

## **Grading and Assessment**

### **Grading**

Academic performance is evaluated by the faculty and is based upon the student's performance in his/her coursework. It is the responsibility of the faculty to inform students of assignments and corresponding due dates. Penalties for the failure to complete the assignment adequately or on time should be made known to the student at the beginning of the course or project. The faculty should discuss (via syllabus/discussion) with the students the criteria for success or failure.

Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average ("B" Average) at all times while enrolled as graduate students in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. Grades below "C" count in computing the GPA but do not carry credit toward a degree. Academic standards are set forth by the UA Graduate School <https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/about/academic-policies/scholastic-requirements/>.

The faculty considers the student's satisfactory progress toward the completion of his or her degree to be an issue of competence. Students who do not meet the minimum academic requirements will be placed on academic probation and/or dismissed from the program.

### **Clinical Skills Assessment**

In a clinical program, academic performance includes more than grades on specific assignments; it also includes the student's performance in meeting clinical obligations. Students are expected to be able to meet clinical competencies throughout the program, including engaging clients in the therapeutic process, assessing existing problems, and designing and implementing intervention strategies for improving outcomes.

The MFT faculty and supervisors evaluates students' clinical competency throughout their time in the program. These judgements are subjective in nature and based on live clinical supervision, observation of video tapes, and case discussion within supervision. Every effort is made to corroborate these judgments among all clinical faculty. To facilitate this, grades for clinical performance (e.g., HD 667 & HD 668) are based upon the discussion among all supervision faculty involved in each grading period. Feedback from that discussion is made available to each student in both written and verbal form at the completion of each semester in which the student is enrolled in either a clinical or supervisory practicum.

Supervisors will also complete quantitative evaluation via the Practicum Evaluation at the end of each semester. One meeting per month is dedicated to the review of students' clinical progress. When an area of concern is identified regarding a student's clinical performance, specific strategies will be implemented in clinical supervision to help the student develop the necessary skills. This is a normal part of the supervision experience. However, if the MFT faculty/clinical supervisor believes that the problem is not alleviated through clinical supervision, the faculty member/clinical supervisor will discuss the concern with the MFT Program Director. The "Minor Deficiency Procedures" will be initiated (see below). If the problem is not alleviated through the improvement process, the problems will be considered a "severe deficiency," and the "severe deficiency" procedure will be enacted.

The MFT Concentration's policy follows the UA graduate school policy regarding the evaluation of student performance in programs including a clinical component.

“In graduate programs that include clinical components, practicum experiences, internships, or other similar program requirements, each student's effectiveness will be given a broad-based evaluation by faculty and supervisors. Final decisions will be based on factors such as course grades, demonstrated clinical competence, personality factors, and relevant test scores. Many programs establish additional academic and/or professional requirements for their students. Failure to meet program requirements for academic progress and/or clinical components may result in the student's being dismissed from the program. Dismissal from a degree program also results in suspension (dismissal) from the Graduate School” (UA Graduate School Handbook).

### **Professional Competencies Assessment**

Students are expected to consistently interact in their work with faculty, clinical supervisors, internship placement supervisors, and other students in appropriate ways. Students are expected to adhere to the Capstone Family Therapy Clinic Policies and Procedures and off-site internship policies and procedures (if available). Students are to behave in professional fashion, taking care to discuss cases in confidential and sensitive ways, approaching colleagues with respect, and responding appropriately to feedback given by faculty and internship supervisors. When a student disagrees with the feedback of a faculty or site supervisor, the student is expected to discuss this with that person and not passively dismiss it or discuss it as a problem with other students and faculty. Similarly, students are expected to be sensitive when giving feedback to colleagues, recognizing when their advice may be ill timed or inappropriate to the situation.

Students must take appropriate steps to prevent their own mental health struggles from having a negative effect on their clients or others with whom they work, as judged by faculty or site supervisors. Students are expected to resolve any personal problems that impede their ability to be effective in their clinical work and/or their ability to be appropriate in their interaction with other students, faculty, or other professionals with whom they work.

Where students are unable to resolve their personal problems through their own efforts they may need to seek professional help. Where these issues are evident in the students' conduct/clinical performance, faculty will provide feedback to students and encourage them to address the problematic issues. In cases where students' emotional problems pose a risk to their clients, they may be immediately removed from cases and may be asked to immediately discontinue all clinical work. In cases where students fail to adequately address the problematic issues, the MFT faculty/clinical supervisor will discuss the concern with the MFT Program Director. The “Minor Deficiency Procedures” will be initiated (see below). If the problem is not alleviated through the improvement process, the problems may be considered a “severe deficiency,” and the “Severe Deficiency Procedures” will be enacted (see below).

### **Ethical and Legal Competencies Assessment**

Each student and faculty member are required to understand and adhere to the ethical and legal guidelines outlined in Alabama Law and the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Any breach of legal or ethical code of conduct by student may be grounds for remediation or dismissal. As determined by the

faculty, students found to have engaged in or to be engaging in ethical misconduct in their clinical work or in other areas, such as misrepresenting facts in clinical paperwork or in communication with faculty, or engaging in other ethically questionable conduct, may be subject to corrective measures in addition to the “Minor Deficiency Procedures” or “Severe Deficiency Procedures” described below. When deemed appropriate, this may be submitted as a violation of the UA code of academic misconduct.