**Section 1283.30 Education**

a) An applicant for a license as a licensed marriage and family therapist shall hold one of the following:

1) A master's or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy from a program accredited by either the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) or the Commission on Accreditation for Counseling Related Education Programs (CACREP);

2) A master's or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited educational institution in marriage and family therapy or in a related field (i.e., behavioral science or mental health) with an equivalent course of study in marriage and family therapy as set forth in subsection (b); or

b) An applicant must have completed a minimum of 48 semester hours or equivalent hours of graduate coursework. The applicant's graduate coursework, at a minimum, shall be substantially equivalent to the curriculum listed in this subsection (b). Courses are evaluated according to course content rather than course title. For the purpose of this Section, course shall be defined as an integrated, organized course of study. No student designed courses, independent study courses or workshops may be used to satisfy the core courses. Course descriptions and syllabi are required for courses with titles that not reflect the content described as follows:

1) Clinical Interviewing Skills or Individual Therapy. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). An acceptable course covers at least one of the following:

A) General clinical interviewing skills such as attending, joining, rapport building, tracking, supporting, intervening, and/or structuring therapy; or

B) An overview of the major clinical theories covered in major textbooks on individual psychotherapy; or

C) At least one of the individual models covered in significant detail including, but are not limited to: psychoanalysis, psychodynamic, object relations, self-psychology, behavioral, cognitive behavioral, emotionally focused individual, existential, experiential, Gestalt, humanistic, person-centered, rational-emotive, reality, or Adlerian.

2) Family Therapy I, Foundations of Family Life, Family Studies, Family Sociology, or General Systems. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). Courses in this area cover an introduction to family theory and/or family therapy. Examples of acceptable courses include, but are not limited to: the foundations of family theory; introduction to family theory; the foundations of family therapy; introduction to family therapy; family studies; sociology of the family; general systems theory; family life cycle; theories of family development; family dynamics; families under stress; the contemporary family; social, cultural, and spiritual foundations of family life, the cross-cultural family; youth/adult/aging and the family; family subsystems; interpersonal relationships (marriage, parenting, sibling); the historical development, theoretical and empirical foundations of family therapy; or contemporary conceptual directions of the field of family therapy.

3) Family Therapy II. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). Courses in this area must cover at least three family therapy models. To fulfill this requirement, a course or set of courses must cover at least three family therapy models such as, but not limited to, the following models: communications, contextual, experiential, object relations, structural, strategic, systemic, behavioral, cognitive behavioral, solution-focused, narrative, Bowenian or transgenerational. The course content shall provide conceptualizations and methods for working conjointly with two or more clients present in therapy sessions who are in significant relationships with each other outside the therapy context. The three models can be covered either as a survey of clinical theories such as those in major textbooks on family therapy, as separate courses, or as parts of separate courses.

4) Couples Therapy. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). Courses in this area must cover at least two couples therapy models. To fulfill this requirement, a course or set of courses must cover at least two couples therapy models such as, but are not limited to, the following models: behavioral, cognitive behavioral, object relations, transgenerational, narrative, solution-focused, emotionally focused couples, collaborative, pragmatic/experiential, Imago, or Gottman's formulations. These formulations shall provide conceptualizations and methods for working conjointly with couples who are in significant relationships with each other outside the therapy context. The two models can be covered either as a survey of clinical theories such as those in major textbooks on couples therapy, as separate courses, or as parts of separate courses.

5) Psychopathology and/or Diagnostic Systems. This requirement must be address in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). Acceptable courses cover:

A) The study of diagnostic systems including the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association and/or the current International Classification of Diseases (ICD) published by the World Health Organization;

B) Psychopathology;

C) Assessment and treatment of mental, emotional, behavioral and interpersonal disorders and psychopathology, including making clinical assessments, certifying diagnoses, prescribing treatment and signing off on treatment plans for persons with mental illnesses or other clinical disorders; or

D) A course that combines subsections (b)(5)(A), (B), and (C).

6) Individual Development and Family Relations. Topics in marriage and family studies must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester or four quarter hours or equivalent). Topics that may be counted towards this area of study include: family development and family interactional patterns across the life cycle; theories of family development; marriage and/or family dynamics; sociology of the family; families under stress; the contemporary family; social, cultural, and spiritual foundations of family life; the cross-cultural family; gender studies; youth/adult/aging and the family; family subsystems; interpersonal relationships (marriage, parenting, sibling); human development; lifestyle and career development; personality theory; and human sexuality.

7) Ethics/Professional Studies. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). Acceptable courses cover the study of Professional Studies and Ethics and may include unique professional and ethical situations involved with conjoint therapies. Topics that may be counted toward this area of study include: professional socialization and the role of the professional organization; legal responsibilities and liabilities; independent practice and interprofessional cooperation; ethics; family law; unique professional and ethical situations involved with conjoint therapies.

8) Research Methods. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). Acceptable courses cover the study of research design and methods in a mental health or allied field, statistics, and research in a mental health or allied field.

9) Assessments in Marriage and Family Therapy. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester hours or four quarter hours or equivalent). Acceptable courses cover the study of: clinical assessment of relational systems, assessment of psychodiagnostics categories, biopsychosocial bases of health and dysfunction, models and measures of systemic and family assessment, and parameters of systemic and individual assessment.

10) Clinical Practicum/Internship. This requirement must be addressed in a minimum of one course (three semester or four quarter hours or equivalent). To meet this requirement the practicum/internship must include 300 hours, 100 of which must be conjoint therapy, all of which must include face-to-face contact with individuals, couples, families, or groups for the purpose of assessment, diagnosis and treatment. Any deficit in face-to-face contact hours (less than 300) must be completed prior to beginning the accumulation of Clinical Experience hours.

c) In evaluating coursework from another jurisdiction, the Marriage and Family Therapy Disciplinary and Licensing Board (Board) may require documentation such as, but not limited to, an evaluation by a foreign equivalency documentation service indicating that the applicant's graduate program is equivalent to a graduate program in this country.

d) An individual who has taught a graduate level course in a regionally accredited educational institution in any of the areas listed in subsection (b) shall receive credit for the course. One course taught is equivalent to one course taken. Repetitive teaching of the same course may only be counted as one course. Syllabi and reading lists shall be submitted in order to obtain credit.

e) Courses taken at a post-degree institution will count as equivalent for an education requirement of subsection (b) if the institution's training program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) or meets the following requirements:

1) The institution's program is established to achieve coherent mission and training objectives and the program has as its primary objective the training of marriage and family therapists.

2) The specific course submitted as equivalent to those defined in subsection (b) is taught by faculty who hold graduate degrees and are trained and credentialed in the field in which they teach.

3) Courses must be offered by an established, identifiable facility or agency.

4) Courses must be ongoing and additive (offered at the same place over a specific period of time and available on an ongoing basis) or offered off site by an acceptable post degree institution with an established, identifiable home-base facility or agency.

5) Courses must include outlines, clear description of content, appropriate bibliography, and other indications or meet generally acceptable criteria for academic offerings.

f) Credit for courses taken pursuant to subsection (e) will be given on a semester-hour equivalency basis which is 15 hours per semester credit. Evaluation of course work is on a case-by-case basis for each applicant. To receive credit, an applicant must submit a syllabus for each course, proof of acceptable completion of the course, and all documentation necessary to demonstrate that the post-degree institution and the specific course meet all the requirements of subsection (e).

g) A thesis or dissertation completed as a requirement of the first qualifying degree will not be counted as equivalent for an education requirement of subsection (b).

h) Applicants who hold non-clinical qualifying degrees, or whose practicum/internship was in areas other than marriage and family therapy, may document the practicum requirement with their first 300 post-graduate client contact hours supervised by an American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Approved Supervisor, supervisor-in-training or a supervisor who meets the requirements set forth in Section 1283.25(b).

i) The Division, upon the recommendation of the Board, has determined that marriage and family therapy programs accredited by either the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy or the Commission on Accreditation for Counseling Related Educational Programs meet the minimum criteria set forth in this Section and are, therefore, approved.

j) Individual Program Requirements

1) Individuals applying for licensure as a licensed marriage and family therapist who have not graduated from a program listed in subsection (a) shall submit their transcripts and program materials to the Division for evaluation by the Board to determine if they meet the requirements of this Section.

2) Individuals applying for licensure who are deficient in any of the content areas set forth in subsection (b) may complete any content area deficiencies in a graduate school course. No student designed courses, independent study courses, or workshops may be used to satisfy the core courses set forth in Section 1283.30(b). The applicant will be required to submit proof to the Division that the applicant has passed such a course addressing the content area deficit. Proof shall include, but not be limited to, curriculum, practicum and program materials, clinical practicum or internship handbook and course materials.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 12727, effective August 9, 2024)