

By Senator Torres

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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.

9
10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

11
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

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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 c. ~~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~~

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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

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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

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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.-e.~~, 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.-e.~~, 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.

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146 (e) Has demonstrated, in a manner designated by rule of the
147 board, knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of
148 clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and mental
149 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 to
155 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 the
162 board, knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of
163 clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and mental
164 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 the~~
170 ~~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.

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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 certificate
182 by endorsement to any applicant who is under investigation in
183 this or another jurisdiction for an act which would constitute a
184 violation of this chapter until such time as the investigation
185 is complete, at which time the provisions of s. 491.009 shall
186 apply.

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