

Rule 4.1

CONTINUING EDUCATION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish the continuing education requirements for licensed marriage and family therapists (LMFT). The LMFT license must be renewed biennially. Licensed marriage and family therapy associates (LMFTA) are not required to participate in continuing education. The continuing education offerings for each discipline (social workers and marriage and family therapists) are approved independently. Licensees should NOT assume that an approved offering for one discipline is also approved for the other discipline. The MBOE website maintains separate lists of approved continuing education offerings for social workers and marriage and family therapists. The primary objective of continuing education must be to maintain and improve the quality of professional services in marriage and family therapy provided to the public; maintain and improve the therapist's knowledge of current research, techniques, and practice; and provide other resources which will improve skill and competence in marriage and family therapy. A licensee will receive credit only for continuing education programs or activities approved by the MFT Continuing Education Committee. Approved programs will be listed on the Continuing Education Offering for MFTs page on the Board's website. Continuing education hours must be relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy as determined by the Board in accordance with the criteria cited at Part 1903, Chapter 4, Rule 4.1(H) of these Rules and Regulations.

B. Requirements

All licensed marriage and family therapists must complete twenty-four (24) hours of approved continuing education during every two (2) year license period. Four (4) out of the 24 must be approved MFT professional ethics hours. The Board will not approve self-directed learning projects and/or distance learning/internet (online) learning courses for the MFT ethics CE requirement. All Board approved supervisors, including those with AAMFT Approved Supervisor standing, must complete two (2) approved hours of MFT supervision continuing education each renewal period. No supervision continuing education hours are required for the first renewal period. The Board will not approve self-directed learning projects and/or distance learning/internet (online) learning courses for the supervision CE requirement. It is the responsibility of each licensee and supervisor to determine in advance that the continuing education activity has been approved by the MFT Continuing Education Committee.

C. Board Continuing Education Committee

The MFT Continuing Education Committee shall consist of designated members of the MFT Discipline Specific Committee. The Board may also select non-Board members who they deem qualified, to serve on the MFT Continuing Education Committee. At least one member of the committee must be a professional educator from a COAMFTE MFT program. The chair of the committee will be a member of the MFT Discipline Specific Committee.

D. Determination of Clock Hour Credits

MFT Continuing Education Committee approved offerings shall be credited with one continuing education clock-hour credit for each one clock-hour spent in the continuing education activity, unless otherwise designated by the Board. Time devoted to registration, organizational business, breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, or other refreshments shall not be counted as instructional or continuing education credit time.

E. Types of Acceptable Continuing Education

Credit will be given only for continuing education programs or activities approved by the MFT Continuing Education Committee. To be acceptable to the MFT Continuing Education Committee continuing education offerings for LMFTs must conform to at least one of the seven content areas specified below under Criteria for Approval of Continuing Education Activities. A qualified presenter is someone found by the Board to be a professional in marriage and family therapy, another mental health discipline, or another profession with information, knowledge, and skills relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy.

The following types of continuing education activities are acceptable **provided that the standards set forth below under Criteria for Approval of Continuing Education Activities have been met:**

1. Continuing education activities related to the practice of marriage and family therapy offered by the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) and any of its divisions, including the Mississippi Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT); Mississippi Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists; and the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards are automatically approved by the MFT Continuing Education Committee.
2. Successful completion (grade B or better), from a regionally accredited college/ university, of a graduate course specific to the practice of marriage and family therapy. One (1) academic semester hour will be equivalent to 5 hours of continuing education hours;

3. Teaching in a graduate school of marriage and family therapy. Credit will be applied at the rate of three (3) hours for every credit hour taught; teaching may count for no more than twelve (12) hours of the biannual continuing education requirement;
4. Presenting workshops, seminars, or lectures that are approved for CE credit for LMFTs will be awarded CEU credit at the rate of 2 hours of credit for each hour of presentation (if the same offering is presented multiple times during the two year renewal period, the continuing education credit hours may only be counted the first time the offering was presented);
5. Self-Directed Learning Projects and/or Distance Learning/Internet (Online) Learning Courses: Continuing education hours for distance learning/internet learning courses will only be granted for courses approved in advance by the MFT CE Committee. The MFT CE Committee will grant continuing education hours only after completion of the course and proof of successful completion of post-test, course examination, and/or evaluation from the course provider. No more than 6 hours of the 24 required hours may be earned in this manner during each two year renewal period. **Ethics continuing education credits may NOT be obtained this way. A list of approved ethics courses may be found on the Board's Website;**
6. Continuing education credit may be earned by Board approved supervisors for clinical supervision of individuals with active Supervision Plans on file with the Board. Supervision may count for no more than ten (10) hours of the biennial continuing education requirement, but not count toward the two (2) hours required for Board approved supervisors to maintain their approved supervisor status; and,
7. An author of a book or peer reviewed article which, as determined by the Board, enhances a marriage and family therapist's knowledge or skill may be granted continuing education credit not to exceed one-half of the biannual continuing education requirement.
8. Supervised Self Directed Learning Groups

Licensed marriage and family therapists may earn up to eight (8) continuing education hours for each renewal period through participation in a Board approved supervised self directed learning group. In order to receive Board approval the following requirements must be met:

- a. The group must be led by a Board Approved supervisor.
- b. A supervision plan documenting the names and license numbers of all participants, proposed learning objectives and an outline of the process for meeting each learning objective must be approved in advance by the MFT Continuing Education Committee. Only plans meeting the criteria for approval of continuing education activities listed in Part 1903, Chapter 4, Rule 4.1(H) of these rules and regulations will be approved. Failure to submit a plan within the sixty-day time period could result in disapproval of the activity for continuing education credit.
- c. Each participant must complete a post evaluation report documenting the effectiveness of the group learning experience and turn it in to the Approved Supervisor leading the group. This report should include evidence that the learning objectives were met. The Approved Supervisor shall maintain these reports for a period of four (4) years following completion of the supervised self directed learning group experience.
- d. Participation in each supervised self directed learning group shall be limited to no less than four (4) and no more than eight (8) participants and a State Approved Supervisor.
- e. The supervised self directed learning group supervisor must issue each participant a signed certificate of completion containing the participants name, license number, number of hours completed, dates of attendance, and MFT CE approval number.
- f. MFT ethics CE hours and Approved Supervisor CE hours will not be awarded for participation in any self directed learning projects.
- g. The fee for supervised self directed learning group approval shall be the same as the fee for becoming a Board Approved Continuing Education Provider.

F. Application Procedure to Become a Board Approved Continuing Education Sponsor

Appropriate providers may apply to the MFT Continuing Education Committee to become approved providers of continuing education activities. Providers may include, but are not limited to, colleges and universities, individuals, mental health agencies, private mental health organizations, and professional organizations. Home study programs are encouraged to apply for approved provider status.

Applicants for approved provider status must complete the necessary application and submit it to the MFT Continuing Education Committee and pay any associated fees (see section IX.B) required by the Board. The MFT Continuing Education Committee will evaluate the application and notify the applicant in writing regarding the approval of that application.

If granted, Approved provider status will expire on December 31 of each year. However, if an initial application is approved after September 1, the status will expire December 31 of the following year. Approved providers must reapply each year in order to maintain their approved provider status.

Approved providers are not required to submit an additional application fee per offering during their “approved provider” year. However, they must submit the appropriate application for each individual continuing education offering to the MFT Continuing Education Committee for review and approval. Each approved offering will be issued an approval number that must appear on the certificate provided to the participant. All applications should be received at least sixty days in advance of the offering in order to receive full consideration by the Committee. Failure to submit a plan within the sixty-day time period could result in disapproval of the organization or individual as an approved provider of continuing education.

G. Approval Procedure for any organization or individual that is not a Board approved sponsor or designated provider

Any organization or individual that is not a Board approved continuing education provider must submit an application for each continuing education offering sixty days prior to the date of the offering. The applications must be made, in writing, to the MFT Continuing Education Committee, which reviews and pre-approves continuing education. **NO RETROACTIVE APPROVALS WILL BE MADE.** Applications for or questions about said approval should be sent to the following address:

Mississippi Board of Examiners for Social Workers and
Marriage and Family Therapists
MFT Continuing Education Committee
P.O. Box 4508
Jackson, MS 39296-4508
601-987-6806
1-888-895-3482 - Instate Only

The Board’s office or the Chair of MFT Continuing Education Committee may be contacted for application forms or questions about the procedure.

H. Criteria for Approval of Continuing Education Activities

Continuing education hours must be relevant to the practice of marriage and family therapy as determined by the MFT Continuing Education Committee, with an emphasis on systemic approaches or the theory, research or practice of psychotherapy work with couples or families. Continuing education for marriage and family therapy general evolves from the following area and must be related to **at least one** of the following seven areas:

1. Theoretical Knowledge of Marriage and Family Therapy. Examples of acceptable offering content in this area include, but are not limited to, the historical development, theoretical and empirical foundations, and contemporary conceptual directions of the field of marriage and family therapy;
2. Clinical Knowledge of Marriage and Family Therapy. Courses in this area cover:
 - a. couple and family therapy practice related conceptually to theory;
 - b. contemporary issues, which include but are not limited to gender, violence, addictions, and abuse, in the treatment of individuals, couples, and families from a relational/systemic perspective;
 - c. a wide variety of presenting clinical problems related to the practice of marriage and family theory and practice;
 - d. issues of gender and sexual functioning, sexual orientation, and sex therapy as they relate to couple, marriage and family therapy theory and practice; _and/or
 - e. diversity and discrimination as it relates to couple and family therapy theory and practice.
3. Assessment and Treatment in Marriage and Family Therapy. Acceptable offering content in this area incorporates a relational/systemic perspective on topics such as, but not limited to, psychopharmacology, physical health and illness, traditional psychodiagnostic categories, and the assessment and treatment of major mental health issues.
4. Individual, Couple, and Family Development. Acceptable offering content in this area focuses on individual, couple, and/or family development across the lifespan.
5. Professional Identity and Ethics in Marriage and Family Therapy. **Generic education in ethics does not meet this standard.** Acceptable content in this area includes:

- a. professional identity of the marriage and family therapist, including professional socialization, scope of practice, professional organizations, licensure and certification;
 - b. ethical issues related to the profession of marriage and family therapy and the practice of individual, couple and family therapy;
 - c. the AAMFT Code of Ethics, confidentiality issues, the legal responsibilities and liabilities of clinical practice and research, family law, record keeping, reimbursement, and the business aspects of practice as these relate to the practice of marriage and family therapy;
 - d. the interface between marriage and family therapist responsibility and the professional, social, and political context of treatment.
6. Research in Marriage and Family Therapy: Content in this area includes significant material on research in couple and family therapy; focus on content such as research methodology, data analysis and the evaluation of research, and include quantitative and qualitative research.
 7. Supervision in Marriage and Family Therapy: Content in this area includes studies in theory and techniques of supervision as well as ethical and legal issues, case management, and topics relative to the specific supervised training.

I. Documenting and Reporting

1. Record Keeping: The licensee shall maintain for four (4) years their own records and official verification of the continuing education they have completed. The Board will not maintain continuing education files for the licensees.
2. Reporting Continuing Education: The continuing education hours will be reported once every two years as part of the license renewal process. No continuing education hours are required for the first renewal period.
3. Provider Responsibility: It is the responsibility of each organization or provider of continuing education to 1) provide the Board with verified list of participants including license number and the number of earned CE hours, and 2) provide the attendee with a written statement, verification, or certificate of attendance or CEU certificate which verifies completion of the offering. The attendee's verification must include the following information:

- a. Name of attendee
 - b. Name of offering
 - c. Date of offering
 - d. Provider's name
 - e. Program approval number assigned by MFT Continuing Education Committee
 - f. Signature of organizer/sponsor or designee
 - g. Number of continuing education hours awarded
4. Licensee Responsibility: It is the responsibility of the licensee to obtain a certificate, transcript or other official document from the approved provider showing the appropriate information. The supporting documentation verifying the continuing education must be kept by the licensee and not sent to the Board unless the Board makes a request in writing for the documentation as a part of the audit process.

J. Random Audit of Continuing Education Documents

1. The Board will annually audit or cause to be audited a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the continuing education reports accompanying the renewal applications. Licensees whose reports are audited will be required to provide a copy of the official documentation of their continuing education activities. If a licensee fails to provide the Board in a timely manner (not to exceed thirty {30} days following the time they are notified of the audit) with official documentation of the total hours listed on their renewal application, the license will be suspended following written notification from the Board and will remain suspended pending further Board action.
2. If, during the audit, the Board disqualifies any of the documented continuing education hours and the licensee does not have sufficient acceptable hours remaining for that renewal period, the Board, at its discretion, may renew the license under the conditions that the continuing education hours will be obtained within six (6) months of the notice of deficiency. Continuing education hours acquired to meet the deficiency may not be applied to any other renewal period. If the licensee does not rectify the deficiency within that six (6) month period, the license will be subject to disciplinary action, including revocation, for failure to comply with the continuing education requirements.

K. Re-evaluation of Continuing Education

A licensee who believes that evidence of continuing education was appraised incorrectly by the Board, may make a written request for re-evaluation to the Board within thirty (30) days of the Board's finding. Verbal requests will not be honored.

L. Waiver of Continuing Education Requirements and Request for Extension of Time to Complete Continuing Education Requirements

1. The Board may waive continuing education requirements to a licensee who was not engaged in the practice of marriage and family therapy during a given continuing education renewal period on an individual basis for reasons of severe illness, disability, military service or other documented hardship or good cause. Any waiver will be granted solely at the discretion of the Board.
2. The Board may extend the time within which to fulfill continuing education requirements to a licensee during a given continuing education renewal period on an individual basis for reasons of hardship, such as severe illness, disability, military service or other good cause. Any waiver or extension of time will be granted solely in the discretion of the Board.
3. A licensee must submit a written request for a waiver of continuing education requirements (L1.), or extension of time to fulfill continuing education requirements (L2.) to complete continuing education requirements. The request must be made in writing, under penalty of perjury, and must set forth with specificity the reasons for requesting the waiver or extension and, in the case of the waiver request, the portion of the renewal period during which the licensee was not engaged in the practice of marriage and family therapy. The licensee shall submit to the Board all documentation in support of the request for waiver or extension and such additional information or documentation as the Board may request in support of the waiver or extension.
4. Waivers of the minimum continuing education requirements may be granted for up to one-half of the twenty-four (24) hours of continuing education required for any two-year (biennial) renewal period. Extensions of time (6 month extensions) may be granted by the Board for a period not to exceed one (1) calendar year. The grant of an extension by the Board will result in the renewal of a license based on the condition that the licensee completes the continuing education requirement by the deadline established by the Board.
5. A waiver of continuing education requirements granted pursuant to this section shall be effective only for the biennial period in which

such waiver is granted. If the condition(s) which necessitated the waiver continues into the next biennial period, a licensee who seeks another waiver must apply to the Board for a renewal of such waiver for the new biennial period.

6. If an extension of time is granted, the license will be placed on active status but the license shall be automatically changed to inactive status at the end of the extension period unless the licensee satisfies the continuing education requirement prior to that time. When the license is placed on inactive status, the licensee shall cease all activity requiring a license.
7. A licensee shall apply for a waiver or extension of continuing education requirements no later than 30 (thirty) days prior to the end of the biennial licensing period for which the waiver or extension is requested. All requests shall be sent to the office of the Board, by certified mail, return receipt requested.
8. An extension of time shall not be granted to any licensee who obtained an extension in the immediately preceding renewal or reporting period in which the licensee held an active license, except in the case of a licensee who is unable to complete the requirements due to military service commitment pursuant to a combat or national emergency assignment.
9. The Board may, as a condition of any extension or waiver granted, require the licensee to make up a portion of the continuing education requirement in the manner determined by the Board.