MFT Internship Manual

Procedures & Guidelines for Mercy University's Marriage and Family Therapy Internship Program

Updated August 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNSHIP 2
- Goals of Internship 2
- Policies of Internship Program 3

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT PROCESS 6
- Placement Timeline (an example) 8
- Internship Selection Process 8
- Resource List for Gaining Volunteer Experiences 10

DURING INTERNSHIP 11
- Marriage & Family Therapy Internship Requirements 11
- Expectations and Responsibilities 12
- Tips for Maximizing Your Internship 14
- Preparing for Supervision 15
- (E)Valuation 15
- Internship Paperwork 16
- Addressing Challenges During Internship 21
- Professionalism Tips 22
- Care for the Caregiver 25

POST INTERNSHIP 27

INTRODUCTION TO INTERNSHIP

Students are required to complete an internship in an appropriate agency or private practice setting as part of their academic training. It is anticipated that this work experience will provide the student with an opportunity to put into practice the theoretical concepts and skills learned in their course work.

Both the student and Mercy University profit from the internship experience. The student is given the opportunity to put into practice the theory and skills learned in the classroom. The University's responsibility is not completed until the students have realistically tried out what they have learned and feel confident in facing the challenges of the marriage and family therapy profession.

In addition to providing practical experience to the MFT intern, it is expected that the sponsoring agency or private practice will also benefit from the internship experience. The student comes to the agency or private practice with an enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to accept guidance and direction from established professionals. Following the orientation (and observation phases) of the internship, it is anticipated that the MFT intern should be ready to function semi-independently and carry out many of the duties and responsibilities of a therapist.

Internship is a process of learning from doing and a therapist-in-training. It is a transition from intellectual understanding to learning from within the process of engaging with clients and clinical context. Internship provides each student with the opportunity to determine his/her own strengths and areas of growth. If this transition is made with adequate preparation and supervision, students will find greater strength and security in what they are doing. Thus, students has the opportunity to make an adaptation to the professional life they are about to enter.

Goals of Internship

An internship is a structured academic opportunity that allows students to apply their clinical skills and knowledge in the workplace. It is experiential education that is based on a set of learning objectives which help students prepare to meet career responsibilities after graduation. The goals of internship are to:

1. Guide the intern toward the development of specific professional skills and technical knowledge relating to the marriage and family therapy process.
2. Supplement the knowledge and skills learned in the academic setting.
3. Provide an opportunity for practical application of classroom instruction.
4. Provide the intern an opportunity to develop confidence in his/her ability to ethically apply systemic theory and techniques in therapeutic situations.
5. Help the intern develop case management and resource allocation skills.
6. Assist the intern in determining appropriate diagnosis and prognosis.
7. Help the intern develop relationships with supervisors, colleagues, and personnel from other agencies.
8. Provide therapeutic services within the sponsoring agency or private practice.

9. Experience the life of a systemic therapist as part of a larger system.
10. Develop professional skills that are transferable for career development.

Policies of Internship Program

Student Eligibility

- Students must be in good academic standing to apply for an internship. A cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 is preferred, but the final decision about participation rests with the program director.
- Typically, students who participate in an internship are in their last year of the program.
- Students must have completed the following courses prior to the start of internship:
    - PSYN 644 Group Experience
    - PSYN 653 Family Systems Assessment
    - PSYN 654 Psychopathology
    - PSYN 657 Contemporary Family Therapy, Or PSYN 605, Contemporary Couple Therapy
    - PSYN 639 Pre-Practicum
    - You are strongly urged to take 665 Professional Issues and Ethics before you begin Practicum I.
    - Whichever course – PSYN 605 Or PSYN 657 – You do not take ahead of practicum must be taken during the same semester as Practicum I. These are two critically important clinical courses.

Academic Credit

Students are required to take a minimum of 3 consecutive semesters of internship. A maximum of 9 semester hours of internship credit will be counted toward degree requirements at Mercy University.

Financial Considerations

To participate in the internship, students must pay tuition balance for each semester they are enrolled for internship. A student's financial aid will apply to the traditional course. Any extra travel or work-related expenses are the student's responsibility. Some sites require that students get a background check or a health check that may have an associated cost/fee. However, you are not required to apply to sites that have an application fee. Student interns will *not* be paid a salary or stipend by their host organization as the internships are *unpaid*.

Geographic Location

Most internships obtained by Mercy students are local. However, it should be noted that although you may prefer a site close to home, you may not be offered a position close to home. Please be prepared to be flexible with sites that may require a commute. In addition, please be realistic about the distance of the internship site **before** applying for the position. Please note, it is not unusual in the NY Metro region to travel for an hour or

so, one way, to one's place of work. *We suggest doing the commute in person (rather than google mapping it) to have a felt sense before you accept your internship position*.

Time Commitment
Students are required to be at their site for a **minimum of 15 hours per week,** which amounts to at least 2 full days per week. Most of these hours need to be on weekdays as few sites have weekend hours. Please note that although this is our requirement, some sites require that you commit more hours. In those cases, you are expected to commit the hours that the site is requesting. (For example, Mercy requires 15 hours per week and if the internship requires 21, you would be expected to be at your site for 21 hours per week as that is the contracted hours with that specific site.)

Timelines

- Students should begin volunteer work and additional outside training in the related field prior to their interest in interning (some years finding a site can be very competitive, so it is recommended that your resume reflects a person interested in this field prior to the search for internships).
- Students should attend the internship orientation and begin exploring internship placements in the fall semester preceding the semester they intend to intern (some very competitive internship sites have application deadlines of six to nine months prior to the start of the internship).
- Students must attend an internship meeting and meet individually with the internship director to conduct a mock interview. In the mock interview, the internship director will provide feedback on areas to improve when interviewing at potential sites.
- Students should reach out to the career center to review and update their resumes and cover letters. While your internship director will also be assisting with this process to help tailor your resume and cover letter to the specific site needs, it's important to have a solid foundation free of grammatical errors and formatting issues prior to your mock interview with the internship director.
- The student will select at least 5 sites from the internship list provided by the school and provide at least 3 sites not included on the list to the Internship Director to determine the appropriateness of the site.
- The internship director will be sending out your resumes and cover letters after the designated deadlines to the site. While you wait, continue to practice interviewing, stay connected with the internship director and follow up with the sites you applied for internship (Internship sites like to see that you are interested in them and taking the initiative, so do not hesitate to introduce yourself to the site prior to securing an interview).
- You must attend interviews and present yourself in a professional manner. **Remember to always keep the internship director in the loop**. This includes but is not limited to challenges and strengths of the internship process, scheduled interviews, acceptance of internship offers, and refusal of offers or changes you make after acceptance. Remember, the internship director is your liaison and needs to know what is going on to support you and start any new contracts with the site.

- **Remember, sites are not required to hire you as an intern because we have an affiliation agreement (a contract) with them. This is like a job interview, and the sites are looking for the best candidates to intern with them.**
- **ONCE YOU HAVE ACCEPTED AN INTERNSHIP OFFER, YOU CANNOT RESCIND YOUR OFFER WITHOUT CONSULTING THE INTERNSHIP DIRECTOR!**

Inclement Weather Policy

- During times of inclement weather, interns should contact their site supervisor for information on whether the site will be open, delayed or closed and adjust their schedule accordingly.

SimCare: Platform for Internship Placement, Tracking & Clinical Training

SimCare will be an important AI platform that you will use throughout the MFT program and during your internship. It is designed to support your clinical training, learning, and supervision.

Your SimCare Account

At the beginning of the program, every student will receive a SimCare account that you will keep throughout your professional journey.

1. **Clinical Learning and AI Simulations**
   You will use SimCare simulations in your courses to practice and prepare for clinical work. These AI-based simulations will allow you to rehearse clinical skills, apply what you are learning, and complete course assignments in a supportive learning environment. You could also rehearse with Sim at your own pace.

2. **FieldX: Internship and Placement Tracking**
   FieldX is a feature within SimCare that will be used to help manage and track your internship process. You will use it for:

- Tracking your internship site selection process
- Documenting and confirming your internship placement
- Completing and tracking required agreements
- Logging and tracking your internship hours

3. **The Supervision Room: Clinical Supervision and Feedback**
   The Supervision Room is an additional HIPAA compliant tool available through SimCare that may be used by the internship site and site supervisor to support clinical supervision. Its use will depend on the site's needs, policies, and the supervisor's preference. When utilized, it can support live supervision, feedback, and the review of recorded clinical sessions, as appropriate. Training will be provided for the use of this feature.

We invite our students to give us feedback as we roll out this new platform in 2026!

Common SimCare Issues

Commented [SB1]: @Vilanova, Maria I cut & Pasted this from their Support page.

If you have any SimCare challenges, please visit their support site and check in with your faculty: **https://app.simcare.ai/docs**

Problem	What to do
My site isn't in the established list	Click **Request New Site**, fill in the details, and submit. Your coordinator will review it.
My site has been Pending for a long time	Contact your coordinator directly — they may need additional information to approve it.
I requested the wrong site	Open the site card with the Pending badge, click into it, and use **Cancel request**. Then resubmit with the correct site.
My supervisor doesn't appear in the dropdown when logging hours	Go to Timesheet > Tools (three-dots) > Add Supervisor and enter their name and email. They'll get an invitation.
My supervisor was added but still isn't showing up	They haven't accepted the invitation yet. Ask them to check their email (including spam) for the invite.
I can't log hours at my site	Check that the site is active (no Pending badge). Also confirm your clearance is approved — go to My Dashboard > Profile Details > Clearance Tasks. Hour logging requires clearance approval.
I selected an established site but it doesn't appear on my list	Refresh the page. If it still doesn't appear, contact your coordinator — there may be a configuration issue with that site.

INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT PROCESS

Placement Timeline (an example)



Internship Selection Process

- Students must allocate at least two full weekdays for internship.
- There is no guarantee that your site will have weekend hours.
- Students need to be at their site for a minimum of 15 hours a week.
- Attend the mandatory Pre-Internship meeting with the Internship Director, Prof. Vilanova.
- Research Practicum sites:
  - Students will select at least five sites from the internship list provided by the program.
  - Students will provide at least 3 new sites, not included in the list, to the internship director to determine the appropriateness of the site. A new site check list will be provided to complete this process.
- Prepare a professional resume and cover letter.
  - Please note that students are strongly encouraged to contact the Career Center to review and update their resume and cover letter for their sites.
- Meet with Prof. Vilanova for a mock interview.
- Practice interviewing.

Preparing for the Mock Interview:

- Consider this a professional job interview in terms of demeanor, dress, and punctuality.
- Present yourself as you would for any other job interview.
- Have your resume and sites selected.

- Make sure to know about your sites (their values, beliefs, etc.)
- Make sure to make a case (to the site) on why they are a fit.

Selecting practicum sites: Consider the following factors

- Consider your areas of clinical or population interest.
- Consider what you hope to gain from your internship (i.e. supervision, experience in a specific specialty) What are your needs?
- Consider what the site can gain from you being there.
- Research the sites: what do you like about the selected sites?
- Consider location, but don't be limited by location.

Tips for professional resume:

- When listing education and experience, start with current and go backwards.
- If you do not have direct mental health experience, try to relate experience in other jobs with counseling skills, for example: Worked with a team; managed people, reliable quickly learned process, worked with systems, etc.
- Go to the career development center at Mercy University, as they will be able to assist with your resume.
- Review sample resumes.
- Check for grammar and make it presentational.

Tips for a professional cover letter

- A cover letter is your opportunity to promote/advocate for yourself.
- Express why you are a good candidate.
- For some sites, it is great that you talk about your journey into this field, and how it led you to wanting to intern at that site. This is particularly helpful for sites with specializations.
- Talk about why this site is a good fit for you and why you are a good fit for them.

Site Selection and Matching Process

- Prof. Vilanova will provide you with a deadline for the final version of your resume and cover letter for each site that has been selected.
- Prof. Vilanova directly submits Resumes and cover letters to the sites in January.
- The interview process takes place between February and May. Please note that the sites will contact the student directly to arrange an interview if they feel the student, is a good fit.
- Students will notify Prof. Vilanova once they are offered a placement at a site.
- Prof. Vilanova will send out Affiliation Agreements (contracts) if it is a new site.
- An introduction to the MFT Program letter gets sent to the student and the clinical site director to be signed before the start of the internship process.
- **For new sites:** Once the Internship Director confirms that the site meets the state requirements, the internship director and site will begin the contracting process. Contracting can occur simultaneously with interviews and even afterwards.

- **No student is allowed to set up their own placement as we work with sites under Affiliation Agreements with Mercy University that meet NY State Department of Education requirements.**
- **You may wish to be at your internship site more hours than the equivalent of 2 full days per week.**
- **You must NOT arrange a second site on your own.** The second site is added only if there is a need (e.g low client contact hours) and based on availability of sites, site needs/fit, interns' performance among other factors. You must receive permission from Professor Vilanova and Program Director following a successful first semester in an internship.

Post Site Selection & Internship Start Date

- July – August is when any paperwork, training, or tests need to be completed with the site's Human Resources Department.
- September; after Labor Day, when Practicum I starts, is when students can start working and seeing clients. **Students may not start clinical work before the semester starts.**
- Internship will continue until the end of Practicum III (December 1 or 2nd week) even if you have accrued your 300 client contact hours by late November or early December. All client contact hours earned during internship will count towards 1500 hours required for licensure.

Resource List for Gaining Volunteer Experiences

If you are a non-traditional student or changing careers, it helps you to have some experience in the helping professions when applying for internships. Plan to get some experience in the Fall & Spring Semesters before the start of your internship (this can also help with your placement interview process as it shows your commitment to the field). To gain experience in the field of social services or helping field, check out the following sites for volunteering:

1. Volunteer Match: https://www.volunteermatch.org/virtual-volunteering
2. Hotline training & volunteer: https://www.nycservice.org/opportunities/7240
3. New York Cares: https://www.newyorkcares.org/search/projects/results
4. Crises text hotline: https://www.crisistextline.org/become-a-volunteer/
   If you are interested in becoming a Samaritans Hotline Volunteer, please go to *https://samaritansnyc.org/volunteer-2/*
5. Jobs for helping run away kids: https://ny.covenanthouse.org/get-involved/employment/
6. A list of volunteer sites: https://diversity.social/best-volunteer-opportunities-sites/#gsc.tab=0

For jobs search:

1. Indeed.Com: https://www.indeed.com/
2. Social service jobs: https://www.socialservice.com/
3. Glassdoor for jobs & work profiles: https://www.glassdoor.com/
4. Related fields: https://jobs.vnsny.org/

DURING INTERNSHIP

Marriage & Family Therapy Internship Requirements

Consistent with NY State requirements, the program requires students to complete a supervised internship of 300 client contact hours. The internship provides an opportunity for the student to perform, under supervision, a variety of therapeutic activities that a professional therapist is expected to perform. The internship requirements include all of the following:

1. The student has completed core course work in marriage and family therapy;
2. 300 hours of direct clinical contact appropriate to the program of study;
3. The opportunity for the student to become familiar with a variety of professional activities in addition to direct service (e.g., record keeping, supervision, information and referral, in-service and staff meetings);
4. The opportunity for the student to develop program-appropriate audio and/or videotapes of the student's interactions with clients for use in supervision;
5. The opportunity for the student to gain supervised experience in the use of a variety of professional resources such as assessment instruments, diagnostics, technologies, print and non-prin media, professional literature and research.
6. As per New York State law, the internship site supervisor has one of the following credentials: "*Your supervisor must be licensed and registered in New York State to practice Marriage and Family Therapy, medicine, as a physician assistant, psychology, licensed clinical social work, or as a registered professional nurse or nurse practitioner and competent in the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy*"
7. The student must get approval from the MFT Internship Director that the site meets the state requirements prior to your interview.
8. Weekly interaction with **an average of one (*1) hour per week of individual supervision,*** throughout the internship, (usually performed by the on-site supervisor) is required by the program.

Expectations and Responsibilities

Student

The student intern has the all-important responsibility of learning, absorbing, and demonstrating through performance in the day-to-day work tasks his/her ability and accomplishment in becoming a therapy professional. The intern is the key to the entire learning experience. The student intern has the following responsibilities:

1. Adherence to Rules and Regulations: The intern will assume a role as a member of the agency or private practice's staff in adhering to policies, regulations, and procedures within the agency or private practice. Also, the intern will observe and work within the framework of the agency or private practice related to staff protocol and behaviors as well as mode of dress.
2. Attendance: The intern will fulfill the agreed upon time commitments. Time lost shall be made-up in a way which is agreeable to the supervisors.
3. Ethical Standards: Students are expected to conform to ethical standards, especially in regard to confidentiality and teletherapy services as per AAMFT ethical and state guidelines.
4. Keep the agency or private practice intern supervisor regularly updated on the progress of all cases assigned.
5. Actively learn within the limits of the agency or private practice, and actively seek out information.
6. Ask for assistance and supervision when needed, so that the client receives adequate services.
7. Keep the internship director and practicum supervisor informed of significant learning experiences, problems, and progress within the internship. Major decisions, such as leaving internship, a site, adding a site etc should be done in consultation with the internship director and program director.
8. Site Grievances: The student shall contact the practicum supervisor regarding any difficulties that should arise regarding the internship or supervision.

Internship Director

The internship should be regarded as a student initiative with the internship director taking a supervisory and mentorship role. The relationship is collaborative and requires constant communication to ensure that the site is appropriate and can meet state and school requirements.

1. The Internship Director serves as a mentor and facilitator to the student during the internship experience. The Director will be meeting and staying in contact consistently with the student.
2. The Director will be arranging times throughout the placement interview process to evaluate progress and provide advice.

3. When placed at an internship, the Internship Director will be responsible for collecting the tracking form for students to ensure that the student is making their required hours. The student, the practicum supervisor (faculty) and internship Director will be working together to address any challenges as it arises in the internship; this may include supervisory relationships, internship culture, getting enough hours, and professionalism, and much more.

Practicum Supervisor

1. The practicum supervisor will schedule contact points with the student to monitor the progress of the internship, the student's progress in reaching the learning objectives and to ensure the completion of all requirements of being at the internship.
2. The practicum supervisor will be making several contacts with the site supervisor during the internship. It is important to monitor the progress of the internship from a variety of viewpoints and to maintain close relationships with all participants.
3. The internship director, along with the practicum supervisor, is responsible for seeing that all paperwork is completed by the student prior to submitting a grade for the practicum/internship.

Internship Site Supervisor

As per NYS, "Your supervisor must be licensed and registered in New York State to practice Marriage and Family Therapy, medicine, as a physician assistant, psychology, licensed clinical social work, or as a registered professional nurse or nurse practitioner and competent in the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy"

1. The site supervisor must assist with and agree to the terms established by the affiliation agreement.
2. The supervisor should take an active role in mentoring and guiding the student to help meet learning goals and be available for meetings or conversations with the student, the internship director and/or the practicum supervisor.
3. The site supervisor should complete the evaluation forms in a timely fashion and return them to the internship director.
4. As per the affiliation agreement, the site supervisor is required to provide 1-hour of individual supervision per week.

Tips for Maximizing Your Internship

Working Tips

1. Make a “good first impression.”
    a. Dress appropriately.
    b. Always be prompt.
    c. Maintain a positive attitude.
    d. Find out about and follow organizational regulations.
    e. Respect the time of others.
    f. Come prepared for meetings.
2. Orientation
    a. Read everything you can about the organization. It helps to understand how you can adopt some of the beliefs of the organization into your work.
    b. Introduce yourself to your co-workers. Remember your co-workers can also teach you things about this field and how to be a better clinician.
    c. Make a list of questions so that you can use your supervisor’s time wisely.
    d. Familiarize yourself with the different theoretical models earlier on. Don’t hesitate to ask feedback from your site supervisor and practicum supervisor on how to use a specific model in the session.
3. Get the job done!
    a. Schedule your time; keep a to do list.
    b. Space out your tasks; one big task can be broken down into stages
    c. Pace your energy. Too much enthusiasm at first may overwhelm you and leave you burned out at the end.
    d. Practice self-care so that you can always present yourself as your best self.
    e. Ask questions, seek clarifications.
4. Time management
    a. Use calendars and reminders
    b. Set-up alarms so you don’t miss appointments and meetings
    c. Protect your internship time if you are doing teletherapy
    d. Set up reminders for deadlines for treatment plans, reports etc. into your calendar (e.g. 2 weeks from 1st session etc.). Do not make your supervisor your reminder system.
    e. Build-in travel time and margins, so you arrive in time for your appointments and meetings. One-offs might be overlooked but being late for different (valid) reasons might be seen as a lack of commitment, accountability, or priority and could affect your placement.

Preparing for Supervision

Supervision is oversight of the intern's clinical work by an experienced, licensed professional who is designated by the site. *The supervisor is legally responsible for the interns' clinical practice.* Thus, it is required that the interns follow the supervisor's directives, especially in terms of case responsibility, client communication, assessments, interventions, handling of suicide threats, other dangerous clinical situations, and so forth.

The major emphasis of supervision will be on the intern's work with marriage/couple and family (systemic, relational) process, whether the trainee is working with individuals, couples, families or groups. During the supervision session, the major focus is on intern's cases, administrative tasks, and professional responsibilities. The supervisor might guide and coach interns to help them socialize to the field's practices and ways of being. This might include how the intern is participating in the life of the institution and representing the organization and the clinical field. It is the intern's responsibility to come prepared for supervision.

As per AAMFT "Supervisors are responsible for an initial screening to evaluate the MFT's/MFT trainee's knowledge of systems theory, family development, special family issues, gender and cultural issues, systemic approaches and interventions, human development, human sexuality, and ethical responsibilities."

As per AAMFT, Supervision of marital and family therapy is expected to have the following characteristics:

- Face-to-face conversation between the MFT/MFT trainee and the supervisor, usually in periods of approximately one hour each.
- The learning process should be sustained and intense.
- Appointments are customarily scheduled once a week,
- Supervision focuses on raw data from a MFT's/trainee's continuing clinical practice, which is available to the supervisor through a combination of direct live observation, co-therapy, written clinical notes, audio and video recordings, and live supervision.
- It is a process clearly distinguishable from personal psychotherapy and is contracted in order to serve professional goals.

(E)Valuation

The progress of MFTs/trainees should be periodically reviewed according to pre-determined supervisory goals, and evaluations should be shared and discussed with trainees. Should a supervisor develop significant concerns about the abilities, philosophical beliefs, or practices of an MFT/trainee, the concerns must be shared with the MFT/trainee and documented in writing as early as possible.

Termination or loss of the Internship position will result in an F in the Practicum course and dismissal from the MFT program. Please be responsive to supervisor feedback and take corrective measures to avoid termination.

Internship Paperwork

The paperwork for the Mercy Program consists of:

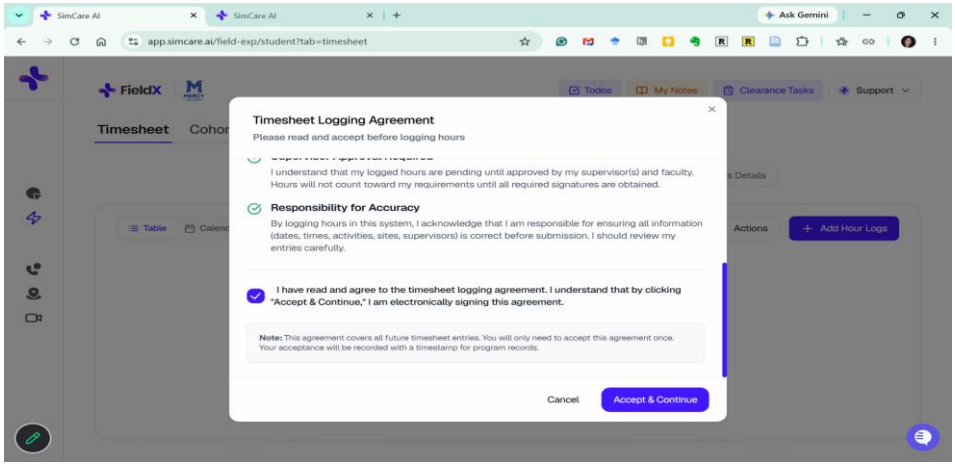
1. Hourly Tracking Form: Time Log sheets
2. Intern Evaluation by your Supervisor conducted per Semester
3. Site evaluation by the intern at the end of Spring Semester

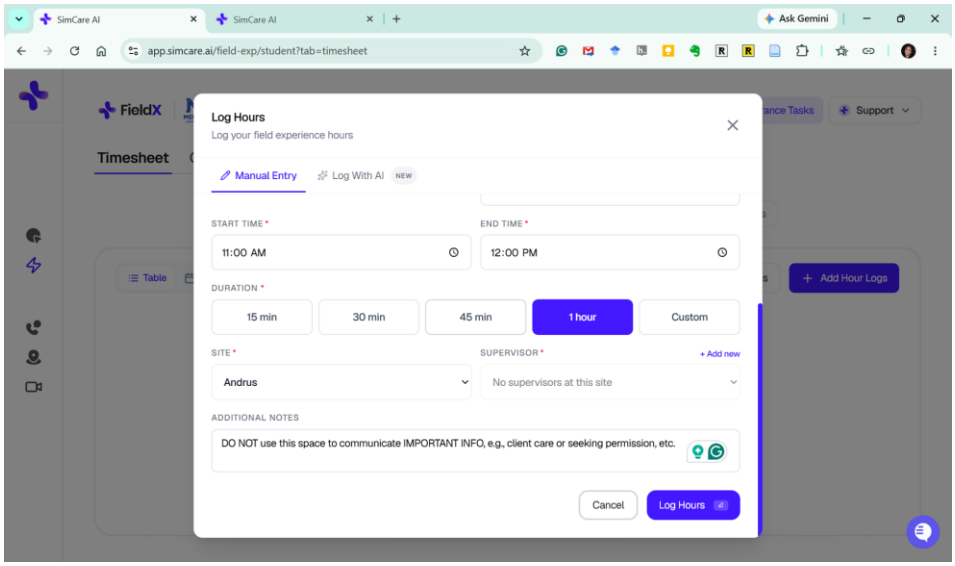
Hourly Tracking Form: Time Log Sheet

Students are required to log their internship hours in **FieldX on a weekly basis**. Every Monday, students will receive a reminder email from **noreply@simcare.ai** prompting them to log their hours for that week before. Students should enter their hours each week to ensure their internship hours are accurate and consistently tracked.
You are required to log in your hours every week and get it signed by your supervisor via SimCare.

You should also maintain a copy of these records for your future use, especially since you may have to submit proof of clinical hours gained during your schooling.

Please refer to the images below for guidance on how to log your internship hours in FieldX. **Internship hours must be entered manually on a weekly basis.**





DO NOT edit the formulas in these gray cells as they are set up to auto-calculate

HOW TO COUNT HOURS

1. Individual therapy = Clinical time spent with a single client
2. Couple therapy = Clinical time spent with a couple

3. Family therapy = Clinical time spent with more than one person when they are not a couple
4. Group therapy = Clinical time for a group session

Internship Log Sheet and Instructions

- Students are not allowed to start providing therapy services to clients until the first week of school when your Practicum I starts.
- Students are not permitted to begin providing therapy or seeing clients for clinical services until the first week of school in September, when Practicum I officially begins.
- If your internship site requires you to begin earlier, such as in August, you may participate in onboarding, orientation, training, and other administrative activities. However, you may not see clients or provide clinical services until Practicum I begins in September.

WHAT HOURS COUNTS?

- You have to do a minimum of 15 hours/week for an internship which includes client contact, supervision, paper, training, etc.
- You need a minimum of 300 face-to-face client contact hours for graduation that will count towards your postgraduate 1500 client count hours for licensure.
- Please note that the Required total face-to-face 300 client contact hours (phone sessions do not usually count except as noted below for COVID) are distributed as:
- Recommended that total supervision hours (individual and group supervision) should be 1 hour for every 5 hours of face-to-face sessions. So, if you had 75 face-to-face client hours of sessions, we recommend you have at least 15 hours of supervision.
- Also, please note that you can have more client hours per semester. In fact, if you get more client hours earlier on then you will have more hours in hand that will count towards your licensure. However, be prepared that there might be a delay in seeing clients due to onboarding, or just the natural buildup of cases. Nonetheless, always keep us in the loop as we are here to help support you as best as we can.

Practicum Hours and Direct Client Contact Requirements

Please note that the Required total face-to-face 300 client contact hours (phone sessions do not usually count except as noted below for COVID)

Each practicum requires **150 hours per semester** at the practicum site, approximately **15 hours per week or the equivalent of two full days**. Practicum hours may include direct client contact, supervision, documentation, training, meetings, and other approved activities.

Direct Client Contact Requirements

Students must complete a **minimum of 300 face-to-face direct client contact hours** to graduate. These hours will also count toward the **1,500 post-graduate client contact hours required for licensure**. Phone sessions generally do not count toward direct client contact hours, except as otherwise permitted by program or regulatory requirements.

Practicum	Total Hours	Direct Client Contact
Practicum I	150	50
Practicum II	150	100
Practicum III	150	100
PSYN 627 (Practicum IV)	150	75

Students may complete **additional direct client contact hours** during any semester. Completing additional hours earlier in the practicum may provide hours that can be applied toward licensure requirements. Students should be aware that client assignments may be delayed due to site onboarding and the natural development of a caseload.

Supervision

Students are encouraged to complete approximately 1 hour of individual and/or group supervision for every 5 hours of face-to-face client contact. For example, 75 face-to-face client contact hours would correspond to approximately 15 hours of supervision.

Students may spend more than the equivalent of two full days per week at their practicum site. Students should consult with the Director of Clinical Internships before taking on significantly more hours to ensure that their practicum workload remains manageable.

IMPORTANCE OF TIMELY COMMUNICATION

- Please note that if any concerns arise with your internship, please speak with your practicum professor first and if the issue is unable to be resolved, the program will intervene. That said, your hours are even more important that they are submitted on time so that the internship director can address challenges with gaining hours as soon as possible. The internship director cannot assist you if they don't know what's happening.

Addressing Challenges During Internship

Challenges during the internship can sometimes be part of the learning process as we get used to new ways of doing, thinking, and being. However, some challenges if not addressed with an intent to learn or address can result in severe consequences. So, please be in conversation with your practicum supervisor to learn the ways of our practice. And, when promoted to learn things or change a behavior, please do so. Develop your system for staying on top of things.

Continuous poor clinical judgment, lack of oversight, lack of professionalism, unethical behavior, a defensive posture, lack of accountability (blaming others), lack of follow-through, and/or commitment to the internship on your part among other behaviors may result in internship termination.

As per the MFT Program Handbook, termination from internship results in dismissal from the program and an F in Practicum. (See below on how to avoid landing at this stage).

If you encounter any of the following challenges in your internship, please act early and consult:

1. **Tedious Work.** As a member of the team, you will be expected to help with routine tasks occasionally (calling waitlisted clients, community engagement, promotion, public speaking, client intake, organizing space and gatherings/celebrations), but you don't want them to become your permanent job. Remember that your role in this internship is to get hands on clinical experience. As such, your primary responsibility is to do therapy (individual, couples, family, and group). If you find that you are not getting opportunities to do therapy but you are doing a lot of administrative work (i.e. only doing intakes, being at the front desk, filing paperwork for staff), then it is important to discuss with your supervisor. ***When in doubt, consult your practicum supervisor*** (and loop in the internship director if things remain unresolved).

2. **Pressure.** Meeting deadlines is your responsibility, but if the pressure to finish assignments on time begins to overwhelm you, let your site supervisor know. The quality of your work is as important as the time element. The best planning can fall through, so don't be afraid to say you can't finish on time or think that the project is too much for you to handle. Your site supervisor can help you try new things to help manage the pressure. Also, consult with your practicum supervisor if you need coaching with time or stress management.

3. **Overtime or prioritizing.** You may be asked, or feel pressured, to work late or on weekends, and working extra hours may help you learn more by experiencing roles or situations not otherwise available. Your commitment to your supervisor and your organization may demand that you put in the extra work. However, everyone has a personal life to maintain, so designing for what is balance for you is a trial and error and negotiated process. It is important to prioritize internship.

So, if you feel confused about work hours and time, talk to your site supervisor and negotiate a solution that considers both your needs and those of the organization. Consult your practicum supervisor, if you need help on how to strike the balance or how to bring up the issues with your site supervisor.

4. **Lack of clients or client contact hours.** Each site varies in how they assign clients and how clients engage in therapy. Engaging clients who are mandated vs. self-referred is a clinical skill. Learning how to handle no-shows or delays is also a clinical skill. While you are learning how to position yourself as a therapist within such situations, you might find you are "lacking" clients or client contact hours which might give you a cause for concern. Rest assured, this is par for course, but do bring up your concern in supervision to learn how to receive more clients, enhance engagement or implement site protocols in case of no-shows etc.

5. **Professionalism**. Site supervisors will give feedback about your work and professional presentation either directly (as a directive) or in subtle ways (as requests, suggestions, or feedback). Learn to ask questions and make changes right away so you are not flagged as a problematic intern. If you are not sure or confused, seek clarifications, ask questions or seek feedback after you have sought to make change (this is known as closing the loop, so you are not left wondering). (See the section on Professionalism Tips for the various areas that matter in our profession.)
    a. In case of written work, ask for samples you can learn from (e.g. treatment plans).

    b. In the case of writing skills, use Mercy's Writing Center's help to improve areas you have received feedback.

    c. Also, consult with your site supervisor, especially if you are confused and not sure you understand the feedback from your site supervisor.

6. **Personal Growth.** Some site supervisors might see an area of personal growth and suggest you seek therapy. Please follow-up and learn why such feedback is being given. And seek out the therapy and/or coaching as directed (see page 17 for resources). Students who get defensive rather than curious might find themselves at odds with their supervisor. Your Practicum Supervisor and Internship Director can also serve as sounding boards should you feel otherwise. If two or more people have given you the same/similar feedback, it is time to act on making the change! We can't help clients in the best possible way, if we are not willing to reflect, change and grow!

Professionalism Tips

Professionalism is a way we live into the cultural discourses and practices of being a "professional." It is a set of socially recognizable practices that is situated within a time and place. These practices evolve and adapt to stay responsive to our local context and

cultural shifts. Here are a few tips to build and discuss with your supervisor as you socialize into the profession.

Engage Your Growth

a. Join AAMFT as a student member!
b. Be active with NYMFTN which offers excellent training.
c. Seek out training and workshops. As students you get some excellent price breaks
d. Sign up for these **free Newsletters** to keep you stay informed about the field:
    - Ethical, Legal & Tech Newsletter for mental health professionals: https://personcenteredtech.com/get-our-articles-and-updates-by-email/
    - Psychotherapy Networker Newsletter: https://www.psychotherapynetworker.org/newsletter
    - PESI Subscription: https://www.pesi.com/page/email-preference
e. Listen to Podcasts & watch clinical videos (via Mercy Library).

Mindsets

a. Build, don't block.
b. Systemic rather than only individually-focused.
c. Co-design with care rather than a defensive posture.
d. Learner (curiosity mindset) and problem-solving rather than fault/blaming.

Communication Area

a. Basic skills: Reading (locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents), writing (communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and creates documents), listening (receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues), speaking (organizes ideas and communicates orally) and shared understanding (inquiry-based contextually comprehending interactions)
b. Ask supervisors what their preferred way for communication is: phone, email, or text
c. Share the best way to reach you and let them know why you might not respond within 12-24 hours.
d. Learn what is the supervisor/organization's response time frame. Negotiate if you need more flex. Approach from flex rather than rigidity mindset.
e. Address people professionally unless they ask you to call them by their first name
f. Avoid being casual, e.g. using texting language in email communications
g. In emails: address the person by their title and sign off with your name
h. Consider having a professional email address, e.g., instead of sassy@gmail.com use lastname@gmail.com
i. Attend to language and grammar: Use permission seeking language such as "May I…" rather than what sounds like a 'demand' or 'urgent'
j. Follow-up if you do not hear back after giving 2-3 business days

k. Timeliness: Be on time, call or inform when you are delayed; notice your frequency of being late/absent (even though they might be for different reasons), as people will create a story about your dependability. Call & email as soon as you can to inform your supervisor/person in-charge in case of delay/absence

Interpersonal Area

a. Participating as member of a team, contribute to group effort and climate
b. Professional connection: Have a middle ground (not overly familiar or overly distant) with professional colleagues (Hint: there is a balance between reflecting on self and too much self-disclosure! Ask questions to learn about balance!)
c. Multiple perspective: Develop ways to hold and acknowledge different viewpoints
d. Areas which are a "push button"- don't give away your power by being defensive, but focus on asking questions
e. Contextual factors: Attend to the hierarchy –formal and informal. Do not ignore the informal leaders & person in charge. Understand the systems – how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operate
f. Exercise leadership: communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies

Academic Area

a. Avoid long breaks during class time & be on time to class
b. Address micro-aggressions directed at you (in your agency) with Practicum or internship supervisors
c. Inform faculty if you will be late or absent and provide a context
d. Missing class due to internship is not an acceptable excuse. Manage your schedule to attend both internship and class

Organizational Area

a. Be on top of paperwork at site and in class
b. Come prepared to discuss cases in supervision
c. Use a calendar to organize your schedule. Keep your calendar private (e.g. avoid shared online family calendars or clients' name)

Attitudes and Appearance

a. Responsibility: exert a high level of effort and persevere towards your goal
b. Self-esteem: believe in own self-worth and maintain a positive view of self
c. Sociability: demonstrate understanding, adaptability, empathy
d. Self-management: assess self accurately, set personal goals, monitor progress, and exhibit self-control
e. Integrity/Honesty: choose ethical courses of action
f. Please use a professional tone

g. Dressing: Avoid casual dressing at internship sites – torn jeans (in fashion), no sweats, tennis shoes, flip flops, etc. Check what is ok to wear.

Social Media

a. Do not make social media requests to follow your supervisors or faculty, (until after graduation, if you want), unless it is their professional social media account
b. Do not befriend or search for clients on social media (this is an ethical issue)
c. Inform your clients on why you cannot accept their social media requests (hint: because of confidentiality & the nature of the relationship= you are not "friends")
d. It is preferable to not search for your clients' online profile, unless clinically relevant
e. It is not unusual that clients, while searching for a therapist, will search about us online (so manage your information or profile online)
f. Learn more about developing your social media policy at: http://www.drkkolmes.com/docs/socmed.pdf

Cell Phone, Email & Computer Use

a. Text and emails are not confidential ways for communication
b. Do not assume you can text your supervisor unless he/she says it is ok (even then, avoid confidential clinical communication)
c. Avoid using your personal cell for client communication
d. Check on your site's use of texting to confirm client appointments. Clients might prefer to text, but DO NOT encourage or use texting as it is not confidential
e. If you use your personal computer at your internship site, be sure it is password protected & contains no clinical information. All clinical information should stay onsite (use flash drives that you can lock away at your site, if you need to use your own computer)

* Some materials are from What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, a publication of the US Department of Labor, June 1991.

Care for the Caregiver

As helpers we too are humans and people in relationship who grapple with own challenges. The caregiver also needs support, care, and help. Intensive training like an internship can at times bring forth relational, emotional, behavioral, organizational and other challenges for one. We invite you to engage with them as pathways for personal and professional development. Seek out therapy or coaching depending on your needs. Here are a select resources:

- Mercy University's Counseling Center: https://www.mercy.edu/student-support/counseling-services or email **CounselingCenter@mercy.edu** to make an appointment (you can avail of **8 free sessions**)
- Mercy University has also partnered with **BetterMynd**, an online therapy platform for University students, with services available **7 days a week with evening and weekend appointments available.**

- Free and low-cost Counseling in New York: https://www.opencounseling.com/new-york/new-york
- Checkout mental health apps & links: https://www.mercy.edu/student-support/counseling-services/helpful-links
- Ask your faculty for other resources as needed. **There is no shame! Reach out! Sooner the better!**

POST INTERNSHIP

In the Summer Semester (Practicum III), the Program will host an orientation focused on licensure and jobs. Though we don't do any job placements, we coach you on how to look for jobs and share any openings we are aware of. You are advised to network, starting in Spring Semester, for possible openings. Be an active participant in the NYMFTA network and sign up for job alerts in the field.

We will also orient you to the NYS's LMFT Licensure process. Note that there are forms that you will need to get signed by your site supervisors, so that your 300+ clients contact hours will count towards your 1500 CC licensure requirements. You are advised to get these forms completed before you exit your internship.

Learn more about the Office of Professions: http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/mhp/
New York State's regulations for LMFT Licensure:
http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/mhp/mftlic.htm

You are advised to take your licensure national exam right after you graduate when your knowledge and readings are fresh. Also, Practicum III (in Summer) will serve as a refresher for all the theory courses, though the exam will go beyond these theories. To learn more visit:

- the process/roadmap: https://amftrb.org/your-exam-roadmap/
- the exam dates: https://amftrb.org/dates/

Private Practice Resources

- https://www.pepitonelaw.com/legal-guides/mental-health-private-practice
- https://www.youtube.com/@AllThingsPrivatePractice
- **Pepitone Law** – Legal considerations
- **All Things Private Practice** – Practical/private-practice education
- **AAMFT** – MFT professional organization
- **SimplePractice Resources** – Starting and managing a practice
- **TherapyDen** – Practice-building tools
- **Psychology Today** – Marketing and building a therapist profile