

Human Development and Family Studies

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The School of Human Sciences offers both the Master of Science and the Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS). Contact the Graduate Coordinator for more information regarding admission requirements and curriculum.

Human Development and Family Studies is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of individual and family development in a variety of contexts across the lifespan, from conception to later life. It encompasses specialty areas in infant and child studies, youth studies, family studies, family resource management, and gerontology.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies

Admission Requirements

An applicant for the Master of Science degree must meet the following requirements.

- Meet all MSU Graduate School requirements for admission
- Have earned a baccalaureate degree in HDFS or a related field
- Submit a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score competitive with other applicants
- Submit three letters of recommendation, with at least two letters from individuals familiar with applicant's academic work
- Submit a sole-authored writing sample (see instructions below)
- Submit a personal statement (500-1,000 words) describing the applicant's purpose for undertaking graduate student, including professional plans, career goals, and detailed research interests

For international, non-native speakers of English, a TOEFL or IELTS score indicative of ability to successfully complete graduate work is required. See English-Language Requirements in the Admission section of this publication for more information.

An overall undergraduate grade point average of 3.00 is preferred. Students admitted provisionally must fulfill Graduate School provisional admission requirements found in this publication. Qualified applicants for the HDFS graduate program are expected to have interests and goals that are consistent with the department's faculty expertise and interests, as well as course offerings. Admission decisions are based on a holistic consideration of the applicant's credentials.

Instructions for Writing Sample: Applicants to the master's program are asked to submit a sole-authored writing sample in English so that the admissions committee may assess the candidate's ability as a writer, potential success in the masters program, and ability to do research and present it in written form. The minimum length of the sample is five pages, but the same should not exceed 25 pages. The sample should be presented in APA style (title page, headers, references, etc.). Examples of possible writing samples include, but are not limited to, papers from past courses, journal articles, or some written work product, such as a manual or technical report.

Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development & Family Studies

Admission Requirements

An applicant for the Doctor of Philosophy degree must meet the following requirements.

- Meet all MSU Graduate School requirements for admission
- Have earned a baccalaureate degree in HDFS or a related field
- Have completed the following courses or their equivalents
- Meet all MSU Graduate School requirements for admission
- Have earned a baccalaureate degree in HDFS or a related field
- Have completed a minimum of 30 hours of master's level coursework in HDFS or a related field
- Have completed the following courses or their equivalents: AIS 8803 Research Methods; HS 8823 Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations; 3 hours of graduate-level statistics; and HS 8813 Seminar in HDFS (contingent acceptance may be granted for students to complete requires courses within one calendar year)
- Have earned a grade point average of 3.00 on all previous graduate coursework

- Submit a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score competitive with other applicants
- Submit three letters of recommendation, with at least two of the letters coming from individuals familiar with the applicant's academic work
- Submit a sole-authored writing sample (see instructions below)
- Submit a personal statement (500-1,000 words) describing the applicant's purpose for undertaking graduate study, professional plans, career goals, and detailed research interests
- Complete an interview with members of the HDFS graduate faculty

For international, non-native speakers of English, a TOEFL score indicative of ability to successfully complete graduate work is required. See English Language Test Score Requirements in the Admission section of this publication for more information.

Qualified applicants for the HDFS graduate program are expected to have interests and goals that are consistent with the department's faculty expertise and interests as well as course offerings. Once all application materials have been submitted, applicants should contact the HDFS graduate coordinator at 662-325-0655 or tom.phillips@msstate.edu to schedule an interview with members of the HDFS graduate faculty. To accommodate international applicants, interviews can be conducted using distance technology. Admission decisions are based on a holistic consideration of the applicant's credentials.

Admission to the master's program does not automatically mean that a student will enter the doctoral program; a student completing the master's degree must reapply through the Office of the Graduate School for admission to the doctoral program.

Instructions for Writing Sample: Applicants to the doctoral program are required to submit a sole-authored writing sample in English so that the admissions committee may assess the candidate's ability as a writer, potential success in the doctoral program, and ability to do research and present it in written form. The minimum length of the writing sample is five pages, but the sample should not exceed 25 pages. The sample should be presented in APA style (title page, headers, references, etc.). Examples of possible writing samples include, but are not limited to, papers from past courses, journal articles, or some written work product, such as a manual or technical report.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Infant and Child Focus) - Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8803	Applying Research Methods to Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8000	Thesis Research/Thesis in Agricultural and Extension Education	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 8113	Trends in Infant and Child Development	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions	
COE 8913	Counseling Children	
EDE 9420	Research Practicum in Early Childhood Education	
EPY 8293	Cognitive and Affective Development	
HDFS 6823	Development and Administration of Child Service Programs	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
PSY 6713	Language and Thought	
EDX 6353	Assistive Technology in Special Education	

Total Hours 31

A thesis committee, consisting of the student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members, must be established. A thesis defense before the committee is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Infant and Child Focus) - Non-Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4

AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
HDFS 7000	Directed Individual Study in Human Development and Family Science	6
Focus Courses		
HDFS 8113	Trends in Infant and Child Development	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions	
COE 8913	Counseling Children	
EDE 9420	Research Practicum in Early Childhood Education	
EPY 8293	Cognitive and Affective Development	
HDFS 6823	Development and Administration of Child Service Programs	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
PSY 6713	Language and Thought	
EDX 6353	Assistive Technology in Special Education	
Total Hours		31

The student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members will comprise the graduate committee. A final comprehensive oral examination is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Youth Focus) - Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8803	Applying Research Methods to Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8000	Thesis Research/Thesis in Agricultural and Extension Education	6
Focus Courses		
HDFS 8313	Contemporary Youth Issues	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions	
HDFS 6873	Positive Youth Development	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6233	Juvenile Delinquency	
SO 6333	Sociology of Sport	
AELC 6403	Development of Youth Programs	
Great Plains Consortium courses ¹		
Total Hours		31

¹ <http://www.gpidea.org>. See Transfer Credit in General Master's Degree Requirements section of this publication.

A thesis committee, consisting of the student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members, must be established. A thesis defense before the committee is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Youth Focus) - Non-Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
HDFS 7000	Directed Individual Study in Human Development and Family Science	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Science	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions	
HDFS 6873	Positive Youth Development	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6233	Juvenile Delinquency	
SO 6333	Sociology of Sport	
AELC 6403	Development of Youth Programs	
Great Plains Consortium courses ¹		
Total Hours		31

The student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members will comprise the graduate committee. A final comprehensive oral examination is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Family Focus) - Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8803	Applying Research Methods to Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8000	Thesis Research/Thesis in Agricultural and Extension Education	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 8413	Issues in Family Studies	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
HDFS 8423	Development in Intimate Relationships	
COE 8303	Family Counseling Theory	
HDFS 6313	Family Resource Management	
HDFS 6333	Families, Legislation and Public Policy	
HDFS 6403	Introduction to Gerontology	
HDFS 6803	Parenting	
HDFS 6813	Adult Development: The Middle Years	
HDFS 6843	Family Interaction	
HDFS 6853	The Family: A Human Ecological Perspective	
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6223	Comparative Family Systems	
Total Hours		31

A thesis committee, consisting of the student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members, must be established. A thesis defense before the committee is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Family Focus) - Non-Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
HDFS 7000	Directed Individual Study in Human Development and Family Science	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 8413	Issues in Family Studies	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
HDFS 8423	Development in Intimate Relationships	
COE 8303	Family Counseling Theory	
HDFS 6313	Family Resource Management	
HDFS 6333	Families, Legislation and Public Policy	
HDFS 6403	Introduction to Gerontology	
HDFS 6803	Parenting	
HDFS 6813	Adult Development: The Middle Years	
HDFS 6843	Family Interaction	
HDFS 6853	The Family: A Human Ecological Perspective	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6223	Comparative Family Systems	
Total Hours		31

The student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members will comprise the graduate committee. A final comprehensive oral examination is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Family Resource Management Focus) - Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8803	Applying Research Methods to Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8000	Thesis Research/Thesis in Agricultural and Extension Education	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 6313	Family Resource Management	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
HDFS 6333	Families, Legislation and Public Policy	
HDFS 6863	Consumer Aspects of Aging	
HS 6323	Consumer Issues and Policy	
HS 6683	Current Housing Problems of Families	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
Great Plains Consortium courses ¹		
Total Hours		31

A thesis committee, consisting of the student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members, must be established. A thesis defense before the committee is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Family Resource Management Focus) - Non-Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
HDFS 7000	Directed Individual Study in Human Development and Family Science	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 6313	Family Resource Management	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6

HDFS 6333	Families, Legislation and Public Policy	
HDFS 6863	Consumer Aspects of Aging	
HS 6323	Consumer Issues and Policy	
HS 6683	Current Housing Problems of Families	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
Great Plains Consortium courses ¹		
Total Hours		31

The student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members will comprise the graduate committee. A final comprehensive oral examination is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Gerontology Focus) - Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8803	Applying Research Methods to Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 8000	Thesis Research/Thesis in Agricultural and Extension Education	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 6403	Introduction to Gerontology	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
PSY 6983	Psychology of Aging	
HDFS 6863	Consumer Aspects of Aging	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6413	Aging and Retirement in American Society	
COE 6713	Issues in Aging	
COE 8813	Counseling Elderly Clients	
SO 6433	Sociology of Death and Dying	

Total Hours		31
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A thesis committee, consisting of the student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members, must be established. A thesis defense before the committee is required.

Master of Science in Human Development & Family Studies (Gerontology Focus) - Non-Thesis

Requirements

HS 8813	Seminar in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 8823	Advanced Theories of Human Development and Family Relations	3
EPY 6214	Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
AELC 8503	Program Planning and Development in Agricultural and Extension Education	3
AELC 7000	Directed Individual Study in Agricultural and Extension Education	6

Focus Courses

HDFS 6403	Introduction to Gerontology	3
Select 6 hours from the following:		6
PSY 6983	Psychology of Aging	
HDFS 6863	Consumer Aspects of Aging	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6413	Aging and Retirement in American Society	
COE 6713	Issues in Aging	
COE 8813	Counseling Elderly Clients	

SO 6433	Sociology of Death and Dying	
Total Hours		31

The student's major professor and two other graduate faculty members will comprise the graduate committee. A final comprehensive oral examination is required.

Note: Courses may be substituted depending on student interest area and course availability. Advisor approval will be required in advance. At least 12 hours in the degree program, exclusive of thesis credits, must be at the 8000 level. Approved HDFS 7000 Directed Individual Study (DIS) credit hours count toward 8000-level requirements. No more than 6 semester hours of graduate credit may be earned in DIS courses. Students may transfer up to 6 semester hours of courses from other accredited degree programs.

Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development & Family Studies (Infant and Child Focus)

Requirements

EPY 8214	Advanced Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
EPY 9213	Advanced Analysis in Educational Research	3
or AELC 9583	Analysis and Interpretation of Data in Agricultural and Extension Education Research	
Statistics course		3
HDFS 8833	Foundations of Human Development and Family Studies	3
AIS 8523	Teaching Out-of-School Groups in Agricultural Information Science and Education	3
HDFS 6843	Family Interaction	3
HDFS 8853	Current Issues in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 9000	Research and Dissertation in Human Development and Family Science	20

Focus Courses

HDFS 8113	Trends in Infant and Child Development	3
Select 12 additional hours from the following:		12
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions	
COE 8913	Counseling Children	
EDE 9420	Research Practicum in Early Childhood Education	
EPY 8293	Cognitive and Affective Development	
HDFS 6823	Development and Administration of Child Service Programs	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
PSY 6713	Language and Thought	
EDX 6353	Assistive Technology in Special Education	

Total Hours		60
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The student must pass a written comprehensive exam prior to being admitted to candidacy. A dissertation committee, consisting of the student's major professor and three other graduate faculty members, must be established. A dissertation defense before the committee is required.

Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development & Family Studies (Youth Focus)

Requirements

EPY 8214	Advanced Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
EPY 9213	Advanced Analysis in Educational Research	3
or AELC 9583	Analysis and Interpretation of Data in Agricultural and Extension Education Research	
Statistics course		3
HDFS 8833	Foundations of Human Development and Family Studies	3
AIS 8523	Teaching Out-of-School Groups in Agricultural Information Science and Education	3
HDFS 6843	Family Interaction	3
HDFS 8853	Current Issues in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 9000	Research and Dissertation in Human Development and Family Science	20

Focus Courses

HDFS 8313	Contemporary Youth Issues	3
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Select 12 additional hours from the following:	12
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions
HDFS 6873	Positive Youth Development
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families
SO 6233	Juvenile Delinquency
SO 6333	Sociology of Sport
HDFS 6403	Introduction to Gerontology
Total Hours	60

The student must pass a written comprehensive exam prior to being admitted to candidacy. A dissertation committee, consisting of the student's major professor and three other graduate faculty members, must be established. A dissertation defense before the committee is required.

Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development & Family Studies (Family Focus)

Requirements

EPY 8214	Advanced Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
EPY 9213	Advanced Analysis in Educational Research	3
or AELC 9583	Analysis and Interpretation of Data in Agricultural and Extension Education Research	
Statistics course		3
HDFS 8833	Foundations of Human Development and Family Studies	3
AIS 8523	Teaching Out-of-School Groups in Agricultural Information Science and Education	3
HDFS 6843	Family Interaction	3
HDFS 8853	Current Issues in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 9000	Research and Dissertation in Human Development and Family Science	20

Focus Courses

HDFS 8413	Issues in Family Studies	3
Select 12 hours from the following:		12
HDFS 8423	Development in Intimate Relationships	
COE 8303	Family Counseling Theory	
HDFS 6313	Family Resource Management	
HDFS 6333	Families, Legislation and Public Policy	
HDFS 6403	Introduction to Gerontology	
HDFS 6803	Parenting	
HDFS 6813	Adult Development: The Middle Years	
HDFS 6853	The Family: A Human Ecological Perspective	
HS 6883	Risk, Resilience and Preventive Interventions	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6223	Comparative Family Systems	
Total Hours		60

The student must pass a written comprehensive exam prior to being admitted to candidacy. A dissertation committee, consisting of the student's major professor and three other graduate faculty members, must be established. A dissertation defense before the committee is required.

Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development & Family Studies (Family Resource Management Focus)

Requirements

EPY 8214	Advanced Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
EPY 9213	Advanced Analysis in Educational Research	3
or AELC 9583	Analysis and Interpretation of Data in Agricultural and Extension Education Research	
Statistics course		3
HDFS 8833	Foundations of Human Development and Family Studies	3
AIS 8523	Teaching Out-of-School Groups in Agricultural Information Science and Education	3

HDFS 6843	Family Interaction	3
HDFS 8853	Current Issues in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 9000	Research and Dissertation in Human Development and Family Science	20
Focus Courses		
HDFS 6313	Family Resource Management	3
Select 12 hours from the following:		12
HDFS 6333	Families, Legislation and Public Policy	
HDFS 6863	Consumer Aspects of Aging	
HS 6323	Consumer Issues and Policy	
HS 6683	Current Housing Problems of Families	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
Courses from Great Plains Consortium ²		
Total Hours		60

The student must pass a written comprehensive exam prior to being admitted to candidacy. A dissertation committee, consisting of the student's major professor and three other graduate faculty members, must be established. A dissertation defense before the committee is required.

Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development & Family Studies (Gerontology Focus)

Requirements

EPY 8214	Advanced Educational and Psychological Statistics	4
AELC 8703	Evaluation of Agricultural and Extension Education Programs	3
EPY 9213	Advanced Analysis in Educational Research	3
or AELC 9583	Analysis and Interpretation of Data in Agricultural and Extension Education Research	
Statistics course		3
HDFS 8833	Foundations of Human Development and Family Studies	3
AIS 8523	Teaching Out-of-School Groups in Agricultural Information Science and Education	3
HDFS 6843	Family Interaction	3
HDFS 8853	Current Issues in Human Development and Family Studies	3
HDFS 9000	Research and Dissertation in Human Development and Family Science	20
Focus Courses		
HDFS 6403	Introduction to Gerontology	3
Select 12 hours from the following:		12
PSY 6983	Psychology of Aging	
HDFS 6863	Consumer Aspects of Aging	
HDFS 8123	The Effects of Poverty on Children and Families	
SO 6413	Aging and Retirement in American Society	
COE 6713	Issues in Aging	
COE 8813	Counseling Elderly Clients	
SO 6433	Sociology of Death and Dying	
Total Hours		60

The student must pass a written comprehensive exam prior to being admitted to candidacy. A dissertation committee, consisting of the student's major professor and three other graduate faculty members, must be established. A dissertation defense before the committee is required.

Note: Courses may be substituted depending on student interest area and course availability. Major professor approval will be required in advance. At least 12 hours of the course work in the degree program exclusive of dissertation credits, must be at the 8000 level. No more than 6 semester hours of graduate credit may be earned in Directed Individual Study courses. Students may transfer up to 9 semester hours of courses from other accredited degree programs.

The School of Human Sciences graduate courses may be used for a minor or for selected certificates in Human Sciences in cooperation with other degree programs. Areas of emphasis are available in the following program areas in Human Sciences: apparel, textiles and merchandising, and human development and family studies. The School also participates in the graduate Gender Studies Certificate by offering HDFS 6313, HDFS 6403, and HS 6513 and the Gerontology Certificate by offering HDFS 6403, HDFS 6813, and HDFS 6863.

For additional information about graduate offerings in the School of Human Sciences, contact Dr. Tommy Phillips.