

UNDERSTANDING CLIENT CONTACT & SUPERVISION HOURS

The AAMFT Requirement:

The requirement is 500 client contact hours for Masters students and 1000 hours for Doctoral students by the time you are ready to graduate. Client contact is a professional service provided to a client, measured in increments of an hour. These increments are rounded up to the nearest half hour. For example, 20 minutes spent with a client is recorded as .5 hour; so is ½ hour spent with a client. 45 minutes spent with a client would be recorded as 1 hour. 1 and ½ hours spent with a client would be recorded as 1.5 hours; 1 hour and 45 minutes would be recorded as 2 hours, and so on.

Required Documentation:

A client contact hour is always a service provided to the client. Therefore, in addition to the client contact hours you record on the client contact forms, you will always be able to produce a case note in the client's chart describing that service. That is your backup documentation, in case questions are ever raised. The one exception to this is community service provided to the community at large by the agency in which you are interning; for this service, you will have a flyer advertising the community service as backup documentation. If you do not have a case note or a flyer you could show, do not record a client contact hour. In the school system, charts are not always required, but your faculty supervisor will talk with you about keeping a backup journal or log for your own records so that your services to clients are recorded properly.

Types of Client Contact Hours:

I. Relational or individual. A relational client contact may be either relational or individual. Relational hour is an hour spent with a couple, a family, a child and that child's caregiver, siblings, or other individuals related by blood or marriage, and/or living in the same household. 200 of the 500 (Masters students), and 400 of the 1000 (Doctoral students) of your client contact hours must be relational. The remaining 300 for master's students and 600 for Doctoral students can be individual, relational, or a mixture of both types.

A note about group therapy: If you are seeing a group of unrelated individuals, like a therapy group at an agency of unrelated 12-year-old boys, that is an individual hour. If the group runs for 1 ½ hours, that is 1.5 hours of individual group client contact. You do not record the number of individuals in the group, but rather the time spent with the group. (In other words, an hour spent with ten 12-year-old does not count as 10 hours, but as 1 hour of individual group client contact.) If you are facilitating a therapy group of related individuals – a couples group, a multiple family group, or a children's group which includes siblings – the same rules apply, but in this situation each hour is an hour of relational group client contact.

Group therapy. As described in COAMFTE 12.0 Standards: “Group therapy can be counted as relational hours if those in the group therapy have a relationship outside of, (above and beyond) the group itself. If the individuals in the group had relationships with one another before the group began, then the group therapy hours may be counted as relational. An example of this may be in-patient groups where the individuals lived together all day in a program.”

(<https://www.coamfte.org/documents/COAMFTE/Accreditation%20Resources/2018%20COAMFTE%20Accreditation%20Standards%20Version%2012%20May.pdf>)

II. DIRECT OR ALTERNATIVE: Client contact hours may be either direct or alternative. The AAMFT requirement is that *400 of your 500 client contact hours must be direct* for Masters students and *800 of your 1000 client contact hours must be direct* for Doctoral students. In order to help you graduate on time and to encourage systemic work, faculty here in the Family Therapy department have succeeded in obtaining permission from COAMFTE for you to count up to 100 hours (Masters)/200 hours (Doctoral) of alternative client contact towards your hour total. This is a privilege, not a requirement, and if you find it confusing you are certainly welcome to have all of your hours be direct client contact hours. The terms are defined below and examples given.

DIRECT: A direct client contact hour is a service you provide to the client face to face. You and the client are both in the same room, for at least most of the time.

EXAMPLES:

From a practicum at BTI: You are the primary therapist and are in the room with the client during your practicum. You meet with the client in front of the mirror at 6 p.m.; you consult with your team behind the mirror during a consultation break; and you return to your client in the room in front of the mirror to complete the session. The session is over at 7:30 p.m. You write a case note describing this session and stating the length of the session (including consulting breaks). Your case note is your backup documentation. This is 1.5 hours of direct individual client contact

From an agency placement: You see your assigned client from 6 to 7:30 p.m. by yourself in your assigned office. This is 1.5 hours of direct individual client contact. Again, your case note listing the amount of time you saw the client is your backup documentation.

From a school setting: You meet with a second-grade classroom to lead a social skills training activity. You meet with the class from 2 until 3:30 p.m. By the terms of the contract your agency or project has with the school, the school itself is your "client". There are 25 children in the class. You would record the activity in your backup journal, and also record the time on your client contact hours form. This would be 1.5 hours of direct individual group client contact.

ALTERNATIVE: Alternative client contact hours are teamwork and consultation hours. This will take different forms in different settings, but alternative client contact hours always represent a service to the client or to the community. Thus, they are distinct from supervision hours, where the focus is on your learning.

EXAMPLES:

From a practicum at BTI: When you are part of the team behind the one-way mirror, actively participating in a colleague's case, this is an alternative hour. When the team meets to write a letter to the client (one which is actually mailed) this is also an alternative hour. Pre and post sessions, watching videos, and other supervision activities are NOT alternative hours. In Internal Practicum, the focus is typically on supervision with some direct and alternative client contact.

In your field placement, you should be obtaining direct and/or alternative client contact hours during most of your time. If you are not, it is YOUR responsibility to discuss this with your onsite and faculty supervisors.

From an agency setting: When you meet with a client's case manager or probation officer to

discuss the client's progress, this is an alternative hour. When you attend a staff meeting the focus of which is to discuss agency policy, and then attend group supervision where a number of people discuss clients you yourself have never seen, these are NOT alternative hours. If you are in an internship setting in which the majority of your hours consist of activities for which you cannot obtain either direct or alternative client contact hours, discuss this with your onsite and faculty supervisors and consider changing internship sites. Again, it is YOUR responsibility to notice and point out the problem.

From a school setting: When you meet with a teacher to discuss a child client's progress, this is an alternative hour; so is an IEP (individualized educational plan) meeting or a child study team meeting. Meeting with your onsite supervisor to discuss cases is NOT an alternative hour; neither is discussing cases with your fellow classmates on site. Again, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure your time is spent wisely during your internship hours.

A NOTE ABOUT COMMUNITY EVENTS: Your agency provides free screenings for family problems at an annual fair. You attend and discuss your agency's services with several families. This is an alternative hour. You would be able to produce a flyer for the event as backup documentation. This type of alternative hour could also occur when you represent BTI at a community event or take part in a family wellness day at your school placement. If you are providing services to the community to people of all ages, including families, you would record this as an alternative family hour. Such events provide a useful way to obtain additional alternative family hours on weekends and holidays in particular.

SUPERVISION:

The COAMFTE Requirement:

COAMFTE requires 100 hours (Masters)/200 hours (Doctoral) of supervision before you graduate. All of these hours must be with an AAMFT approved supervisor. Typically, this person will be your faculty supervisor, though if you have an onsite supervisor with the AAMFT approved supervisor credential, these supervision hours may count as well. Consult your faculty supervisor and/or Internship Coordinator about this.

For most of our internship sites, there is no AAMFT approved supervisor on site. The supervision you receive from your onsite supervisor who is not an AAMFT approved supervisor is important and valuable, and helps orient you to the real working world, but it is NOT counted towards your supervision requirement.

Of these 100 hours (Masters)/200 hours (Doctoral) with an AAMFT approved supervisor, 50 hours (Masters)/100 hours (Doctoral) must be live based on direct observation, videotape, or audiotape. At least 25 hours of the 50 supervision hours (Masters)/50 hours of the 100 (Doctoral) must be based on direct observation or videotape. These terms are defined below and examples given.

TYPES OF SUPERVISION HOURS:

Individual or group:

At BTI in Internal practicum: If the team is discussing your case or you as a therapist, this is individual supervision. If the team is observing you in the room with a client, or watching a video of your work, this is also individual supervision. If the focus is on another of your classmates or your classmate's client, you record this time as group supervision. Over the course of the semester, the focus should rotate so that you receive approximately one hour of individual supervision a night in your practicum. If this is not happening, it is YOUR responsibility to discuss this with your practicum supervisor and ask for more individual focus on your work.

With your faculty supervisor, while doing your field placement: If more than 1 other person is present besides you and your faculty supervisor, this is group supervision. If you are alone with your faculty supervisor or have only one classmate with you with your faculty supervisor, this is individual supervision.

Live, Audio, Video or From Notes

If the client is present, this is live supervision. If you are watching a videotape of someone's work with a client, this is supervision from video. If you are listening to an audiotape of someone's work with a client, this is supervision from audio. If you are simply talking about cases, this is supervision from notes.

Your responsibility to monitor your live individual supervision total:

Ideally, you will receive 25 hours (Masters)/50 hours (Doctoral) of live individual supervision in practicum Internal Practicum, through being in the room with clients while your supervisor observes. If this is not happening for you, ask if the team can watch a video of your work or if you can be assigned more clients. If, despite these efforts on your part, you did not receive 25 hours (Masters)/50 hours (Doctoral) of live or video individual supervision in Internal Practicum, then there are ways you can make sure you meet this requirement while in your field placement:

1. Spend at least some of your internship time at an internship site where live supervision from an AAMFT approved supervisor is available. Such sites include Fifth Street, BTI, and the Center for Family Services of Palm Beach County.
2. Ask at your agency/internship site if you can obtain audio recordings of yourself with a client and take them off site for your faculty supervisor to hear. This is done in many clinical training programs, but you must follow agency policy about it. Video recordings will also work but are typically more disruptive and difficult to obtain.

Department of Family Therapy

Documentation of Client Contact Hours & Supervision

What you need: 500 hours total (Masters students), 1000 hours total (Doctoral students). At least 200 of these must be relational (i.e., more than one family member is in the room: includes couples, parent and child, and siblings). for Masters Students, and at least 400 of these hours have to be relational for Doctoral students.

What you record:

BTI: A family came to BTI during your practicum, and you were the therapist in the room.
Record 1 family client contact hour for every hour that you spend with this family under In-room, Family.

BTI: A family came to BTI during your practicum, and you participated in the session from behind the mirror.
Record 1 family client contact hour for every hour that you participated in this family session under Alternative Therapeutic Contact

Internship: You saw a group of nine-year-old boys referred for behavior problems.
Record 1 individual client contact hour for every hour that you spend with this group under In-room Group, Individual.

Documentation of Supervision:

What you need: 100 hours total (Masters students), 200 hours total (Doctoral students). Of these hours, at least 50(Masters), 100 (Doctoral) must be supervised by direct observation, video, or audio. 25 (Masters), 50 (Doctoral) of those hours must be direct observation or video.

What you record:

BTI: A family came to BTI during your practicum, and you were the therapist in the room. The supervisor watched the sessions from behind the mirror.
Record 1 individual supervision hour for every hour that you spend with this family under Individual, Live.

BTI: A family came to BTI during your practicum, and you were the therapist in the room. The supervisor did not watch the sessions from behind the mirror, but you discussed the case with him or her. There were not more than two therapists in that supervision session.
Record 1 individual supervision hour for every hour that you discussed this case with your supervisor under Individual, Notes

BTI: A couple came to BTI during your practicum, and you participated in the session from behind the mirror.
Your supervisor watched the session from behind the mirror.
Record 1 group supervision hour for every hour that you participated in this family session under Group, Live.

- ** Keep separate Client Contact and Supervision Hours Sheets for each site that you accrue hours. This helps you accurately keep track of your hours and makes it easy to have the appropriate supervisors initial and sign your sheets.

Hours Clarification:

Relational hours counted if student therapist sees a family one day, deals with familial issues with just one member of the family the following session, then meets with the family in the next session. If this repetition continues, then all the hours spent in session with all of the family members are counted as relational hours, even though during intermittent times, there is just one member of the family present in the session.