State Licensure Statutes, Regulations, Forms, and Policies not only change on a regular basis, but may contain contradictory information. It is the responsibility of any individual who may review this document to check with their licensure board regarding all requirements and policies regarding the licensure process. For more information please refer to your state licensing board, click here to find your state licensing board website aamftrc.org

Arkansas may not accept the NCU degree for licensure purposes

Does the State require a degree program to include a specific number of credit hours (e.g. 45, 48 or 60 semester credits)? If so, how many credit hours are required?

Arkansas requires 60 semester graduate hours acceptable to the Board. In addition, a grade of “B” or above is required in each of the required 60 hours. The Arkansas Board rules specifically state that brick-mortar (traditional in-classroom) and distance learning courses are accepted if the courses meet the standards adopted by the board.

What type of institutional or programmatic accreditation is required?

Applicants for licensure in Arkansas must have a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy or related field from a regionally accredited institution. The graduate semester hours must meet the national academic and training content standards adopted by the Board from the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) or the Council for Accreditation Counselor Related Education Programs (CACREP) or equivalent. Distance/Cyber/Electronic education degrees will be treated the same as onsite education degrees if the degrees are primarily professional counseling or marriage and family therapy in content and are earned from a regionally accredited institution of higher education and the distance education degree programs are accredited as required.

The definition of distance learning/education acceptable to the Board for licensure purposes is a formal education process in which instruction occurs when the student and instructor are not located in the same place. Distance learning adds technology to the learning environment by a variety of means, such as web sites, e-mail, video conferencing, and videotapes. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Video tapes may not comprise more than 20% of the instruction time in any one course. The responsibility for documenting that each course, content and presentation, meets the standards for Board endorsement and acceptance is the responsibility of the granting institution and the applicant. The Board review and acceptance/denial of each Cyber/Distance/Electronic course is mandated prior to the application being processed for any Arkansas license issued by the Board.

Does the State require the program to have COAMFTE or CACREP Accreditation?

While Arkansas strongly encourages these accreditations, they do not require these accreditations.

Does the State accept a COAMFTE accredited degree without requiring the applicant to list specific courses on the license application?

No.

What courses does the State require an applicant to have taken in order to be have met this educational requirement for licensure?

Arkansas requires that all graduate semester hours must meet the national academic and training content standards adopted by the Board from the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) or the Council for Accreditation Counselor Related Education Programs (CACREP) or equivalent. The following five areas are deemed essential educational training for the practice of marriage and family therapy. Course Equivalents: 3 semester credits.
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STUDIES (9 Hour Minimum/3 Courses): Courses in this area should present a fundamental introduction to systems theory. Courses should address a wide variety of family structures and a diverse range of contemporary issues, which include but are not limited to gender, violence, addictions, and abuse from a relational/systemic perspective. Examples of courses: systems theory, family development, family subsystems, blended families, gender issues in families, cultural issues in families, family violence, family communications, etc. Survey or overview courses in which systems is one of several theories covered are not acceptable in this area. Courses in which systems theory is the major focus and other theories of individual or families are studied in relation to systems theory are appropriate.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY (9 hour minimum/3 courses): Courses in this area should have a major focus on advanced family systems theories with their therapeutic interventions. This area is intended to provide a substantive understanding of the major theories of systems change and the applied practices evolving from each theoretical orientation. Examples of courses: strategic therapy, intergenerational family therapy, systemic sex therapy, etc. Survey, or overview course, in which family therapy is one of several types of theories covered are not acceptable.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (9 Hour minimum/3 courses): Courses in this area should provide knowledge of individual personality development and its normal and abnormal manifestations. The student should have relevant coursework in human development across the life span that includes special issues that affect an individual’s development (i.e., culture, gender and human sexuality). This material should be integrated with systems concepts. Examples of courses: human development, cross-cultural studies, child/adolescent development, human sexuality, personality theory, etc. One of these 3 courses must include Psychopathology. Test and measurement courses are not accepted toward this area.

ASSESSMENT (3 Hour minimum): Courses in this area address the use of formal and informal assessment of individual, relationship, family, and systemic factors including the assessment and treatment of major mental health issues. Individual assessment includes standard individual cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social instruments. Assessment of systemic factors includes valid relational, structural, and family functioning instruments.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS (3 Hour minimum): Courses in this area are intended to contribute to the professional development of the therapist. Areas of study should include the therapist’s legal responsibilities and liabilities, professional ethics as a marriage and family therapist from AAMFT’s Code of Ethics, professional socialization, and the role of the professional organization, licensure or certification legislation, independent practice and inter-professional cooperation. Religious ethics courses, philosophy or moral theology courses are not accepted toward this area.

RESEARCH (3 Hour minimum): Courses in this area should assist students in understanding and performing research and include significant material on research in couple and family therapy. Course examples: research methodology, quantitative methods and statistics, qualitative research, etc. Individual personality, test and measurement, and library research courses are not accepted toward this area.

PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY (3 Hour minimum): The physiological/medical aspects of mental illness and the medications that are used to treat specific common disorders are examined. Content includes basic classifications, indications, and contradictions of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications so that appropriate referral can be made for medication evaluations and identifying effects and side effects of such medications.

PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIPS (9 Hour Practicum/Internships): Applicants must complete a minimum 1-year practicum (500 hours of client contact with individuals, couples and families).

How many client contact hours must a student obtain during practicum, and how many of these must be relational hours?
Arkansas requires that practicum include at least five hundred hours supervised client contact.

How many supervision hours must a student obtain during practicum?

While Arkansas does not specify a minimum number of supervision hours during practicum, they do require that the direct client contact hours must have been supervised by site supervisors assigned by the university in addition to the university’s faculty’s supervision.

What is the required length of practicum in this State?

Arkansas requires a practicum that lasts a minimum of one year.
Post-Graduation Requirements

What are the minimum number of years of clinical experience a graduate needs to obtain a license, the minimum number of client contact hours, and how many of these hours must be relational hours?

Marriage and Family Therapists licensed in Arkansas at the associate level must complete three years of Client Contact Hours (CCH) with supervision. One year is defined as 1000 supervised CCH. One year is referred to as Phase I for the first year, Phase II for the second year and Phase III for the third year. The supervision must be provided in the following manner:

1. Year I (Phase I) is supervision of 1,000 CCH and the minimum of one hundred hours of supervision. The ratio of supervision is one hour of supervision for each 10 hours of client contact.
2. Year II (Phase II) is supervision of 1,000 CCH and the minimum of fifty hours of supervision. The ratio of supervision is one hour of supervision for each 20 hours of client contact.
3. Year III (Phase III) is supervision of 1,000 CCH and the minimum of 25 hours of supervision. The ratio of supervision is the minimum of one hour of supervision for each 40 hours of client contact. Two options are available for year III, see Section (e).

One year of experience may be gained for each 30 semester hours of graduate work beyond the Master’s level, provided the hours are clearly marriage and family therapy in nature and acceptable to the Board. Hours earned may be substituted for no more than two years of supervised professional experience.

Additional Note:

If the three years of supervision, defined as Phases I, II, and III, are not completed in six calendar years from the date of the LAMFT license issue, the LAMFT license may not be renewed unless the individual holding the LAMFT license can document extenuating circumstances, acceptable to the Board, that would allow the Board to extend the six years.

All Licensed Associate Marriage and Family Therapists must have a Board-approved supervision plan/agreement prior to providing any therapy services.

What are the minimum number of experience hours required by this State?

Arkansas does not specify a minimum number of hours of experience after graduating.

What are the minimum number of post-graduate supervision hours required by this State, and how many of these hours must be individual supervision?

Arkansas requires that an applicant for licensure must have been supervised for at least 175 hours distributed as required over the three phases.

What are the State requirements for an individual to be qualified as a supervisor?

Supervision for the Associate Marriage and Family Therapist in Arkansas must be provided by a practitioner who is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, holds approved supervisor status from the Arkansas Board, and whose license is current. (i.e. not suspended due to delinquent renewal or disciplinary actions). Arkansas standards for anyone seeking a Supervision Specialization License include the following:

1. Three (3) years experience as a Licensed Professional Counselor and/or a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
2. Good standing (as LPC and/or LMFT) in Arkansas
3. Documentation of one of the following: (i) A doctorate, primarily counseling/therapy in content, which included both course work in supervision (specific to the supervision license, LAC or LAMFT) and supervised experience in supervision; or (ii) A completed, advanced three (3) hour graduate course in
clinical supervision (specific to the supervision license, LAC or LAMFT) which included eighteen (18) hours of supervised experience in supervision arranged as part of the graduate course

(D) Must submit and have Board approval of: (i) A typed description of his/her theoretical orientation to supervision (specific to the supervision license, LAC or LAMFT), including model of supervision, and techniques of practice; (ii) A signed code of ethics agreement and a group supervision plan and forms; (iii) An Oral Examination with the Board

Does the state require the National Examination offered by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB)?

Yes. Persons who are enrolled in the final semester of graduate study in counseling or marriage and family therapy and have completed the core curriculum courses may be admitted to the written examination by submitting to the Board, with their application, a letter stating their projected graduation date from one of the following college or university officials.

Does the State have specific training requirements beyond the graduate degree?

All individuals applying for licensure in Arkansas who have not previously had an oral examination with the Arkansas Board must complete an oral examination prior to being granted a license.

Can an individual with a criminal history request board review before actually having to apply for licensure?

It is unclear if Arkansas has a process to pre-preapprove applications.

How can someone contact the Board in this state?

Arkansas Board of Examiners in Counseling
124 South Jackson
Suite 312 McAlester Building
Magnolia, Arkansas 71753

Mail Address
Arkansas Board of Examiners in Counseling
P.O. Box 70
Magnolia, Arkansas 71754-0070
arboec@sbcglobal.net (870) 901-7055
(870) 901-7059
(870) 234-1842 Fax
Website: http://abec.arkansas.gov/Pages/default.aspx

Every state has a "definitions" section of their rules and/or statutes. Are there any definitions that might be important for an applicant to pay attention? (Note: this is not a complete list, please review definitions in your state)

Persons engaged in practices/activities of Counseling or Marriage and Family Therapy to individuals or groups in Arkansas must hold an Arkansas license for whatever method the services are offered, rendered or delivered. These regulations apply to all traditional approaches and to all technology-assisted distance approaches, including telephone approaches, to Counseling or Marriage and Family Therapy offered to individuals or groups in Arkansas. Telephone Crisis “Hot Lines”, telephone consultation between licensed mental health providers and emergency telephone calls are exempt. Counseling or Marriage and Family Therapy telephone services provided as a regular scope of practice, as a business, advertised to the public with hourly fees as mental health services by Counselors or Marriage and Family Therapists requires and Arkansas license.