Certificate in School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy

The School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy (SB-MFT) certificate program prepares candidates to fulfill the requirements for certification with the State Board of Education to work in the public school system. The program is available to current MFT master’s students and to licensed graduates of COAMFTE-accredited programs.

State Certification as a School Marriage and Family Therapist

In 2007, Connecticut passed the first school certification law for MFTs in the country. Connecticut State Board of Education Regulations require applicants to meet specialized training and experience requirements for school MFT certification. Applicants must be licensed by the Department of Public Health, meet Praxis I requirements (required of all educators), fulfill a minimum of 300 of hours of supervised experience in public schools, and complete graduate coursework in special education, developmental, learning and school-based systems theory.

Section 10-145d-566d of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies specifies:

To receive an initial educator certificate to serve as a school marriage and family therapist, the applicant shall meet the following requirements:
(a) Holds a bachelor’s degree from an approved institution;
(b) Holds a master’s degree from an approved institution with a planned program in marriage and family therapy accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE);
(c) Has successfully met Praxis I requirements;
(d) Holds a valid license from the Connecticut Department of Public Health pursuant to Section 20-195c of the Connecticut General Statutes to practice marriage and family therapy;
(e) Has completed graduate coursework in the following areas:
    (1) Child and adolescent development;
    (2) Learning theories;
    (3) School-based systems theory;
    (4) Federal and state education laws including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), Americans with Disabilities Act Section 504, professional ethics and code of professional responsibility for educators, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and statutory requirements for mandated reporting, suspensions and expulsions, and school and district accountability; and
(5) 300 hours of school-based marriage and family therapy practicum jointly supervised by faculty of a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) and a special service staff member of a board of education;

(f) Has completed a course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than 36 clock hours which shall include study in understanding the growth and development of exceptional children, including handicapped and gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special-needs children in the regular classroom.

Fairfield University School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy Certificate Requirements

The seven (7) required courses may be taken concurrent with the candidate’s master’s program or after completion of the degree. Completion of the master’s degree and certificate are noted on the student’s transcript.

The courses required for the certificate are:

ED 442: Educational Psychology
ED/PY 534: Theories of Learning
FT 447: Lifespan Human Development
FT 555: Foundations of Marriage and Family Therapy
SE 405: Exceptional Learners in the Mainstream
FT 570: School-Based Practicum in Marriage and Family Therapy

And either:

SE/SL 419: Special Learners in the Bilingual/ESL Classroom
Or
SL 477: Culture and Second Language Acquisition

- FT 447 and FT 555 are core courses in the regular MFT master’s degree program and are taken as part of the MA curriculum. These courses will count toward the certificate program as well.

- ED/PY 534, SL 477, SE 405, ED 442, SE/SL 419, and FT 570 may be taken by MFT master’s degree candidates only after completing a brief paper application for the SB-MFT certificate, providing Praxis I passing scores or waiver, and providing evidence of having been fingerprinted.
• Completion of the SB-MFT admission application does not commit the student to completion of the certificate program. It does ensure that, if the certificate program is completed, notification will be posted on the student’s transcript after graduation from the MFT master’s degree program.

• FT 570 may be taken concurrently with or after completion of ED 442 and SE 405

Admission and Matriculation Requirements for the School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy Certificate

1. To apply for the School-Based Marriage & Family Therapy certificate, go to the dean’s office of the Graduate School of Education & Allied Professions to complete the 2-page application.

2. To complete the application, candidates must provide passing scores on the Praxis I test (or evidence of a waiver of the Praxis I). When you take the Praxis I exam, use the University’s code of 3390 and provide ETS with your Social Security number so that your scores will be sent to the dean’s office and uploaded into the system. Information about Praxis waivers can be found at www.ct.gov/sde/certapps.

3. To complete the application, candidates also must be fingerprinted at one of the state-identified fingerprinting centers. Information about the fingerprinting requirement is available at www.fairfield.edu/documents/admission/ga_fingerprinting.pdf.

An important note about Praxis requirements and fingerprinting: Do not leave these tasks to the last minute. It takes quite some time for the Praxis scores to be processed by ETS and/or a Praxis waiver to be obtained from the state, and for the fingerprinting to be processed and confirmation sent to the University. If the Praxis scores/waiver or fingerprinting are not on file with the dean’s office, you will not be permitted to register for SB-MFT classes.