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May 1, 2026

Dr. Zephor Lister
Marriage and Family Therapy Program
Loma Linda University (PhD)

Dear Dr. Lister:

The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), at its April 13-14, 2026 meeting, reviewed the Marriage and Family Therapy (PhD) program at Loma Linda University for Renewal of Accreditation. This review included consideration of the program's Self-Study, COAMFTE's Self-Study Review Letter, Program's Additional Information, Site Visit Report, Program's Response to Site Visit Report, and any additional materials submitted by the program.

The Commission voted to grant Renewal of Accreditation for a period of three (3) years, May 1, 2026 - May 1, 2029, with **Stipulations** on the following Key Elements:

Key Element I-B	Key Element III-E
Key Element II-B	Key Element III-F
Key Element II-C	Key Element IV-B
Key Element II-E	Key Element IV-C
Key Element III-B	Key Element IV-D

Consistent with the COAMFTE policy on Notification to Program of COAMFTE Actions, the program must agree in writing to any stipulations for accreditation before the status can be conferred (COAMFTE Accreditation Manual: Policies and Procedures, p. 28). **The program is required to respond in writing by May 13, 2026, to coa@aamft.org.**

The Commission's review of the program's Renewal of Accreditation materials is below:

STANDARD I: OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

Key Element I-A: Outcome-Based Education Framework

The program has an overall outcome-based education framework that includes the following:

- *A program mission generally consistent with the program's larger institutional setting.*
- *Specific program goals that implement the program's mission and promote the COAMFTE Developmental Competency Components.*

- *Student learning outcomes (SLOs) that set clearly defined targets for measuring specific student competencies and achievement of program goals. Note: Please refer to the glossary definition of assessment measure.*
- *Annual collection and publishing of graduate achievement required by type of program (masters, doctoral, post-degree).*
- *Selected communities of interest (COI's) who are direct stakeholders in the program's outcomes, effectiveness, and improvement.*
- *Availability of the program's outcome-based education framework to communities of interest and others selected by the program. to the program's mission and goals.*

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element. The program provided evidence that its mission is consistent with the larger institution's and program goals, and that these goals align with the COAMFTE Developmental Competency Components. The student learning outcomes include defined targets for measuring competencies and program goals. The program collects graduate achievement data annually. The program demonstrated that it has a process for gathering information from alumni, but it would be helpful to offer a clearer definition of this Community of Interest and to state its intention to survey them only immediately after exiting the program.

Key Element I-B: Plan for Assessing Outcome-Based Educational Achievement

The program has an overall assessment plan for collecting, reviewing, and acting on achievement data identified in Key Element I-A to support program improvement. Data-informed review actions may address improvements to program mission, goals, student learning outcomes measures and targets, communities of interest inclusion, and review processes/policies.

The outcome-based education assessment plan includes the following:

- *A description of how and by whom assessment data for student learning outcomes and graduate achievement are collected, reviewed, and acted on as needed.*
- *Mechanisms for assuring that selected communities of interest input are included in the review process.*
- *An assessment timeline that identifies expected completion of assessment review cycles.*
- *A description of how and by whom the program's outcome-based education framework and its assessment plan are reviewed for improvement actions as needed.*

Please note: Graduate achievement data are presented and discussed in Key Element IV-A. Student learning outcome data are presented and discussed in Key Element IV-B.

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program provided an updated assessment process for gathering data from adjunct faculty that includes a town hall and a quarterly instructor course improvement survey, as well as a plan to send out reports on the updates. The program provided evidence of conducting the town hall that included adjunct faculty. The program needs to provide evidence of the implementation of the remaining components of the updated

assessment process, including the remaining adjunct data points, and of the assessment process that solicits feedback from alumni/graduates.

Key Element I-C: Plan for Assessing Environmental Supports

Environmental supports are institutional and program resources that contribute to successful student achievement, program quality and an inclusive and diverse learning environment. The program has a plan for maintaining effective environmental supports through a process of review that includes collection of feedback from identified communities of interest, program review, focused corrective action/advocacy where needed, and input to and from institutional leaders.

The plan for reviewing environmental supports includes the following areas:

- *How the program promotes an inclusive and diverse learning environment.*
- *How the program follows published policies for receiving, reviewing, and responding to complaints and grievances, and student concerns.³*
- *How the program monitors other environmental supports including:*
 - *fiscal and physical resources*
 - *technological resources*
 - *instructional and clinical resources*
 - *academic resources and student support services*
- *How the program complies with institutional policies and procedures concerning the use or technology, including policies on disaster planning and recovery of information, and responses to illegal or inappropriate uses of technology systems and resources.*
- *How the program ensures the reliability of technology systems, the integrity and security of data, and safeguards student and client information in accordance with applicable regulations and guidelines.*

Please note: Results of this review process are reported and discussed in Key Element IV-C

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element.

STANDARD II: PROGRAM LEADERSHIP, PROGRAM FACULTY, AND PROGRAM CLINICAL SUPERVISORS

Key Element II-A: Program Leadership Qualifications and Effectiveness

Direction and oversight of the program occurs continuously throughout the year (12 months). Program leadership is qualified, assigned ultimate responsibility for the administration of the program, and meets the following criteria:

- *Is a core faculty member who demonstrates professional identity as a Marriage and Family Therapist.*
- *Is responsible for oversight of the outcome-based education framework, assessment activities, curriculum, clinical training program, facilities, services, and the maintenance and enhancement of the program's quality.*

- *In doctoral degree programs offering the advanced curriculum, is an AAMFT Approved Supervisor unless the program has an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or Supervisor Candidate on the core faculty.*
- *Participates in an established effectiveness review that includes input from communities of interest and as needed, plans to support further leadership development and enhanced effectiveness.*

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element.

Key Element II-B: Qualifications of Program Faculty and Program Clinical Supervisors

Program faculty and program clinical supervisors who contribute to the program's curriculum and application components are qualified to fulfill their specific roles. Qualifications and roles are identified in the context of the program's institution and congruent with the program's goals.

- *All program faculty members and program clinical supervisors are academically, professionally, and experientially qualified to fulfill their specific program responsibilities.*
- *Program faculty and program clinical supervisors have expertise in their area(s) of teaching and/or supervisory responsibility and knowledge of their instructional modality (e.g., distance learning) or method of MFT relational/systemic supervision (e.g., teletherapy, live observation).*
- *Program clinical supervisor roles are distinguished from instructional faculty roles and consistent with the program's application component.*
- *All program faculty receive position descriptions describing their responsibilities, required qualifications and institutional and program expectations for scholarship, teaching, research, MFT relational/systemic supervision, practice, and/or service.*
- *Fifty percent or more of core faculty, including the program leader(s) are qualified to provide MFT relational/systemic supervision as a program clinical supervisor.*

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program indicated that they have program faculty members who are academically, professionally, and experientially qualified to fulfill their specific program responsibilities. The program indicated that program faculty have expertise in their area(s) of teaching responsibility and knowledge of their instructional modality. The program indicated that program faculty receive position descriptions describing their responsibilities, required qualifications, and institutional and program expectations.

The program stated that the Advanced Practical Experience Component (APEC) does not include clinical practice; however, discrepancies between what was reported to the Commission and what is advertised on the program website and in program materials to students indicate at least an optional clinical component is included in the program. The Commission could not verify that the statements in the response letter accurately reflected the program's course catalog or published degree plan. The program needs to provide evidence that Program Clinical Supervisors are academically, professionally, and experientially qualified to fulfill their specific program responsibilities. The program also needs to provide evidence that Program Clinical Supervisor roles are distinguished from instructional faculty roles and consistent with the program's application component. The program needs to provide

evidence that fifty percent or more of core faculty, including the program leader(s), are qualified to provide MFT relational/systemic supervision as Program Clinical Supervisors.

Key Element II-C: Core Faculty and Program Clinical Supervisor Sufficiency

The core faculty and program clinical supervisors must be sufficient to implement the program's outcome-based education framework (Standard I), curriculum instruction, and application component.

- *Core faculty sufficiency is demonstrated by*
 - *a core faculty-to-student FTE ratio of 1:15, OR*
 - *as an alternative, the program may designate and meet a core faculty-to-student FTE ratio that the program demonstrates to be sufficient to support core faculty responsibilities and institutional and program expectations as reported in Key Element II-B. The program must define sufficiency criteria that support the alternative ratio and demonstrate how these criteria are evaluated, reviewed, and revised as needed. Noncore faculty may be included in this alternative ratio if the program demonstrates defined and ongoing non-core faculty contributions that support core faculty areas of responsibility beyond course instruction and/or clinical supervision.*
- *The program must have a sufficient number of program clinical supervisors to support the program's application component in Key Element III-C, as demonstrated by a ratio the program determines to be sufficient to meet program responsibilities and expectations for program clinical supervisors.*

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program indicated a 1:15 faculty-to-student ratio. The program needs to provide evidence of a process for identifying the sufficiency of program clinical supervisors.

Key Element II-D: Program Faculty Evaluation and Effectiveness

Program faculty which includes core faculty and non-core faculty members, meet the expectations of their institutional and program roles. The program reviews program faculty effectiveness and contributions to program quality.

- *The program must have an established process for evaluation of the contributions and effectiveness of program faculty as appropriate to each individual faculty member's role.*
- *The evaluation process must identify who directs the process, the evaluation methods and data used, timeline, and as needed, include a plan to support further development and enhanced effectiveness.*
- *The program must demonstrate that it completes its program faculty evaluation and effectiveness review process and assures that the results of the evaluation are provided to each program faculty member.*

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element.

Key Element II-E: Program Clinical Supervisor Evaluation and Effectiveness

Program clinical supervisors meet the expectations of their program and professional roles. The program reviews clinical supervisor effectiveness and contributions to program quality.

- *The program must have a stated process for evaluation of the program clinical supervisor's contribution and effectiveness appropriate to the supervisor's role.*
- *The evaluation process must identify who directs the process, the evaluation methods and data used, timeline, and as needed, include a plan to support further development and enhanced effectiveness.*
- *The program must demonstrate that it completes its program clinical supervisor evaluation and effectiveness review process and assures that the results of the evaluation are provided to each program clinical supervisor.*

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program needs to provide evidence of a process for the evaluation of the program clinical supervisors' contribution and effectiveness appropriate to the supervisor's role. The evaluation process must identify who directs the process, the evaluation methods and data used, the timeline, and as needed, include a plan to support further development and enhanced effectiveness. The program must demonstrate that it completes its program clinical supervisor evaluation and effectiveness review process and assures that the results of the evaluation are provided to each program clinical supervisor.

STANDARD III: CURRICULUM

Key Element III-A: Curriculum Alignment and Monitoring

The program must provide descriptions of:

- *How the curriculum and practice components support the program attainment of student learning outcomes and aligns with the COAMFTE Developmental Competency Components.*
- *Logical sequencing of the curriculum and practice components.*
- *Processes and procedures used to monitor and ensure student progress and completion of requirements in the curriculum and practice components.*
- *Governance processes and procedures for designing, approving, implementing, reviewing, and changing the curriculum*

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element.

Key Element III-B: Foundational and Advanced Curricula

Advanced Curriculum

The advanced curricula areas (ACAs) advances knowledge and skill by addressing the curricular areas below.

- *Doctoral degree programs must describe how students demonstrate competence in the COAMFTE Developmental Competency Components.*

- *Doctoral degree programs must provide evidence of coursework in all the advanced curricular areas (ACA). Programs may emphasize some of the ACAs, more than others, and include other areas that are consistent with the program's mission, goals, and student learning outcomes.*
- *Programs may emphasize some of the areas more than others and include other areas that are consistent with their program's mission, goals, and student learning outcomes.*

ACA 1: Advanced Research

This area facilitates the development of competencies in:

- a) advanced research, including demonstrated proficiency in quantitative methods and analysis techniques, qualitative methods and analysis techniques, or mixed methods and analysis techniques appropriate to carrying out relational research;*
- b) methodologies and analysis techniques outside of their proficiency area (e.g., if a student decides to become proficient in quantitative methods, they will have a working knowledge of qualitative methods as well);*
- c) understanding the theoretical complexity of change within relationships and how this complexity informs research;*
- d) understanding and demonstrating sensitivity to and awareness of how issues of diversity in terms of culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, etc. play a role in their choice of research topics and their conduct of research activities; and*
- e) preparing and disseminating research through a variety of activities (e.g., grants and grant writing, program evaluation, professional publications and presentations).*

ACA 2: Advanced Relational/Systemic Clinical Theory

This area facilitates the development of advanced clinical competencies including:

- a) advanced understanding and application of multiple family and couple models and empirically-supported interventions;*
- b) skill in working with diverse populations across the lifespan through direct clinical work or in MFT relational/systemic supervision of the therapy of others;*
- c) awareness of cultural issues, differences, and personal blind spots in their clinical and supervisory work; and*
- d) development of a specialized clinical area that is grounded in research and is at an advanced level of intervention and understanding.*

ACA 3: Advanced Relational/Systemic Applications to Contemporary Challenges

This area facilitates the development of leading-edge professionals who are competent in relational/systemic innovations. This includes application to controversial moral and advanced ethical dilemmas, international, cross-cultural, and multicultural issues in Marriage and Family Therapy professional roles, responsibilities, practices, and applications to other contemporary problems. This area also includes a focus on family policy and/or family law.

ACA 4: Foundations of Relational/Systemic Teaching, MFT Relational/Systemic Supervision, Consultation, and/or Leadership

This area facilitates the development of competencies in relational/systemic teaching, MFT relational/systemic supervision, and/or MFT consultation. This may include educational/learning theories, relevant research, multicultural content, evaluation and assessment methods, ethics and

professional issues, and personal philosophy. This area also addresses administrative competencies including program development and policy, leadership roles and evaluation of MFT educational and service-oriented institutions and agencies. Students who intend to teach at the higher education level will develop and apply a teaching philosophy, as well as demonstrate the capacity to develop and apply course evaluation methods and student learning outcomes. All students will demonstrate skills in clinical MFT relational/systemic supervision. Students who have teaching opportunities in formal or informal settings will demonstrate a sensitivity to issues of diversity in the material they teach, to the persons they are teaching, and in the ways in which information and correction is provided.

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program provided clarification on the curriculum and on how the Ethics Developmental Competency Component is met within the required courses. The program also provided updated syllabi for the requested courses. The program needs to provide evidence of how it assesses and ensures the achievement of the developmental competency component for the practice of system/relational therapy, since the required clinical component of the program has been removed. The program also needs to clarify the discrepancy between the curriculum advertised on the program website and the information provided in the program's response.

Key Element III-C: Foundational and Advanced Application Components

The program must demonstrate it offers an application component with appropriate placement in the curriculum, duration, focus, and intensity consistent with the program's mission, goals, and student learning outcomes.

The Advanced Practical Experience Component

Programs that teach the advanced curriculum must offer the advanced practical experience component that includes:

- *Selected experiences consistent with the program's mission, goals, and student learning outcomes in any of the following areas: advanced research, grant-writing, teaching, MFT relational/systemic supervision, consultation, advanced clinical theory, clinical practice/innovation, program development, leadership, or policy. In addition, programs may offer experiences in presenting and professional writing.*
- *Appropriate and adequate mentoring of students during the experience.*
- *For doctoral programs, a minimum of two of the areas noted above can be combined over a minimum of 9 months.*

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element. The program provided evidence of selected experiences consistent with the program's mission, goals, and student learning outcomes in the areas of research and teaching. The program provided evidence of appropriate and adequate mentoring of students during the experience and that these experiences occur over the course of at least 9 months.

Key Element III-D: Experience with Diverse, Marginalized, and/or Underserved Communities

The program demonstrates student experience in Marriage and Family Therapy practice with diverse, marginalized, and/or underserved communities. Experiences may include:

- *Professional activities (such as therapy, research, MFT relational/systemic supervision, consultation, teaching, etc.) with diverse, marginalized, and/or underserved communities; and/or*
- *Other types of activities (such as projects, service, interviews, workshops, etc.), as long as the program can demonstrate that the experience is directly related to MFT activities, and students are in interaction with members of these communities.*

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element.

Key Element III-E: Program Transparency and Informed Acknowledgement

The program demonstrates that the curriculum aligns with the educational and clinical practice requirements (e.g., coursework, clinical experience, and supervision) that satisfy the regulatory requirements for entry-level practice either in the state/province/location in which the program physically resides or in which the student intends to practice.

Programs must provide prospective and entering students information regarding the MFT profession's licensure and regulatory requirements as follows:

- *The program demonstrates use of a policy and process to ensure that all students are informed of the MFT profession's general regulatory structure and that practice/licensure requirements, including qualifying degree requirements, may vary across state/provincial jurisdictions.*
- *This information, along with resources for contacting state/provincial regulatory bodies, must be provided to students and acknowledged in writing, prior to beginning the program's course of study.*
- *Programs that include teletherapy and/or virtual supervision as part of the clinical practice experience must have a policy on how the program ensures that such practices are compliant with relevant federal, state, or provincial regulatory requirements.*

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program needs to provide evidence of a process to ensure that all students are informed of the MFT profession's general regulatory structure and that practice/licensure requirements, including qualifying degree requirements, may vary across state/provincial jurisdictions. The program needs to provide evidence that this information, along with resources for contacting state/provincial regulatory bodies, must be provided to students and acknowledged in writing prior to beginning the program's course of study. Lastly, the program needs to clarify whether it includes teletherapy or virtual supervision as part of the advertised elective clinical components of the program, and if so, how the program ensures that such practices are compliant with relevant federal, state, or provincial regulatory requirements.

Key Element III-F: Curriculum/Practice Alignment with Communities of Interest

The program demonstrates that it considers the needs and expectations of identified communities of interest in developing and revising its curriculum and application component.

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program indicated that it considers the needs of Communities of Interest by gathering data at town hall meetings and through a newly implemented adjunct faculty course improvement survey. The program provided evidence of the implementation of the town hall meetings. The program needs to provide evidence of the implementation of the adjunct faculty course improvement survey.

STANDARD IV: PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Key Element IV-A: Demonstrated Graduate Achievement and Improvement

The program demonstrates that aggregated data on graduate achievement is collected and reviewed as specified in Key Element I-B. Graduate achievement data and analysis demonstrate that the program is meeting established benchmarks or is using the data to make improvements.

Commission's Response:

The program meets the requirements of this Key Element.

Key Element IV-B: Demonstrated Achievement of Program Goals and Improvement

The program demonstrates that aggregated data on student achievement is collected and reviewed as specified in Key Element I-B. Student learning outcome data and analysis demonstrate that the program is meeting program goals or is using the data to make improvements.

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program indicated an updated assessment process related to student achievement. The program needs to provide evidence of the implementation of the new assessment process related to student achievement that involves the review of aggregated data demonstrating program goal achievement to determine whether the program is meeting its goals or using the data to make improvements.

Key Element IV-C: Review and Improvement of Environmental Supports

The program demonstrates that aggregated data on environmental supports are collected and reviewed as specified in Key Element I-C. Data and analysis from program review demonstrate that the program is maintaining its environmental supports or making improvements where needed.

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program indicated an updated assessment process related to environmental supports. The program needs to provide evidence of implementing the new assessment process for environmental supports, including aggregated data demonstrating that the program is maintaining its environmental supports or using the data to make improvements.

Key Element IV-D: Communication with Communities of Interest

The program demonstrates that it communicates results of assessment data compiled according to the program's assessment plan (outlined in Standard I) and any resulting program changes to relevant communities of interest.

Commission's Response:

The program does not meet the requirements of this Key Element. The program indicated that it developed new assessment processes within Standard I. The program needs to provide evidence of the implementation of those processes, including communication of data assessment results compiled according to the program's assessment plan (outlined in Standard I) and any resulting program changes to relevant Communities of Interest.

NOTE: Consistent with the COAMFTE Corrective Action Policy (COAMFTE Accreditation Manual: Policies and Procedures, pp. 25-26), COAMFTE accredited programs carrying stipulations will have a maximum of two years from the date of stipulation to come into compliance with the standards. Year One will include Imposing of Stipulations; Year Two will include Probation and hosting a Focused Site Visit. Programs that fail to rectify such compliance issues will be subject to revocation of accreditation status at the beginning of Year Three.

Please note that the program is now in its Year 1 – Impose Stipulations stage. Consistent with the Corrective Action Policy, programs must submit a compliance report addressing deficiencies by the noted deadline, review accreditation materials, and consult with Accreditation Staff. Additionally, it is recommended that the program attend accreditation trainings and seek consultation from an external consultant (a list of consultants can be obtained from the Accreditation Office).

Programs may elect to submit their response to stipulations earlier, for an interim review, to clear their stipulations. The interim response can only be submitted during the first year of the Corrective Action Policy. Following the interim response, programs will continue to report on the established timeline. Programs interested in submitting an interim response should contact COAMFTE staff to confirm the submission deadline.

Program's Response to Stipulations Instructions:

- 1) Program's response should address all Key Elements that have Stipulations and include definition of all referenced Key Elements.
- 2) Program's response should not refer to previously submitted documents (Self-Study, appendices, etc.).
 - *Programs may provide additional information as supporting evidence of the program's response.*
- 3) Program's Response to Stipulations and any supporting documentation must be in one document, in a PDF format with bookmarks linked to the individual components. The bookmarks MUST follow the order of the individual components. The PDF document must not exceed 30 MB in size.

- 4) Program's Response to Stipulations must be submitted on or before the due date to coa@aamft.org.


The following documents must be submitted in the required format by the noted deadlines:

Document	Submission Deadline
<i>Interim Response to Stipulations (optional)</i>	<i>July 31, 2026</i>
Response to Stipulations	January 31, 2027
Annual Report	

In accordance with COAMFTE policy, the program will need to submit an Annual Report on January 31st of every year of your accreditation term.

Please feel free to contact the Accreditation Office by e-mail at coa@aamft.org or by phone at (703) 253-0448 if you have further questions or if you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,


Blake Berryhill, PhD
COAMFTE Chair


Jill Fogolin
Director of Accreditation