



Program Handbook

Post-Baccalaureate
and Post-Masters
Certificates in
Marriage and
Family Therapy

Fall 2026



Welcome!

Dear Certificate in Marriage and Family Therapy Student,

The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC) functions in two ways in the Marriage and Family Sciences Department of the JFK School of Psychology and Social Sciences (JFKSOPSS).

If a student wishes to select certain course work to fulfill requirements for licensure not otherwise met by previous master's course or to otherwise enhance knowledge around marriage and family therapy (MFT). Clinical training courses are not eligible for PBC.

If a student wishes to enter the MA MFT program at National University to complete a full Master's program.

The Post-Masters Certificate (PMC) functions in a similar way in that it provides students with the opportunity to take additional coursework to either fulfill requirements for licensure or to expand their knowledge in the field of MFT with doctoral level course work. Clinical training courses are not eligible for PMC

In this program handbook the policies, procedures, processes, and expectations will be laid out for the PBC and for the PMC. Students are expected to read through the handbook and be aware of the various sections that apply to their program of study. Some of the information included in this handbook is universal, meaning it applies to all students at National University regardless of program, but also there is specific information about policies, procedures, processes, and expectations, that apply to students in JFKSOPSS, as well as the MFS Department.

It is the responsibility of the student in any program at National University to be familiar with the program handbook of the program they are in and to abide by the policies and expectations laid out in the handbook. Questions or concerns about how policies are applied, and procedures followed should be directed to program leadership.

As the program director for both the PBC and the PMC, I welcome each of you to the Marriage and Family Sciences Department and wish you luck in completing your program of study.



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1 Introduction to MFS Department





01 Introduction To MFS Department

Welcome from the Department Chair

Welcome to the Marriage and Family Sciences Department. The Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) programs include the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC) in MFT, Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) in MFT, Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT), Doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy (DMFT), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Marriage and Family Therapy. This handbook serves as the primary source of information regarding program-specific requirements, policies, and procedures for students enrolled in the Certificate in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) Programs. Students are responsible for reviewing this handbook and the current National University Catalog and complying with all applicable program and University requirements. This handbook is organized into sections that address:

- Program mission, goals, and student learning outcomes
- Academic and professional expectations
- Student support resources
- Program contacts and additional resources



To get the most from this handbook:

- Review the handbook in its entirety when you enter the program.
- Refer back to specific sections as questions arise throughout your training.
- Use the table of contents, bookmarks, or document search features available within your viewing platform to locate specific policies and procedures.
- Pay particular attention to sections related to Professional Standards and Expectations, Student Progression, Remediation, Probation, Dismissal, Complaints, and Appeals.

References to University policies throughout this handbook are provided for student convenience. University policies remain the official source for institution-wide requirements. Students are responsible for reviewing and complying with the current version of all applicable University policies and procedures. This handbook may be revised periodically to reflect changes in program requirements, accreditation standards, University policies, or professional practice expectations. Questions regarding this handbook or certificate program requirements should be directed to the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences at mfsdepartment@nu.edu.

Tracy Oliver, PhD, LMFT
Department Chair

MFS Program Leadership

The following are the Leadership in the MFS Department:

Patricia Postanowicz, Ph.D., Academic Program Director of MFT Certificate Programs

Julie Costello, Ph.D., Academic Program Director of MAMFT Program

Krista Speicher, DMFT, Academic Program Director of Doctoral MFT Programs

Tracy Oliver, Ph.D., Department Chair

Asha Sutton, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Academic Affairs



2 MFS Department-Wide Policies and Procedures





02 MFS Department-Wide Policies and Procedures

The following program policies are reviewed and revised as necessary. These policies are intended to be fair, equitable, and supportive of the mission and values of both the certificate and MFT programs and National University. If students have questions regarding any policies or any other information found in this handbook, they are encouraged to contact the Department Chair or the MFT Academic Program Directors (APD) to seek clarification.

Program Roles and Student Support

Need Help With	Contact	Email
Advising, registration, degree planning, financial aid questions	AFC / Advising Team	Advisor@nu.edu
Program policies, progression concerns	MFS Department	MFSDepartment@nu.edu
Clinical training questions (for those planning to apply for the MAMFT)	Clinical Administrative Team	MFTtraining@nu.edu

Academic and Finance Counselor (AFC)

Academic and Finance Counselor (AFCs) serve as a primary point of contact for students regarding University systems, degree planning, registration, and student support resources. AFCs assist students with course scheduling, degree completion planning, academic and administrative questions, and referrals to appropriate University services. Students are encouraged to maintain regular communication with their AFC throughout the program.

Academic Program Director (APD)

The Academic Program Directors (APD) provides academic leadership for the Certificate and MFT Programs and is responsible for oversight of curriculum, academic policies, accreditation compliance, program assessment, and student progression. The Academic Program Directors (APD) works collaboratively with faculty, advisors, and clinical leadership to support student success and ensure the quality and integrity of the program. Students may interact with the Academic Program Directors (APD) regarding program policies, progression concerns, professional standards matters, and other academic issues.



Program Faculty

Program Faculty teach academic coursework and support the development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions expected of marriage and family therapists. They are responsible for course instruction, assessment of student learning, academic mentoring, and evaluation of student progress toward the program's educational objectives, Program Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes. Program Faculty also contribute to curriculum development, program assessment, scholarship, service, and professional practice.

The Department of Marriage and Family Sciences is comprised of full-time and part-time faculty members trained in systemic theory and practice. Faculty bring diverse professional, academic, and cultural backgrounds to the program and are committed to preparing competent, ethical, and culturally responsive marriage and family therapists. Current information regarding Program Faculty is maintained on the MFT Programs website.

Students

Students are active participants in their own academic, professional, and clinical development. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with University and program requirements, maintaining professional and ethical behavior, communicating with appropriate program personnel, seeking support when concerns arise, and successfully completing all academic, clinical training, and graduation requirements.

Collaborative Student Support Model

The MFT Programs utilize a collaborative approach to student support and success. Program Faculty, Academic and Finance Counselors, the Academic Program Director (APD), and other authorized University personnel work together to support student learning, progression, professional development, and clinical training.

Information related to a student's academic performance, professional development, progression, well-being, or ability to meet program requirements may be shared among appropriate members of the program team as permitted by University policy and applicable law. This collaborative approach allows the program to identify concerns early, coordinate resources and support, promote student success, and support timely intervention when concerns arise.

Students should be aware that the collaborative sharing of information among appropriate members of the program team is intended to support student development, academic success, and successful progression through the program.

Licensure Information

The certificate programs are not intended to meet the requirements for licensure on their own. While each licensing board serves as the ultimate authority regarding the laws, regulations, and requirements governing the practice of marriage and family therapy within its jurisdiction, determining where to begin the licensure process can be challenging. To assist students in planning for licensure, the MFT Programs provide state-specific licensure information and links to licensing board resources through the [MAMFT State Specific Information](#) resource.



Student Progress and Success

Tracking Student Progress

Student progress is monitored throughout the program using academic performance, course evaluations, professional behavior indicators, Student Progress Evaluations, and clinical performance measures, when applicable. Students receive feedback throughout the curriculum to support professional development, successful progression, and achievement of program requirements.

When concerns related to academic performance, professional behavior, engagement, clinical readiness, or student success are identified, faculty or staff may submit an At-Risk referral. Referred students may be reviewed through the Student Success Summit (SSS), a collaborative faculty process designed to identify resources, supports, and interventions that may promote student growth and successful progression through the program.

Student Support and Review Processes

To support student success, the MFT Programs utilize several processes designed to address concerns at the earliest appropriate level. These processes serve different purposes and are used based on the nature and severity of the concern.

At-Risk Referral and Student Success Summit (SSS): Used when concerns related to academic performance, engagement, professional behavior, well-being, or student success are identified. The purpose is to connect students with resources, support, and early intervention strategies.

Professional Standards and Expectations Committee (PSEC): Used when significant concerns arise regarding professional, ethical, academic, behavioral, or clinical standards. The committee may recommend support, remediation, probation, or dismissal, depending on the nature of the concern.

Generally, concerns are addressed at the lowest appropriate level whenever possible. However, the program may implement a higher-level review process when concerns are significant, repeated, or involve client welfare, professional ethics, or program integrity.

Repeated concerns, including multiple At-Risk referrals, or a single significant incident, may result in referral to the Professional Standards and Expectations Committee (PSEC) for further review.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) Policy

Federal regulations define Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in distance education as predictable, scheduled interactions between instructors and students, including instruction, feedback, content-related responses, discussion facilitation, or other accreditor-approved activities.

Students in the marriage and family therapy programs regularly receive written or audio feedback on course assignments, supporting consistent engagement with faculty. Many MFT courses have a required synchronous meeting with their faculty. Additional meetings with faculty or program leadership may also be required. Students are expected to participate in all required RSI, whether it is scheduled as part of a course or added to support further interaction and engagement.

Meeting Request Participation Requirement

Student participation is central to ongoing professional development and, when necessary, remediation efforts. Thus, students must respond to all meeting requests from faculty, staff, or administrators in a reasonable timeframe. Ignoring, refusing, or in other ways disputing these requests constitutes a violation of these Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior.



University Policies Applicable to all MFT Students

In addition to the program-specific requirements described in this handbook, students are responsible for reviewing and complying with all applicable National University policies, procedures, and requirements, which are published in the University Catalog. While not an exhaustive list, MFT students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with University policies and resources related to:

- Attendance Procedures
- Class Drop and Withdrawal
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Academic Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy
- Student Withdrawal from the University
- Administrative Withdrawal
- Graduation Requirements
- Financial Obligations and Release of Records
- Students with Disabilities
- Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination
- FERPA
- Student Educational Records
- Student Grievance Process
- Safety and Security
- Privacy Policy
- Licensure and Certification

MFT Professional Standards, Ethics, and Student Conduct

The following sections give students information about Ethics, Conduct Expectations and Appeals Process. Students are required to review the following carefully and additional information can be found Here: [MFS Community Culture, Standards and Expectations, and Appeal Policies](#)

Learning Environment and Program Climate

The MFT Programs and National University are committed to fostering a learning environment characterized by respect, professionalism, inclusion, safety, and appreciation for diverse perspectives and experiences. Students are expected to engage respectfully with peers, faculty, supervisors, staff, clients, and community members and to contribute to a learning environment that supports learning, professional growth, self-reflection, and ethical practice.

The MFT Programs value diversity in all its forms and recognizes that graduate education and clinical training often involve discussions of complex and sensitive topics. Students are expected to approach these discussions with openness, professionalism, cultural humility, curiosity, and respect for differing viewpoints and life experiences. The program is committed to maintaining an educational environment free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and other prohibited conduct. Students should review the current University policies related to student well-being, safety, equity, and nondiscrimination for additional information regarding student rights, responsibilities, reporting options, and support resources.

The MFT Programs value student engagement and recognize that students play an important role in the learning community and the ongoing improvement of the program. Students are encouraged to provide feedback regarding their educational experiences and may participate in opportunities for student leadership, program improvement, student organizations, advisory groups, committees, and other collaborative initiatives offered by the program and University. Student feedback is considered an important component of the program's continuous improvement efforts and helps support the ongoing development of curriculum, clinical training experiences, student support services, and overall program effectiveness.



Anti-Discrimination Policy

National University and the MFT Programs are committed to providing an educational and clinical training environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and other prohibited conduct. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with University policies and the professional values of the marriage and family therapy profession.

The MFT Programs value diversity and recognize that individuals bring a wide range of personal, cultural, social, and professional experiences to the learning environment. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, age, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender identity, geographic background, health status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and other aspects of individual and group identity.

Students are expected to engage with others in a respectful, professional, and culturally responsive manner throughout their academic and professional experiences. Consistent with the values of the marriage and family therapy profession, students are expected to develop awareness, knowledge, and skills related to working effectively with diverse individuals, couples, families, and communities. Consideration of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and cultural responsiveness is integrated throughout the curriculum, clinical training experiences, Program Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes.

For additional information regarding student rights, reporting options, and University policies related to discrimination, harassment, and equal opportunity, students should consult the current University Catalog and other official University resources.

Confidentiality Policy and Student Acknowledgement

Students are required to complete the Student Acknowledgement Form during their first course, at a minimum, confirming that they have reviewed this handbook and understand the program's expectations regarding confidentiality, professional conduct, and participation in training activities.

MFT training involves both professional and personal development. Throughout the program, students engage in self-reflection, clinical skill development, professional growth, and discussion of personal and professional experiences relevant to their development as therapists. Students should exercise discretion regarding the personal information they choose to share and are encouraged to disclose only information they are comfortable discussing in academic settings.

Faculty and staff are expected to treat student disclosures with professionalism and respect. However, students should understand that the MFT Programs utilize a collaborative training model. Information relevant to a student's academic performance, professional development, professional conduct, progression, well-being, or ability to meet program requirements may be shared among appropriate Program Faculty, University administrators, and other authorized University personnel when reasonably necessary to support student development, client welfare, clinical training, program operations, or compliance with University policies and applicable legal requirements.

Because Program Faculty, Program Leadership and University staff and Leadership, work collaboratively to support student learning and professional development, information shared by students in coursework, or other program-related settings should not be considered confidential from members of the program team who have a legitimate educational or training-related need to know. Information will not be disclosed outside of authorized individuals except as permitted or required by law, University policy, professional obligations, or circumstances involving health, safety, legal proceedings, or other situations requiring disclosure.



AAMFT Ethical Code Policy

All students, Program Faculty, Program Clinical Faculty, and Local Clinical Supervisors are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the current edition of the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Ethical practice is a foundational expectation of the MFT Programs and the marriage and family therapy profession. Students are expected to make decisions and conduct themselves in a manner that promotes client welfare, professional integrity, and responsible clinical practice.

The AAMFT Code of Ethics is introduced in coursework and reinforced throughout the curriculum, clinical training experiences, and supervision process. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the provisions of the Code of Ethics and for complying with applicable ethical standards prior to engaging in clinical work, supervision activities, or other professional responsibilities.

MFT Professional Standards and Expectations Policy

The MFT Programs prepare students for entry into a profession that requires academic competence, professional behavior, ethical conduct, cultural responsiveness, and accountability. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with University policies, the standards of the marriage and family therapy profession, the AAMFT Code of Ethics, and the expectations outlined by the program.

The MFT Professional Standards and Expectations document describes the professional values, behavioral expectations, and review processes used when concerns arise regarding a student's academic, professional, clinical, or ethical conduct. Students are responsible for reviewing and complying with the complete policy, which is published here: [MFT Programs Page](#).

Professional Standards and Expectations Committee (PSEC)

The Professional Standards and Expectations Committee (PSEC) is the program-level review process used when significant concerns arise regarding a student's ability to meet the professional, ethical, academic, behavioral, or clinical expectations of the program. The purpose of the process is to support student development, protect client welfare, uphold professional standards, and maintain the integrity of the profession.

Students may be referred to the Professional Standards and Expectations Committee (PSEC) following concerns regarding academic performance, professionalism, ethics, clinical readiness, or professional conduct. Referrals may occur when a student accumulates multiple documented concerns (e.g., repeated At-Risk referrals, repeated CDC reviews, or other documented concerns) or when a single incident is determined to be sufficiently serious to warrant immediate review. The Program reserves the right to initiate a PSEC review whenever concerns regarding professional standards, client welfare, or program integrity arise.

The Program is not required to utilize every level of intervention, support, remediation, warning, or committee review prior to initiating a PSEC review.

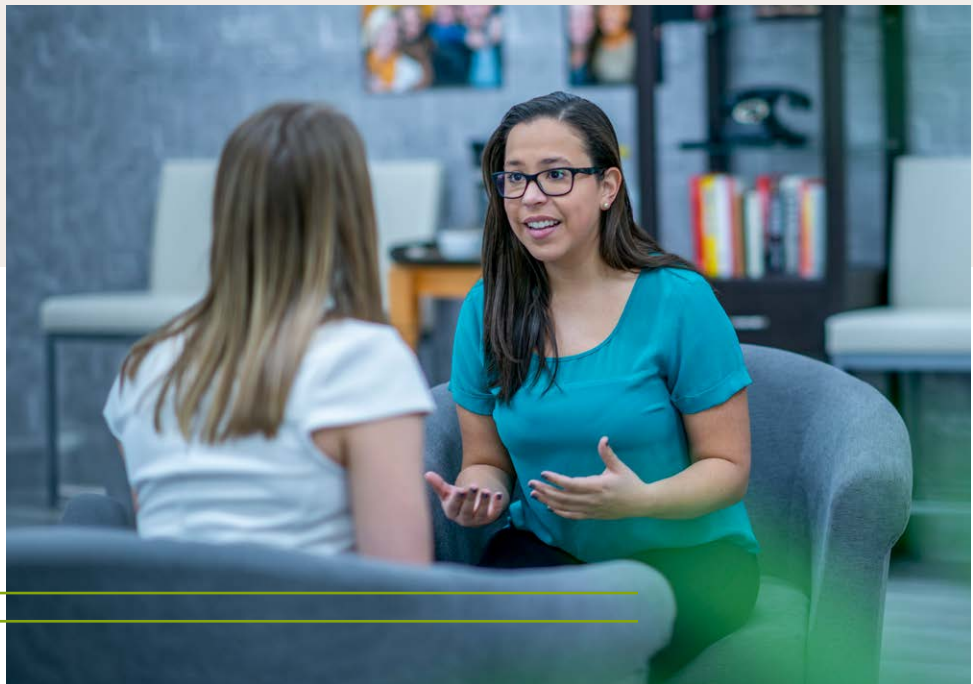
When appropriate, concerns may be addressed through consultation, recommendations, remediation, probation, or dismissal. Students involved in a PSEC review are provided notice of concerns, an opportunity to respond, and access to applicable appeal procedures. Based on the outcome of the student's program review, students may be ineligible for other SBS or licensure-track programs.

Detailed PSEC policies and procedures are published on the [MFT Programs Webpage](#).



3 Student Resources





03 Student Resources

Key University Services and Resources

- Academic and Finance Counseling
- Enrollment Services
- Office of the Registrar
- Disability/ADA Services
- Academic Success Center
- University Library
- Student Portal
- National University Student Email Address
- Office of Student Affairs
- Career Services
- Student Wellness

The list above is not comprehensive. Students should consult the current University Catalog and other official University publications for the most current versions of applicable policies and procedures. University policies and requirements may be revised from time to time, and students remain responsible for complying with the current version of all applicable University requirements.

Minimum Technology Requirements and Training

Because the MFT Programs are delivered primarily through online instruction and technology-supported clinical training, students are responsible for maintaining access to the technology, equipment, internet connectivity, and software necessary to successfully participate in coursework and clinical training activities.

Minimum technology requirements, system specifications, and related technology guidance are maintained through official University resources. Students should consult the current University Catalog and other official University publications for the most current technology requirements.



Technology Training

Students are expected to complete all required technology orientations, trainings, and onboarding activities associated with participation in the MFT Programs. Program technology may include learning management systems, videoconferencing platforms, and other technology tools utilized by the University or the program.

Students will receive information, orientation, and training regarding required technology at appropriate points throughout the program. Additional technology training and support resources may be provided by the University, Program Faculty, Program Clinical Faculty, Academic and Finance Counselor, or other authorized personnel.

Program technologies, training requirements, and support resources may change over time. Students are responsible for completing required training and utilizing approved technology systems in accordance with University, program, clinical training, and applicable legal or ethical requirements.

Resources Available to Students When Experiencing Difficulties

The MFT Programs are committed to supporting student growth, development, and success. When concerns are identified regarding academic performance, professional behavior, clinical readiness, ethical conduct, personal well-being, or progression through the program, students may be asked or required to participate in support, remediation, or development activities designed to address identified concerns and promote successful progression.

Depending on the nature of the concern, support and remediation activities may include, but are not limited to, referral to University academic support resources, consideration of a leave of absence, referral for therapy services or medical intervention within the student's local community, development of an academic, behavioral, or professional growth plan, additional faculty mentoring, adjustments to course sequencing, or additional clinical training experiences when appropriate. Students may be required to participate in and complete elements of a support, remediation, or professional development plan as a condition of continued progression in the program.

All recommendations and interventions are intended to support student growth and success while maintaining the professional standards of the marriage and family therapy profession. At the same time, the program has an obligation to protect the welfare of clients, students, and the broader community. When concerns arise, the program seeks to balance student support with its responsibility to ensure readiness for professional practice and compliance with academic, ethical, clinical, and professional standards.

If Program Faculty determine that a student is unable to demonstrate the personal, professional, ethical, academic, or clinical readiness necessary for effective practice as a marriage and family therapist, the student may be advised regarding alternative educational or professional pathways consistent with applicable program policies and procedures.



Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures

Part of becoming a professional marriage and family therapist is learning to address questions, concerns, disagreements, and grievances in a respectful and professional manner. In most situations, concerns can be effectively resolved through direct communication with the individuals most closely involved in the matter. Students are encouraged to communicate directly with faculty, supervisors, advisors, or staff, as appropriate, and to make reasonable efforts to resolve concerns at the lowest appropriate level before seeking additional review.

The MFT Programs encourage respectful dialogue, collaborative problem-solving, and professional communication. Learning to address concerns constructively and engage in appropriate conflict resolution is an important component of professional development. Students should follow the escalation process below when seeking assistance with academic, clinical, or administrative concerns.

Step	Academic and Clinical Concerns	Administrative Concerns
Level 1	Faculty Member / Professor	Academic and Finance Counselor
Level 2	Academic Program Director (APD) <i>(For clinical training concerns, students should first contact the Clinical Administrative Team.)</i>	Associate Director of Student Services
Level 3	Department Chair	Director or Senior Director of Student Services
Level 4	Assistant Dean	Office of the Provost
Level 5	Dean	Formal Grievance Process
Level 6	Formal Grievance Process	

Students should utilize the formal grievance process only after appropriate efforts have been made to resolve concerns through the established escalation process, unless otherwise directed by University policy.

Request for Faculty Change Policy

The MFT Programs prepare future marriage and family therapists to work effectively with individuals who hold different perspectives, communication styles, expectations, and approaches to professional practice. As part of this developmental process, students and faculty are expected to make reasonable efforts to address misunderstandings, disagreements, and concerns through respectful communication and problem-solving.

Requests to change faculty assignments are not ordinarily granted due to personality differences, communication preferences, or teaching style preferences alone. Students are encouraged to first discuss concerns directly with the faculty member whenever appropriate.

After reasonable efforts have been made to resolve a concern, students may contact their Academic and Finance Counselor to obtain information regarding the Faculty Change Request process. Students are strongly encouraged to provide relevant documentation regarding their concerns, including steps taken to address the issue and any supporting communications or information that may assist in the review of the request.



Unified Program Appeals Policy and Procedures

Students have the right to request review of certain program-level decisions through the Social and Behavioral Sciences Division Unified Program Appeals Process. This process applies to decisions arising from program review committees and other program-level actions, including matters related to academic performance standards, professional standards reviews, sanctions, remediation requirements, and program dismissal.

The appeals process is designed to promote fairness, consistency, and due process. Appeals are limited to specific grounds and must be submitted within the timelines and procedures established by the policy.

Students need to review the complete Unified Program Appeals Policy and Procedures before initiating an appeal. The full policy is published on the [MFT Programs Webpage](#) in the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences Community Culture, Standards, and Expectations document.

Student Support Services

National University offers a variety of academic, professional, and personal support services designed to promote student success throughout the program. Students are encouraged to utilize available resources and work with their Academic and Finance Counselor (AFC) when assistance is needed to identify appropriate services or support options. Students seeking accommodations should contact the appropriate University accessibility services office or speak with their assigned AFC.

Students may have access to a variety of University resources and services, including:

- Academic support and coaching
- Library and research services
- Career development resources
- Academic and financial advising
- Accessibility and accommodation services
- Student engagement and leadership opportunities
- Technology support services
- Registrar and enrollment services
- Clinical training support resources
- Student wellness and well-being resources
- Equity, inclusion, and support services
- Alumni and professional development resources

Students should consult the current University Catalog and official University websites for the most current information regarding available services, eligibility requirements, contact information, and operating procedures.



4 Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC)





04 Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC)

In this section, students will find policies and procedures specific to the PBC within the MFS Department at National University. As stated above, there are two pathways for students pursuing the PBC.

One is to do a stand-alone certificate, in which the student (along with program staff and leadership) create a set of course work which fulfills the needs of the student to either expand their knowledge of the field of MFT or meets the curriculum requirements needed for student to apply for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

The other is a pathway for students to complete a PBC as a basis for admission to the MA MFT program. Both options will be discussed below in this section, first starting with policies and procedures which apply to both types of students and then focusing on each pathways separately to ensure that students in each option are clear as to policies, procedures, and expectations related to their specific pathway.

Policies, Procedures, Processes and Expectations for all PBC students

Congratulations on the decision to pursue a Post-Baccalaureate certificate here at National University. We are excited to work with you on this journey and hope that you will find the coursework you are taking both challenging and fulfilling. The decision to pursue higher education is an important step, and we are here to support you as you pursue your individual goals using this certificate.

All PBC students will engage in coursework which is at a Master's level. This means that the courses have been designed for students who have completed a bachelor's degree and require coursework beyond their bachelor's. To complete a PBC, 12 credits must be taken and all courses within those 12 credits must be completed according to university policy before the certificate is awarded. All requirements that the University has for students to be considered successful and earn a certificate must also be met and students in the PBC should familiarize themselves with any University policies and guidelines as well.

Students in the PBC are required to adhere to the same policies, procedures, processes and expectations as students in any other program within the MFS Department as outlined above.

In the next section, policies and procedures related to students pursuing the PBC only option will be discussed.



Policies, Procedures, Processes and Expectations

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC)-Only students

Students coming to complete a stand-alone certificate often have previous master's level coursework completed and need additional coursework to fulfill the curriculum requirements for licensure as an MFT. Additionally, some students may want to complete coursework to expand their knowledge in marriage and family therapy or for some other requirement related to their professional journey. All students who are pursuing the PBC-only option need to be aware of the following:

1. PBC-only students are held to the same standards and expectations as students in any other program within the MFS Department.
2. PBC-only students are required to choose course work which aligns with their professional goals and desired reason for obtaining the PBC.
3. Clinical training courses (i.e., practicum and internships) are not eligible for PBC courses.

Enrollment

As students begin discussions with our enrollment team about the PBC-only option, students should be aware that National University will offer a variety of course work options and it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the courses they choose are aligned with the reasons they are pursuing the certificate. National University, the JFK School of Psychology and Social Sciences, and the leadership within the MFS Department cannot guarantee that coursework taken will fulfill the requirements for licensure in any particular state. **It is incumbent upon the student to provide documentation to the program leadership of the coursework needed so that the degree plan can be built.**

Getting Started

Students in the PBC-only option will begin coursework with the first course in their degree plan, as set out and agreed to by them with enrollment. Students will need to ensure that they have all required technology prior to their start date and if any additional resources are needed, students are encouraged to explore those with enrollment prior to their start date.

Students in the PBC-only option can take courses one at a time or can overlap the course work, in accordance with policies governing how courses are taken in the MFS Department. Any changes to schedule need to be made through academic advising. **Once a degree plan has been set, students cannot add or change courses without the prior approval of programmatic leadership. Any potential use of previous coursework for transfer credit for the certificate will need to be discussed and approved prior to enrolling in the certificate. A maximum of one three credit course will be allowed to transfer in, using the transfer rules of the MFS Department and the University. Coursework from a conferred degree cannot be applied to a certificate.**

Completing the Certificate

Once a student has successfully completed the 12 credits (4 courses) in their degree plan, the student will be considered successful in their completion of the certificate. All procedures related to the closing out of the degree, completing financial aid exit paperwork and the registrar conferring the certificate will need to be followed by the student to ensure that the program is closed out.

Students in the PBC-only option are held to the same academic standards as students in any other program in the MFS Department. Satisfactory academic progress and adherence to all academic standards, including standards of academic and professional behavior, are required for a student to complete the certificate successfully.



Clinical Training

Students in the PBC-only option will not have the option to complete any part of the clinical training required for licensure as a PBC student. Only students enrolled in the PBC-pathway to MAMFT will have clinical training as part of their journey and only once those students are fully enrolled in the MAMFT program.

No clinical training coursework or supervision will be available to students in the PBC-only option.

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC)-Pathway to MAMFT students

Students who enroll in the PBC-Pathway to MAMFT option should have the goal of obtaining a Masters in MFT as their reason for enrolling in this option. The PBC-pathway is an opportunity for students to take 4 specifically chosen courses which will give students both the foundational knowledge of MFT and also the chance to determine if they are interested and capable of meeting the rigors of a masters program in MFT.

The courses that are available to students in this option are set and not available to change by the student. Those courses are MFT 6301, MFT 6302, MFT 6303, and MFT 6304.

Evaluation of Academic Progress and Program Fit

At the end of every course in the Pathway certificate, students will be evaluated by their faculty to address strengths the student displayed and any challenges that the student faced in the course. Students will have a chance to evaluate themselves as well and discussions with faculty about performance and expectations will be an integral part of each course within the certificate pathway.

The evaluation for each course will be tracked for each student and as the student completes the forth course in the certificate pathway, students will be given information about next steps. If a student's evaluations have met a certain standard, information will be given about the process to apply to the MAMFT program once the certificate is completed. Students who have struggled to complete coursework at the expected standard, or who have had challenges related to behavior or comportment, will be referred to program leadership and may or may not be offered the opportunity to apply for the full MAMFT program.

Successful completion of the certificate does not guarantee admission to the MAMFT program, all students will still need to apply and go through additional processes for acceptance into the full MAMFT program.

Students in the PBC pathway to MAMFT will be expected to adhere to all standards and expectations for students in both the PBC and the MAMFT program. Students in the pathway should familiarize themselves with the academic and behavioral standards referenced in this handbook under the section **MFS Department-Wide Policies and Procedures.**

Applied Credits and Transfer Credits

Students who decide and are invited to pursue the MAMFT after the PBC is completed will be able to apply the 12 credits earned from the PBC to the MAMFT, thus resulting in no additional credits to meet requirements based on their intended state of licensure. Students who have completed previous coursework prior to enrolling in the PBC and wish to have that course work evaluated for transfer must complete the process for transfer credit evaluation through enrollment. **Only 1 three credit course may be transferred in to the PBC and only courses which are evaluated to be in alignment with the coursework offered as part of the Pathway certificate will be considered. Courses which fall out of the certificate coursework can be evaluated for transfer in to the MAMFT program at the time of enrollment for certificate, but this does not guarantee admission into the MAMFT program. The transfer credit policy as outlined in the MAMFT handbook will be followed for anyone seeking to transfer credits in to the MAMFT program.**



Completion of the Certificate and Pathway to MAMFT

Once a student has completed the 12 credits in the certificate and has been cleared to apply for the full program, the student will be given instructions on how to proceed with the application and other steps to be considered for enrollment in the MAMFT program. Students who are not cleared to begin this process will be given options by academic advising for next steps. **Decisions made by academic leadership regarding the offering of the opportunity to apply to the full MAMFT are final and not subject to appeal.**

MAMFT Application- Next Steps After PBC Pathway Completion

Admission to a National University Master's program requires a conferred bachelor's degree from an accredited academic institution. To be eligible to be invited to apply for the MA in MFT, the four designated courses in the Cert-MAMFT Pathway must also be successfully completed.

In addition, a current resume or curriculum vitae and a copy of degree transcripts are required. Applicants will also complete an application packet that reviews program requirements and expectations. The packet requires applicants to review the MAMFT Program website and the University Catalog regarding requirements for pursuing licensure, as well as program and graduation requirements for MFT training. Applicants are expected to develop a preliminary plan for pursuing licensure, including exploring requirements related to clinical training sites, supervision, and post-graduate licensure requirements. Applicants are also required to respond to a series of questions referred to as a "Statement of Intent" so that MAMFT Program faculty may evaluate the applicant's interest in and readiness for the MAMFT Program, as well as review a brief sample of the applicant's writing. Applicants should compose these responses in their own words and should not use generative AI to create or substantially revise their responses.

Applicants will also be required to submit a response to one of two provided prompts. Applicants are expected to use their own words and refrain from using generative AI to create or substantially revise their responses. This writing sample is intended to evaluate the applicant's scholarly writing skill level, so other than some basic proofreading and spell checking, the submission should be entirely created and edited by the applicant.

Applicants complete a Statement of Professional Ethics and Conduct, in which they are required to report any previous ethical and/or criminal behavior that may be relevant to training and practicing as a marriage and family therapist. Because state laws require licensed marriage and family therapists to be of good moral character, any prospective student who has been convicted of a felony prior to or subsequent to admission is required to immediately inform the MAMFT Academic Program Director (APD) or the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences so that the program can determine the most appropriate course of action. In addition, a felony conviction may disqualify a student from some clinical training sites, thereby making it difficult or impossible to complete the requirements of the MAMFT Program. Once all required documentation has been received, MAMFT applicants must participate in a group synchronous interview with a current MFT faculty member. In addition to determining whether the MAMFT Program is a good fit for the applicant's goals, another purpose of this meeting is to inform applicants about how licensing regulations may differ across jurisdictions and to review potential transfer credits, if applicable. After all required materials have been submitted and the interview has been completed, an admission determination can be made.

All students are required to complete a background check prior to beginning clinical training. Some applicants may be required to complete the background check as part of the admission process to determine whether past criminal history may impede their ability to participate in clinical training or pursue licensure.



Transfer Credit Policy

A core goal of the MAMFT Program is to prepare students for licensure as marriage and family therapists and for professional practice within the field. Eligible transfer credits may be applied to the program in accordance with accreditation standards, state licensure requirements, and University policies. In addition to the University's Transfer Credit Policy, the following minimum requirements must be met for transfer credits from non-National University behavioral sciences programs to be considered:

- Transfer course content must be substantially equivalent to the content covered in the corresponding MAMFT course.
- Credit Received (CR) grades are not accepted. The transfer course must have a corresponding letter grade.
- Transfer credits may not be applied to clinical training courses or core MFT courses.
- For California applicants:
 - Transfer credits must meet applicable California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) requirements.



5 Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) in Marriage and Family Therapy





05 Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) in Marriage and Family Therapy

Policies, Procedures, Processes and Expectations for Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) Students

Students coming to complete a stand-alone certificate often have previous master's level coursework completed and need additional coursework to fulfill the curriculum requirements for licensure as an MFT. Additionally, some students may want to complete coursework to expand their knowledge in marriage and family therapy or for some other requirement related to their professional journey. All students who are pursuing the PMC need to be aware of the following:

1. PMC students are held to the same standards and expectations as students in any other program within the MFS Department.
2. PMC students are required to choose course work which aligns with their professional goals and desired reason for obtaining the PMC.
3. Clinical training courses (i.e., practicum and internships) are not eligible for PMC courses.

Enrollment

As students begin discussions with our enrollment team about the PMC, students should be aware that National University offers a variety of course work options and it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the courses they choose are aligned with the reasons they are pursuing the certificate. National University, the JFK School of Psychology and Social Sciences, and the leadership within the MFS Department cannot guarantee that coursework taken will fulfill the requirements for licensure in any particular state. **It is incumbent upon the student to provide documentation to program leadership of the coursework needed so that the degree plan can be built.**



Getting Started

Students in the PMC will begin coursework with the first course in their degree plan, as set out in their agreement with enrollment. Students will need to ensure they have all required technology prior to their start date and if any additional resources are needed, students are encouraged to explore those with enrollment prior to their start date.

Students in the PMC can take courses one at a time or can overlap courses in accordance with policies governing how courses are taken in the MFS Department. Any changes to schedule need to be made through academic advising. **Once a degree plan has been set, students cannot add or change courses without the prior approval of programmatic leadership. Any potential use of previous coursework for transfer credit for the certificate will need to be discussed and approved prior to enrolling in the certificate. Applicants can only transfer in a maximum of one three-credit course, using the transfer rules of the MFS Department and the University.** Coursework from a conferred degree cannot be applied to a certificate.

Completing the Certificate

Once a student has successfully completed the 18 credits (6 courses) in their degree plan, the student will be considered to have successfully completed the certificate. All procedures related to the closing out of the degree, completing financial aid exit paperwork and the registrar conferring the certificate will need to be followed by the student to ensure that the program is closed out.

Students in the PMC are held to the same academic standards as students in any other program in the department. Satisfactory academic progress and adherence to all academic standards, including standards of academic and professional behavior, are required for a student to complete the certificate successfully.

Clinical Training

No clinical training coursework or supervision is available to students in the PMC.



