

NC MFT Licensure Roadmap

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Your Path from Graduate Intern to Licensed MFT

This roadmap outlines the journey to becoming a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in North Carolina. Each phase includes specific requirements, milestones, and practical tips to help you progress efficiently toward full licensure.

Total timeline: Typically 2-4 years depending on your clinical setting, caseload size, and supervision frequency.

Phase 1: Graduate Education (During Master's Program)

Requirements

- Complete a COAMFTE-accredited MFT master's program (or equivalent as approved by NCMFTLB)
- Minimum 300 clinical contact hours during practicum/internship
- 100+ hours of supervision during graduate training
- Pass comprehensive exams and complete thesis/capstone (if required by your program)

Key Milestones

Year 1: Complete coursework in MFT theory, systemic assessment, human development, research methods, and ethics.

Year 2: Begin practicum/internship at an approved clinical site. Start tracking clinical hours and supervision hours immediately.

Pro Tips

- Start your clinical hour log from day one—use a spreadsheet or app to track client contact, supervision, and relational hours

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- Build relationships with faculty supervisors—they may become future references or mentors
 - Observe experienced therapists whenever possible (doesn't count toward hours, but invaluable for learning)
 - Join AAMFT as a student member for access to resources, liability insurance, and networking
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Phase 2: LMFTA Application (Post-Graduation)

Requirements

- Master's degree in MFT or related field (transcript review required)
- Pass the national MFT exam (AMFTRB exam administered by Pearson VUE)
- Submit application to NCMFTLB with all required documentation
- Obtain LMFTA (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associate) status

Key Milestones

Application checklist:

1. Complete online application at ncbmf.org
2. Submit official transcripts from all graduate institutions
3. Provide verification of clinical hours completed during graduate training
4. Pass national MFT exam (schedule through Pearson VUE)
5. Pay application and licensure fees
6. Obtain liability insurance (required before practicing)

Timeline

- **Application processing:** 4-8 weeks after all materials received
- **Exam scheduling:** Register as soon as you graduate (some programs allow you to take it before you graduate); results take 2-4 weeks
- **LMFTA issuance:** Once application approved and exam passed

Pro Tips

- Apply for LMFTA as soon as you graduate
- Keep copies of all application materials for your records

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- Set up your supervision arrangement before your LMFTA is issued so you can start immediately once you are issued a provisional license (**DON'T PERFORM ANY DUTIES AS A THERAPIST DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE ENDING OF YOUR GRADUATE INTERNSHIP AND THE ISSUANCE OF YOUR PROVISIONAL LICENSE**)

Phase 3: Post-Graduate Clinical Experience (LMFTA to LMFT)

This is the longest phase—building the required clinical and supervision hours for full licensure.

Total Hour Requirements

Requirement	Hours	Details
Clinical Contact Hours	1,500	Direct client contact (individuals, couples, families)
Supervision Hours	200	Minimum 50 clock minutes per hour (NC definition)
Relational Hours	500	Therapy with 2+ people (couples, families, groups)

Important: The 500 relational hours are included within your 1,500 total clinical hours (not in addition to). You are allowed to carry over up to 500 clinical contact hours from your practicum/internship.

Supervision Requirements

NC's 50-Minute Rule: North Carolina defines a clinical supervision hour as a minimum of 50 clock minutes of face-to-face supervision^{[1][2]}.

Supervision formats that count:

- Individual supervision: 1 supervisor, 1 supervisee (50+ minutes)
- Triad: 1 supervisor, 2 supervisees (50+ minutes)
- Group supervision: 1 supervisor, 4-6 supervisees (must include at least 50 minutes of clinical supervision within the session)

Frequency: Minimum 1 hour per week while actively accruing clinical hours. You may do more to accelerate progress.

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Supervisor qualifications: Must be an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or AAMFT Supervisor Candidate in good standing.

Tracking Your Hours

What counts as clinical contact:

- Face-to-face therapy sessions (in-person or telehealth)
- Couples therapy, family therapy, group therapy
- Initial assessments and intakes
- Crisis interventions with clients

What does NOT count:

- Documentation time (progress notes, treatment plans)
- Travel time to/from sessions
- Administrative tasks (scheduling, billing, phone calls)
- Training or continuing education

Common Challenges and Solutions

Challenge	Solution
Not enough relational hours	Seek sites with couples/family therapy opportunities; offer sliding scale couples work; join group therapy teams
Slow hour accumulation	Increase caseload capacity; work in higher-volume settings (community mental health, college counseling); consider part-time private practice to supplement
Expensive supervision costs	Join group supervision to reduce cost per hour; negotiate with employer for supervision coverage; use triad format
Difficulty finding AAMFT supervisor	Use AAMFT supervisor directory; reach out to local MFT programs for faculty recommendations; consider remote supervision if allowed

Phase 4: LMFT Application and Licensure

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Requirements

- Completed 1,500 clinical contact hours (including 500 relational hours)
- Completed 200 supervision hours with qualified supervisor(s)
- Supervisor evaluation and verification of hours
- Continued liability insurance
- Clear background check and ethics review

Application Process

1. Log into NCMFTLB portal and complete LMFT application
2. Upload clinical hour logs (must be signed by supervisor)
3. Submit supervisor evaluation forms (completed by your supervisor)
4. Provide updated transcripts if any additional coursework completed
5. Pay LMFT application and licensure fees
6. Await board review and approval

Cost Planning for Licensure Journey

Budget for these expenses during your LMFTA phase:

Expense	Estimated Cost
LMFTA application	\$200-300
National MFT exam	\$250-300
Annual LMFTA renewal	\$100-150/year
Supervision (200 hours)	\$12,000-18,000 total (\$60-90/hr average)
Liability insurance	\$200-400/year
AAMFT membership	\$100-200/year
LMFT application	\$200-300
Total (2-3 years)	\$15,000-22,000

Cost-saving tips:

- Use group or triad supervision to reduce per-hour cost
- Seek employers who provide free or subsidized supervision
- Apply for AAMFT student or early-career membership discounts

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- Choose high-volume clinical sites to accumulate hours faster (reducing total supervision time)
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Additional Resources

Official NC Board:

[1] North Carolina Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure. (2024). *Applicant Guidelines*. <https://www.ncbmf.org/>

[2] NCBMFT. (2023). *Supervision Agreement Addendum for LMFTA Applicants*. https://www.ncbmf.org/images/uploads/files/Supervision_Agreement_Addendum.pdf

National Organizations:

[3] American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. (2024). *AAMFT Core Competencies*. <https://www.aamft.org/>

[4] Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards. (2024). *MFT National Examination*. <https://www.amftrb.org/>

Tracking Tools:

- Download our free Clinical Hour Tracker spreadsheet at workmyaoff.com
 - Use apps like TherapyNotes, SimplePractice, or TheraNest for integrated hour tracking
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Next Steps

Ready to start your supervision journey?

Contact Kevin Harrison for a free 15-minute consultation:

 kevin@workmyaoff.com

 336-756-2063

 workmyaoff.com

Download more resources:

- Supervision Prep Checklist
 - Systemic Case Conceptualization Template
 - Tech Integration Guide for Therapists
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