



School Certification for MFTs

In July 2007, a law was passed in Connecticut to provide school certification for Licensed MFTs. Connecticut is the first state in the nation to certify MFTs to be hired directly to work in the public schools. Regulations by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education (DHE) specify requirements for this certification. The regulations require that MFTs fulfill course requirements specific to the certification of MFTs in the schools, and complete a 300-hour practicum in a public school under the joint supervision of the school's Special Services and the MFT program. **The CCSU MFT program has developed a specialty track** for those students who wish to seek certification for employment as a School MFT, which includes a specialized practicum that covers the required course content specified in the Department of Higher Education regulations.

CCSU Approved Offerings for MFTs in the Schools Certification Sequence.

The following Sequence has been pre-approved at CCSU by the State Department of Education Certification Bureau for the Educator Certificate for Marriage and Family Therapists as meeting requirements specified in the regulations:

- 1) **MFT 592 – School-Based Family Counseling** - School-Based Family Counseling. MFT practice and intervention in public schools, school-based systems theory, learning theory, state and federal education laws pertaining to the health and education of children, and statutory requirements for mandated reporting, suspensions/ expulsions, and school/district accountability; strategies for communicating and collaborating with families about students' progress; school-based ethics, and policies and procedures governing special and general ed. services for collaboration, referral and placement.
- 2) **Practicum Placements** – Students must be placed in a public school for a minimum of 300 clock hours (easily obtained through the MFT program's requirement of 12 hours per week). Your MFT 593 and MFT 594 seminar meets the state's requirement for "joint supervision" between the school and the MFT program.
 - a. **MFT 593 - School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy Practicum and Seminar I.** Supervision of Marriage and Family practice in public schools with direct client contact. Covers school-based learning and systems theories, Federal and state education laws (e.g., IDEA and ADA); professional ethics and code of professional responsibility for educators; FERPA; statutory requirements for mandated reporting, suspensions and expulsions; and school and district accountability. Fulfills 1/2 of the required 300 hours of practicum for state certification.
 - b. **MFT 594 – School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy Practicum and Seminar II.** School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy Practicum and Seminar II Spring. Continuation of the two-semester School-Based Marriage and Family Therapy Practicum and Seminar. Further development of content areas covered in MFT 593. Fulfills the second 1/2 of the required 300 hours of practicum for state certification.
- 3) **ED 515 - School Law** - School Law Teachers study legal bases of chosen profession and develop more adequate understanding of federal, state, and local laws applicable to teachers and pupils of public school. Primary emphasis is placed on Connecticut statutes and judicial interpretations.
- 4) **SPED 501 – Education of the Special Learner** – Education of the Exceptional Learner Examines growth and development of students with disabilities, including those identified as gifted and talented, and methods for assessing, planning for and working effectively with these students. Meets State of Connecticut requirement for teacher certification (10 hours of off-campus field experience required). CT law requires fingerprinting and a criminal background check for the field experiences in this class. Fingerprinting must be completed prior to the beginning of class.
- 5) **MFT 505 – Counseling & Human Development Across the Lifespan or PSY 512** - The nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels with a focus on the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of growth. Psychosocial theories of development and counseling models will be addressed as they apply to the stages of the lifespan.

The above courses are all required to fulfill the certification requirements. In addition to meeting these course and practicum requirements, persons interested in the MFT School Certification must be "License-eligible"; you are automatically so when you graduate from the CCSU Master's program in MFT.

For Students enrolled in the MFT program, one course would count toward your required elective; there are two extra courses required beyond the regular MFT curriculum (6 credit hours).

Note: Students enrolled in the **Weekend Cohort Track** may also participate in the School-based Certification track; however, they must be aware that they would need to substitute MFT 593 and MFT 594 for the two practicum seminar courses that run during the regular week.

Post-Grads – The School-Based MFT Official Certificate Program (OCP) is a post-master's program in which persons interested in pursuing the School MFT Certification through the State Department of Education (SDE) may matriculate into an academic program to fulfill the requirements of SDE certification. The OCP provides access to the SDE pre-approved courses required for certification; an individualized Planned Program of Study is developed with an academic advisor to determine what courses the individual would need to take to fulfill the requirements. OCP program students would follow the curriculum as described above, including a 2-semester school-based practicum as prescribed by the SDE and the CCSU OCP. For further information, including how to apply, go to www.ccsu.edu/grad and look under "Advanced Official Certificate Programs."