Admission Requirements

• Acceptable scores on the verbal and analytical/written sections of the Graduate Record Examination
• Minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75
• Submission of statement of personal and professional goals
• A personal interview with the clinical faculty of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program
• Emotional stability and maturity as evidenced through three letters of recommendation from previous professors (minimum of two letters) or employers (maximum of one letter)

Preference will be given to applications received prior to March 1; however, applications are accepted until all openings are filled.

Applicants to the Marriage and Family Therapy Program are selected and admitted without discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, color, creed, ethnic or national origin, physical disability or sexual orientation. These provisions also apply to handicapped individuals pursuant to current federal and state regulations subject to reasonable standards of admission and employment.

ADMISSION INTO CLINICAL COMPONENT OF THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY PROGRAM

Clinical readiness is assessed prior to a student having face-to-face client contact. This assessment will include the following:
• faculty feedback related to the student’s readiness to begin the clinical component
• a pen and paper instrument designed to highlight the strengths and challenges of the student’s personality in relation to the student’s development as a helping professional

Faculty and students develop goals for personal and professional growth. Evaluation of students will occur each semester by the faculty prior to moving to the next level of practicum.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is available through graduate assistantships, work-study programs, scholarships, clinical externships and grants.
• Assistantships: Indicate interest on application and submit a resume to the director.
• Clinical Externships: Students in clinical practicum are eligible for paid assistantships through arrangements with community mental health centers, psychiatric hospitals and other sites.
• Scholarships: The Department of Child and Family Studies has a variety of scholarship opportunities available to students. Information can be found on our website.
• Grants: Faculty often have service and research grants that provide opportunities for students.
Program Overview
The University of Southern Mississippi Marriage and Family Therapy program (M.S.) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education. The program currently offers a full-time track and a part-time track. Both tracks combine academic course work and supervised clinical experiences with individuals, couples, and families. They are designed to focus on the integration of theory, research, and clinical practice throughout the family life span. Full-time students normally complete their degree requirements in two full calendar years, while part-time students complete degree requirements in three to four calendar years.

Mission Statement
The mission of the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) master’s program is to prepare ethical, competent mental health professionals who are dedicated to improving the human condition through both prevention and intervention. The program emphasizes a systemic and contextual perspective so that individual, couple, and family processes are conceptualized within an ecological framework. Faculty will engage students to grow personally and professionally through the development of critical thinking skills, an understanding of scholarship, an appreciation of diversity, and a commitment to service.

Our Strengths
- Onsite therapy clinic that serves the needs of Mississippi’s high risk children, youth, and families
- Broad-based clinical training utilizing both modern and postmodern methods and interventions
- Strong faculty-student mentoring
- Biopsychosocial perspective emphasizing resiliency and strength
- Clinical opportunities for practice in community mental health centers, psychiatric hospitals, youth court, residential treatment, and alcohol and drug treatment facilities
- Success in preparing students for advanced graduate degrees

The University Clinic For Family Therapy
Our campus clinic allows students to develop clinical skills working with individuals, groups, couples, and families in a closely supervised environment. Student-therapists see clients from South Mississippi with a wide variety of presenting problems:
- Parent-child problems
- Marital distress
- Depression and anxiety
- Anger management
- Domestic violence
- Premarital therapy

Curriculum
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS
- Theories of MFT I
- Theories of MFT II

CLINICAL PRACTICE
- Pre-practicum in MFT
- Marital Therapy
- Assessment in MFT
- Special Problems in Family Relations: Diagnosing Psychopathology in Individuals and Families

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY RELATIONS
- Individual and Family Life Cycle Development
- Parents and Children: Problem Resolution
- Gender and Culture in the Family

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND ETHICS
- Professional Seminar in MFT
- Professional Practice in MFT

RESEARCH
- Practice of Family Research

SUPERVISION
- Practicum in MFT (minimum 21 hours)
- 500 hours face-to-face client contact
- 200 of those hours are relational
- 100 hours of supervision
- 200 hours must be at the University Clinic for Family Therapy

Minimum Hours in Program – 60

Marriage and Family Therapy Faculty and Staff

Heath Grames
Ph.D.

Stacie Frey
M.S.

Pat Sims
Ph.D.

Jeff Hinton
Ph.D.

Pamela Clark
Ph.D.

“We have greatly benefitted from our relationship with the MFT clinical interns from Southern Miss, who have been a vital part of the ongoing mental health services offered in a number of public schools along Mississippi’s Gulf Coast. The interns are able to gain pertinent skills as they work with a multidisciplinary team to treat children and their families.”

RANDY KIRSEY, INPATIENT CLINICAL MANAGER AT MEMORIAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

“The Marriage and Family Therapy Program at The University of Southern Mississippi provided me with a solid educational background to excel in any clinical setting as a marriage and family therapist. In addition, the program’s component on personal growth and discovery has enabled me to gain self-confidence and determination in my professional pursuits. The clinical and interpersonal skills learned in this program are beneficial in any professional setting and have helped to prepare me for a competitive work environment.”

LISA, 2003 GRADUATE