APPLYING TO THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY PH.D. PROGRAM

To apply to the program go to: http://www.applyweb.com/apply/vtg/indexa.html

Fully completed applications must arrive by the first business day of January.

Assistantships & scholarships are available.

For more information, contact Scott Johnson, Ph.D., Director, Family Therapy Center, 840 University City Boulevard, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0515, 540-231-7201 (swj@vt.edu), or Anisa Zvonkovic, Ph.D., Department Head, Department of Human Development, 366 Wallace Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0416, 540-231-5434 (anisaaz@vt.edu).

All photographs used with permission, including photographs of clients. Clients’ faces may be obscured for confidentiality. Some shots depicting therapy sessions are simulated.

Virginia Tech programs, activities and employment are available to all people regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, or political affiliation. Anyone with questions concerning discrimination should contact the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the mission of your program?

Our aim is to graduate well rounded scholar-clinicians who will move the field ahead, either through research, teaching, practice, service, or aspects of all four. As a research and practice centered program, we believe graduates should be able to do all these things well, though they have a wide number of career choices once they have finished. No single choice is right for everyone.

What type of student are you looking for?

A wide range of types — students who are interested in developing their ideas in a variety of ways and who are motivated to explore new ideas about themselves, relationships, and psychotherapy with an equally wide range of other learners.

What are your philosophies about diversity?

Diversity, as Darwin noted, is the engine of the organic enterprise on earth; without it, life becomes unsustainable. But it is more than just skin color or gender, sexual orientation or age or disability, important as they are. In our program, we look for diversity of many different kinds, including diverse beliefs and values, life experiences and geography, along with ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and age or ability. Ultimately, we are seeking a diversity that leads not only to social complexity and variety, but to diverse clinical and scholarly outcomes: new ideas and approaches that will help improve the way all human beings live their lives. A good part of the research conducted by our students and faculty over the years has been directed toward a variety of diversity related topics.

What is the ethnic diversity of your students and faculty?

For the past several years, our student body has fluctuated between 15 and 30 percent ethnic minorities, and included several students from other countries, as well as students from over 24 states with a wide variety of beliefs and values. Our small numbers mean that very small changes in enrollment cause relatively large changes in percentages. Our faculty are half female, half male, and include African American and Native American heritage members.

What kind of students apply to your program?

We typically attract candidates from COAMFTE accredited MFT masters programs and other mental health curricula with high GPAs and above average GREs who are committed to their own growth as therapists and scholars, and to the growth of the field. Their GPAs have tended to average about 3.8 on a 4.0 scale; their GRE verbal and quantitative scores have been averaging about 1050. Many students are accepted, however, whose numbers are well above, or occasionally below these norms.

What master’s courses and clinical experience should I have had?

6 hours of family therapy theory, 9 hours of additional clinical coursework (not including practica), 6 hours of family studies or human development courses, 3 hours of ethics, 3 hours of assessment/psychopathology, 3 hours of research methods or statistics, 3 hours of electives, and 500 hours of supervised clinical practice, preferably under a licensed family therapist or Approved Supervisor.

How many students do you usually accept, and what kind of support do you offer?

We typically accept about six students per year. Historically, all program students seeking assistantships have received at least half time (ten hours) support. For the past several years we have been able to support nearly all program students at the level they have requested. (Students have received the number of hours they asked for.) Assistantships remit all or part tuition, depending on the hours the assistantship carries. A ten hour assistantship remits half of the cost of tuition; a fifteen hour remits three-quarters; a twenty hour assistantship (full support) remits full tuition. Students receiving ten hour or greater assistantships pay in-state tuition.

Is there a standard date by which new students offered assistantships by any MFT doctoral program must accept them?

Yes. For any MFT program in a university that belongs to of the Council of Graduate Schools, which is nearly all of them, a student offered financial support has until April 15th to decide whether to accept it.

How long does it take to complete the program?

Students have taken as few as 3 years and as long as 10 to complete the program. The designed minimum length is six years.

What kinds of careers do your graduates have?

Our graduates have careers that span the range of teaching and the helping professions, and sometimes include a few in entirely different fields. They have chosen positions as far away as Australia and as close to home as Blacksburg. About half our graduates have gone into clinical academic positions, while the rest have gone into private practice, agency work, or medical clinics and hospitals.

The Virginia Tech Marriage and Family Therapy Ph.D. Program, in the Department of Human Development, is the oldest continuously accredited MFT doctoral program in the nation, attracting students from across the country and around the world. Students, faculty, and graduates have singular records of achievement, winning prestigious honors, holding important positions, and publishing some of the most respected articles in the field.

Susan Perkins, ‘11, AAMFT Dissertation Award

Toni Zimmerman, ’91, University Distinguished Teaching Scholar, Colorado State University.

Jamie Banker, ’10, Assistant Director of Graduate Psychology, California Lutheran University

Darren Moore, ’12 Assistant Professor, Mercer University School of Medicine

Sean Davis, ’05, MFT Site Director, Alliant University, Sacramento.

William Turner, ’90, Betts Chair and Professor of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University; former aide to Senator Barack Obama.

John Miller, ’96, Director, Sino-American Family Therapy Institute, Nova Southeast University; Fulbright Scholar.

Sen. William V. S. Skelton, ’59, U.S. Senate, author, and director of the Institute for Contemporary Studies, Raleigh, NC, and co-founder of the North Carolina Institute of Public Policy, Raleigh, NC.

Senator William Turner, ‘90, Betts Chair and Professor of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University; former aide to Senator Barack Obama.

Barack Obama.

The Virginia Tech Marriage and Family Therapy Ph.D. Program, in the Department of Human Development, is the oldest continuously accredited MFT doctoral program in the nation, attracting students from across the country and around the world. Students, faculty, and graduates have singular records of achievement, winning prestigious honors, holding important positions, and publishing some of the most respected articles in the field.
Our faculty have included distinguished figures in the profession, including two winners of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Outstanding Contribution to MFT Award and two former AAMFT Presidents.

Scott Johnson, PhD, Associate Professor and Program Director. Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor, AAMFT. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Certificate of Teaching Excellence & CLAHS Graduate Advising awards, National Institute on Aging Summer Research Fellow. Reviews Editor, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy. Articles and chapters in Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, Family Relations, and many others.

Erika Grafsky, PhD, Internship Coordinator and Assistant Professor. Pre-clinical Fellow, AAMFT. Over fourteen refereed articles in top-flight journals such as Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, AIDS Education & Prevention, and Children & Youth Services Review. $54,000 dissertation grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2010 NCFR New Professional Award.


Fred Piercy, PhD, Professor. Clinical Fellow, Approved Supervisor, and Fellow, AAMFT. Editor, Journal of Marital & Family Therapy; numerous editorial boards. Former Board Member, AAMFT. Former Chair, Commission on Accreditation for Marriage & Family Therapy Education. AAMFT Training Award and Outstanding Contribution to Marriage & Family Therapy Award. Over two hundred articles in scholarly journals and popular periodicals, and many books and chapters.

To date, we have over 129 graduates. Since 1982, our graduation rate is 88%. In addition, 87% of our minority students have graduated.

We have consistently recruited students from across the U.S. and from other countries, including India, Iran, Columbia, Russia, Turkey and China. U.S. students have come from at least 25 different states.

We offer excellent facilities in our off-campus clinic and training center, with practicum student office, therapy, and classroom space, and a digital video system.

www.familytherapy.vt.edu
Assistantships & Fellowships

For the last 20 years, every student who has sought an assistantship has received one.

Currently, all students have received the number of assistantship hours they requested.

Program students have also won prestigious University scholarships and fellowships.

Students have assistantship duties in a variety of settings, including classroom teaching and support, research, and administration.

AAMFT Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration Fellows

Isha Williams
Mathis Kennington
Hoa Nguyen
Narkia Green

Tanisha Brown
Darren Moore
Tenille Richardson
Jamie West

1st year student Tina Voskanova, translator of one of Sue Johnson’s (right) books into Russian, with colleague Lucy Mikaelyna (left)

Program students and faculty had over 60 presentations, publications, and grant applications in the past year, including several presentations at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Annual Conference, and articles in a range of scholarly journals, such as Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, and Traumatology. Students and faculty also have won national and university awards, and given presentations in South Africa and China in the past year.
Our students have ranged from new master’s graduates to practitioners with decades of experience, and have also included people embarking on new careers. They have come from all cultures, creeds and backgrounds, and worked together in support and harmony.

Their interests have ranged from spirituality in therapy to ethnic identity, art and family therapy, gender issues, medical family therapy, sports and adventure based interventions, marital enrichment, business consultation, working with children, sexual orientation, and the therapist’s use of self, to name only a very few.

Our task has been to help bring their ideas to life, develop their lives to the fullest, and help them influence the larger world.

Curriculum
Advanced Systems Theory
Advanced Traditional Models
Advanced Experiential Models
Advanced Contemporary Models
Advanced Professional Seminar
Advanced Diagnosis & Assessment
Marriage & Family Therapy Research
Qualitative & Quantitative Research
Research & Dissertation
Clinical Practicum (200 hours)
Clinical Internship (500 Hours; 9-12 months off campus)

Students receive regular group and individual supervision in accordance with AAMFT standards. They work with clients from a wide variety of cultures, incomes, sexual orientations, and constellations, drawn in a radius from eastern West Virginia to the North Carolina border. In their third year, students serve a 9 to 12 month internship. Past interns have worked at the Houston-Galveston Institute with Harlene Anderson, Ottawa Civic Hospital with Susan Johnson, the University of Chicago under John Rolland, the University of Oregon under John Miller, and numerous other important agencies across the U.S. and Canada.

Students need a total of 1,000 clinical hours and 200 hours of supervision to graduate. Up to half of these hours may be transferred from their master’s programs if they meet certain criteria. Students from non-AAMFT accredited master’s programs may need some additional classes.

Depending on their master’s work, students may qualify to take the MFT licensure exam in some states on or shortly after graduation. Students seeking Virginia licensure may need limited additional coursework.