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AAMFT Curriculum Guidelines

Applicants for AAMFT membership must document the completion of eleven (11) required courses in the five core requirement areas. The equivalent of 1 course is defined as 3 semester credits or 4 quarter credits. For post-degree training programs, a minimum of 36 didactic (i.e. lecture or classroom) hours will be equivalent to one course.

Marriage and Family Studies (a minimum of three courses required)

Courses in this area should present a fundamental introduction to systems theory. The student should learn to think in systems terms across a wide variety of family structures and a diverse range of presenting issues (i.e. gender, culture, and substance abuse). Topic areas may include: systems theory, family development, subsystems, blended families, gender issues in families, cultural issues in families. All courses in this area must have a major focus from a systems theory orientation. Survey or overview courses in which systems is one of several theories covered are not appropriate. Courses in which systems theory is the major focus and other theories are studied in relation to systems theory are appropriate.

Marriage and Family Therapy (a minimum of three courses required)

Courses in this area should have a major focus on advanced family systems theories and systemic 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. Major theoretical approaches might include: strategic, structural, object relations family therapy, behavioral family therapy, communications family therapy, intergenerational family therapy, and systemic sex therapy. Survey or overview courses in which family therapy is one of several types of theories covered is not acceptable.

Human Development (a minimum of three courses required)

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, which includes special issues that affect an individual's development (i.e. culture, gender, and human sexuality). This material should be integrated with systems concepts. Topic areas may include: human development, child/adolescent development, psychopathology, personality theory, human sexuality, etc. Course not accepted in this area include test and measurement, career development, group counseling, etc.

Professional Ethics (a minimum of one course required)

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, professional socialization, and the role of the professional organization, licensure or certification legislations, independent practice and inter-professional cooperation. Religious ethics courses and moral theology courses are not accepted toward this area.

Research (a minimum of one course required)

Courses in this area should assist students in understanding and performing research. Topic areas may include: research methodology, quantitative methods, and statistics. Individuality personality, test and measurement, and library research courses are not accepted toward this area.