



Board of Behavioral Sciences




IMPORTANT ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FOR ASSOCIATE MARRIAGE AND
FAMILY THERAPISTS AND MFT TRAINEES



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dca
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Revised: 01/2020 | PDE_19-379 

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Associate Marriage and Family Therapists and MFT Trainees Frequently Asked Questions

Revised January 1, 2020



The information provided in this publication is supplemental and is intended to serve as a quick answer guide for common questions for those pursuing licensure as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. The Board's [Statutes and Regulations](#) contain the official legal code sections. The Board encourages you to thoroughly read the [Statutes and Regulations](#) pertaining to the marriage and family therapy profession.

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A. TRAINEE FAQs

(See Section C for more information on supervised experience requirements for Trainees)

1. Am I required to register as a Trainee with the Board?

No, the Board does not register MFT Trainees.

2. What types of settings are Trainees allowed to work in?

Trainees are prohibited from working in a private practice setting. All other settings must comply with all of the following:

- The school in which the Trainee is enrolled must approve the site and have a written agreement with the site that details each party's responsibilities.
- The setting must lawfully and regularly provide mental health counseling or psychotherapy.
- The setting must provide oversight to ensure that the Trainee's work at the setting meets the experience and supervision requirements, and is within the scope of practice for the profession.

Statutes cited: Business and Professions Code (BPC) sections 4980.42 and 4980.43.3

3. As a Trainee, when can I begin counting pre-degree hours of work experience?

Trainees can only begin counting hours of experience if the student has completed a minimum of 12 semester or 18 quarter units of coursework in a qualifying MFT degree program, and is enrolled in a practicum course.

However, there is one exception for individuals have gained their experience under "Option 2" (see page 9 for information on the two options). Personal psychotherapy hours may be counted beginning on the date you began your degree program. Note: The ability to count hours under Option 2 closes on December 31, 2020, so if you are currently a Trainee, Option 2 is not available to you.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.03 and 4980.43

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

A Trainee is permitted to earn a maximum of 1,300 hours of experience overall prior to the degree being awarded. Up to 750 hours of counseling (including diagnosing and treating couples, families and children, and individual or group psychotherapy) and supervision are permitted within the 1,300-hour maximum. The remaining 550 hours may only consist of non-clinical experience. For more information about supervised experience types and requirements, see section C.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

5. Are Trainees required to be enrolled in practicum in order to counsel clients?

A Trainee may provide counseling while not enrolled in practicum if BOTH of the following are met:

- The period of time is less than 90 calendar days AND
- The 90-day (or shorter) period is immediately preceded by enrollment in practicum and immediately followed by enrollment in practicum (or completion of the degree program).

For example, if your practicum course ended on May 29, and you are not taking a summer practicum course, you may see clients for the next 90 days PROVIDED you are enrolled in another practicum course that starts by August 27, or you graduate by August 27.

If a Trainee's practicum break is 90 days or greater, the Trainee cannot count any hours gained during that time period.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.36 and 4980.42

6. Do I need to be fingerprinted as a Trainee?

The Board does not require Trainees to be fingerprinted. However, if you graduate on or after January 1, 2020 and you want to count hours under the "90-day rule," then your employer must have had you fingerprinted before you will be allowed to count hours after graduation. See question 7 on the next page for more information.

Statutes cited: BPC section 4980.43

B. ASSOCIATE REGISTRATION; LAW AND ETHICS EXAM

7. Can I count hours of experience after I graduate but before I receive an Associate registration number? What is the “90-day rule”?

If the Board receives your application for an Associate registration within 90 days of your degree award date, and you are thereafter issued an Associate registration, all postdegree hours of supervised experience may be credited. Hours gained under this “90-day rule” must comply with all experience and supervision requirements in order to count toward licensure.

For applicants graduating on or after January 1, 2020:

Hours may only be accepted under the “90-day-rule” described above IF the hours are obtained at a workplace that, prior to the applicant gaining hours, required live scan fingerprinting. The applicant must provide documentation to the Board consisting of a

copy of the processed “State of California Request for Live Scan Service” form. This form must be submitted with the application for licensure in order for the hours gained between graduation and registration issuance to be accepted. A copy of the processed Live Scan form is the ONLY acceptable documentation specified in law. There are no exceptions. See the [FAQ](#) about the 90-day rule for more information about the new requirements.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

8. When can I begin working in a private practice setting?

9. Are there any limitations on working in a private practice?

You may not work in a private practice until your Associate registration has been issued by the Board. You may work in private practice for a maximum of six (6) years, until your first Associate registration has met its maximum length. There are no exceptions.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.43 and 4984.01; Regulation cited: Title 16, California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1833

10. What are the requirements to become an Associate?

Please see the [AMFT Registration Application](#), available on the Board’s [website](#).

11. Now that my Associate registration has been issued, can I start practicing independently or open my own office?

No. Independent practice cannot begin until you have completed all licensure requirements and the Board issues you a license as a LMFT. Independent practice (or opening your own office) is considered unlicensed practice and is subject to disciplinary

action by the Board. Additionally, you are prohibited from billing clients directly until you are licensed.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980, 4980.10 and 4982

12. When am I required to renew my Associate registration?

Registrations expire annually and have a total six (6)-year time limit. Your registration's expiration date will be printed on your registration certificate. You will be mailed a courtesy renewal notice 90 days prior to your expiration date. The Board encourages renewing online because it takes effect instantly as long as all renewal requirements are met.

Statute cited: BPC section 4984.01

13. Are Associates required to take an exam to renew?

Yes. Associates who have not yet passed the LMFT California Law and Ethics Exam **MUST** have taken this exam during their renewal cycle in order to renew. There are no exceptions. To apply for the exam, download the exam application from the Board's [website](#) and mail it in with the required fee. Allow 4-6 weeks for processing. See the [FAQs](#) about the Law and Ethics Exam for more information.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.399

14. What happens if I don't pass the California Law and Ethics Exam?

You do not need to pass the exam in order to renew your registration; you just need to have taken it. You may retake the exam after at least 90 days have passed from the date you last took the exam. See the [Request for Re-Examination for more information](#).

If you don't pass the exam prior to your registration's expiration date, you must complete a 12-hour course in California Law and Ethics before you will be allowed to retake the exam during your NEXT renewal cycle. You will not be allowed to retake the exam after your registration expires until you submit proof of course completion. See the [FAQs](#) about the Law and Ethics Exam for more information.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.399; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1805.05

15. Where can I take the 12-hour California Law and Ethics course?

The course must be taken through a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, or an acceptable continuing education provider.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.399

16. What happens if I haven't passed the Law and Ethics Exam by my registration's 6-year time limit?

California law permits a registration to be renewed a maximum of five (5) times before being cancelled. Associates may then apply for a subsequent (second or third) registration number. You cannot be issued a subsequent number unless you have passed the LMFT Law and Ethics Exam. There are no exceptions.

Statute cited: BPC section 4984.01

17. How do I obtain a second or third (subsequent) Associate registration number?

18. Can I work in a private practice under a subsequent Associate registration number?

Submit the [AMFT Subsequent Registration](#) application with the required fee. Be sure to submit it in advance of your registration's expiration date to allow time for processing and to avoid a lapse in your registration.

Only those who have been issued a first Associate registration number may work in a private practice. Associates issued a subsequent registration may NOT work in a private practice. There are no exceptions. All other work settings are permissible.

Statute cited: BPC section 4984.01

19. What happens once I pass the Law and Ethics Exam?

If you are still earning hours of supervised experience, you will continue as a registrant until you have completed your hours. No further exams are required until you apply for licensure. You may submit your *Application for Licensure* once you have met all education and experience requirements. Upon approval of your *Application for Licensure*, you will be required to take and pass the California Clinical LMFT Exam.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.397 and 4980.399

C. EXPERIENCE HOURS, SUPERVISION AND EMPLOYMENT

20. What is the breakdown for the required hours of experience to become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)?

California law currently requires 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience, including 104 supervised weeks, in order to qualify for LMFT licensure.

Applicants have two different options for gaining supervised experience. Hours can qualify under either Option 1 (streamlined categories) or Option 2 (multiple categories) as described below. Applicants must fully qualify under either Option 1 OR Option 2. There is no “mixing and matching” between the two categories.

Individuals who wish to qualify under Option 2 must submit an *Application for Licensure* postmarked no later than December 31, 2020. Otherwise the applicant must fully qualify under Option 1.

OPTION 1 – STREAMLINED CATEGORIES

Under Option 1, the supervised work experience categories break down into just two overall types:

- Direct counseling experience (*Minimum 1,750 hours*)
 - A minimum of 500 of the above hours must be gained diagnosing and treating couples, families and children.
- Non-clinical experience (*Maximum 1,250 hours*)
 - May consist of direct supervisor contact, administering and evaluating psychological tests, writing clinical reports, writing progress or process notes, client centered advocacy, and workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences directly related to marriage, family, and child counseling.

OPTION 2 – MULTIPLE CATEGORIES

This option expires on December 31, 2020

- A. Individual Psychotherapy (*No minimum or maximum hours required*)
- B. Couples, Families, and Children (*Minimum 500 hours - up to 150 conjoint hours may be double-counted*)
- C. Group Therapy or Counseling (*Maximum 500 hours*)
- D. Telehealth Counseling (*Maximum 375 hours*)
- E. Administering and evaluating psychological tests of counselees, writing clinical reports and progress or process notes; client-centered advocacy (*Maximum 500 hours*)
- F. Workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences directly related to marriage, family, and child counseling (*Maximum 250 hours**)
- G. Personal Psychotherapy received (*Maximum 100 hours, triple counted**)
- H. Individual, Triadic and Group Supervision*

** Hours earned in categories F, G and H are limited to a total combined maximum of 1,000 hours*

IMPORTANT INFORMATION APPLICABLE TO BOTH OPTIONS

Limitations on Experience Hours:

- Maximum 1,300 hours gained pre-degree
- Maximum 750 hours of counseling and direct supervisor contact gained pre-degree
- Maximum 40 hours of experience earned in any week between all settings
- Maximum six (6) hours of individual, triadic or group supervision in any week

104 Supervised Weeks Required:

These 104 weeks must contain:

- One (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) hours of group supervision during **any** week in which experience is claimed
- 52 weeks in which the applicant received at least one (1) hour of **individual or triadic** supervision

An applicant for licensure cannot be approved to sit for the clinical exam without completing both the 3,000 hours of experience AND 104 supervised weeks.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.43 and 4980.43.2; Regulation cited: Title 16 CCR section 1833

21. What is triadic supervision?

Triadic supervision is defined as face-to-face supervision consisting of one supervisor and two supervisees. It is counted under the law as equivalent to individual supervision.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

22. I'm gaining hours under Option 2. How do I log or get credit for the conjoint couples and family incentive hours?

When completing *Weekly Log* forms and *Experience Verification* forms, document the total couples, families and children hours on the category titled "Couples, families, and children." In the subsection below, record the amount of actual conjoint couple and family therapy hours. This subsection is only for recording purposes and will not affect your supervision requirements or increase your weekly totals.

Only document actual hours. Do not double count the hours on your forms. Once your application is received by the Board, those hours will be evaluated, and up to the first 150 hours of conjoint couples and family hours will be double counted to a maximum of 300 hours. For example: If you completed 10 couples, families and children hours, and

6 of those hours were conjoint couples and family, you would record 10 hours in the couples, families and children category and 6 hours below in the conjoint couples and family subsection.

23. What is the definition of “telehealth counseling”?

24. How many telehealth hours can I gain?

Telehealth refers to the mode of delivering health care services and public health via information and communication technologies to facilitate the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of a patient’s health care while the patient is at the originating site and the health care provider is at a distant site. Trainees and Associates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the “Standards of Practice for Telehealth,” available in the Board’s [Statutes and Regulations](#).

Experience Option 1: There is no limit on the number of telehealth hours.

Experience Option 2: Up to 375 hours of supervised experience may be gained providing personal psychotherapy, crisis counseling, or other counseling services via telehealth. This may include telephone counseling.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 2290.5 and 4980.43; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815.5

25. How far back can experience hours be counted? What is the 6-year rule?

The Board cannot accept hours of experience (including personal psychotherapy and workshops, training or conferences) that are older than six (6) years from the date the Board receives your *Application for Licensure*. The only exception is up to 500 hours of supervised experience obtained as a Trainee while enrolled in practicum – these 500 hours can be older than six (6) years.

For example, the Board receives an *Application for Licensure* on 03/24/2018. The Board can only accept hours earned by this applicant between 03/24/2012 and 03/24/2018 (except that up to 500 counseling and supervision hours obtained while a Trainee will be accepted even if they are older than 03/24/2012).

It is important to note that if your *Application for Licensure* is abandoned, you will be required to re-apply. Your six-year period will be recalculated to six years back from the date your new application is received. For more information on abandonment, see question 44.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

26. How do I determine the amount of supervision I need each week?

27. What is the difference between the supervision requirements for MFT Trainees and Associates?

28. What is the required ratio of supervision to client contact hours?

“One unit” of supervision = one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision OR two (2) hours of group supervision.

Trainees and Associates must receive at least one (1) unit of supervision, as defined above, during any week in which experience is gained in each work setting. In addition:

Trainees: One (1) additional unit of supervision is required if the Trainee provides more than five (5) hours of direct clinical counseling in a single week in a work setting.

Trainees must receive one (1) additional unit of supervision for every five (5) hours of direct clinical counseling provided in a single week in a work setting.

Associates: If an Associate provides more than 10 hours of direct clinical counseling in a single week in a work setting, the Associate must receive one (1) additional unit of supervision in that setting.

The above supervision ratios only apply to direct clinical counseling hours (under Option 2, this includes Individual Psychotherapy; Couples, Family, and Children; Group Psychotherapy; and Telemedicine/Telehealth Counseling).

Note that Trainees can calculate ratios based on the average number of hours gained over the entire period of time a Trainee works in a particular setting. Supervision ratios cannot be averaged for individuals gaining hours postdegree.

TRAINEE - EXAMPLE #1:

A Trainee works one job and provides 16 hours of direct clinical counseling during a single week. This Trainee must receive four (4) units of supervision during that week.

TRAINEE - EXAMPLE #2:

A Trainee works two jobs, and provides 4 hours of direct clinical counseling at Job A, and 7 hours at Job B during a single week. This Trainee must receive three (3) units of supervision during that week (one (1) unit at Job A and two (2) units at Job B).

ASSOCIATE - EXAMPLE #1:

An Associate works one job and provides 25 hours of direct clinical counseling during a single week. This Associate must receive two (2) units of supervision during that week.

ASSOCIATE - EXAMPLE #2:

An Associate works two jobs, and provides 12 hours of direct clinical counseling at Job A and nine (9) hours at Job B during the same week. This Associate is required to receive a total of three (3) units of supervision during that week (two (2) units at Job A and one (1) unit at Job B).

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

29. Can I be paid as a 1099 / independent contractor while a Trainee or Associate?

30. Can I be employed as a volunteer?

All Associates and Trainees must either be a paid W-2 employee or a volunteer employee. Trainees and Associates may also not bill clients directly. There are limited circumstances under which you may be paid under a 1099. If you work as a volunteer in any setting other than a private practice, and receive reimbursement for expenses actually incurred, receiving a 1099 for those reimbursements is acceptable. If you have received a stipend or educational loan repayment from a program designed to encourage demographically underrepresented groups to enter the profession, or to improve recruitment and retention in underserved regions or settings, a 1099 for the stipend or loan repayment is acceptable. Those paid under a 1099 may be audited by the Board to ensure the payment was for one of the above purposes.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.3; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

31. Who is eligible to supervise MFT Trainees or Associates?

Only licensed mental health professionals can supervise Trainees, Associates, and Associate applicants. Licensed mental health professionals include any of the following:

- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs)
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCCs) (must have met education and experience requirements that allow the LPCC to treat couples and families)
- Licensed Clinical Psychologists
- Licensed Educational Psychologists (LEP) (*Note: LEPs may only supervise up to 1,200 hours, which must consist of educationally related mental health services that are consistent with the LEP scope of practice described in BPC section 4989.14*)
- Licensed Physicians certified in Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

Additionally, the supervisor must meet all of the following:

- Complete a minimum of six (6) hours of supervision training or coursework within 60 days of commencement of supervision and every two-year renewal period thereafter (Licensed Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists are exempt from this training requirement); and
- Maintain a current and active California license that is not under suspension or probation. (You can check your supervisor's status any time [here](#)); and
- Have been licensed in California or any other state for at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision; and
- Have practiced psychotherapy during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision (or, if an LEP, has provided psychological counseling pursuant to BPC section 4989.14); **OR**

- Provided direct supervision to Marriage and Family Therapist Trainees, Associate Marriage and Family Therapists, Associate Professional Clinical Counselors, or Associate Clinical Social Workers who perform psychotherapy during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision. Supervision of psychotherapy performed by a student (social work intern or a professional clinical counselor trainee) shall be accepted if the supervision performed is substantially equivalent to the supervision required for registrants.

Statute cited: BPC sections 4980.03 and 4989.14; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833.1

32. How many supervisees can participate in a session of group supervision?

Group supervision sessions shall include no more than eight (8) persons receiving supervision, even if there are two or more supervisors present. Group supervisors must ensure that the amount and degree of supervision is appropriate for each supervisee.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

33. Can group supervision be broken into one-hour increments?

Group supervision can be broken into one-hour sessions, as long as both increments (full two hours) are provided in the same week as the experience being claimed.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

34. Can I receive supervision via videoconferencing or over the telephone?

An Associate working in an exempt setting (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. Trainees, as well as Associates working in non-exempt settings, are not permitted to receive supervision in this manner.

Individual or group supervision may not be provided over the telephone in any setting.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

35. Do my supervisor and I have to be employed by the same employer?

36. Does my supervisor need to be on site?

Only in a private practice setting does a supervisor need to be employed by, and practice at, the same site as the registrant's employer. Alternatively, the supervisor may be an owner of the private practice. However, if the site is a professional corporation, the supervisor must be employed full-time at the site and be actively engaged in performing professional services at the site.

In a setting that is not a private practice, the supervisor may be employed by the Trainee's, Associate's, or applicant's employer on either a paid or volunteer basis. If the supervisor is not employed by the supervisee's employer or is a volunteer, a written oversight agreement that addresses the supervisor's and employer's responsibilities must be signed by the supervisor and the employer prior to commencement of supervision. Please see the Board's [website](#) for a sample written oversight agreement.

In any setting, Trainees, Associates, and applicants may only perform services at the places where their employers permit business to be conducted, which may include performing services at other locations, so long as the services are performed under the direction and control of their employer and supervisor, and in compliance with the laws pertaining to supervision.

Whether a supervisor is required to be on site depends on the situation. Supervisors must consider their responsibilities as defined in the LMFT statutes and regulations, which includes taking responsibility for, and control of, the quality of services being provided. Among other responsibilities, supervisors are required to do all of the following, whether they are on site or off site:

- Ensure that the extent, kind and quality of counseling performed by the Associate or Trainee is consistent with the education, training and experience of the person being supervised.
- Monitor and evaluate the supervisee's assessment, diagnosis and treatment decisions and providing regular feedback.
- Monitor and evaluate the ability of the Associate or Trainee to provide services at the site(s) where he or she will be practicing and to the particular clientele being served.
- Monitoring and addressing clinical dynamics, including, but not limited to, countertransference-, intrapsychic-, interpersonal-, or trauma-related issues that may affect the supervisory or the practitioner-patient relationship.
- Ensure compliance with all laws governing the practice of marriage and family therapy.
- Reviewing the supervisee's progress notes, process notes, and other patient treatment records, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.
- With the client's written consent, providing direct observation or review of audio or video recordings of the supervisee's counseling or therapy, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.

Upon request by the Board, a supervisor is required to provide the Board with documentation that verifies the supervisor's compliance with all requirements.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.43.1, 4980.43.3 and 4980.43.4; Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1833 and 1833.1

37. Where can I find more information about supervision?

Please see the [Guide to Supervision for MFT Trainees and Associates](#).

38. What forms must I use to record my experience hours and supervision?

While gaining your hours of experience you must use the following forms, available on the Board's [website](#):

Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of an MFT Trainee or Associate: Your supervisor must sign this form prior to commencing supervision and provide you with the original. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure*.

Weekly Summary of Experience Hours ("Weekly Log"): Log your hours on this form on a weekly basis and have your supervisor sign weekly. You will retain the original logs. Do not submit Weekly Logs to the Board except upon request.

Experience Verification: This form is completed upon the termination of your supervised experience with your supervisor, and must indicate the total hours completed in each category under your supervisor, your supervisor's license information and information about your employer. Your supervisor will sign the form and provide you with the original for submission with your *Application for Licensure*.

Be sure to use the *Experience Verification* and *Weekly Log* forms that are designed for the option under which you are gaining hours (Option 1 or Option 2).

Submission of forms as directed in the licensure application instructions will lessen the possibility that the licensing evaluator will need to request additional information from you, which will delay the approval of your application.

39. Where do I record Personal Psychotherapy hours received under Option 2?

40. Must I be under supervision while receiving Personal Psychotherapy?

The Board does not have a specific form for recording Personal Psychotherapy hours, which can only be claimed under Option 2 (see page 9). These hours are reported on the *Application for Licensure*. Personal Psychotherapy received is not classified as "work experience" and therefore does not require supervision.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

41. Do I need to report hours gained pre-degree separately from hours gained postdegree?

The Board strongly recommends that you submit your pre-degree and postdegree hours on separate *Experience Verification* forms, and maintain separate *Weekly Log* forms.

42. How do I fill out *Experience Verification* forms or *Weekly Log* forms if I have more than one supervisor in the same work setting?

If you are receiving supervision from two individuals in one employment setting, document the hours from each supervisor on separate forms. As long as the time periods on the two forms overlap and the employment setting is the same, the Board will combine the experience and supervision together when evaluating your experience.

43. When do I need to send in supervision-related forms?

All supervision-related forms (*Supervisor Responsibility Statement* and *Experience Verification* forms) must be submitted with your *Application for Licensure*. Do not send these forms in with your Associate application. Do not send *Weekly Log* forms unless the Board requests you to do so.

Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1833 and 1833.1

D. APPLYING FOR LICENSURE

44. Should I be concerned about abandonment of my *Application for Licensure*?

Yes – and abandonment could have major consequences, such as losing experience hours that are too old. Once an application is abandoned, an applicant may reapply, but must pay a new application fee and meet all current requirements. One of those requirements is that your hours are less than six (6) years old.

If an *Application for Licensure* is abandoned, you would lose any hours of experience that are more than six (6) years old (exception: see question 25), based on the date the board receives the new *Application for Licensure*. See question 25 for more information about the six-year rule.

In accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1806, an application shall be deemed abandoned in any of the following circumstances:

- Applicant does not submit the remaining documents or information requested in the application deficiency letter within one (1) year from the date of the deficiency letter
- Applicant does not complete the application within one (1) year after it has been filed.
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not sit for an examination within one (1) year after being notified of initial eligibility to take the examination.
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not take an examination within one (1) year from the date the applicant was notified of failing an examination
- The applicant fails to pay the initial license fee within one (1) year after notification by the board of successful completion of MFT licensing requirements.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

45. What type of employment documentation does the Board require with my *Application for Licensure*?

If a Paid Employee: You must provide a copy of your W-2 for each year of paid employment in each work setting with your *Application for Licensure*. If your W-2 is not available, you may submit a copy of your “Wage and Income Transcript” from the Internal Revenue Service. W-2s are required for all tax years during which you gained experience. For the current tax year, include a photocopy of your most recent pay stub. A copy of your 1040 or other tax filing form is not acceptable.

If a Volunteer Employee: You must provide a letter from your employer verifying your status as a volunteer with your *Application for Licensure*. A sample letter verifying volunteer status is available on the Board’s [website](#).

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.3; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

46. Do I need to send in originals of my W-2s or most recent pay stub?

Originals are not required - photocopies are acceptable.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.3; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

47. What additional coursework do I need to complete prior to licensure?

In addition to holding a qualifying degree, an applicant must complete specific courses prior to submitting an *Application for Licensure*. The courses required differ depending on when you entered and completed your degree program, and whether you have an in-state or out-of-state degree.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR APPLICANTS WITH A CALIFORNIA DEGREE

If you entered an in-state degree program prior to August 1, 2012 and graduated prior to December 31, 2018, you are required to complete the courses listed below (unless identified on your transcript previously submitted for Associate registration).

Note: The below topics are also required for applicants who entered a degree program after August 1, 2012, but content is provided within the degree program, and proof of course completion not required.

Course	Required of:	Length	Content Required
1. Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	7 hours	Must be based on California law. See BPC** section 28.
2. Human Sexuality	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	10 hours	BPC section 25 and 16 CCR section 1807
3. Alcoholism and Chemical Substance Abuse and Dependency	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	15 hours	16 CCR section 1810
4. Aging, Long Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	10 hours	BPC section 4980.39
5. California Law and Professional Ethics	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	2 semester units or 3 quarter units	BPC section 4980.41

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REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR APPLICANTS WITH A CALIFORNIA DEGREE (continued)

Course	Required of:	Length	Content Required
6. Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection and Intervention	Applicants who entered a degree program between 01/01/1995 and 08/01/2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific number of hours if entered degree program before 12/31/03, but must cover assessment, detection and intervention • 15 hours if entered a degree program after 1/1/2004 	BPC section 4980.41
7. Psychological Testing	Applicants who entered a degree program between 01/01/2001 and 08/01/2012	2 semester units or 3 quarter units	BPC section 4980.41
8. Psychopharmacology	Applicants who entered a degree program between 01/01/2001 and 08/01/2012	2 semester units or 3 quarter units	BPC section 4980.41

REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR APPLICANTS WITH AN OUT-OF-STATE DEGREE

If your degree was earned out-of-state, you must complete all of the courses listed below.

Course	Length	Content Required
a) Mental Health Recovery Oriented Care and Methods of Service Delivery	45 hours or 3 semester units	See BPC section 4980.81.
b) California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81.
c) Diagnosis, Assessment, Prognosis and Treatment of Mental Disorders	2 semester units	See BPC section 4980.81.
d) Psychological Testing	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81.
e) Psychopharmacology	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81.

**REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR APPLICANTS WITH AN OUT-OF-STATE DEGREE
(continued)**

Course	Length	Content Required
f) Developmental Issues from Infancy to Old Age	15 hours or 1 semester unit <i>(if deficient in a single topic listed, may remediate by taking 3 hours of instruction on each missing topic)</i>	Instruction must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Issues from infancy to old age • The effects of developmental issues on individuals, couples and family relationships. • The psychological, psychotherapeutic, and health implications of developmental issues and their effects. • The understanding of the impact that personal and social insecurity, social stress, low educational levels, inadequate housing and malnutrition have on human development. See BPC section 4980.81 .
g) Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California	7 hours	See BPC sections 28 and 4980.81 and Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1807.2
h) Aging, Long Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse, End-of-Life and Grief	10 hours	See BPC section 4980.81 .
i) Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection and Intervention	15 hours	See BPC section 4980.81 .
j) Multicultural Development and Cross-Cultural Interaction	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81 .
k) Human Sexuality	10 hours	See BPC sections 25 and 4980.81 and Title 16, California Code of Regulations section 1807
l) Substance Use Disorders	15 hours	See BPC section 4980.81 .
m) Co-Occurring Disorders and Addiction	15 hours	See BPC section 4980.81 .

**REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR APPLICANTS WITH AN OUT-OF-STATE DEGREE
(continued)**

Course	Length	Content Required
n) Miscellaneous Content	No specific number of hours required, but content must be adequately covered within the applicant's coursework	Instruction must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childbirth, child rearing, parenting and step-parenting • Marriage, divorce and blended families • Cultural factors relevant to abuse of partners and family members • Poverty and deprivation • Financial and social stress • Effects of trauma • The psychological, psychotherapeutic, community and health implications of the matters and life events that arise in marriage and family relationships within a variety of California cultures See BPC section 4980.81 .

48. Do I need to take my additional coursework at a university?

No. Additional coursework may be taken from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), or an acceptable continuing education provider, and may be taken in-person or online.

49. Is my additional coursework too old?

Coursework may have been taken at any time in the past.

50. What do I need to know about the Six-Hour Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention requirement that takes effect January 1, 2021?

“Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention” (required of all applicants on and after January 1, 2021) does not have to be an actual course. If this content was included within your supervised experience, and you can obtain a written certification from the program’s director of training, or from your primary supervisor stating that the training was included within your supervised experience, it may be accepted in lieu of a course.

If this content was included within your qualifying degree program, you will need to obtain a written certification from the registrar or training director of your school or program stating that this coursework was included within the curriculum required for graduation, or within the coursework that was completed by you (if you submitted an Associate application after January 1, 2020, your *Degree Program Certification* may have already included this verification). Otherwise, this requirement may be met by taking a six-hour course from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the USDE, a school approved by the BPPE, or an acceptable continuing education provider.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.396

51. How can I provide verification of my experience if my supervisor is deceased or incapacitated?

The Board will review documentation on a case by case basis in order to make a determination. However, we recommend that you submit all of the following:

- If your supervisor is deceased, documentation such as a copy of the obituary
- The previously signed, original *Supervisor Responsibility Statement*
- The previously signed, original *Weekly Log* forms
- Documentation by the employer verifying employment of the supervisor and supervisee
- The letter of agreement for supervision if your supervisor was not employed by your employer

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.43.3; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

52. Do I need to resubmit fingerprints with my *Application for Licensure*?

Applicants do not need to resubmit fingerprints if one or more of the following applies at the time the Board receives the application:

- Applicant still possesses a current Associate registration number; or
- Applicant's Associate number has been cancelled for less than 30 days.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815

53. What happens once I submit my *Application for Licensure*?

The Board will evaluate your application and notify you either that:

- There are one or more deficiencies in your application. You will have one (1) year from the date of the initial deficiency notice to clear all deficiencies

OR

- You have been found eligible for examination, and will be provided with information on how to register.

Once you pass both required exams: Submit the [Request for Initial License Issuance](#) form with the required fee. Your license will be issued within 30 business days from the date of receipt.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

54. Do I need to maintain a current Associate registration number to participate in the clinical exam?

The Board encourages all individuals to maintain a current Associate registration and to continue recording experience hours until licensed as an LMFT, as a safeguard in the event that some of the hours submitted are unable to be accepted by the Board either now or in the future due to application abandonment and/or the “six-year rule” (see question 44 for more information).

Whether you are required by law to maintain a registration, however, will depend on the type of setting you are working in. If working in a private practice, you are required to maintain a current Associate registration until your LMFT license has been issued. If you are working in an exempt setting (an institution that is both non-profit and charitable, a school or a governmental entity), or other non-private practice setting, you are not required to maintain a registration once you have submitted your experience hours. However, your employer may require it as a condition of employment.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.01 and 4980.43

55. Must I continue to have supervision after my experience hours have been approved?

Once the required number of experience hours are gained, you must receive a minimum of one hour of direct supervisor contact per week for each practice setting in which direct clinical counseling is performed. Once the required number of experience hours are gained, further supervision for nonclinical practice shall be at the supervisor’s discretion.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

56. Once I pass both exams, can I start practicing independently?

No. A successful examinee still must submit a [Request for Initial License Issuance](#) form and fee before the Board will issue a LMFT license. Submit this form and fee upon completion of all licensure requirements – do not submit sooner or it will be rejected. Your license will be issued within 30 business days from the date of receipt. Independent practice cannot begin until the Board issues a license. Otherwise it is considered unlicensed practice, which is subject to disciplinary action by the Board.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980 and 4982