

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, PROFESSIONAL  
COUNSELING, AND SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD

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IN THE MATTER OF RULEMAKING : ORDER OF THE  
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE : MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY,  
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY : PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND  
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING, AND : SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD  
SOCIAL WORK EXAMINING BOARD : ADOPTING RULES  
(CLEARINGHOUSE RULE 19-115)

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ORDER

An order of the Marriage and Family Therapy, Professional Counseling, and Social Work Examining Board to repeal and recreate MPSW 16.02, and to amend 16.04 (1) relating to education equivalent to a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy from a program accredited by COAMFTE.

Analysis prepared by the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

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ANALYSIS

**Statutes interpreted:** Section 457.03 (1), Stats.

**Statutory authority:** Sections 15.08 (5) (b) and 457.03 (1), Stats.

**Explanation of agency authority:**

“Each examining board [s]hall promulgate rules for its own guidance and for the guidance of the trade or profession to which it pertains, and define and enforce professional conduct and unethical practices not inconsistent with the law relating to the particular trade or profession.” [s. 15.08 (5) (b), Stats.]

“Upon the advice of the social worker section, marriage and family therapist section, and professional counselor section, promulgate rules establishing minimum standards for educational programs that must be completed for certification or licensure under this chapter and for supervised clinical training that must be completed for licensure as a clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or professional counselor under this chapter and approve educational programs and supervised clinical training programs in accordance with those standards.” [s. 457.03 (1), Stats.]

**Related statute or rule:** None.

**Plain language analysis:**

The rule clarifies that courses taken outside of the program study leading to a master's or doctorate degree are acceptable to obtain program equivalency, and that individuals may begin to accrue clinical practice hours upon completion of a graduate degree in a mental health field approved by the marriage and family therapist section, and enrollment in a graduate degree program or other educational program in marriage and family therapy accredited by COAMFTE.

**Summary of, and comparison with, existing or proposed federal regulation:** None.

**Summary of public comments received on statement of scope and a description of how and to what extent those comments and feedback were taken into account in drafting the proposed rule:**

The Board held a preliminary hearing on the statement of scope for this rule at its March 18, 2019 meeting. No comments were received.

**Comparison with rules in adjacent states:**

**Illinois:** According to Illinois Admin Code s. 1283.30 (e), courses taken at a post-degree institution may count as equivalent for an education requirement if the institution's training program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), or meets the following requirements:

- (1) The institution's program is established to achieve coherent mission and training objectives and the program has as its primary objective the training of marriage and family therapists.
- (2) The specific course submitted as equivalent to those defined in subsection (b) is taught by faculty who hold graduate degrees and are trained and credentialed in the field in which they teach.
- (3) Courses must be offered by an established, identifiable facility or agency.
- (4) Courses must be ongoing and additive (offered at the same place over a specific period of time and available on an ongoing basis) or offered off site by an acceptable post degree institution with an established, identifiable home-base facility or agency.
- (5) Courses must include outlines, clear description of content, appropriate bibliography, and other indications or meet generally acceptable criteria for academic offerings.
- (6) Correspondence courses are not acceptable.

**Iowa:** According to IAC 645—31.4(2), an applicant can attain licensure as a marriage and family therapist with a master's degree in a counseling related field, and various semester hours of required coursework documented on the applicant's graduate transcript

**Michigan:** Michigan Admin Code R 338.7205 (a) (ii) allows an individual to complete graduate level courses outside of the master's or higher graduate degree attained in order to meet educational requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

**Minnesota:** Minnesota code requires a graduate degree in a subject field related to

marriage and family therapy, and the degree program must contain the required coursework enumerated in the rule. Minn. Admin Code 5300.0140 (2).

**Summary of factual data and analytical methodologies:**

The Board determined that it was necessary to clarify that courses taken outside of a degree program can count towards the academic program equivalent to a master's or doctorate degree in marriage and family therapy to prevent confusion and barriers to entry to the profession.

**Analysis and supporting documents used to determine effect on small business or in preparation of economic impact analysis:**

The rule was posted for 14 days to receive economic comments. No comments were received.

**Fiscal Estimate and Economic Impact Analysis:**

The Fiscal Estimate and Economic Impact Analysis is attached.

**Effect on small business:**

These proposed rules do not have an economic impact on small businesses, as defined in s. 227.114 (1), Stats. The Department's Regulatory Review Coordinator may be contacted by email at Daniel.Hereth@wisconsin.gov, or by calling (608) 267-2435.

**Agency contact person:**

Jon Derenne, Administrative Rules Coordinator, Department of Safety and Professional Services, Division of Policy Development, 4822 Madison Yards Way, P.O. Box 8366, Madison, Wisconsin 53708; telephone 608-266-0955; email at DSPSAdminRules@wisconsin.gov.

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TEXT OF RULE

SECTION 1. MPSW 16.02 is repealed and recreated to read:

**MPSW 16.02 Educational equivalent to a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy from a program accredited by COAMFTE.**

(1) Course work required for education to be substantially equivalent to the course work required for a master's or doctorate degree in marriage and family therapy course work from a program accredited by COAMFTE shall contain all of the following:

(a) At least 6 semester credits or 8 quarter credits in the area of foundations of relational or systemic practice, theories and models.

(b) At least 6 semester credits or 8 quarter credits in the area of clinical treatment with individuals, couples and families. This area shall include a focus on evidence based practice and content

on crisis intervention.

(c) At least 3 semester credits or 4 quarter credits in the area of diverse, multicultural or underserved communities. This area shall include understanding and applying knowledge of diversity, power, privilege, or oppression.

(d) At least 3 semester credits or 4 quarter credits in the area of research and evaluation. This area shall include marriage and family therapy research and evaluation methods and evidence based practice.

(e) At least 3 semester credits or 4 quarter credits in the area of professional identity, federal and state law, ethics, and social responsibility.

(f) At least 3 semester credits or 4 quarter credits in the area of biopsychosocial health and development across the life span.

(g) At least 3 semester credits or 4 quarter credits in the area of systemic assessment and mental health diagnosis and treatment.

(h) At least 3 semester credits or 4 quarter credits in the area of contemporary developments which interface marriage and family therapy knowledge and practice with the broader multidisciplinary context.

(i) A clinical internship as part of an academic program in marriage and family therapy or a substantially equivalent field. The internship shall consist of a minimum of 300 hours in face-to-face contact with individuals, couples, and families for the purpose of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment under supervision in not less than 8 calendar months.

(2) An applicant may, at an institution which was accredited by its regional accrediting association at the time the course was completed, complete credit hours outside the program of studies leading to a master's or doctorate degree in order to meet the requirements in this section.

(3) An applicant may, at an institute for marriage and family therapy which was accredited by COAMFTE at the time the course was completed, complete credit hours outside of a program of studies leading to a master's or doctorate degree in order to meet the requirements in this section.

SECTION 2. MPSW 16.04 (1) is amended to read:

**MPSW 16.04 (1)** An applicant for licensure as a marriage and family therapist under s. 457.10, Stats., shall complete, after receiving the required master's or doctorate degree, or upon completion of a graduate degree in a mental health field approved by the marriage and family therapist section, and enrollment in a graduate degree program or other educational program in marriage and family therapy accredited by COAMFTE, 3,000 hours of supervised marriage and family therapy practice, including at least 1,000 hours of face-to-face client contact, while holding a valid marriage and family therapist training license before being eligible for licensure.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE. The rules adopted in this order shall take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register, pursuant to s. 227.22 (2) (intro.), Stats.

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(END OF TEXT OF RULE)  
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