

Texas Woman's University
College of Professional Education
Department of Family Sciences

PhD in Family Therapy

Admissions Process

The admissions procedure begins with making application to the Graduate School of TWU (details on TWU website). The student must have completed a master's degree in a related field with at least a 3.5 GPA on the last 60 hours of course work. Once Graduate Admissions has approved the application and forwarded it to the Department of Family Sciences by our deadline (Feb. 15 or Sept. 15), the student is assigned an appointment for the Applicant Interview Day. This day includes writing an essay, a therapist-client role play, and a small group interview with faculty. Acceptance into the program may be unconditional or provisional for the next long semester following this Applicant Interview Day.

Philosophy of the Family Therapy Programs

The Family Therapy Programs use a systemic approach that conceptualizes problems as located within the relationships and interactions between people rather than only within the individual(s). We are interested in the multiple systems within which all people live and the recursive connections between them. Our program is committed to providing an open context that promotes equality, social tolerance, and the right to express different points of view. We actively seek enrichment through the strength, power, and wisdom of diversity.

Doctoral Program Course Requirements

The program requires 70 semester hours of coursework plus 12 semester hours of courses designated as research tools. Students who have not completed the 18 semester hours of prerequisite courses in their master's program must also complete those. Clinical coursework includes at least 4 semesters of practicum (300 hours of therapy, at least 150 hours of which is with couples and families), a time commitment of at least 20 hours per week each semester. The student must apply in advance *each* semester for a practicum assignment. For the first semester of practicum, the student is usually assigned to the Counseling and Family Therapy Clinic (CFTC) on campus and the remaining semesters the student works with clients at an approved community agency or other approved site she/he selects and interviews with in the area. The course in clinical supervision includes the requirement that the student supervise student therapists in the CFTC. The Supervision class is usually taken during the 4th semester of the student's practicum.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

The doctoral program contains the coursework needed to apply to take the exam in Texas for licensing as a Marriage and Family Therapist. After passing the exam, the graduate may be licensed as an LMFT-Associate and will be required to provide 3000 hours of family therapy under supervision by a state-approved supervisor before being fully licensed as an LMFT. The website for the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage & Family Therapists details the requirements.

Emphasis on Research

The Family Therapy doctoral program emphasizes research and requires the completion and successful defense of a doctoral dissertation reporting on original research designed, conducted and written by the student under the direction of the major advisor. The student's research committee will include the advisor and at least two others, at least one of whom must be family

therapy faculty. Students have 10 years to complete the Ph.D. program and, on average, our students take at least 5 years to finish their coursework, clinical practica and supervision course, and dissertation research.

The Doctoral Committee

A major advisor, one of the 4 family therapy faculty members, will be assigned to the student when she or he is accepted for admission into the program. The advisor helps the student plan coursework each semester and answers questions the student may have. If at any point the student wishes to change advisors, another faculty member may be asked to serve and a Change of Advisor Form completed and submitted to the FS office. The student's doctoral committee, composed of the major advisor and 4 other professors (at least 2 of whom must be from the family therapy faculty) is selected by the student in consultation with the major advisor. After completion of about 12 semester hours of coursework, the major advisor helps the student prepare the doctoral degree plan, a form setting forth the coursework for the degree, a minimum of 90 hours past the bachelor's degree that will include 30 hours of research courses. The student arranges the formal degree plan meeting with the five faculty members on the degree plan committee to officially approve the plan, which must be signed and submitted to the FS office.

After completion of all coursework, the student will sit for comprehensive written and oral exams in the following semester, writing for three 8-hour days in spring or fall, followed two weeks later by a 2-hour oral exam. The student applies to take the exams in the long semester preceding the spring or fall "Comps." The student's five doctoral committee members provide the questions for the written exam, covering all the coursework on the student's degree plan, and conduct the oral exam. After successful completion of the comprehensive exams, the student will be notified by the Graduate School that he or she has been approved for Advancement to Candidacy for the doctoral degree. At this point the student may begin the process leading to the proposal of the dissertation research.

Department of Family Sciences

Our Department of Family Sciences includes the Counseling & Development, Family Studies, Early Childhood Development & Education, and Family Therapy components, providing a variety of faculty disciplines and perspectives to our students. Texas Woman's University truly celebrates diversity as we are enriched by students of differing physical ability, race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, and socioeconomic status, among other differences. Our department offers opportunities for students to enhance professionalism through membership in a variety of student organizations. Family Therapy students are expected to become student members in our campus organization Student Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and to join the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy <www.aamft.org> as a student member. We also encourage student attendance at AAMFT Annual Conference and other family therapy and family sciences workshops and seminars.

Additional information is available in the TWU Catalog and the TWU Student Handbook.