

1                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to marriage and family therapists;  
 3           amending s. 491.005, F.S.; providing equivalent  
 4           education requirements for licensure by examination;  
 5           conforming provisions to changes made by the act;  
 6           amending s. 491.006, F.S.; deleting certain education  
 7           requirements for licensure or certification by  
 8           endorsement; providing an effective date.

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 10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 12           Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 491.005, Florida  
 13 Statutes, is amended to read:

14           491.005 Licensure by examination.—

15           (3) MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY.—Upon verification of  
 16 documentation and payment of a fee not to exceed \$200, as set by  
 17 board rule, plus the actual cost ~~to the department~~ for the  
 18 purchase of the examination from the Association of Marital and  
 19 Family Therapy Regulatory Board, or similar national  
 20 organization, the department shall issue a license as a marriage  
 21 and family therapist to an applicant who the board certifies:

22           (a) Has submitted an application and paid the appropriate  
 23 fee.

24           (b)1. Has a minimum of a master's degree with major  
 25 emphasis in marriage and family therapy from a program

26 accredited by the Commission of Accreditation for Marriage and  
27 Family Therapy Education or from a Florida university program  
28 accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and  
29 Related Educational Programs, or a closely related field, and  
30 has completed graduate courses approved by the Florida Board of  
31 Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental  
32 Health Counseling. all of the following requirements:

33 a. ~~Thirty six semester hours or 48 quarter hours of~~  
34 ~~graduate coursework, which must include a minimum of 3 semester~~  
35 ~~hours or 4 quarter hours of graduate-level course credits in~~  
36 ~~each of the following nine areas: dynamics of marriage and~~  
37 ~~family systems; marriage therapy and counseling theory and~~  
38 ~~techniques; family therapy and counseling theory and techniques;~~  
39 ~~individual human development theories throughout the life cycle;~~  
40 ~~personality theory or general counseling theory and techniques;~~  
41 ~~psychopathology; human sexuality theory and counseling~~  
42 ~~techniques; psychosocial theory; and substance abuse theory and~~  
43 ~~counseling techniques. Courses in research, evaluation,~~  
44 ~~appraisal, assessment, or testing theories and procedures;~~  
45 ~~thesis or dissertation work; or practicums, internships, or~~  
46 ~~fieldwork may not be applied toward this requirement.~~

47 b. ~~A minimum of one graduate-level course of 3 semester~~  
48 ~~hours or 4 quarter hours in legal, ethical, and professional~~  
49 ~~standards issues in the practice of marriage and family therapy~~  
50 ~~or a course determined by the board to be equivalent.~~

51 ~~e. A minimum of one graduate-level course of 3 semester~~  
52 ~~hours or 4 quarter hours in diagnosis, appraisal, assessment,~~  
53 ~~and testing for individual or interpersonal disorder or~~  
54 ~~dysfunction; and a minimum of one 3-semester-hour or 4-quarter-~~  
55 ~~hour graduate-level course in behavioral research which focuses~~  
56 ~~on the interpretation and application of research data as it~~  
57 ~~applies to clinical practice. Credit for thesis or dissertation~~  
58 ~~work, practicums, internships, or fieldwork may not be applied~~  
59 ~~toward this requirement.~~

60 ~~d. A minimum of one supervised clinical practicum,~~  
61 ~~internship, or field experience in a marriage and family~~  
62 ~~counseling setting, during which the student provided 180 direct~~  
63 ~~client contact hours of marriage and family therapy services~~  
64 ~~under the supervision of an individual who met the requirements~~  
65 ~~for supervision under paragraph (c). This requirement may be met~~  
66 ~~by a supervised practice experience which took place outside the~~  
67 ~~academic arena, but which is certified as equivalent to a~~  
68 ~~graduate-level practicum or internship program which required a~~  
69 ~~minimum of 180 direct client contact hours of marriage and~~  
70 ~~family therapy services currently offered within an academic~~  
71 ~~program of a college or university accredited by an accrediting~~  
72 ~~agency approved by the United States Department of Education, or~~  
73 ~~an institution which is publicly recognized as a member in good~~  
74 ~~standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of~~  
75 ~~Canada or a training institution accredited by the Commission on~~

76 ~~Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education~~  
77 ~~recognized by the United States Department of Education.~~  
78 ~~Certification shall be required from an official of such~~  
79 ~~college, university, or training institution.~~

80 2. If the course title which appears on the applicant's  
81 transcript does not clearly identify the content of the  
82 coursework, the applicant shall be required to provide  
83 additional documentation, including, but not limited to, a  
84 syllabus or catalog description published for the course.

85  
86 The required master's degree must have been received in an  
87 institution of higher education which at the time the applicant  
88 graduated was: fully accredited by a regional accrediting body  
89 recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary  
90 Accreditation; publicly recognized as a member in good standing  
91 with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada; or  
92 an institution of higher education located outside the United  
93 States and Canada, which at the time the applicant was enrolled  
94 and at the time the applicant graduated maintained a standard of  
95 training substantially equivalent to the standards of training  
96 of those institutions in the United States which are accredited  
97 by a regional accrediting body recognized by the Commission on  
98 Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation. Such foreign  
99 education and training must have been received in an institution  
100 or program of higher education officially recognized by the

101 government of the country in which it is located as an  
102 institution or program to train students to practice as  
103 professional marriage and family therapists or psychotherapists.  
104 The burden of establishing that the requirements of this  
105 provision have been met shall be upon the applicant, and the  
106 board shall require documentation, such as, but not limited to,  
107 an evaluation by a foreign equivalency determination service, as  
108 evidence that the applicant's graduate degree program and  
109 education were equivalent to an accredited program in this  
110 country. An applicant with a master's degree from a program  
111 which did not emphasize marriage and family therapy may complete  
112 the coursework requirement in a training institution fully  
113 accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and  
114 Family Therapy Education recognized by the United States  
115 Department of Education.

116 (c) Has had at least 2 years of clinical experience during  
117 which 50 percent of the applicant's clients were receiving  
118 marriage and family therapy services, which must be at the post-  
119 master's level under the supervision of a licensed marriage and  
120 family therapist with at least 5 years of experience, or the  
121 equivalent, who is a qualified supervisor as determined by the  
122 board. An individual who intends to practice in Florida to  
123 satisfy the clinical experience requirements must register  
124 pursuant to s. 491.0045 before commencing practice. If a  
125 graduate has a master's degree with a major emphasis in marriage

126 and family therapy or a closely related field that did not  
127 include all the coursework required under subparagraph (b)1.  
128 ~~sub-subparagraphs (b)1.a.-c.~~, credit for the post-master's level  
129 clinical experience shall not commence until the applicant has  
130 completed a minimum of 10 of the courses required under  
131 subparagraph (b)1. ~~sub-subparagraphs (b)1.a.-c.~~, as determined  
132 by the board, and at least 6 semester hours or 9 quarter hours  
133 of the course credits must have been completed in the area of  
134 marriage and family systems, theories, or techniques. Within the  
135 2 ~~3~~ years of required experience, the applicant shall provide  
136 direct individual, group, or family therapy and counseling, to  
137 include the following categories of cases: unmarried dyads,  
138 married couples, separating and divorcing couples, and family  
139 groups including children. A doctoral internship may be applied  
140 toward the clinical experience requirement. A licensed mental  
141 health professional must be on the premises when clinical  
142 services are provided by a registered intern in a private  
143 practice setting.

144 (d) Has passed a theory and practice examination provided  
145 by the department for this purpose.

146 (e) Has demonstrated, in a manner designated by rule of  
147 the board, knowledge of the laws and rules governing the  
148 practice of clinical social work, marriage and family therapy,  
149 and mental health counseling.

150 (f) For the purposes of dual licensure, the department

151 shall license as a marriage and family therapist any person who  
152 meets the requirements of s. 491.0057. Fees for dual licensure  
153 shall not exceed those stated in this subsection.

154 Section 2. Section 491.006, Florida Statutes, is amended  
155 to read:

156 491.006 Licensure or certification by endorsement.—

157 (1) The department shall license or grant a certificate to  
158 a person in a profession regulated by this chapter who, upon  
159 applying to the department and remitting the appropriate fee,  
160 demonstrates to the board that he or she:

161 (a) Has demonstrated, in a manner designated by rule of  
162 the board, knowledge of the laws and rules governing the  
163 practice of clinical social work, marriage and family therapy,  
164 and mental health counseling.

165 (b)1. Holds an active valid license to practice and has  
166 actively practiced the profession for which licensure is applied  
167 in another state for 3 of the last 5 years immediately preceding  
168 licensure.

169 ~~2. Meets the education requirements of this chapter for~~  
170 ~~the profession for which licensure is applied.~~

171 2.3. Has passed a substantially equivalent licensing  
172 examination in another state or has passed the licensure  
173 examination in this state in the profession for which the  
174 applicant seeks licensure.

175 3.4. Holds a license in good standing, is not under

176 investigation for an act that would constitute a violation of  
177 this chapter, and has not been found to have committed any act  
178 that would constitute a violation of this chapter. The fees paid  
179 by any applicant for certification as a master social worker  
180 under this section are nonrefundable.

181 (2) The department shall not issue a license or  
182 certificate by endorsement to any applicant who is under  
183 investigation in this or another jurisdiction for an act which  
184 would constitute a violation of this chapter until such time as  
185 the investigation is complete, at which time the provisions of  
186 s. 491.009 shall apply.

187 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.