

FAQ's: Master of Science in Couple and Family Therapy (CFT)

What careers are CFT graduates qualified for and what are some typical jobs that graduates obtain?

CFT graduates are well trained to conduct couple and family therapy. In addition to working as couple and family therapists, past graduates have gone on to serve as agency administrators, substance abuse counselors, school counselors, human service project directors, and child/family researchers.

What are the minimum requirements for entry to the program?

Applicants must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better, and a score of at least 1000 on the combined Quantitative and Verbal sections of the general GRE.

What academic and work experiences should students have before entering the program?

The clinical faculty considers applications to the program on a case-by-case basis. It is desirable for students to have had academic coursework in the areas of family studies, human development, research methods and statistics, abnormal psychology, and an introduction to therapy or counseling skills. Work or volunteer experience in the human services (especially therapy-related experience) is highly recommended.

When is the application deadline?

All Department and Graduate School application materials for the master's program in Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) program are due January 15th. This includes GRE scores, which must be received by that date.

What financial aid is available?

A limited amount of financial aid is available in the form of fellowships, graduate assistantships, and loans from federal, state, and private sources. Details regarding loan eligibility can be obtained from the Student Financial Aid Office (<http://www.financialaid.umd.edu/>). A small number of university fellowships may be available for outstanding students.

How do I apply for funding?

When you complete the Graduate School application, check the box indicating that you wish to be considered for a Graduate Assistantship. There is no additional form to complete; all students accepted into the program are considered for Graduate Fellowship and/or Assistantship support.

Do I have to take the GRE's?

Yes. The GRE (Graduate Record Examination) General Test is required for all applicants...no exceptions. If you need information on taking the exam, please visit the GRE's website at <http://www.gre.org/>. This link will provide information on test registration, preparation, and score reporting.

Do you accept students for the spring semester?

No, the CFT program accepts students for fall admission only.

How long does it take to complete the program?

It typically takes 2 – 2 ½ years to complete all of the requirements of the CFT program as a full-time student.

The thesis option requires 51 credits; the non-thesis option requires 48 credits.

Can a student do the program part-time?

Yes, the program can be done less than full-time, although most students are full-time. One can slow down the coursework to the 7 to 8 clinical credit minimum and use an additional year to complete the non-clinical requirements. Additional time commitments include the clinical internship, which requires 20 hours per week during the second, third, and fourth semesters. All students are required to participate in clinic meetings, in-service training, supervision, intake, case management, record-keeping, and administrative duties.

Can students hold outside jobs while attending the CFT program?

It is recommended that full-time CFT students work no more than 10 hours per week through assistantships or outside employment.

How many students are enrolled in the program?

There are currently about 20 students enrolled in the CFT program, and approximately 10 students are admitted each year. There are about 50 total students enrolled in the Family Science M.S. and Ph.D. programs.

What school of thought/model of therapy is emphasized in the CFT program and how might this emphasis differ from other training programs?

The CFT program uses an integrative systems approach. Students are exposed to all the major models in family therapy early in their course of study. These models include, but are not limited to: structural, strategic, intergenerational, feminist, cognitive-behavioral, constructivist, client-centered, narrative, emotion-focused, and experiential. Although each faculty member emphasizes a particular model in his/her practice of therapy, students are not expected to adopt any one perspective. Rather, students are encouraged to experiment with various models of therapy in order to find the approach or combination of approaches that best suits them.

What types of supervision are offered by the CFT program?

Supervision in the departmentally operated clinic, The Center for Healthy Families, is provided through a range of techniques including case discussion in supervision groups, live observation through one-way mirrors, session video-tape review, occasional co-therapy with supervisors, and live supervision of sessions via telephone consultation.

What are the requirements for completing a Master of Science degree with an emphasis in Couple and Family Therapy?

Students must complete 51 credit hours for the thesis option and 48 credit hours for the non-thesis option. Fifteen credits (5 courses) are seminar, nine credits are supervision of clinical work and the remaining are didactic courses. In conjunction with the series of marital and family therapy seminars, students must complete 500 hours of supervised client contact.

What is the difference between the thesis and the non-thesis option?

The thesis is an original research paper, which the student defends orally before a faculty committee. The thesis option is strongly encouraged for students interested in continuing in a Ph.D. program. The non-thesis option involves writing a clinical paper and conducting a clinical case presentation, both of which are evaluated by the full clinical faculty. The non-thesis option is available for those who see the master's degree as their final

degree and do not plan to conduct further research during their career.

How does the CFT program comply with AAMFT certification requirements?

The CFT Program has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT).

The clinical supervision provided by the family therapy faculty and adjunct supervisors meets AAMFT approved criteria. Up to 100 of the 200 supervision hours required by AAMFT for clinical membership can be obtained during one's graduate work. Also, the 500 client contact hours completed during the program count toward the 1000 hours required for AAMFT clinical membership. One may complete more than the minimum hours of client contact and supervision (1 hour of supervision for each extra five hours of client contact) and these hours will also count toward AAMFT clinical membership.

Are CFTs eligible for licensure in the state of Maryland?

Yes. CFT graduates are eligible for licensure as a Licensed Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist (LCMFT) in the state of Maryland. The state requirements to sit for the licensing exam parallel the course curriculum of the University of Maryland CFT program. Two years of clinical experience and supervision are required after graduation. The Licensed Graduate Marriage and Family Therapist (LGMFT) designation was established for CFTs who have graduated and passed the licensing exam but are still accumulating the required post-graduate clinical hours.

Does the CFT program encourage participation in conferences and workshops?

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in national professional conferences and the many educational events in the Washington area. In recent years, CFT students have presented their research at annual meetings of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT), and the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). The Department makes every effort to award travel funds to graduate students presenting papers at professional conferences.