

## COAMFTE Accreditation Process

Accreditation is a voluntary process whose major purpose is to ensure quality in a marriage and family therapy program. All accredited programs are expected to meet or exceed all standards of accreditation throughout their period of accreditation. The integrity of an institution and the program is fundamental and critical to the process of accreditation. Accreditation standards are regarded as minimal requirements for quality training. Programs seeking COAMFTE Accreditation are required to demonstrate compliance with current accreditation standards. Programs must submit Eligibility Criteria documents, a Self-Study, and host a Site Visit. The entire accreditation process takes a minimum of two years.

The following is a snapshot of the accreditation process. Programs interested in seeking accreditation are required to review the 'COAMFTE Accreditation Manual: Policies and Procedures' for a full description of the accreditation process and policies.

### Step 1: Prepare for Accreditation

#### ➤ Review Resources:

- COAMFTE Accreditation Manual: Policies and Procedures
- COAMFTE Accreditation Standards Version 12

#### ➤ Attend Accreditation Trainings

- Sign Up for Webinars and Trainings

#### ➤ Gather Data

- Begin collecting data two (2) years in advance of applying for accreditation.
- Evaluate program in relation to the mission, goals and outcomes:
  - Mission, Goals and Outcomes Template

### Step 2: Letter of Intent and Application – no later than (6) months prior to Eligibility Criteria

#### ➤ Submit Letter of Intent

#### ➤ Complete and Submit Application

- Application Form
- Distance Education Form (if applicable)

#### ➤ Send via email to [coa@aamft.org](mailto:coa@aamft.org)

### Step 3: Accreditation Eligibility Criteria

Programs must substantially meet each of the Eligibility Criteria to be eligible for accreditation and to continue with the process of demonstrating compliance with Standards I-V.

#### ➤ Organization and Submission Requirements for Programs

- Complete and submit all tables, including required supporting evidence/appendices, for each Eligibility Criterion using the Eligibility Criteria Narrative Template

- Format:
  - All components must be combined in one PDF document with bookmarks linking to each individual component.
  - PDF document shall not exceed 30 MB
  - Email to [coa@aamft.org](mailto:coa@aamft.org)
- Submit Eligibility Criteria Process Fee
- Deadlines: April 1 and October 1 (one year prior to Self-Study Submission deadline)
  - Eligibility Criteria submission deadlines are published on the COAMFTE website for programs renewing their COAMFTE accreditation

#### ► **Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) and Notification**

- Eligibility Criteria documents will be reviewed by Accreditation staff for completeness and compliance with Organization and Submission requirements.
- Eligibility Criteria documents that are incomplete or do not meet the Organization and Submission requirements noted above will be returned to programs with an explanation and timeline for resubmission.
- Complete Eligibility Criteria documents will be forwarded to ERC for review.
- Following the review of a program's Eligibility Criteria documents, a program will receive the Eligibility Criteria Review Letter.
- Possible Responses
  - ✓ **Invite to Proceed with Self-Study / Eligibility Criteria is met**
  - ? **Submit Additional Information / Eligibility Criteria information is insufficient**
  - ✗ **Deny or Revoke Accreditation /Eligibility Criteria is not substantially met**

#### **Step 4: Self-Study**

The purpose of a Self-Study is to help programs become more effective by clarifying their goals, assessing achievements, identifying problems, and implementing needed changes. The Self-Study is the program's opportunity to describe how it meets or exceeds COAMFTE's current set of accreditation standards and is used by the Commission and Site Visit Team to assess the program's compliance with the COAMFTE accreditation standards. All Self-Study documents must be in the English language.

#### ► **Organization and Submission Requirements for Programs**

- Complete and submit the following Forms:
  - Self-Study Narrative Template
  - Self-Study Narrative Overview
  - Mission, Goals, and Outcomes Template
  - Faculty Summary
  - Supervisor Summary
  - Program Composition and Student Achievement (Initial Programs Only)
  - Supporting Appendices (evidence supporting the Self-Study narrative responses)
  - Site Visit Date Request Form
  - Site Visit Conflict of Interest Form
  - Site Visit Confidentiality Form

- Format:
  - All Self-Study components must be combined in one PDF document with bookmarks linking to each individual component.
  - PDF document shall not exceed 30 MB
  - One electronic; read only; USB Flash Drive
  - Mail 1 USB Flash Drive to:  
COAMFTE/AAMFT, 112 South Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
- Submit Fees for Application and Site Visit
- Deadlines: April 1 and October 1
- ▶ **Commission Review and Notification**
  - Self-Studies received by the submission due date will be reviewed by staff for completeness.
  - Complete Self-Studies will be forwarded to the Commission for review.
  - Self-Studies that are incomplete will be returned to programs.
  - Following the review of a program's Self-Study, a program will receive the **Self-Study Review Letter** indicating the COAMFTE recommendation and areas of deficiencies.
  - Possible Recommendations
    - ✔ **Recommend Site Visit / Self-Study is accepted**
    - ⚠ **Defer Site Visit / Self-Study is incomplete**
    - ✘ **Deny Site Visit / Accreditation Standards are not substantially met**

#### Step 5: Site Visit

The purpose of an accreditation Site Visit is to determine the accuracy and completeness of the Self-Study document and gain an understanding of those aspects of a program which cannot be fairly and adequately evaluated from documentation alone. If the reviewers determine that the program provided substantial information to demonstrate compliance with the Accreditation Standards, a Site Visit will be recommended. For any standards with indicated deficiencies, programs will need to provide additional documentation demonstrating how the requirements of that standard are met.

- ▶ **Preparing for the Site Visit**
  - Submit Program's Response to Self-Study Review Letter to the COAMFTE office at [coa@aamft.org](mailto:coa@aamft.org) within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the Review Letter, if applicable.
  - Complete Site Visit Logistics Form and include Site Visit Agenda
  - Schedule for Site Visit
    - Spring Cycle: March 15 – May 15
    - Fall Cycle: September 15 – November 15
    - Occur over two-day period, usually Mondays and Tuesdays
    - Travel days are Sunday and Wednesday
- ▶ **Site Visit Report**
  - The final Site Visit Report is forwarded to the Program Director and the Chief Executive Officer of the institution within forty-five (45) days of Site Visit completion.
- ▶ **Program's Response to Site Visit Report**
  - Submit program's response to the COAMFTE office at [coa@aamft.org](mailto:coa@aamft.org) within thirty (30) days of the receipt of Site Visit Report.

## Step 6: Accreditation Review and Decision

Both the Primary and Secondary Reviewer will carefully examine the Self-Study, the Site Visit Report, the program's response to the Site Visit Report, and any additional documentation submitted by the program prior to the Commission Meeting following the Site Visit. During the Commission Meeting, the Commission, by a majority vote of members present, will take one of the actions described below:

### ▶ Decisions

- ✔ Award Accreditation
- ➡ Award Accreditation with Stipulations
- ⚠ Defer Decision on Accreditation
- ✘ Deny Accreditation

- ▶ **Action Letters** will be sent to programs within 30 days of the Commission Meeting indicating the accreditation decision.

## Step 7: Maintenance of Accreditation

Each accredited program must demonstrate its continuing compliance with COAMFTE standards through the submission of reports related to the maintenance criterion. Each maintenance criterion describes a standard that accredited programs must meet to demonstrate ongoing compliance with accreditation. Programs that have been awarded accreditation are encouraged to review these criteria so they can adequately prepare to comply with the standards.

### ▶ Annual Reports

- Programs must submit the annual report using the online annual report form prior to or on the program's report due date (January 31 or July 31)
- Programs must submit an annual report for all years of accreditation on their regular schedule of submission, including the year in which a Self-Study is due.

### ▶ Special Reports

- Programs that have deficiencies in their Annual Report will be required to submit a Special Report using the online Special Report Template by the next submission deadline or as required by COAMFTE.

### ▶ Response to Stipulations

- Programs that have stipulations are required to submit their Response to Stipulations consistent with the Timeline for Corrective Actions Policy.

## Organization and Submission Requirements for Programs

Document	Submission Requirement(s)	Format	Submission
Letter of Intent and Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Letter of Intent</li> <li>○ Application Form</li> <li>○ Distance Education Form (if applicable)</li> </ul>		E-mail to: <a href="mailto:coa@aamft.org">coa@aamft.org</a>
Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eligibility Criteria Template/Tables</li> <li>○ Supporting Appendices and Required Documents</li> <li>○ Fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDF format, read only</li> <li>• All Eligibility Criteria components must be combined in <u>one PDF document</u> and include bookmarks linking to each individual component.</li> <li>• PDF document shall not exceed 30 MB.</li> </ul>	E-mail to: <a href="mailto:coa@aamft.org">coa@aamft.org</a>
Self-Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-Study Narrative Template</li> <li>○ Self-Study Narrative Overview</li> <li>○ Mission, Goals, and Outcomes Template</li> <li>○ Faculty Summary</li> <li>○ Supervisor Summary</li> <li>○ Program Composition and Student Achievement (Initial Programs Only)</li> <li>○ Appendices/evidence supporting Self-Study narrative responses</li> <li>○ Fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One electronic; USB Flash Drive</li> <li>• PDF format, read only</li> <li>• All Self-Study components must be combined in <u>one PDF</u> document in the order noted in 'Contents' with bookmarks linking to each individual component.</li> <li>• PDF document shall <u>not</u> exceed 30 MB.</li> </ul>	Mail USB Flash Drive to:  COAMFTE/AAMFT 112 South Alfred Street Alexandria, VA 22314
Site Visit Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Site Visit Date Request Form</li> <li>○ Site Visit Conflict of Interest Form</li> <li>○ Site Visit Confidentiality Form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDF format, read only</li> </ul>	E-mail to <a href="mailto:coa@aamft.org">coa@aamft.org</a>
Self-Study Addendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-Study Addendum Template</li> <li>○ Appendices (evidence supporting the narrative response)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One electronic; USB Flash Drive</li> <li>• PDF format, read only</li> <li>• All Self-Study Addendum components must be combined in one PDF document with bookmarks linking to each individual component.</li> <li>• PDF document shall <u>not</u> exceed 30 MB.</li> </ul>	Mail USB Flash Drive to:  COAMFTE/AAMFT 112 South Alfred Street Alexandria, VA 22314

### Accreditation Process Document Due Dates/Fees

All fees and documents must be received at the COAMFTE office on the dates noted below. Current fees are available on the COAMFTE website, see [Accreditation Fees](#).

Document	Fee	Submission Date
Application for Accreditation	Application for Accreditation (Initial/Renewal)	October 1/April 1
Eligibility Criteria Report	Eligibility Criteria Process Fee	
Self-Study	N/A	
	Site Visit	
	Annual Sustaining/Maintenance of Accreditation	January 31
	Special Report Fee/Maintenance of Accreditation Late Fee	<i>Per Invoice</i>
Annual Report		January 31/July 31
Special Report		
Response to Stipulations		