

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Marriage and Family Therapy Program
Letter of Affiliation

USC Training

USC's Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) students receive one full calendar year of training in the foundations of MFT before they are allowed to begin clinical work. Students must successfully complete their academic work, and participate in on-going videotaped, supervised practice and feedback sessions, where demonstration and evaluation of knowledge and skills in key MFT domains are reviewed. Competence in foundational areas must be achieved prior to advancement to fieldwork.

The Fieldwork Site

Field instruction and supervision take place in a school or mental health agency (referred to in this document as a "Site"). Instruction and supervision are done by a Site supervisor, licensed for 2 years, who has a written agreement to supervise within the Site. The Site is selected because of a demonstrated commitment to training MFT students using the highest professional standards of practice and training, and an interest in collaborating with the MFT program at USC.

Factors used in the selection of a Site for fieldwork training are:

1. Statement of defined site function that includes community-based advocacy and therapy for underserved urban populations, and an adequate number of qualified personnel and administrators to achieve that function.
2. Sufficient trainee orientation period (1 to 2 weeks), dedicated to learning the Site's mission, policies (e.g., reporting abuse, crisis, supervision coverage, etc.), staff, clientele, mode of practice, and paperwork. Shadowing or observation of Site operation, therapy sessions, and co-therapy are desirable prior to the initiation of independent trainee work.
3. A sufficient number and variety of carefully planned case assignments to ensure a diversified and challenging training experience. Options should include at least two of the following types of cases in some depth: individuals (children, adolescents, or adults), groups, couples, families, and community. Students are required to work 15-20 hours per week at primary Sites, with a required minimum of 7, and maximum of 10, face to face client hours per week, on average. 240 face to face client hours are required at the end of the practicum/fieldwork experience. Direct client contact beginning 2-4 weeks after the start date is needed to provide adequate case material for students' practicum course. Trainees should build a full caseload (minimum 7 client hours per week) within 6 weeks of beginning their training.
4. Provision of adequate time for training, supervision, treatment planning, paperwork, and, in some cases, regular crisis work should be included in the 15-20 hour work week, which includes the 7 to 10 face to face clinical hours. Adequate provision for office space, telephone use, clerical support, and travel reimbursement for the trainees (if travel is a job requirement).
5. A start date of late May or early June is preferred. The practicum training starts in late May, so students with later start dates fall behind their peers in training development. Earlier start dates will be considered on an individual basis.
6. Provision of 1 hour of face to face individual supervision, and 2 hours of group supervision by a licensed (2+ years) mental health practitioner, who has taken the 6 hour supervision CEU training within the past 2 years. Supervision coverage is provided for periods when a supervisor is ill or on vacation.
7. Midterm and final evaluations of trainees' work must be completed for summer, fall, and spring semesters. Trainees should be evaluated based on expectations for trainees at their developmental level. Constructive communication of these evaluations to the trainees is essential to their growth, and must be done before submission to the fieldwork instructor.
8. In-service clinical training opportunities are provided and Site consultants or supervisors are available, as appropriate. Video-taping for Site and University supervision is preferred.
9. The practice framework of the Site should be sufficiently congruent with the empirically-based practice, therapeutic outcome measures, laws, and ethics endorsed by USC's MFT program so that theory, skills, and approach to practice do not conflict between the students' Site and their program.
10. Flexibility with work schedule is necessary, as students' course schedules must come first in determining clinical work schedule. Courses are held Monday through Wednesday 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. to facilitate Site planning.

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The Site Supervisor

The Site Supervisor is usually an employee of the Site, who agrees to provide field instruction and supervision to trainees placed in the Site. Outside supervisors may supervise for the Site if there is a written agreement with the Site to do so. She/he is selected by the Site, on the basis of his/her professional competence and interests in teaching and supervision.

The following criteria are used in the selection of the Site Supervisor:

1. Possession of a valid, active, mental health provider license in the State of California, for a minimum of 2 years. This practitioner cannot have a record of disciplinary action taken against his or her license by the State of California or its Boards.
2. Has taken 6 units of continuing education in Supervision within the past two years.
3. Possession of the following qualities and/or skills:
 - Desire to teach.
 - Demonstrated competence in developmental approaches to supervision.
 - Demonstrated competence in practice of counseling and MFT.
 - Identification with the counseling and MFT profession, and adherence to ACA's and AAMFT's Code of Ethics.
 - Detailed knowledge of and adherence to laws applying to mental health practice in the state of California.
 - Competence in multicultural practice and supervision.
 - Leadership in client advocacy.
 - Knowledge of approaches to Recovery Oriented Care.
 - Knowledge of community and its resources.
4. Demonstrated knowledge in and capacity to manage:
 - The authority inherent in the role of an educator.
 - Trainees with a wide range of backgrounds, experience, and interests.
 - The structure and function of the mental health Site, and its relationship to the community.
 - The organization and implementation of Site resources in meeting the educational needs of the student.
 - Close collaboration with University practicum and fieldwork faculty supervisors, and if necessary clinical coordinator or program coordinator.
 - Selection and monitoring of caseload of supervisees (e.g., choosing appropriately challenging cases, reviewing notes, reviewing audio/video recordings, reviewing clinical assessments and other clinical tasks, providing regular supportive and constructive feedback based on these measures, etc.).
 - Monitoring of caseload of supervisees in terms of appropriate provision and management of time and resources (e.g., not allowing students to take on more than 12 clients in any week, or more than 10 clients per week, on average; helping students to set aside time in the 15-20 hour work week for paperwork, crisis work, planning, etc.)
5. Demonstrated teaching ability in:
 - Use of theory in case conceptualization and treatment.
 - Use of research to inform practice.
 - Working with the University's clinical coordinator in designing and implementing training curriculum, and in clinical work with the trainee.
 - Individual and group supervision, spontaneous supervision of crisis work, and trainee performance review. Supervision should include discussions on assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, preparation, case review, countertransference, professional growth, etc.
 - Thoroughly evaluating the trainee's work on an ongoing basis, and in the formal written evaluations required at the middle and end of each semester (summer, fall, and spring). Effective, supportive communication of these evaluations to the student is part of this skill.

Letter of Affiliation
Agreement

_____ (Site Name) is applying to become a field placement Site for the University of Southern California Marriage and Family Therapy Program, for the _____ academic year. The Site understands that in accepting MFT students in placement, they agree to provide all of above the requirements:

A check list is provided below to quickly summarize the agreement points:

- Adequate period (1 to 2 weeks) of official orientation, devoted to the Site's mission, policies, staff, clientele, mode of practice, and paperwork prior to beginning clinical work. Some initial observations and/or role plays are preferred.
- Sufficient census to fill trainee caseload of 7-10 weekly clinical hours within 6 weeks of training commencement. 15-20 clock hours are required for the work week. Students should not have more than 12 clinical hours in any week.
- Start date in late May to early June is highly preferred. Earlier start dates to accommodate training is acceptable, but trainees should not begin clinical hours until they begin practicum in May.
- Clinical work should begin approximately 1-2 weeks after start date, unless early training is conducted before practicum class begins.
- Provision of sufficient time during the 15-20 hour work week for treatment planning, preparation, paperwork, and crisis work is required. Sufficient private office space, with access to phone, computer, and clerical staff should be provided.
- 1 Hour of individual supervision, and 2 hours of group supervision each week for the entire training period. Supervision coverage should be provided for when a supervisor goes on vacation or is ill.
- Continual in-service training pertaining to effective work with the Site's population. Video-taped session review is the preferred method of supervision for the University supervisors, therefore sites that allow taping are preferred.
- Philosophy and practice of the Site should not conflict with MFT program curriculum. Sites should consider student course schedules (M-W 4-10 p.m.) first in determining scheduling commitments to the Site.
- Site or contracted supervisors should meet all of the qualifications listed on page 2 of this document.
- The Site understands that field instruction, includes; individual and group and supervision; review of recorded clinical work; monitoring and assignment of cases; coordination of activities; and bi-semester student evaluations. This will take a minimum of three (3) hours per week, per student.
- A close collaborative relationship with the University faculty on training elements and trainee challenges is necessary.

USC MFT faculty and Site representatives will review these factors together as a basis for determining the appropriateness of integrating the Site into the USC MFT fieldwork program. Agreement to these provisions is documented by the signed Letter of Affiliation.

USC Clinical Coordinator Date Site Clinical Director Date

Please return the completed form to:
Mary Andres, Psy.D., CADC
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