

*Answers to  
Most Frequently Asked Questions  
Relating to  
Marriage and Family Therapist Trainees and  
Interns*



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## *Vision*

*Strong minds, lives, families, and communities.*

## *Mission*

*Protect Californians by promoting consumer awareness, advocating for improved mental health services, and setting, communicating, and enforcing standards.*

**1. What is the breakdown for the required hours of experience for Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) licensure?**

The Board requires 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience and 104 weeks of supervision to qualify for MFT licensure. Of the 104 supervised weeks required, 52 weeks must be weeks in which the applicant received at least one hour of one-on-one, individual, face-to-face supervision. A supervised week is any week in which a Trainee or Intern meets with an individual supervisor for one hour or a group supervisor for two hours. The required 3,000 hours of supervised experience must conform to the following breakdown:

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**Counseling Hours**

- Individual Psychotherapy (no Min or Max hrs)
- Couples, Family, and Children (**Min** 500 hrs)
  - The first 150 hours of conjoint treatment of couples and family hours can be double counted starting 1/1/2010.
- Group Therapy or Counseling (Max 500 hrs)
- Telemedicine Counseling (Max 375 hrs)(see question 24)

**Administering and Evaluating Psychological Tests, Writing Clinical Reports, Writing Progress or Process Notes (Max 250 hrs)**

**Other Non-Counseling Hours (Max 1,250 hrs)**

- Workshops, Seminars, Training Sessions or Conferences (Max 250 hrs)
- Personal Psychotherapy Received (Max 100 hrs triple counted as 300)
- Client Centered Advocacy
- Direct Supervisor Contact (Both individual and group)

The maximum amount of work experience that a Trainee or Intern may count in a given week is 40 hours. Personal Psychotherapy received does not count as work experience and does not require supervision.

*Statutes and Regulations cited: B&P Code Section 4980.43; CCR Section 1833*

**2. What types of hours can I count as a Trainee?**

The maximum number of hours a person can earn while a Trainee is no more than 1,300 hours of the following:

- Counseling and Supervision Hours (Max 750 hrs)
- Administering and Evaluating Psychological Tests, Writing Clinical Reports, Writing Progress or Process Notes (Max 250 hrs)
- Workshops, Seminars, Training Sessions or Conferences (Max 250 hrs)
- Client Centered Advocacy
- Personal Psychotherapy Received (Max 100 hrs triple counted as 300)

*Statutes and Regulations cited: B&P Code Section 4980.43*

<p><b>3. What is the maximum number of hours of supervision I can count in a week?</b></p>	<p>No more than five hours of supervision, whether individual or group, shall be credited as work experience during a single week.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: CCR Section 1833</i></p>
<p><b>4. Where do I record Personal Psychotherapy hours?</b></p>	<p>The Board does not have a specific form for recording Personal Psychotherapy hours. Personal Psychotherapy hours are logged on the MFT examination eligibility application. This application is on the "Forms and Publications" section of the website.</p>
<p><b>5. What is the 6-year rule?</b></p>	<p>The Board cannot accept hours of experience older than six years from the time a person applies for MFT examination eligibility. The only exception to this rule is a maximum of 500 hours of work experience from an applicant's degree program. Up to 500 hours of counseling and supervision experience, obtained as an MFT Trainee while enrolled in practicum, can be older than 6 years.</p> <p>For example, Applicant A sends in an application for MFT examination eligibility, and the Board receives this application on March 24, 2010. The Board will only accept hours earned between March 24, 2004 and March 24, 2010. Of course, up to 500 counseling and supervision hours obtained while an MFT Trainee will be accepted even if they are older than March 24, 2004.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43</i></p>
<p><b>6. Do I need to separate hours gained pre-degree from hours gained post-degree? Do I need to separate hours gained prior to 1/1/2010 and hours gained on or after 1/1/2010?</b></p>	<p>The Board encourages MFT Trainees and Interns to keep pre-degree and post-degree hours on separate Experience Verification forms. The Board also strongly encourages MFT Trainees and Interns to close out all hours on their Experience Verification forms and Weekly Log Sheets through 12/31/2009 and start with the new forms on 1/1/2010. Please see the new forms for hours gained on or after 1/1/2010 on the Board's Web site. Although not required by law, but doing so may decrease the processing time for applications.</p>
<p><b>7. What is the difference between the supervision requirements for MFT Trainees and Interns?</b></p>	<p>As a Trainee, an individual needs to receive at least "one unit" of supervision contact for every five hours of psychotherapy or counseling performed. Interns must receive "one unit" of supervision for the first 10 hours of counseling experience performed in any week in each setting. Interns must receive one additional "unit" of supervision during any week in which more than 10 hours of psychotherapy or counseling are performed in each setting. The requirements described only apply to direct counseling/psychotherapy hours. (Individual Psychotherapy; Couples, Family, and Children; Group Psychotherapy; and</p>

	<p>Telemedicine Counseling)</p> <p>Note: One “unit” if supervision equals one hour of individual supervision or two hours of group supervision.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43</i></p>
<p><b>8. Can I count hours after I graduate but before I receive an Intern registration number?</b></p>	<p>Applicants for Intern registration <u>may</u> count hours obtained post-degree but before issuance of an Intern registration number ONLY if the applicant applies for Intern registration within 90 days of the qualifying degree conferral date. The Board grants no exceptions.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43</i></p>
<p><b>9. Can I begin work in a private practice setting without having an Intern registration number?</b></p>	<p>A private practice setting is a place of business that lawfully and regularly provides mental health counseling or psychotherapy and is owned by a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed psychologist, a licensed physician and surgeon, or a professional corporation of any of these professions.</p> <p>Trainees cannot work in a private practice setting. Registered Interns may be employees in a private practice setting.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43; CCR Section 1833</i></p>

<p><b>10. Who can supervise MFT Trainees or Interns?</b></p>	<p>Only licensed mental health professionals can supervise Trainees and Interns. Licensed mental health professionals include licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed psychologists, and licensed physicians certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Additionally, the supervisor must maintain a current valid California license. The supervisor must have held that license for at least two (2) years and practiced psychotherapy or directly supervised trainees, interns, or associate clinical social workers that perform psychotherapy as part of their clinical practice for at least two years within the last five-year period immediately preceding supervision.</p> <p>The Board requires supervisors of Trainees and Interns to complete a minimum of six (6) hours of supervision training or coursework within two years immediately preceding supervision (or within 60 days of commencement of supervision) and every renewal period thereafter. Psychologists and physicians certified in psychiatry are exempt from supervision training.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.03; CCR Section 1833.1</i></p>
<p><b>11. When do I need to send in supervisory forms?</b></p>	<p>MFT Experience Verification forms shall be sent with an applicant's MFT examination eligibility application. These forms are not required before that time. Responsibility Statements must also be submitted with the application for examination eligibility.</p> <p>Weekly Summary of Hours of Experience forms only need to be sent if the Board specifically requests an applicant in writing to do so.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: CCR Section 1833; 1833.1</i></p>
<p><b>12. How many people can participate in a session of group supervision?</b></p>	<p>Group supervision sessions shall include no more than eight (8) persons receiving supervision.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43; CCR Section 1833</i></p>

<p><b>13. What pre-licensure coursework do I need to complete prior to licensure?</b></p>	<p>In addition to holding a qualifying degree, an applicant for examination eligibility must complete specific pre-licensure required courses prior to submitting an application for MFT examination eligibility.</p> <p>These courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting (7 hrs)</li> <li>• Human Sexuality (10 hrs)</li> <li>• Alcoholism and Chemical Substance Abuse Dependency (15 hr/1 semester unit; must be within the qualifying degree program)</li> <li>• Spousal/Partner Abuse (must be within degree program; must be 15 hours for those after 1/1/2004)</li> <li>• Psychological Testing (2 semester or 3 quarter units)</li> <li>• Psychopharmacology (2 semester or 3 quarter units)</li> <li>• California Law and Professional Ethics (2 semester or 3 quarter units)</li> <li>• Aging and Long Term Care (10 hrs for those after 1/1/04)</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The dates above refer to when a person begins his or her degree program.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code 4980.39, 4980.41; CCR Section 1807, 1807.2, 1810</i></p>
<p><b>14. What color ink can I use on Board forms?</b></p>	<p>The Board does not require applicants to use any particular color of ink on forms.</p>
<p><b>15. Do I need to take all pre-licensure required coursework prior to submitting an MFT Intern registration application package?</b></p>	<p>No. An applicant can apply for MFT Intern registration without completing all the required pre-licensure additional coursework. Pre-licensure coursework only needs to be complete at the time a person applies for examination eligibility.</p>
<p><b>16. Can I work in a private practice setting with my second Intern registration number?</b></p>	<p>No. If an individual applies for and receives a second MFT Intern registration, he or she cannot work in a private practice setting with that second intern registration number</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code 4984.01</i></p>

<p><b>17. Can I practice as a 1099 independent contractor while a Trainee or Intern?</b></p>	<p>No. Only a licensed MFT practicing within the scope of practice for MFTs may be paid on a 1099. All Interns and Trainees must be a paid employee of an agency or a volunteer.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code 4980.43; CCR Section 1833</i></p>
<p><b>18. Do I need to maintain a current Intern registration number to participate in the examination?</b></p>	<p>The Board does not require an examination candidate to maintain a current registration number in order to take the licensing examination. However, many employers do require a current registration number to remain employed. The Board advises applicants to consult with their employer prior to allowing an Intern registration to expire.</p>
<p><b>19. Once I pass my exams, can I start practicing independently?</b></p>	<p>No. A successful examinee still must submit an MFT Initial License application form and fee before the Board will issue a marriage and family therapy license. Independent practice cannot begin until the Board issues a license.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980</i></p>
<p><b>20. Must I continue to have supervision while in the exam process?</b></p>	<p>All applicants, trainees, and registrants must receive supervision from an acceptable licensed mental health professional. Once issued a license, an individual no longer needs to be under supervision.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43</i></p>
<p><b>21. Does my supervisor need to be on-site?</b></p>	<p>Only in a private practice setting does a supervisor need to be employed by, and practice at, the same site as the applicant's employer. In a setting that is not a private practice, the supervisor may be employed by the registrant's employer on either a paid or voluntary basis. An off-site supervisor must sign a letter of agreement with the agency employing the applicant.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: CCR Section 1833</i></p>
<p><b>22. Do I need to resubmit fingerprints with my MFT examination eligibility application?</b></p>	<p>If you have a current MFT Intern registration number at the time the Board receives your application for MFT examination eligibility, you will not need to redo your fingerprints for the Board.</p> <p>If you do not have an open file with the Board, fingerprints will be necessary.</p>



<p><b>23. As a Trainee, when can I begin counting pre-degree hours of work experience?</b></p>	<p>A Trainee can only begin counting hours of experience if <u>both</u> the following requirements are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student must have completed a minimum of 12 semester or 18 quarter units in a qualifying MFT degree program.</li> <li>2. The Trainee must have a written agreement between the school and each work site that details each party's responsibilities, including the methods by which supervision shall be provided.</li> </ol> <p><b>Note:</b> One exception is Personal Psychotherapy hours, which can count from the date a person begins his or her degree program.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.03; 4980.42</i></p>
<p><b>24. What is the definition of telemedicine counseling?</b></p>	<p>Telemedicine refers to the practice of health care delivery, diagnosis, consultation, treatment, transfer of medical data, and education using interactive audio, video, or data communications. Neither a telephone conversation nor e-mail between a provider and a client constitutes telemedicine.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Hours gained on or after 1/1/2010 will also include Telephone counseling to this category.</p> <p>The interaction must take place in real time or near real time.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 2290.5</i></p>
<p><b>25. Can group supervision be broken into one-hour increments?</b></p>	<p>Group supervision can be broken into one-hour increments, as long as both increments (full two hours) are provided in the same week as the experience being claimed.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43</i></p>
<p><b>26. Can I receive supervision via videoconferencing?</b></p>	<p>An MFT Intern working for a governmental entity; school, college, or university; or an institution that is both nonprofit and charitable may obtain supervision via live two-way videoconferencing. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the client confidentiality is preserved.</p> <p><i>Statutes and Regulations cited: B&amp;P Code Section 4980.43</i></p>

The information provided in this publication is supplemental and intended to serve as a quick answer guide for common questions. The *Statutes and Regulations Relating to the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy, Licensed Clinical Social Work, and Licensed Educational Psychology* contains the official legal code sections and language. The BBS encourages you to thoroughly read the *Statutes and Regulations* and refer to it in cases that require official legal authority or language