State Licensure Statutes, Regulations, Forms, and Policies not only change on a regular basis, but may contain contradictory information. It is the responsibility of any individual who may review this document to check with their licensure board regarding all requirements and policies regarding the licensure process. For more information please refer to your state licensing board, click here to find your state licensing board website aamftrc.org

Does the State require a degree program to include a specific number of credit hours (e.g. 45, 48 or 60 semester credits)? If so, how many credit hours are required?

Applicants for licensure in West Virginia must complete a minimum of 60 semester hours of graduate course work inclusive of a masters or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy.

What type of institutional or programmatic accreditation is required?

Applicants for licensure in West Virginia must have earned a master’s or doctoral degree from an institution with a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCACS), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), or a comparable accrediting body as determined by the Board.

The program or concentration must clearly be identified as marriage and family therapy. Such a program must specify in pertinent institutional catalogues and brochures its intent to educate and train marriage and family therapists. In addition, the marriage and family therapy curriculum must stand as a recognized entity within the institution and have a marriage and family therapy faculty.

Does the State require the program to have COAMFTE or CACREP Accreditation?

West Virginia does not require these accreditations.

Does the State accept a COAMFTE accredited degree without requiring the applicant to list specific courses on the license application?

This is unclear.

What courses does the State require an applicant to have taken in order to be have met this educational requirement for licensure?

West Virginia requires that completed marriage and family coursework must be within an organized course of study that includes at least one three hour graduate course in each of these eight areas of marriage and family therapy:

Marriage and family studies: Courses in this area should present a fundamental introduction to marriage and family studies. The student should learn to think across a wide variety of family structures
and a diverse range of issues (i.e. gender, culture, and substance abuse). Topic areas may include but not limited to: family development, subsystems, blended families, gender issues in families, cultural issues in families;

**Systems theory:** Courses in this area should address the historical development, theoretical and empirical foundations, and contemporary conceptual directions of the field of marriage and family therapy;

**Research:** Courses in this area should assist the student in understanding and performing research. Topic areas may include: research methodology, qualitative and quantitative methods, and statistics;

**Professional ethics:** Courses in this area must include the "American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy" (AAMFT) code of ethics, confidentiality and liabilities of clinical practice and research, professional ethics as a marriage and family therapist, professional socialization and the role of the professional organization, licensure or certification legislation, independent practice and interprofessional cooperation. Religious ethics courses and moral theology courses do not meet this requirement;

**Human growth and development:** Courses in this area should provide knowledge of personality development and its normal and abnormal manifestations. The student should have relevant coursework in human development across the lifespan, which includes special issues that should be integrated with systems concepts. Topic areas may include but are not limited to: human development, psychopathology, personality theory, human sexuality. Test and measurement courses do not meet this requirement;

**Appraisal of individuals and families:** includes individual and family differences, methods of data gathering and interpretation, individual, family and group testing, and case study;

**Principles of etiology, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and prevention** of mental and emotional disorders and dysfunctional behavior; and,

**Practicum:** Includes a supervised training experience consisting of the provision of marriage and family therapy to clients and is acceptable to the Board. Practicum must be a minimum of twelve months. Minimum twelve months, supervised clinical practicum with three hundred hours of direct contact with individuals, couples, and families. Fifty percent of the three hundred hours must be with couples and families present.

The marriage and family therapy coursework completed must include four courses in marriage and family therapy. Courses in this area should have a major focus on advanced marital or family systems 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 include but are not limited to: strategic, structural, object relations, behavioral, intergenerational, and systemic sex therapy.
How many client contact hours must a student obtain during practicum, and how many of these must be relational hours?

West Virginia requires a supervised training experience consisting of the provision of marriage and family therapy to clients and is acceptable to the Board. This supervised clinical practicum must include three hundred hours of direct contact with individuals, couples, and families. Fifty percent of the three hundred hours must be with couples and families present.

How many supervision hours must a student obtain during practicum?

West Virginia does not specify a minimum number of supervision hours during practicum.

What is the required length of practicum in this State?

West Virginia requires that this practicum must be a minimum twelve months.
**Post-Graduation Requirements**

**What are the minimum number of years of clinical experience a graduate needs to obtain a license, the minimum number of client contact hours, and how many of these hours must be relational hours?**

West Virginia requires an applicant for licensure to have a minimum of 1500 hours of supervised marriage and family therapy experience after earning the degree. The master’s level marriage and family therapy work experience shall be obtained in not less than two years and the doctoral degree marriage and family therapy work experience shall be obtained in not less than one year. Applicants should apply systemic theories and treatment with all clients and make every effort to work with as many couples and families as possible.

**What are the minimum number of experience hours required by this State?**

West Virginia requires the applicant to have a minimum of 3000 hours of supervised marriage and family therapy experience after earning a master’s degree in marriage and family therapy or its equivalent as determined by the Board (or have earned a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy or its equivalent as determined by the Board). The Board will not credit an applicant with more than 1500 hours of experience in any twelve-month period.

**What are the minimum number of post-graduate supervision hours required by this State, and how many of these hours must be individual supervision?**

West Virginia requires a minimum of 1 hour of direct individual supervision for every 20 hours of practice unless the supervisor deems additional supervision is necessary. When the supervisor is not a full-time employee of the same firm or agency as the applicant, this supervision shall occur at least twice in each calendar month unless the supervisor deems additional supervision is necessary. The supervisor shall be reasonably available to the applicant for telephone consultation. An approved professional supervisor may not supervise more than 4 individual applicants.

**What are the State requirements for an individual to be qualified as a supervisor?**

West Virginia requires that the professional supervisor must be pre-approved by the Board and shall provide post-graduate degree supervision for applicants provided he/she is a marriage and family therapist, licensed professional counselor, or other qualified supervisor as determined by the Board. At a minimum, the professional supervisor shall have been licensed for a period of 2 years and shall have 5 years therapy/counseling experience. The professional supervisor shall document to the Board that he or she has a current license and has completed training in therapy/counseling supervision that includes content and experiences relevant to the professional and clinical supervision of marriage and family therapists. The professional supervisor shall provide the Board with a statement detailing his or her therapy philosophy, supervision experience and therapy experience. The professional supervisor shall demonstrate skills necessary to address core areas of practice as outlined in West Virginia rules.
The training in therapy/counseling supervision must be one of the following: a. Successful completion of a one-semester graduate course in marriage and family therapy clinical supervision from an accredited institution; or b. A 30 hour continuing education course in clinical supervision offered by a board approved provider.

In lieu of meeting the qualifications set forth in West Virginia rules, a licensed mental health professional is an acceptable professional supervisor if the licensed mental health professional has been designated as an approved supervisor by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) before the licensed mental health professional provides any supervision.

**Does the state require the National Examination offered by the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB)?**

Yes. A passing score is valid for 5 years from the date of examination.

**Does the State have specific training requirements beyond the graduate degree?**

None are noted in West Virginia.

**Can an individual with a criminal history request board review before actually having to apply for licensure?**

It is unclear if West Virginia has a process to pre-preapprove applications.

**How can someone contact the Board in this state?**

West Virginia Board of Examiners in Counseling  
815 Quarrier Street, Suite 212  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: (304) 558-5494  
Fax: (304) 558-5496  
Email: rclay27@msn.com  
Website: www.wvbec.org

Every state has a "definitions" section of their rules and/or statutes. Are there any definitions that might be important for an applicant to pay attention? (Note: this is not a complete list, please review definitions in your state)

None are noted in West Virginia.