approved, you will be required to forward your accommodation letter to each of your instructors. The ASO maintains the confidentiality of all students and will only disclose a student's accommodations, not their disability. Students may request accommodations at any time during the semester, however the approved accommodations are not retroactive, and students must send their letters to their instructors each semester. For additional information, please visit <https://www.iona.edu/offices/accessibility-services/academic-accommodations>

#### **University COVID-19 Protocol and Class Attendance**

The Program follows the University COVID-19 protocol when students test positive when it comes to class attendance. Please read details on the University website:

<https://www.iona.edu/offices/health-wellness-safety/return-campus-information-protocols#:~:text=An%20at%2Dhome%20COVID%2D19,date%20of%20the%20test%20result.>

#### Assessments of Resources and Program Leadership

While in the Program, all faculty and students will be required to take a short survey annually to provide feedback on the sufficiency of technological, instructional, clinical, fiscal, physical, academic, and student support services. Additionally, there will be questions on the Program Director's effectiveness in leadership of the Program. This is done so that the Program can use Faculty and Student feedback to assess whether these resources are adequate to support Program effectiveness, and the ability to meet the Program's mission, goals, and outcomes. The feedback will be discussed by faculty at the final meeting at the end of every Spring term. Sufficiency will be measured by the target of 75% positive faculty/student feedback on the services. Any low ratings or other concerns of the quality of, or access to, will be reported to the Dean's office for review and follow up.

#### Licensing as a Marriage and Family Therapist:

New York State: As a "Licensure Qualifying" program in New York State, the Iona University Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy meets all the requirements for "licensure eligibility." Plus, as a "licensure qualifying" program, the supervised clinical hours (500 minimum) accumulated while in the program are counted toward the post-degree supervised clinical hours required for licensure (1500) in New York State.

**Iona MFT Masters Portability:** while the majority of our graduates have achieved licensure in New York, several graduates have obtained licensure in other states. While the degree from COAMFTE accredited Master's programs is generally accepted in most, if not all, states, some states do require additional coursework. If a prospective student intends to re-locate to another state, that student is advised to consult with the AAMFT's summary of MFT degree portability located under "[Degree Portability](#)" on the [AAMFT website](#). The same holds true for the supervised clinical experience requirements.

### Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge receipt of the Iona University's Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy Program's Student Handbook.

I have read the Handbook and agree to abide by the principles and provisions contained therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Key Terminology

- PD = Program Director
- CD = Clinical Director and Field Placement Coordinator.
- IFTC = Iona Family Therapy Center
- PIP = Performance Improvement Plan
- Dyadic Supervision: Dyadic supervision means that your supervision course may include another student.
- Group supervision: Involves 6-8 students and your supervisor
- Tevera: Tevera is the name of the clinical hours tracking software Iona University's MFT program (and other graduate programs) uses to account for the program's clinical hours requirement for graduation. You will mainly use Tevera to track all client contact and supervision hours accrued at the IFTC and at your external field placement(s). You will also be able to use Tevera to search for external field placements and to apply for internship opportunities at these sites. Your IFTC supervisor(s) as well as your external field placement supervisor(s) will have a Tevera account so that they can sign off on your clinical hours. Your Tevera account will be provided to you by the start of your practicum experience in the program. Upon your conferral date, you will have the ability to add your personal email address to your account to maintain lifetime access of your clinical hours as you continue your path towards licensure.
- Medicat One: Medicat One is a counseling specific and HIPAA Compliant Electronic Health Record (EHR) system used to document client charts (i.e., intake documentation, progress notes, treatment plans, scheduling, secure communication with clients) at the IFTC.
- External Field Placement: An external field placement (or simply, "field placement" or "internship") refers to where you will be accruing the majority of your clinical client contact hours for graduation. Since you will be considered an intern at your external field placement, you will be applying for and going through the hiring process to secure an internship at an approved external field placement after you successfully complete your first year of study. Students have often maintained two external field placements in addition to working with clients at the IFTC to meet graduation requirements. The CD will assist you in your search for a field placement during the spring semester of your first year of study. You may begin the internship during the summer after your first year of study or by the beginning of the Fall semester of your second year of study.



## Appendix 1

### Iona Family Therapy Center Tele-Therapy and Supervision Student Agreement

This contract is between \_\_\_\_\_ and the Iona University Marriage and Family Therapy program.

Please read the following, sign, and date at the bottom.

- I will watch and review the Online Training on Tele-Therapy prior to meeting with clients: [Tele-Therapy Training Video](#)
- I will use the HIPAA compliance tele-therapy programs such Zoom Pro account and the Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, Medicat One provided by Iona University to conduct all tele-therapy practices (i.e., client sessions, supervision, communication with supervisors and co-therapists about clients etc.) with clients.
- I will not use ANY OTHER MEANS outside of an Iona issued HIPAA compliance programs (Zoom Pro and Medicat One) to conduct therapy with clients (i.e., Facetime, WhatsApp, Voice Phone call, free/basic Zoom platform, non-Iona issued Zoom Pro license, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.).
- I will only sign into my Iona Zoom Pro account through the sign-on at Iona.Zoom.Us. I will not record (i.e., video or audio) any client meetings I am a part of (Co-therapy or Supervision team) for any reason.
- I will use headphones, sound machine, and make sure that I am in a quiet and private room with a neutral background that does not have personal effects within view to ensure professionalism and client confidentiality during therapy sessions and supervision. I ensure that I will communicate with any other household members to not disrupt me during Tele-Therapy sessions and Supervisions.
- I will make sure that no one can hear client's voice and supervision discussion when conducting Tele-Therapy and Supervision and thus, I will use headphones.
- I will make sure that I turn off any Voice Assistants (i.e., Siri, Alexa, Cortana, Google's Assistant) on my computer while conducting Tele-Therapy and Supervision.
- I will have adequate technological ability to operate the secure platform for Tele-Therapy and Supervision.
- I will ensure that I have a strong enough Wi-Fi signal to support Tele-Therapy.
- I will write progress notes in Medicat One after a Tele-Therapy session with a client within 24 hours.
- Any email contact with clients related to scheduling or logistical matters will be done using my Iona email account or Google Voice number (see #13). No health information or discussion of client's case will be included in the email or over the phone other than appointment time.
- I will not use my personal cell phone number to communicate with clients.
- If I decide to use a google voice number with clients, I will only use this number to communicate about scheduling and/or logistical matters. I will provide the Clinical Director with my google voice number. Instructional video on how to set up a google voice number: [How to Set up a Google Voice Number](#)



- I will not keep any documents containing clients' information on my laptop or email account. I will destroy or delete any such document containing clients' information.
- I understand it is my responsibility to obtain the 50 hours of direct observation (raw) supervision, 25 of which must involve my supervisor observing me conduct therapy in real-time. I will coordinate with my Fall, Spring and Summer Supervisors to ensure I am receiving the required Live Supervision.
- I agree to have 1 hour of Supervision for every 5 clients that I meet with.
- I agree to update my availability and client sessions in the EHR calendar (Medicat One) and continue to keep scheduling information current.
- I will only see clients during the MFT program's allowable days and times.
- I will contact the Clinical Director using my Zoom Pro account to ensure and demonstrate my competence in using the secure platform before meeting with clients.
- When seeing a new client, all intake paperwork must be completed before beginning a session. I will make sure that I review the client's intake form in Medicat One to ensure that client signed all the required documents to initiate Therapy Service at the IFTC.
- I will make sure that I show the client my Iona Student ID to identify myself as an Iona MFT graduate student and I will make sure that client show their ID to ensure verification of both therapist and client's identities during the initial Tele-therapy session.
- I will assess whether the client is appropriate for Tele-Therapy, as evidenced by"
  - Ensuring the client has the ability to use the Tele-therapy technology
  - Access to a camera on their phone, tablet, or computer
  - Ability to navigate through a secure Tele-Therapy platform
  - Ensuring client has access to a private space
- I will ensure that I conduct Tele-therapy within the jurisdictional state borders identified by the Iona University MFT Program. I will review the provided [link](#) of the Tele-therapy practice rules by the State.
- I will ask the client to identify and verify her/his/their current location by asking them to identify the state she/he/they are in.
- I will not connect and/or communicate with any of my clients on any social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, etc.).
- I will contact the Clinical Director and IFTC Supervisor should I have any concerns and/or emergency during the Tele-Therapy meetings with client.
  - Clinical Direct Office: 914-633-2074 | Clinical Director Work Cell: 347-915-3907
- I agree that all other professional and ethical standards and practices from the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#), [AMFTRB Teletherapy and Tele-supervision Guidelines II](#), and [HIPAA Federal and New York State regulations](#) must be adhered to as if I were meeting with the client in-person at the Iona Family Therapy Center.

I acknowledge that I have read, agree with, and will adhere to all the aforementioned statements.  
I acknowledge that violation of any of the above statements may result in dismissal from the program.

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Student Signature

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Date

Please upload your current professional liability insurance and child abuse reporting certification when you submit this document on Tevera.