



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.**

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SCHOOL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SCIENCE

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USM MFT Program  
Spring Data and Reaccreditation Report  
May 15, 2025

Prepared by:  
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MFT Program Director

Dear Communities of Interest:

This report is being disseminated to update you on the MFT program fall and spring data and to share additional updates about changes we have made in the program based on the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy (COAMFTE) stipulations assigned during our recent renewal process. After you have reviewed our data and information, we ask that you click on the link at the end of this report to provide feedback.

Sincerely,  
Ben Jones, PhD, LMFT

### Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 Data

Please review the Southern Miss Outcomes Based Education (OBE) Framework for Assessing Program Achievement at [southern-miss-outcomes-based-education-framework-for-assessing-program-achievement.pdf \(usm.edu\)](https://southern-miss-outcomes-based-education-framework-for-assessing-program-achievement.pdf). Program goals, student learning outcomes (SLO), and the data collection process are outlined in our OBE framework. Data collected and aggregated are presented in the table below. The SLOs regarding summer data are not included in this report given that they have not yet been assessed in this cycle. The final data review will take place during the faculty data review meeting at the end of summer semester 2025.

Data Provided	Met	Not Met	Action Taken	Evaluation of Action Taken
<b>SLO1</b>				
<b>*Target: 80% passing score (C or better) on FAM 656 Final Exam</b> 91% earned a passing score, N=11 (10 passed)	X			
<b>**Target: 80% passing score (C or better) on FAM 610 Final paper/video project</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=11	X			
<b>SLO2</b>				
<b>*Target: 80% passing score (C or better) on FAM 661 Treatment Plan assignment</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=11	X			
<b>SLO4</b>				
<b>*80% of students will receive a passing score (C or better) on FAM 659 Final Exam</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=11	X			
<b>*Target: 80% passing score (C or better) on FAM 659 State Licensure Requirement Project</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=11	X			
<b>**Target: 70% of students will pass AMFTRB Practice Exam Domain 6</b> 79% passed domain 6, N=14 (11 passed)	X			
<b>SLO6</b>				
<b>*Target: 80% passing score (C or better) on FAM 615 Gender and Culture Paper</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=14	X			
<b>SLO9</b>				
<b>**Target: 80% passing score (C or better), clinical research project, FAM 790</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=14	X			
<b>**Target: 80% passing score (C or better), couples paper/video, FAM 610</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=14	X			

<b>SLO10</b>				
<b>*Target: 80% passing score (C or better), FAM 602 Genogram grades</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=11	<b>X</b>			
<b>SLO12</b>				
<b>*Target: 80% passing score, Telehealth legal and ethical training</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=11	<b>X</b>			
<b>*Target: 80% passing score (C or better), Telehealth Quiz in FAM 790</b> 100% earned a passing score, N=11	<b>X</b>			

\* 1<sup>st</sup> year student assessment

\*\* 2<sup>nd</sup> year student assessment

\*\*\* both year assessment

All program SLOs for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 have been met.

### **Program Reaccreditation Process Updates**

Toward the end of Fall 2024, we received notice of our renewal of accreditation from COAMFTE after completing the campus visit portion of the process that previous spring. As part of our renewal process, we were given three stipulations that we were asked to address by the end of Summer 2025. What follows is a brief version of a much more detailed response that we are submitting to COAMFTE. If you would like additional details about our response to these stipulations so that you can further understand the steps that were taken, you can email the program director at [b.maurice.jones@usm.edu](mailto:b.maurice.jones@usm.edu) to be provided a copy of this response.

#### **Stipulation 1: The program needs to provide evidence that the Program Director's evaluation data was reviewed and any plans to support continued effectiveness.**

We provided a detailed overview of how data has historically been collected about the Program Director from the student level, and we designed and implemented a new Program Director peer evaluation to be completed by the other faculty members. The results of all of these pieces of feedback are shared with the Program Director in conjunction with annual review processes that happen with the School Director.

#### **Stipulation 2: The program needs to demonstrate the program faculty evaluation methods and data from Communities of Interest that are used to determine contributions and effectiveness and any plans to support further development and effectiveness for faculty. The program needs to demonstrate that it completes the program faculty evaluation and review and that results are provided to faculty.**

Similar to the previous stipulation, we provided a detailed overview of how faculty members are assessed each year, which includes feedback given as part of course evaluations, supervision evaluations, program evaluations, and annual evaluations conducted by the School Director. Furthermore, we explained the ways in which we have been collecting data from our Communities of Interest, including the existence of/meeting schedule for the MFT Advisory Board, website and email distributions, and feedback collected by our Center Director as part of student site evaluation processes.

### **Stipulation 3: The program needs to provide evidence that assessment results were sent to Communities of Interest as outlined in the assessment plan in Key Element I-A.**

We explained the process for how this data gets sent out to Communities of Interest, including email distribution, posts on the USM MFT program main website, and MFT Advisory Board Meetings. For reference, this refers to the table at the start of this newsletter.

### **Program Updates**

There have been several noteworthy changes to our program during the previous year, including:

#### **1. Faculty Transitions**

- a. After a long and decorated career as a marriage and family therapist at USM, Dr. Pat Sims officially retired. Dr. Sims has served the USM MFT program as the program director, school director, and a dedicated member of the core faculty for decades. She wrapped up her final set of classes this spring.
- b. In Fall 2024, Dr. Alex Kaeppler joined us as a new core faculty member for the MFT program. Dr. Kaeppler completed his Ph.D. at Auburn University, and has been working hard to establish his own research lab on the Southern Miss campus this past year.
- c. After almost two decades as a core member of the MFT Faculty, Dr. Heath Grames has transitioned out of the program director role and has been serving as the school director for the School of Human Development and Family Sciences at USM. Dr. Grames is still teaching courses in the MFT program, but has seen his primary responsibilities shift to providing leadership to the school as a whole.
- d. In Dr. Grames' transition, Dr. Ben Jones has stepped into the program director role for the MFT program.

#### **2. School Name Change**

- a. The astute among you will have caught this in the previous section, but after going through all official channels, the former School of Child and Family Sciences is now officially the School of Human Development and Family Sciences. We are excited to lean into this rebranding in the coming academic year and are hopeful that the name change (which more accurately reflects that our curriculum does cover work with families across the lifespan) will help interested students better understand what they can pursue in one of our degree programs.

#### **3. MFT Advisory Board**

- a. Our advisory board met for our most recent meeting in April and discussed a number of updates to our program. We also devoted some time in that most recent meeting to discuss emergent therapy models that would be worth considering exposing our current students to so that they can be well equipped for any job opportunity they want to pursue after graduation. In light of this, we have decided to add a mini-unit on the basics of Internal Family Systems to one of our FAM 663 course. The current MFT Advisory Board members are Ben Wood, Britney Mangum, Catherine Jones, Jessica Chappell, John Herrington, Jody Herring, Katie Lambright, Marita Harris, Samuel Asay, and Turner Griffin. If you have any suggestions for expanded membership on the board, please reach out to [b.maurice.jones@usm.edu](mailto:b.maurice.jones@usm.edu) with names for contact.

#### **4. Expanded Placement Site Opportunities**

- a. This past academic year, we were able to expand our placement site opportunities for students at volunteer positions to include a placement at local intensive outpatient, Kids Hub, and The Estate. We have not been able to continue all of these into the coming year due to having a slightly smaller cohort of second year students, but are hopeful to

continue investing in these relationships in the future as our incoming class of first-year students is larger. With the ongoing challenges to federal funding structures, we are also highly interested in pursuing any additional opportunities for funded positions with local healthcare agencies. If you know of any organizations that may be seeking intern support, please contact [b.maurice.jones@usm.edu](mailto:b.maurice.jones@usm.edu).

If you would like to provide any feedback to the program, please use the link below to submit your questions, concerns, or suggestions.

[USM MFT Program Feedback](#)