BBS

Board of Behavioral Sciences

IMPORTANT ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FOR ASSOCIATE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS AND MFT TRAINEES

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Associate Marriage and Family Therapist and MFT Trainee

Frequently Asked Questions

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The information provided in this publication is supplemental and is intended to serve as a quick answer guide for common questions for those pursuing licensure as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. The Board's *Statutes and Regulations* contain the official legal code sections. The Board encourages you to thoroughly read the *Statutes and Regulations* pertaining to the marriage and family therapy profession.

If you are brand new to learning about licensure requirements, you may want to start here: Handbook for Future LMFTs

Question not answered here? Email the Board *(access at www.bbs.ca.gov "Contact Us" button at the top of the page).*

A. TRAINEE FAQs

B. ASSOCIATE REGISTRATION; WORK SETTINGS; LAW AND ETHICS EXAM

C. EXPERIENCE HOURS, SUPERVISION AND EMPLOYMENT

C. QUALIFYING FOR AND APPLYING FOR LICENSURE

A. TRAINEE FAQs

See Section C for more information on supervised experience requirements for Trainees

1. Am I required to register as a Trainee with the Board?

No, the Board does not register MFT Trainees.

2. As a Trainee, when can I begin counting pre-degree hours of work experience?

Trainees can only begin counting hours of experience once they have completed a minimum of 12 semester or 18 quarter units of graduate instruction in a qualifying MFT degree program. If the Trainee will be counseling clients, they must also be enrolled in a practicum course (see question 5 for more information on practicum enrollment).

Statutes cited: BPC section 4980.03

3. What types of hours can I count toward licensure as a Trainee?

A Trainee is permitted to earn a maximum of 1,300 hours of experience overall prior to the degree being awarded. Up to 750 hours of counseling (including diagnosing and treating couples, families, and children, and individual or group psychotherapy) and supervision are permitted within the 1,300-hour maximum. The remaining 550 hours may only consist of non-clinical experience. For more information about supervised experience types and requirements, see section C.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

4. What types of settings are Trainees allowed to work in?

Trainees are prohibited from working in a private practice or professional corporation setting until they have been issued an Associate registration (see pages 3-4 for work setting definitions).

All Trainee work settings must comply with all of the following:

- The school in which the Trainee is enrolled must approve the site and have a written agreement with the site that details each party's responsibilities.
- The setting must lawfully and regularly provide mental health counseling or psychotherapy.
- The setting must provide oversight to ensure that the Trainee's work at the setting meets the experience and supervision requirements and is within the scope of practice for the profession.

Statutes cited: Business and Professions Code (BPC) sections 4980.42 and 4980.43.3

5. Are Trainees required to be enrolled in practicum in order to counsel clients?

Generally, yes - a Trainee must be enrolled in practicum in order to counsel clients. However, the law provides an exception that allows a Trainee to provide counseling while NOT enrolled in practicum if BOTH of the following requirements are met:

- The period of lapsed enrollment in practicum is less than 90 calendar days AND
- The 90-day (or shorter) period is immediately preceded by enrollment in practicum and immediately followed by enrollment in practicum or completion of the degree program.

For example, if your practicum course ended on May 29 and you are not taking a summer practicum course, you may see clients for the next 90 days IF by August 27, you are enrolled in a practicum course or you complete your degree program.

If a Trainee's practicum break is 90 days or greater, the Trainee cannot count any hours gained during that time period.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.36 and 4980.42

6. Can Trainees gain experience hours toward licensure providing services via telehealth?

7. Can Trainees count telehealth hours toward the 150 hours of face-to-face experience required for practicum?

Trainees are permitted to gain experience hours toward licensure providing services via telehealth, including over the telephone (see questions 29 and 30 for more information about telehealth hours). However, Trainees are required to complete a minimum of 150 hours of face-to-face counseling to meet their qualifying degree requirements. Any counseling services provided over the telephone will not count toward those 150 hours since they are not face-to-face (must have both audio and visual contact with the client to count). However, any telephone counseling hours may count toward licensure even though they do not count toward the 150-hour practicum requirement.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.36(d)(1)(B)(ii), 4980.43 and 4980.43.3(i)

8. Do I need to be fingerprinted as a Trainee?

The Board does not require Trainees to be fingerprinted. However, if you graduated on or after January 1, 2020, and you want to count experience hours immediately upon graduation (under the "90-day rule"), then your employer must have you fingerprinted before you will be allowed to count any postdegree hours. See question 12 for more information.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

9. When do I need to start following the rules for Associates?

Once you graduate from your degree program you are required to start following the rules that pertain to Associates, which differ in certain areas from Trainee rules. See the following sections for information pertaining to Associates.

B. ASSOCIATE REGISTRATION; WORK SETTINGS; LAW AND ETHICS EXAM

10. If I want to become dually licensed as an LMFT and LPCC, do I need to register as an Associate for both license types?

Yes, you will need to register as both an AMFT and as an APCC to count hours toward both license types. See question 53 for additional requirements.

11. What are the requirements to become an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist?

Please see the *AMFT Registration Application* for a list of requirements *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant> LMFT>Forms/Pubs).*

12. Can I count hours of experience after I graduate but before I receive an Associate registration number? What is the “90-day rule”?

If the Board receives your application for an Associate registration within 90 days of your degree award date, and you are thereafter issued an AMFT registration, all post-degree hours of supervised experience may be credited. Hours gained under this “90-day rule” must comply with all experience and supervision requirements in order to count toward licensure.

Additional Requirement for Applicants who Graduated ON OR AFTER January 1, 2020:
Hours may only be accepted under the “90-day-rule” described above IF the hours are obtained at a workplace that, prior to the applicant gaining hours, required live scan fingerprinting. To count these hours, you must provide a copy of the processed “State of California Request for Live Scan Service” form (provided by your employer) with your *Application for Licensure*. **A copy of the processed Live Scan form is the ONLY acceptable documentation specified in law.**

If you cannot provide a copy of the processed Request for Live Scan Service form from your employer, your experience hours will only count from the date your Associate registration is issued. There are no exceptions. See the 90-Day Rule FAQ *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov> Applicant>LMFT> Forms/Pubs)* for more information.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

13. What is a private practice or professional corporation (aka “nonexempt setting”) and when will I be allowed to work in either of these settings?

14. Are there any limitations on working in a private practice or professional corporation?

You are not permitted to work in a private practice or professional corporation until your Associate registration has been issued by the Board. You may only work in a private practice or professional corporation for the first six (6) years after your Associate registration is issued. You are not permitted to work in these settings after that time. There are no exceptions.

“Private practice” means a type of nonexempt setting that meets the following criteria:

- The practice is owned by a licensed health professional either independently or jointly with one or more other licensed health professionals;
- The practice provides clinical mental health services, including psychotherapy, to clients; and,
- One or more licensed health professionals are responsible for the practice and for the services provided and set conditions of client payment or reimbursement for the provision of services.

“Professional corporation” means a type of nonexempt setting and private practice that has been formed pursuant to Part 4 (commencing with Section 13400) of Division 3 of Title 1 of the California Corporations Code.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.06, 4980.43 and 4984.01; Regulation cited: Title 16, California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 1833

15. What is an exempt setting?

An exempt setting is a governmental entity, a school, a college, a university, or an institution that is both nonprofit and charitable (designated as a “501(c)(3)” by the Internal Revenue Service).

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.01

16. Now that my Associate registration has been issued, can I start practicing independently or open my own office?

No. Independent practice cannot begin until you are issued an LMFT license. Independent practice (including opening your own office) is considered unlicensed practice and is subject to disciplinary action by the Board. You are also prohibited from receiving any remuneration (payment) from clients directly for services performed until you are licensed.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980, 4980.10 and 4982

17. When am I required to renew my Associate registration? What must I do to renew?

Registrations expire annually, and your registration’s expiration date will be printed on your registration certificate. You will be mailed a courtesy renewal notice 90 days prior to the expiration date. If you have an email address on record with the Board in the Breeze system, you will also receive an email reminder. The Board encourages renewing online as it takes effect instantly as long as all renewal requirements are met.

To qualify for renewal, you must do all of the following:

- If you have not yet passed the LMFT California Law and Ethics exam, you must take the exam during your renewal cycle to be permitted to renew.
- Complete 3 hours of continuing education in California Law and Ethics during your renewal cycle (the one-year period prior to your registration's expiration date). See the Registrant Continuing Education Brochure *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov> Licensee>Continuing Education>Mandatory Coursework)* for more information.
- Pay a renewal fee.

Note: Registrations can only be renewed five (5) times and have a total six (6)-year age limit. See questions 21-24 for information about subsequent registrations.

Statute cited: BPC sections 4980.54 and 4984.01

18. When do I need to take the Law and Ethics Exam? What happens if I don't take it before my registration's expiration date?

Associates **who have not yet passed** the LMFT California Law and Ethics Exam MUST have taken this exam during their renewal cycle in order to **renew** their registration. There are no exceptions.

If you have not passed the exam, it is critical that you apply to take the exam early in your renewal cycle and schedule your exam well in advance of your expiration date to ensure your ability to renew on time. Exam applications can take up to 6 weeks for processing. The test administrator may not have immediate test dates available, so be sure to allow enough time for scheduling (allow even more time if you have applied for testing accommodations).

If you wait until the last minute to apply, schedule, or take the exam, you risk delaying your ability to renew. Your employer is unlikely to allow you to work with an expired registration, and you won't be able to count any experience hours toward licensure during the time your registration lapsed.

Statute cited: BPC sections 4980.43 and 4984.01

19. How do I apply to take or retake the California Law and Ethics Exam?

See the Board's website for this information, including FAQs *(www.bbs.ca.gov> Exams>California Law and Ethics Exam).*

20. What happens if I don't pass the California Law and Ethics Exam?

You will need to apply to retake the exam and pay a re-exam fee. You will not be eligible to retake the exam until after at least 90 days have passed from the date you last took the exam. You will be required to take the exam during your next renewal cycle in order to renew. Note: You do not need to pass the exam in order to renew your registration; you just need to have taken it during your renewal cycle.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.399; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1805.05

21. What happens if I haven't passed the Law and Ethics Exam by my registration's 6-year time limit?

You cannot be issued a subsequent registration unless you have passed the LMFT Law and Ethics Exam. There are no exceptions. See the questions below for information about subsequent registrations.

Statute cited: BPC section 4984.01

22. How do I obtain a second or third (subsequent) Associate registration number?

23. Can I count experience gained under a subsequent number?

24. Can I work in a private practice or professional corporation under a subsequent Associate registration number?

California law permits an Associate registration to be renewed five (5) times before being cancelled upon the registration reaching six (6) years of age. Prior to cancellation, you may apply for a subsequent (second or third) registration number. Apply early to avoid a lapse in your registration (up to 90 days in advance of your registration's cancellation date).

To apply, submit the *Application for Subsequent AMFT Registration (available at www.bbs.ca.gov> Applicant>LMFT> Forms/Pubs)* with the required fee. You may continue to count hours of experience under your subsequent Associate number; however, your hours can only be up to six years old at the time you apply for licensure, as explained in question 10.

Only those who have been issued a first Associate registration number may work in a private practice or professional corporation (see pages 3-4 for setting definitions). Associates issued a subsequent registration may NOT work in a private practice or professional corporation. There are no exceptions. All other work settings are permissible.

Statute cited: BPC section 4984.01

25. What happens once I pass the Law and Ethics Exam?

If you are still earning hours of supervised experience, you will continue as a registrant until you have completed your hours. No further exams are required until you apply for licensure. You may submit your *Application for Licensure* once you have met all education and experience requirements. Upon approval of your *Application for Licensure*, you will be required to take and pass the California Clinical LMFT Exam. Once you have passed the clinical exam, you will submit an *Application for Initial License Issuance* and fee.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.397 and 4980.399

C. EXPERIENCE HOURS, SUPERVISION AND EMPLOYMENT

26. What is the breakdown for the required hours of experience to become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)?

California law currently requires 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience, including 104 supervised weeks, in order to qualify for LMFT licensure.

An applicant for licensure cannot be approved to sit for the clinical exam without completing both the 3,000 hours of experience and the 104 required supervised weeks.

The charts below and on the following page provide a breakdown of the requirements for experience hours and supervision hours.

3,000 HOURS OF SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE

BREAKDOWN OF REQUIREMENTS

Category	Minimum or Maximum
Direct clinical counseling experience	*Minimum 1,750 hours overall*
Diagnosing and treating couples, families and children	*Minimum 500 hours (of the above 1,750 hours)*
Non-clinical experience consisting of direct supervisor contact, administering and evaluating psychological tests, writing clinical reports, writing progress or process notes, client centered advocacy*, and workshops, seminars, training sessions, or conferences	*Maximum 1,250 hours overall*
All hours obtained prior to the degree award date	*Maximum 1,300 hours*
Hours of counseling and direct supervisor contact obtained prior to the degree award date	*Maximum 750 hours (of the above 1,300 hours)*
Supervision by a Licensed Educational Psychologist (LEP)	*Maximum 1,200 hours (see question 40 for other restrictions)*
Supervision by any other type of qualified licensed mental health professional	*No minimum or maximum*

**See question 28 for a definition of client-centered advocacy*

<u>104 “SUPERVISED WEEKS”</u>

BREAKDOWN OF REQUIREMENTS

A “supervised week” means a week in which a Trainee or Associate meets with a supervisor for one 1 hour of individual or triadic supervision or two 2 hours of group supervision

104 SUPERVISED WEEKS – OVERALL MINIMUMS

Supervision Amount and Type	Minimum
One (1) hour of **Individual or Triadic** supervision per week	52 weeks (no maximum)
Two (2) hours of Group supervision per week	No minimum

WEEKLY MINIMUMS AND MAXIMUMS	
Category	**Minimum or Maximum**
Supervision required weekly in each work setting	Minimum one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) hours of group supervision.
Supervision required within each week that experience is claimed	Minimum one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) hours of group supervision.
Additional supervision required weekly in each work setting ***(supervision ratios)***	If more than 10 hours of “direct clinical counseling” is performed in week in a work setting, then one (1) additional hour of individual or triadic supervision, or two (2) additional hours of group supervision is required during that week (see question 37 for more information on supervision ratios).
Weeks earned prior to the degree award date	No minimum or maximum (see chart on prior page for maximum pre-degree hours)..
Experience hours credited weekly	A maximum of 40 hours of experience may be credited in any 7 consecutive days between all settings toward licensure.
Supervision hours credited weekly	A maximum of six (6) hours of individual, triadic, or group supervision in any week may be credited toward licensure.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.43 and 4980.43.2; Regulation cited: Title 16 CCR section 1833

27. What is triadic supervision?

Triadic supervision is defined as face-to-face supervision consisting of one supervisor and two supervisees. It is counted under the law as equivalent to individual supervision.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

28. What is client-centered advocacy?

Client-centered advocacy may include, but is not limited to, researching, identifying, and accessing resources, or other activities, related to obtaining or providing services and supports for clients or groups of clients receiving psychotherapy or counseling services. It is up to your supervisor to determine whether any hours would fall under this category since they are responsible for signing off on your weekly logs and experience verification forms.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.03(h)

29. What is the definition of "telehealth counseling"?

30. How many telehealth hours can I count toward licensure?

Telehealth refers to the mode of delivering health care services and public health via information and communication technologies to facilitate the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management, and self-management of a patient's health care while the patient is at the originating site and the health care provider is at a distant site. Supervisees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the standards of practice for telehealth.

There is no limit on the number of telehealth hours that can be counted toward the supervised experience requirements.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 2290.5 and 4980.43; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815.5

31. Can a Trainee or Associate who is traveling out-of-state provide services to a client in California, and can they count those hours toward licensure?

Yes, as long as the following are complied with:

- The supervisor makes an assessment and deems it appropriate (for Trainees, at the discretion of the school program and supervisor);
- The standards of practice for telehealth are met;
- Supervision is provided by the California supervisor via face-to-face videoconferencing; and,
- All other requirements pertaining to Trainees or Associates are met.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 2290.5, 4980.42, 4980.43, and 4980.43.2; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815.5

32. Can I count supervised experience gained in another state toward California licensure?

You may be able to count experience gained in another state if it is substantially equivalent to the experience required in California. See the *Guide to Requirements for Out-of-State or Out-of-Country Applicants for Licensure* for more information *(access at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicants>LMFT>Out-of-State/Out-of-Country)*.

33. Can I count supervised experience gained in California toward licensure in another state?

You would need to contact the licensing agency in the state where you would like to become licensed for that information, as every state is different.

34. How far back can experience hours be counted? What is the 6-year rule?

The Board cannot accept hours of experience (including workshops, training or conferences) that are older than six (6) years from the date the Board receives your *Application for Licensure*. The only exception is up to 500 hours of counseling and supervision obtained as a Trainee while enrolled in practicum – these 500 hours can be older than six (6) years.

For example, the Board receives an *Application for Licensure* on 03/24/2022. The Board can only accept hours earned by this applicant between 03/24/2016 and 03/24/2022 (except that up to 500 counseling and supervision hours obtained while a Trainee enrolled in practicum will be accepted even if they are older than 03/24/2016).

It is important to note that if your *Application for Licensure* is closed (also known as abandonment), you will be required to re-apply. Your six-year period will be recalculated to six years back from the date your new application is received, so it is important that you understand how the actions you take could result in file closure/abandonment. For more information on file closure/abandonment, see question 55.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43

35. How do I determine the amount of supervision I need each week?

36. What is the difference between the supervision requirements for MFT Trainees and Associates?

37. What is the required ratio of supervision to direct clinical counseling hours?

"One unit" of supervision = one (1) hour of individual or triadic supervision OR two (2) hours of group supervision.

It is important to note that these are just the **minimums** specified in law. Your supervisor is responsible for providing the amount and type of supervision that ensures they are meeting their responsibilities as a supervisor.

Trainees and Associates	At least one (1) unit of supervision, as defined above, during any week in which experience is gained in each work setting.
Trainees: **1:5 Ratio**	For <u>every</u> five (5) hours of direct clinical counseling provided in a single week in a work setting, Trainees must receive one (1) additional unit of supervision. <u>Trainees</u> are permitted to average these <u>additional</u> units of supervision over the entire period of time a Trainee works in a particular setting. This means the additional supervision is not required to be provided during that same week. NOTE: At least one (1) unit of supervision is required in any week in which experience is gained in each work setting, and that supervision must occur within the same week. Only the additional supervision to meet the 1:5 ratio may be averaged over time.
Associates: **1:10 Ratio**	If an Associate provides <u>more than 10</u> hours of direct clinical counseling in a single week in a work setting, the Associate must receive one (1) additional unit of supervision in that setting during that week.
TRAINEE EXAMPLE #1:	A Trainee works one job and provides 16 hours of direct clinical counseling during a single week. This Trainee must receive a minimum of one (1) unit of supervision during that week, and must obtain an additional three (3) units of supervision for that week. This additional supervision may be averaged over time as described above.
TRAINEE EXAMPLE #2:	A Trainee works two jobs, and provides 4 hours of direct clinical counseling at Job A, and 7 hours at Job B during a single week. This Trainee must receive one (1) unit of supervision at each job during that week, and must obtain one (1) additional unit of supervision at Job B for that week. This additional supervision may be averaged over time as described above.

ASSOCIATE EXAMPLE #1:	An Associate works one job and provides 25 hours of direct clinical counseling during a single week. This Associate must receive two (2) units of supervision during that week.
ASSOCIATE EXAMPLE #2:	An Associate works two jobs, and provides 12 hours of direct clinical counseling at Job A and nine (9) hours at Job B during the same week. This Associate is required to receive a total of three (3) units of supervision during that week (two (2) units at Job A and one (1) unit at Job B).

Statute cited: BPC sections 4980.43.1 and 4980.43.2; Regulation cited: 16 CCR section 1833.1

38. Can I be paid as a 1099 / independent contractor while a Trainee or Associate?

39. Can I be employed as a volunteer?

All Associates must either be a paid W-2 employee or a volunteer employee. Trainees and Associates may not bill clients directly. Associates will be required to submit proof of employment status for the period of time during which they gained hours as an Associate when applying for licensure.

There are limited circumstances under which you may be paid under a 1099. If you work as a volunteer and receive reimbursement for expenses actually incurred, receiving a 1099 for those reimbursements is acceptable. If you have received a stipend or educational loan repayment from a program designed to encourage demographically underrepresented groups to enter the profession or to improve recruitment and retention in underserved regions or settings, a 1099 for the stipend or loan repayment is acceptable. Those paid under a 1099 may be audited by the Board to ensure the payment was for one of the above purposes.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.3; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

40. Who is eligible to supervise MFT Trainees or Associates?

The following California-licensed mental health professionals are permitted to supervise experience hours for Trainees or Associates:

- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs)
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs)
- Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCCs)
- Licensed Psychologists
- Licensed Educational Psychologists (LEP) (***Note:*** *LEPs may only supervise up to 1,200 hours, which must consist of educationally related mental health services that are consistent with the LEP scope of practice described [in BPC section 4989.14]*)

- Licensed Physicians certified in Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

Additionally, the supervisor must meet all of the following requirements:

- Complete the supervisor training and continuing professional development required by law (Licensed Psychologists and Psychiatrists are exempt from these requirements); and

- Maintain a current and active California license that is not under suspension or probation. (You can check your supervisor's status on the Department of Consumer Affairs License Search any time here); and

- Have been licensed in California or any other state for at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision; and

- Have practiced psychotherapy or psychological counseling during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision; **OR**

- Provided direct supervision to MFT Trainees, AMFTs, Associate Professional Clinical Counselors, or Associate Clinical Social Workers who perform psychotherapy during at least two (2) years out of the last five (5) years prior to the commencement of supervision.

The following types of relationships are prohibited between a supervisor and supervisee:

- The supervisor may not have ever provided therapeutic services to the supervisee.
- The supervisor may not be a spouse, domestic partner or other relative of the supervisee.
- A supervisor may not have (currently or previously) a personal, professional or business relationship with the supervisee that undermines the authority of effectiveness of supervision.

A list of other requirements pertaining to supervisors, including supervisor responsibilities, is contained in the *Supervision Agreement* form.

Statute cited: BPC sections 4980.03 and 4989.14

41. How many supervisees can participate in a session of group supervision?

Group supervision sessions shall include no more than eight (8) persons receiving supervision for providing clinical mental health services, even if there are two or more supervisors present. Group supervisors must ensure that the amount and degree of supervision is appropriate for each supervisee.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

42. Can group supervision be broken into one-hour increments?

Group supervision can be broken into one-hour sessions, as long as both increments (full two hours) are provided in the same week as the experience being claimed.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

43. Can I receive supervision via videoconferencing or over the telephone?

You may be able to obtain supervision via live two-way videoconferencing if your supervisor determines that it is appropriate to do so. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the client confidentiality is preserved. For more information see the AB 1758 FAQ *(available at bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>Law Changes).*

Supervision provided over the telephone will not count toward licensure because the law requires supervision to have a face-to-face component.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

44. What happens if my supervisor is temporarily unavailable to provide supervision?

Alternative supervision must be arranged. The substitute supervisor must meet all regular supervisor qualifications. In addition:

- The substitute supervisor must sign your weekly log.
- You and the substitute supervisor must sign a *Supervision Agreement*.
- The substitute supervisor and your employer must sign a *Written Oversight Agreement* if one is required.

If the substitute will be supervising you for MORE than 30 consecutive calendar days:

- A new supervisory plan is also required, and
- The substitute supervisor must sign an *Experience Verification* form for hours earned under their supervision.

If the substitute will be supervising you for 30 consecutive calendar days or LESS:

- A new supervisory plan is not required.
- Your regular supervisor may sign an *Experience Verification* form that includes the experience gained under the substitute.

Regulation cited: 16 CCR section 1833.1.5

45. Do my supervisor and I have to be employed by the same employer?

46. Does my supervisor need to be on site?

If the registered Associate will be working in a private practice or professional corporation, the supervisor must:

- Be employed by or contracted by the Associate's employer or be an owner of the practice, and
- Either provide psychotherapeutic services to clients for the Associate's employer or have a written contract with the Associate's employer that provides the supervisor with the same access to the Associate's clinical records as is provided to employees of the Associate's employer.

In any work setting, the following are required:

- If the supervisor is not employed by the supervisee's employer or is a volunteer, a written oversight agreement that addresses the supervisor's and employer's responsibilities must be signed by the supervisor and the employer prior to commencement of supervision. Please see the Board's website for a sample written oversight agreement *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LMFT> Forms/Pubs).*
- Supervisees may only perform services at the places where their employers permit business to be conducted, which may include performing services at other locations, so long as the services are performed in compliance with the laws pertaining to supervision.

Whether a supervisor is required to be on site depends on the situation. Supervisors must consider their responsibilities as defined in LMFT law, which includes taking responsibility for, and control of, the quality of services being provided. Among other responsibilities, supervisors are required to do all of the following, whether they are on site or off site:

- Ensure that the extent, kind and quality of counseling performed by the supervisee is consistent with the education, training and experience of the person being supervised.
- Monitor and evaluate the supervisee's assessment, diagnosis and treatment decisions and providing regular feedback.
- Monitor and evaluate the ability of the supervisee to provide services at the site(s) where he or she will be practicing and to the particular clientele being served.
- Monitoring and addressing clinical dynamics, including, but not limited to, countertransference-, intrapsychic-, interpersonal-, or trauma-related issues that may affect the supervisory or the practitioner-patient relationship.
- Ensure compliance with all laws governing the practice of marriage and family therapy.

- Reviewing the supervisee's progress notes, process notes, and other patient treatment records, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.

- With the client's written consent, providing direct observation or review of audio or video recordings of the supervisee's counseling or therapy, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.

Upon request by the Board, a supervisor is required to provide the Board with documentation that verifies the supervisor's compliance with all requirements.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.43.1, 4980.43.3 and 4980.43.4; Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1833 and 1833.1

47. Where can I find more information about supervision?

Please see the *Guide to Supervision for MFT Trainees and Associates and the Supervision Agreement (available at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LMFT>Forms/Pubs).*

48. What forms must I use to record my experience hours and supervision?

While gaining your hours of experience, you must use the following forms, available on the Board's website *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LMFT>Forms/Pubs).*

It is critical that these forms are signed as required - applicants can lose experience hours if they are not.

- *Weekly Log*: Log your hours on this form on a weekly basis and ensure that your supervisor signs it weekly. You will retain the original logs. Do not submit Weekly Logs to the Board except upon request.

- *Experience Verification*: The purpose of this form is to provide verification of your hours when applying for licensure - **make sure that it is completed and signed upon the termination of your supervised experience with your supervisor**. The form indicates the total hours completed in each category under your supervisor, your supervisor's license information, and information about your employer. Your supervisor will sign the form and provide you with the original for submission with your *Application for Licensure.*

For Supervisory Relationships that Commenced ON OR AFTER January 1, 2022:

- *Supervision Agreement*: You and your supervisor must sign this form, which includes a collaboratively developed Supervisory Plan, within 60 days of commencing supervision (if you are under a supervisor for less than 60 days it must be signed prior to termination). Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure*.

For Supervisory Relationships that Commenced BEFORE January 1, 2022:

- *Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of an MFT Trainee or Associate*: Your supervisor must have signed this form prior to commencing supervision and provide you with the original. Retain for future submission with your *Application for Licensure*.

Submission of forms as directed in the instructions contained within the Application for Licensure will lessen the possibility that the licensing evaluator will need to request additional information from you, thus delaying the approval of your application.

49. Do I need to report hours gained pre-degree separately from hours gained post-degree?

Yes - submit your pre-degree and post-degree hours on separate *Experience Verification* forms and maintain separate *Weekly Log* forms.

50. How do I fill out *Experience Verification* forms or *Weekly Log* forms if I have more than one supervisor in the same work setting?

If you are receiving supervision from two individuals in one employment setting, the Board recommends that you record all hours under your primary supervisor, with one exception. Any actual **supervision hours** that you received under your secondary supervisor must be recorded and signed for by your secondary supervisor on separate weekly logs and a separate *Experience Verification* form (your primary supervisor is not permitted to sign for supervision hours provided by another supervisor). However, all of your **work experience hours** in that setting may be recorded and signed for by your primary supervisor. Recording your experience in this manner will lessen the probability that the Board will need to request additional information from you when reviewing your *Application for Licensure*.

51. When do I need to send in supervision-related forms?

All supervision-related forms must be submitted with your *Application for Licensure*. Do not send these forms in with your Associate application. Do not submit your Weekly Logs unless requested by the Board.

Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1833 and 1833.1

52. What types of signatures does the Board accept?

Signed documents may be original, scanned, or have an electronic signature.

53. What do I need to do if I want to become dually licensed as an LMFT and LPCC?

First, you must have a degree that qualifies for both license types. If so, you will be able to count hours toward both license types **if you do all of the following**:

- Register as both an AMFT and APCC (separate applications and fees).
- Ensure that both registrations are active while you are gaining hours of experience (or if you are gaining hours under the "90-day rule" as described in question 12, ensure that you have submitted both applications within the 90-day-period after your degree award date).
- Take the California Law and Ethics Exam for both license types to ensure your ability to renew (separate applications, fees and exams).
- Ensure that the hours you gain are within the scope of practice for both license types.
- Ensure that the hours you gain fit within the categories required and the minimums required, as well as the maximums allowed for both license types.

54. How can I avoid losing experience hours as a registrant?

There are a number of avoidable events that could result in losing your hard-earned experience hours. Don't let this happen! Be sure to:

- Follow the 90-day rule.
- Ensure that your **supervisor** meets all requirements, including maintaining a current license.
- Ensure that you are **employed** as either a W-2 employee or a volunteer, and not as an independent contractor.
- Ensure that a ***Supervision Agreement*** is completed within 60 days of commencing supervision with each supervisor, and keep the signed agreement in a safe place.
- Ensure that your supervisor signs your experience **log** on a weekly basis and keep the signed logs in a safe place.
- Have your supervisor sign your ***Experience Verification*** form immediately upon conclusion of supervision. Don't wait until a later date, as unforeseen issues can arise with obtaining signatures later. Keep your signed form in a safe place.
- Renew your **Associate registration** timely and apply for a subsequent registration early (up to 90 days prior to your registration's cancellation date). You cannot earn hours without a current registration.
- Ensure that you complete all **hours of experience** (with the exception of 500 practicum hours) within the six (6)-year period immediately preceding submission of your *Application for Licensure*.

D. QUALIFYING FOR AND APPLYING FOR LICENSURE

55. What can cause my file to be closed? What happens when a file is closed?

File closure (also known as abandonment) could have major consequences, such as losing experience hours that are too old. Once a file is closed an applicant may reapply but must pay a new application fee and meet all current requirements. One of those requirements is that your hours are less than six (6) years old at the time of reapplication.

This means if your *Application for Licensure* is closed (abandoned), you would lose any hours of experience that are more than six (6) years old at the time of reapplication (with the exception of up to 500 practicum hours). See question 34 for more information about the six-year rule.

The law specifies that an application shall be deemed abandoned, and the file closed, in any of the following circumstances:

- Applicant does not submit the remaining documents or information requested in the application deficiency letter within one (1) year from the date of the deficiency letter.
- Applicant does not complete the application within one (1) year after it has been filed.
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not sit for an examination within one (1) year after being notified of initial eligibility to take the examination.
- Applicant who has submitted experience hours does not take an examination within one (1) year from the date the applicant was notified of failing an examination.
- The applicant fails to pay the initial license fee within one (1) year after notification by the board of successful completion of MFT licensing requirements.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

56. How can I avoid losing experience hours AFTER applying for licensure?

It is still possible to lose experience hours after submitting your licensure application (even after it has been approved). You can avoid this by doing the following:

- **Clear any deficiencies** in your *Application for Licensure* **within one year** of receiving a deficiency notice.
- **Take the Clinical exam within one year** of approval of your *Application for Licensure*; and, if you don't pass the exam, make sure to take it within one year from your last attempt.

- If you don't test within the above time frames, you will have to reapply for licensure, which may cause you to lose experience hours due to their age.
- To help ensure you meet your one-year window for taking the clinical exam, make sure you do the following:
  - **Don't wait until your one-year time frame is near its end to schedule your exam**. Leave a cushion in case you are unable to take the exam and need to reschedule due to an unforeseen event (being sick, vehicle breaking down, etc.).
  - If you require **testing accommodations**, apply for them well in advance of your desired test date and allow additional time for scheduling.
  - Know the process and time frames for **scheduling** the clinical exam, including the testing vendor's change/cancellation policy.
  - Know the **requirements for participating** in the exam as specified in the Candidate Handbook, such as identification requirements and security requirements.

The above information will help you avoid problems with obtaining a test date prior to the close of your one-year window or being turned away at the test site due to noncompliance with the testing vendor's requirements.

57. What additional coursework do I need to complete before applying for licensure?

In addition to holding a qualifying degree, an applicant must complete specific courses prior to submitting an *Application for Licensure*. The courses required differ somewhat depending on when you entered and completed your degree program, and whether you have an in-state or out-of-state degree.

COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LICENSURE FOR ALL APPLICANTS WITH A CALIFORNIA DEGREE

Course	Required of:	Length	Content Required
1. Provision of Mental Health Services via Telehealth	All applicants	3 hours of coursework or applied experience	See BPC section 4980.395. Must include law and ethics related to telehealth.
2. Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention	All applicants	6 hours of coursework or applied experience	See question 60 for more information.

COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LICENSURE FOR APPLICANTS WITH A "PRE-2012" CALIFORNIA DEGREE

If you entered an in-state degree program prior to August 1, 2012 and graduated on or before December 31, 2018, you are required to complete the courses listed below (unless identified on your transcript previously submitted for Associate registration).

*Note: The below topics are also required for applicants who entered a degree program on or after August 1, 2012. However, because this content is provided within California degree programs, proof of course completion **not** required.*

Course	Required of:	Length	Content Required
1. Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	7 hours	Must be based on California law. See BPC section 28
2. Human Sexuality	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	10 hours	BPC section 25 and 16 CCR section 1807
3. Alcoholism and Chemical Substance Abuse and Dependency	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	15 hours	16 CCR section 1807.3
4. Aging, Long-Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	10 hours	BPC section 4980.39
5. California Law and Professional Ethics	Applicants who entered a degree program prior to 08/01/2012	2 semester units or 3 quarter units	BPC section 4980.41
6. Psychological Testing	Applicants who entered a degree program between 01/01/2001 and 08/01/2012	2 semester units or 3 quarter units	BPC section 4980.41
7. Psychopharmacology	Applicants who entered a degree program between 01/01/2001 and 08/01/2012	2 semester units or 3 quarter units	BPC section 4980.41

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COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LICENSURE FOR APPLICANTS WITH A "PRE-2012" CALIFORNIA DEGREE (continued)

Course	Required of:	Length	Content Required
8. Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection and Intervention	Applicants who entered a degree program between 01/01/1995 and 08/01/2012	• No specific number of hours if entered degree program before 12/31/03, but must cover assessment, detection and intervention • 15 hours if entered a degree program after 1/1/2004	BPC section 4980.41

COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LICENSURE FOR APPLICANTS WITH AN OUT-OF-STATE DEGREE

If your degree was earned out-of-state, you must complete all of the courses listed below.

Course	Length	Content Required
a) Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention	6 hours	See question 60 for more information
b) Mental Health Recovery Oriented Care and Methods of Service Delivery	45 hours or 3 semester units	See BPC section 4980.81
c) California Cultures and the Social and Psychological Implications of Socioeconomic Position	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81
d) Diagnosis, Assessment, Prognosis and Treatment of Mental Disorders	2 semester units	See BPC section 4980.81
e) Psychological Testing	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81
f) Psychopharmacology	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81
g) Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting in California	7 hours	See BPC sections 28 and 4980.81

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Course	Length	Content Required
h) Aging, Long Term Care and Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse, End-of-Life and Grief	10 hours	See BPC section 4980.81
i) Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection and Intervention	15 hours	See BPC section 4980.81
j) Multicultural Development and Cross-Cultural Interaction	15 hours or 1 semester unit	See BPC section 4980.81
k) Human Sexuality	10 hours	See BPC section 4980.81 and 16 CCR section 1807
l) Substance Use Disorders	15 hours	See BPC section 4980.81
m) Co-Occurring Disorders and Addiction	15 hours	See BPC section 4980.81
n) Developmental Issues from Infancy to Old Age	15 hours or 1 semester unit *(if deficient in a single topic listed, may remediate by taking 3 hours of instruction on each missing topic)*	Instruction must include: • Developmental Issues from infancy to old age • The effects of developmental issues on individuals, couples and family relationships. • The psychological, psychotherapeutic, and health implications of developmental issues and their effects. • The understanding of the impact that personal and social insecurity, social stress, low educational levels, inadequate housing and malnutrition have on human development. See BPC section 4980.81

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COURSEWORK REQUIRED PRIOR TO LICENSURE FOR APPLICANTS WITH AN OUT-OF-STATE DEGREE (continued)

Course	Length	Content Required
o) Miscellaneous Content	No specific number of hours required, but content must be adequately covered within the applicant's coursework	Instruction must include: • Childbirth, child rearing, parenting and step-parenting • Marriage, divorce and blended families • Cultural factors relevant to abuse of partners and family members • Poverty and deprivation • Financial and social stress • Effects of trauma • The psychological, psychotherapeutic, community and health implications of the matters and life events that arise in marriage and family relationships within a variety of California cultures See BPC section 4980.81

58. Do I need to take my additional coursework at a university?

No. Additional coursework may be taken from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), a school approved by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), or an acceptable continuing education provider, and may be taken in-person or online.

59. Is my additional coursework too old?

Coursework may have been taken at any time in the past.

60. What is allowed for the Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention training?

This training may be taken as a course; or, if this content was included within your supervised experience and you can obtain a written certification from the program's director of training, or from your primary supervisor stating that the training was included within your supervised experience, it may be accepted in lieu of a course.

If this content was included within your qualifying degree program, you will need to obtain a written certification from the registrar or training director of your school or program stating that this coursework was included within the curriculum required for graduation, or within the coursework that was completed by you (if you submitted an

Associate application after January 1, 2020, your *Degree Program Certification* may have already included this verification). Otherwise, this requirement may be met by taking a 6 hour course from a school that holds a regional or national institutional accreditation recognized by the USDE, a school approved by the BPPE, or other acceptable continuing education provider *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov>Licensees> Continuing Education>Where to Find CE Courses).*

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.396

61. What type of employment documentation does the Board require with my *Application for Licensure*?

NOTE: The documentation described below is NOT required for experience gained pre-degree. It is only required for post-degree hours of experience.

If a Paid Employee: You must provide a copy of your W-2 for each year of paid employment in each work setting, for all tax years during which you gained experience, with your *Application for Licensure*. If your W-2 is not available, you must obtain a duplicate W-2, which may be obtained from your employer. Alternatively, you may request a Wage and Income Transcript from the Internal Revenue Service. No other types of documents will be accepted in place of a W-2 or Wage and Income Transcript, with one exception for the current tax year, where you will need to include a photocopy of your most recent pay stub. Originals are not required - photocopies are acceptable.

If a Volunteer Employee: You must provide a letter from your employer verifying your status as a volunteer with your *Application for Licensure*. A sample letter verifying volunteer status is available on the Board's website *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov> Applicant>LMFT>Forms/Pubs). The* letter from your employer must either be on the employer's letterhead or via email from your employer from a verifiable email address.

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.3; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

62. How can I provide verification of my experience if my supervisor is deceased or incapacitated?

The Board will review documentation on a case-by-case basis in order to make a determination. However, we recommend that you submit all of the following:

- Evidence that your supervisor is deceased or incapacitated. For example: A copy of an obituary or death certificate if deceased; a doctor's note, letter of conservatorship, or letter from the employer if incapacitated.
- All supervision documentation which had previously been signed by the supervisor, including:
    - The previously signed *Supervisor Responsibility Statement* or *Supervision Agreement;*
    - The previously signed *Supervisory Plan;* and
    - The previously signed *Weekly Log* forms.

- Documentation from the employer verifying employment of the supervisor and supervisee. A letter from the employer will suffice. Other documentation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- The written oversight agreement if your supervisor was not employed by your employer.

Note: Any letter from your employer must either be on the employer's letterhead or via email from your employer from a verifiable email address.

Statute cited: BPC sections 4980.43.3; Regulations cited: Title 16, CCR sections 1815.8 and 1833

63. What should I do if my supervisor refuses to sign for my hours?

The first step is to contact your supervisor and inform them that they are obligated by law to sign for hours that you completed. The law (reference below) states, "A supervisor shall give at least one (1) week's prior written notice to a supervisee of the supervisor's intent not to sign for any further hours of experience for such person. A supervisor who has not provided such notice shall sign for hours of experience obtained in good faith where such supervisor actually provided the required supervision." If the supervisor continues to refuse to sign for your hours, you may then file a complaint with the Board. You may file your complaint electronically at www.breeze.ca.gov.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1833

64. Do I need to resubmit fingerprints with my *Application for Licensure*?

The Board only has access to your fingerprint results while you hold a license or registration with the Board. Applicants do NOT need to resubmit fingerprints if one or more of the following is true at the time the Board receives the *Application for Licensure*:

- Applicant possesses a current or delinquent Associate registration; or
- Applicant holds a cancelled Associate registration that has been cancelled for less than 30 days.

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1815

65. What happens once I submit my *Application for Licensure*?

The Board will evaluate your application to ensure that you meet all qualifications specified in law. Upon completion of the evaluation, you will be notified of any deficiencies in your application that need to be resolved. If there are no deficiencies, you will be notified of how to register for the exam.

It is important that you have a current email address on record with the Board as **your notification of eligibility to take the exam is sent to applicants via email only** by the Board's testing vendor. Add or change your email address using the instructions provided here *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov>Resources>Breeze Helpful Hints).*

Important: If there are any deficiencies in your application, you will have one (1) year from the date of the initial deficiency notice to clear all deficiencies. If you do not clear your deficiencies within one year, the law requires your file to be closed and you will be required to reapply for licensure (see question 55 for implications of file closure/abandonment).

Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

66. Do I need to maintain a current Associate registration number to participate in the clinical exam?

The Board strongly encourages all individuals to maintain a current Associate registration and to continue recording experience hours until licensed as an LMFT, as a safeguard in the event that some of the hours submitted are unable to be accepted by the Board either now or in the future due to application closure/abandonment (see question 55) and/or the “six-year rule” (see question 34) for more information).

Whether you are required by law to maintain a registration, however, will depend on the type of setting you are working in. If you are working in a private practice or professional corporation, you are required to maintain a current Associate registration until your LMFT license has been issued. If you are working in an exempt setting (an institution that is both non-profit and charitable, a school or a governmental entity) you are not required to maintain a registration. However, your employer may require it as a condition of employment.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980.01 and 4980.43; Regulation cited: Title 16, CCR section 1806

67. Must I continue to have supervision after my experience hours have been approved?

Once the required number of experience hours are gained, you must receive a minimum of one hour of direct supervisor contact per week for each practice setting in which direct clinical counseling is performed, and further supervision for nonclinical practice shall be at the supervisor’s discretion.

However, the Board strongly encourages all individuals to maintain a current Associate registration and to continue receiving the same amount of supervision as is required to count experience toward licensure (including maintaining a weekly log, etc.) until licensed as an LMFT. This is recommended as a safeguard in the event that some of the hours of experience you submit are unable to be accepted by the Board.

Even if your hours are accepted and you are approved to take the exam, applicants can still lose hours if they don’t take the clinical exam within the designated time frame (see question 56 for more information).

Statute cited: BPC section 4980.43.2

68. Once I pass both exams, when will my license be issued and when can I start practicing independently?

Once you have passed both exams, your license will be issued within 30 business days from the date you complete one of the following:

- Apply to “upgrade to fully licensed” online via the Breeze system, and pay the initial licensure fee; OR
- Submit a *Request for Initial License Issuance* form *(available at www.bbs.ca.gov>Applicant>LMFT>Forms/Pubs)* and pay the initial licensure fee.

DO NOT APPLY until you have completed all licensure requirements or your application will be rejected.

Independent practice cannot begin until the Board issues your license. Otherwise, it is considered unlicensed practice, which is subject to disciplinary action by the Board.

Statutes cited: BPC sections 4980 and 4982