WRITING SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS
Specialization in Marriage and Family Program

The Writing Sample is an important component of the decision-making process for the faculty of the Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy Program. It serves as a forum to express your ideas, self-awareness and professional goals. The sample provides the opportunity for us to get to know you as a person and to understand your interest in and commitment to becoming a marriage and family therapist.

The Writing Sample also illustrates your ability to think clearly and to communicate effectively, which are essential skills for graduate work as well as for the professional marriage and family therapist. It is important to demonstrate your written communication skills by effectively organizing your thoughts and by attending to grammar, spelling, sentence structure and composition.

Using the following questions as a framework, write a three-section paper which is typed, double-spaced, and a maximum of eight (8) pages in length. When you are done, staple it to the Writing Sample Cover Sheet. Please address each of the following questions in your writing sample:

Section I: Personal Philosophy

- Discuss your personal philosophy of life. What ideas, values, and preferences guide you?
- What people and/or experiences have been major influences in your life?

Section II: Marriage and Family Therapy

- What are the factors and experiences that motivate you to become a marriage and family therapist (MFT)?
- What are the most important qualities of a successful MFT?
- Describe your professional goals. How do you envision using your skills as an MFT? What will you be doing in 5 years and 15 years?

Section III: Education

- What attracted you to the SMFT Program at NIU?
- How do you personally learn most effectively? Describe your ideal learning context.
- Describe why this is good time in your life to pursue MFT education.

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