



Understanding Contact and Supervision Hours

- 1) **THE AAMFT REQUIREMENT**— The requirement is 500 client contact hours for Masters students and 1000 hours for Doctoral students by the time a student is 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.
- 2) **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**—A client contact hour is always a service provided to the client. Therefore, in addition to the client contact hours students record on the client contact forms, they will also be able to produce a case note in the client’s chart describing that service. This will serve as a backup documentation, in case of questions. The one exception to this is community service provided to the community at large by the agency at which the student is interning. In this case, the student will need a flyer advertising the community service as backup documentation. If the student does not have a case note or a flyer, they should not record a client contact hour. In the school system, charts are not always required, but a faculty supervisor will discuss keeping a backup journal so that services to clients are recorded properly.
- 3) **TYPES OF CLIENT CONTACT HOURS**— **INDIVIDUAL**: face-to-face contact with an individual, where student and client are both in the same room. **RELATIONAL**: contact 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, or group sessions (where the client resides in residential placement, or a school setting). Note that 250 of the 500 hours (Masters) or 500 of the 1000 hours (Doctoral) must be relational. The remaining 250 (Masters) and 500 (Doctoral) can be individual, relational, or a blend of both.
- 4) **DIRECT OR ALTERNATIVE**—Client contact hours may be either direct or alternative. The AAMFT requirement is that 400 of the 500 client contact hours must be direct, for Masters students and 800 of the 1000 client contact hours must be direct, for Doctoral students. NSU’s Family Therapy department has succeeded in obtaining permission from COAMFTE to count up to 100 hours (Masters) or 200 hours (Doctoral) of alternative client contact towards the total hours needed.

DIRECT: A direct client contact hour is a service that the student provides to the client face-to-face, where the student and the client are both in the same room, for at least most of the hour.

SOME EXAMPLES:

(1) BTI-- Student is the primary therapist and is in the room with the client during the practicum. The student meets with the client in front of the mirror at 6 p.m.; and consults with the team behind the mirror during a consultation break; and returns to their client in the room in front of the mirror to complete the session. The session is over at 7:30 p.m. the student writes a case note describing this session and stating the length of the session (including consulting breaks). The case note is backup documentation. This is 1.5 hours of direct individual client contact.

(2) External agency placement—The student sees the assigned client from 6 to 7:30 p.m. alone in an assigned office. This is 1.5 hours of direct individual client contact. Again, the case note listing the amount of time the student saw the client is the backup documentation. From a school setting: The student meets with a second grade classroom to lead a social skills training activity. Student meets with the class from 2 until 3:30 p.m. By the terms of the contract the agency or project has with the school, the school itself is the “client”. There are 25 children in the class. The student would record the activity in a backup journal, and also record the time on their client contact hours form. This would be 1.5 hours of direct individual group client contact.

ALTERNATIVE: Alternative client contact hours are considered teamwork and consultation hours. This may take on different appearances in different settings, but alternative client contact hours always represent a service to the client or to the community. They are distinct from supervision hours, where the focus is on the student therapist’s learning.

SOME EXAMPLES:

(1) BTI—A therapist is with the team, behind the one way mirror, actively participating in a colleague’s case, this is an alternative hour.

(2) Team meet—The team meets to write a letter to a client (one which is actually mailed). This is also an alternative hour. Note: Pre and post sessions— watching videos and other supervision activities are NOT alternative hours.

(3) A student’s meeting with a client’s case manager or probation officer to discuss the client’s progress is considered an alternative hour.

(4) A student’s meeting with a teacher to discuss a child-client’s progress is an alternative hour. An IEP (individualized educational plan) meeting, or a child-study team meeting would also count as alternative.

A NOTE ABOUT COMMUNITY EVENTS: *An agency provides free screenings for family problems at an annual fair. Student attends and discusses their agency’s services with several families. This is an alternative hour. Student would be able to produce a flyer for the event as backup documentation. This type of alternative hour could also occur when the student represents BTI at a community event, or takes part in a family wellness day at a school placement. Students providing services in the community (clients of all ages, including families), will record this as an alternative family hour. Such events*

provide a useful way to obtain supplementary alternative family hours on weekends and holidays in particular. See the Supplementary Placement Agreement for contracting these events and hours.

- 5) **SUPERVISION**— The COAMFTE Requirement: COAMFTE requires 100 hours (Masters)/200 hours (Doctoral) of supervision for graduation. All of these hours must be with an AAMFT approved supervisor. Typically, this supervisor will be a faculty supervisor, although, if a therapist has an onsite supervisor with the AAMFT approved supervisor credentials, these supervision hours may count as well. Faculty supervisors should be consulted if there are questions in this area. Most often, internship sites do not have AAMFT approved supervisors.

Non-AAMFT approved site supervision is important and invaluable in its orientation to the real therapeutic world, but it is NOT counted towards the 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.

- 6) **TYPES OF SUPERVISION HOURS**— Individual or groups at BTI in internal practicum, when the team is discussing a case, is **individual** supervision for the therapist for the case being discussed. If the team is observing a therapist, in the room with a client, or watching a video of a therapist's work, this is also **individual** supervision for that therapist. If the focus is on a classmates or a classmate's client, this time is recorded as **group** supervision. Over the course of the semester, the focus should rotate so that a student receives approximately one hour of **individual** supervision a night in their practicum. When more than one student is present with a faculty supervisor, while the student is a part of a field placement, this supervision is considered **group** supervision. Faculty supervision alone, or with only one other student, is considered **individual** supervision.

Live, Audio, Video or From Notes

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

Ideally, the student should receive 25 hours (Masters), 50 hours (Doctoral) of live individual supervision in Internal Practicum, in-room, with clients while the supervisor observes. Students should request team assistance in watching their own videos, or simply request new clients, where necessary to fulfill this program requirement.

Students should speak with their faculty supervisors to ensure these minimal requirements are being met. The supervisor may suggest alternatives such as:

- Participation at an internship site where live supervision from an AAMFT approved supervisor is available.
- Requesting the agency/internship site loan audio recordings of student with a client and take review the tapes off site with faculty supervisor. This is done in many clinical training programs, but student must follow associated agency policies.

- 7) **SUPERVISION**—COAMFTE requires 100 hours (Masters), 200 hours (Doctoral) of supervision for graduation. All of these hours must be with an AAMFT approved supervisor. Typically, this supervisor will be a faculty supervisor, although, if a therapist has an onsite supervisor with the AAMFT approved supervisor credentials, these supervision hours may count as well. Faculty supervisors should be consulted if there are questions in this area.
- 8) **DOCUMENTATION OF HOURS**— Requirements: 500 hours total (Masters students), 1000 hours total (Doctoral students). At least 250 of these must be relational (i.e., more than one family member is in the room: includes couples, parent and child, and siblings).
- *BTI: A family came to BTI during practicum, and the student therapist was in the room (See Clinical Hours Documentation worksheet). Student records one family client contact hour for every hour that spent with this family, under In-room, Family.*
 - *BTI: A family came to BTI during practicum, and student participated in the session from behind the mirror. Student records one family client contact hour for every hour they spend watching the family session, under Alternative Therapeutic Contact.*
 - *External Internship: Student saw a group of nine-year-old boys referred for behavior problems. Student records one individual client contact hour for every hour that was spent with this group, under In-room Group, Individual*

10) **DOCUMENTATION OF SUPERVISION HOURS**—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.

- *BTI: A family came to BTI during a practicum, and the student was the therapist in the room. The supervisor watched the sessions from behind the mirror. Student records one individual supervision hour for every hour that student spends with this family, under Individual, Live.*
- *BTI: A family came to BTI during practicum, and student was the therapist in the room. The supervisor did not watch the sessions from behind the mirror, but student discussed the case with faculty supervisor. There were no more than two therapists (total) in that supervision session. Student records one individual supervision hour, under Individual Notes, for every hour that student discussed this case with the supervisor.*
- *BTI: A couple came to BTI during practicum, and a student participated in the session from behind the mirror. The Faculty supervisor watched the session from behind the mirror: Student records one group supervision hour for every hour that the student participated in this family session under “Group, Live”.*

NOTE: A separate “signed” client contact sheet and supervision sheet is required for each field site. The form header should be completed in full, including the student “N” number and email address.

Any other issues and concerns not addressed here should be reviewed with a faculty supervisor.