

Graduate Student Handbook

Master's Program in Family Sciences

2011-2012

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I. PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROGRAM

The Department of Family Sciences offers the Master of Science in Family Sciences degree. Family Sciences uses an integrative approach to learning about and improving individual, family, and community well-being through the generation and application of knowledge about human development, family systems, and family finances. Students can tailor their programs to prepare for employment in their chosen field, or to establish a foundation for the Family Sciences Ph.D. program or for doctoral work at another institution.

II. MASTER'S PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The application deadline is January 15 to begin fall semester of the same calendar year; admissions are for fall semester enrollment only.

Areas of emphasis within the master's program are: (a) adolescent development, (b) aging, (c) couples and family therapy, (d) family finances and economics, and (e) family processes. All students pursuing the family sciences master's degree take 15 hours of core courses: FAM 601, FAM 652, FAM 654, FAM 668, and FAM 690, and a data analysis (either quantitative or qualitative) or program evaluation course must be taken no later than the semester prior to graduation. At least two-thirds of the minimum requirements must be in regular courses, and at least three-quarters of the minimum requirements must be in courses numbered at the 600 or 700 levels.

The curriculum for each emphasis area except couples and family therapy requires a minimum of 30 credit hours, comprised of 15 credit hours of core courses, 5 hours of electives, 3 hours of a data analysis or program evaluation course, 1 hour of a professional development seminar, and 6 credit hours for the thesis (Plan A) or scholarly project (Plan B).

The couples and family therapy emphasis area is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) and requires a prescribed curriculum totaling 56 credit hours (2 years, including one summer), comprised of 15 credit hours of core family sciences courses, 18 hours of core couples and family therapy courses, 13 hours of supervised practicum, 3 hours of a data analysis or program evaluation course, 1 hour of a professional development seminar, and 6 credit hours for the thesis (Plan A) or scholarly project (Plan B).

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. General Regulations

Students are expected to know all regulations and procedures required by the program of study being pursued; ignorance of departmental or university regulations and procedures is not a valid excuse. Therefore, students should become familiar with the *Graduate School Bulletin* (especially see, "Student Responsibility") and the *Department of Family Sciences Graduate Student Handbook*. In the case of a contradiction, the *Graduate School Bulletin* supersedes this departmental handbook.

B. Academic Load

For the fall and spring semesters, a typical graduate load is 9 credit hours per semester and the maximum is 15 credit hours. The maximum load is 9 credit hours for the 8 week summer term, 4 credit hours for the 4-week intersession, or 12 hours for a combination of both summer terms. The Credit Overload Form, (see www.research.uky.edu/gs/forms.html) should be used to request permission to exceed these loads.

C. Temporary Advisor

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or designee will advise all new students for the first semester. Students then choose a Major Advisor and committee as outlined below.

D. Advisory Committee

Prior to completing nine credit hours or two semesters of classes (whichever comes last), each master's student should identify a full or associate member of the family sciences graduate faculty with whom they share similar academic interests, and ask that faculty member to serve as Major

Advisor (Advisory Committee Chair). Then, in consultation with the Major Advisor, two additional faculty members must be selected to serve as Advisory Committee Members. The Advisory Committee must be comprised of at least one full member of the UK Graduate Faculty, and two of the three must be faculty members in the Department of Family Sciences.

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) must be notified in writing of the student's Advisory Committee members using the M-1: Advisory Committee form (see fam.uky.edu/forms). Any subsequent changes in committee membership must also be submitted in writing to the DGS, but only following consultation with the Major Advisor and all other Advisory Committee members.

In consultation with the Advisory Committee, a program of study must be established during the student's second semester in the program. The plan of study must then be filed with the DGS using the M-2: Plan of Study form (see fam.uky.edu/forms). Changes in the plan of study may occur thereafter, but the Advisory Committee must approve any changes.

The Advisory Committee will mentor students through the final project (see below). The Advisory Committee membership cannot be changed after the beginning of the student's last semester unless a member of the committee is unavailable that semester. In such an instance, the DGS must approve the substitution.

E. **Transfer Credit**

Students who desire to transfer graduate work completed under post-baccalaureate status at the University of Kentucky or credits received from another institution must submit the "Transfer of Credit" form (see www.research.uky.edu/gs/forms.html) to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who will then submit the request to the Graduate School. Transfer of credit forms should be submitted during the first semester after being admitted to the program or the first semester after returning to UK after taking course(s) elsewhere. Total transfer credit is limited to 9 credit hours. Failure to initiate the credit transfer request at least one semester prior to graduation may delay one's graduation.

F. **Student Absence**

Enrolled graduate students who sit out for one or more semesters will need to complete a new application (both Graduate School and Department of Family Sciences) and pay the application fee in order to be considered for readmission. Upon readmission, program rules in place at the time of the readmission will apply. In many instances this requirement can be avoided by requesting a "leave of absence." In addition to avoiding the application process, this status will allow the student to priority register in preparation for their return to UK.

Procedurally, students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to seek approval for the leave prior to the beginning of the semester in question. If approved, the DGS will contact their Graduate School admissions officer who will modify the record accordingly. No more than two consecutive and four total semesters in leave of absence status may be requested. Post-qualifying doctoral students are not eligible for the leave of absence. International students considering a leave of absence are strongly encouraged to discuss their plans with the Office of International Affairs, Department of Immigration Services prior to making a formal request.

G. **Grades and Grade Point Average**

An overall average of B (3.0) on all graduate work in the program must be attained before a master's degree may be awarded. Note that graduate courses may not be taken pass/fail and D grades are not awarded to graduate students.

When students have completed 12 or more credit hours of graduate course work with a cumulative grade point average of less than 3.0, they will be placed on scholastic probation. Students will have one full-time semester or the equivalent (9 credit hours) to remove the scholastic probation by attaining a 3.0 cumulative grade point average. If probation is not removed, students will be dismissed from the program.

A student may repeat a graduate course and count only the second grade as part of the graduate grade point average. This action must be initiated by petition of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to the Dean of the Graduate School, and may be used only once in a particular degree program.

H. **Termination Policy**

The Graduate Faculty (or a designated committee) will regularly evaluate the academic performance of graduate students in the Department.

- i. *Warnings.* The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will send a student warning of unsatisfactory progress for any of the following:
 - grade point average for work taken the previous semester was below a 3.0
 - 6 or more credit hours of incomplete work
 - 4 or more credit hours of C grades

- ii. *Termination.* The Graduate Faculty may terminate a student for any of the following:
 - grade point average below 3.0 in each of two semesters of work
 - 6 credit hours of I (incomplete) grades not been completed after one year
 - more than 6 credit hours of I (incomplete) grades accumulated at any one time
 - 7 or more credit hours of grades below a B (even if the cumulative GPA is over 3.0).
 - absences from the program (i.e., not taking at least one course per semester) without permission (see Student Absence section above).
 - failure to demonstrate satisfactory competence on a second attempt of the final examination (if a student fails a first attempt at the final examination, the examination may be retaken after at least one month has passed since the first examination date)

A student who is terminated will receive written notice of the decision stating the grounds for termination, and will be afforded an opportunity to meet with the graduate faculty and appeal the dismissal. After meeting with the student and considering the student's grounds for appeal, the graduate faculty can reconsider the termination decision.

I. **Application for Degree**

Students must file an application for receipt of their degree no later than 30 days after the beginning of the semester in which they will complete their degree. Go to myUK.uky.edu and click on student services / myRecords / graduate degree application. The student is responsible for consulting the latest edition of the *Graduate School Bulletin* for changes in requirements and procedures and to make sure all deadlines are met.

J. **Final Project Requirements**

Candidates for the master's degree in family sciences are required to complete a thesis (Plan A) or a scholarly project (Plan B). The following steps are required:

1. Prior to completing 21 credit hours, students should enroll in FAM 768 (residence credit) to develop a thesis or scholarly project proposal in consultation with the Major Advisor. Advisory Committee approval is required no later than mid-term of the first semester enrolled in FAM 768. Failure to have a proposal approved by this deadline will require that the student drop FAM 768 that semester.

2. Students must complete the thesis or scholarly project in close collaboration with the Major Advisor, then submit it for Advisory Committee review at least five weeks prior to the projected final examination date. The specific nature of the thesis or scholarly project is the responsibility of the student and the Advisory Committee. A scholarly project may result in a journal publication, CES publication, policy paper, literature review, or another appropriate piece of scholarly work.

3. After approval by the majority of the Advisory Committee to defend the thesis or scholarly project, the student must schedule a final examination with the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the desired final examination date (see Deadlines section below).
4. As required by the Graduate School, students must complete a final examination on or before the last day to sit for a graduate final examination, as specified in the University calendar for the semester that the student wishes to graduate. Students are encouraged to schedule their final examination well in advance of the last day to sit for a final examination to allow time to make any necessary revisions in the thesis or scholarly project that result from Advisory Committee feedback during the final examination.

K. Master's Final Examination

The Graduate School specifies that the final examination must be completed at least eight days before the last day of classes of the semester in which the student intends to graduate. Students should consult the university calendar for the specific date each semester (see www.uky.edu/Registrar/AcademicCalendar.htm). Note that an oral defense will usually not be given during the summer period (May 15 through August 15) because most faculty members have 9-month appointments and cannot be required to be in attendance during this period.

A Final Examination Recommendation form must be submitted no later than two weeks before the scheduled date of the examination. Given the various deadlines, students must arrange a final examination date in consultation with their Advisory Committee no later than one month prior to the end of the semester. For procedures and forms, see www.research.uky.edu/gs/CurrentStudents/printed_thesis_defense_process.html.

The final examination consists primarily of the defense of the thesis (Plan A) or scholarly project (Plan B), but topics covered during a student's coursework may also be examined. The student's Advisory Committee will administer the final examination

Please note that, if on the basis of the final examination, revisions to the thesis are stipulated by the Committee, time will be needed to make the changes before graduation. An Advisory Committee is under no obligation to review and approve changes without adequate time. It is therefore highly recommended that the final examination be scheduled early in the semester to allow ample time for revisions.

If the student does not demonstrate satisfactory competency on the first final examination, the Major Advisor can schedule a second defense no less than one month later. (Note that this may prevent a student from graduating in the desired semester.) If a student does not exhibit satisfactory competency on the second defense, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and the Graduate Faculty will review the student's status and may terminate the student.

The DGS and the Major Advisor must be given a bound copy of the student's thesis or scholarly project following a successful defense and upon completion of any necessary revisions. Students are strongly encouraged to provide other members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee with copies as well (not necessarily bound).

L. Master's Degree Time Limit

Students enrolled in the master's program have six years from initial enrollment to complete all requirements for the degree, but may request extensions up to an additional four years, for a total of 10 years.

M. Graduation Ceremonies

The School of Human Environmental Sciences participates in graduation ceremonies at the end of the spring semester only. In order to participate in the ceremony, the student must have successfully completed all degree requirements as symbolized by signatures of the student's Advisory Committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) on the final examination card. It is the student's responsibility to notify the DGS of her or his intent to attend the graduation ceremony and to obtain the appropriate academic attire through the University Bookstore.

IV. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Department of Family Sciences offers both half-time (10 working hours per week) and full-time (20 working hours per week) graduate teaching assistantships, which usually include half or full-time tuition scholarships, respectively. Students on a Plan A (thesis) track are given priority for assistantships over those who are on a Plan B (scholarly project) track. Faculty members who have received internal or external funding may also offer research assistantships, although doctoral students are typically given preference for these positions. Additionally, the School of Human Environmental Sciences awards scholarships each year; application forms are available from the School of Human Environmental Sciences' Office of Student Services, located in Erikson Hall. Other types of financial assistance are available from the University. Please see the *Graduate School Bulletin* for additional information on financial support.

V. CHANGING EMPHASIS AREAS

Students can change from any emphasis area to any emphasis area except couples and family therapy with approval from the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). If a student has been accepted into the master's program but not the couples and family therapy (CFT) emphasis area, and later wishes to change to the CFT emphasis area, a formal application must be submitted according to the deadline dates for application to the Department of Family Sciences graduate program.

VI. DEADLINES

During second semester in program:

- Select Major Advisor (Chair) and Advisory Committee members and submit M-1 to the DGS.
- Have a *plan of study* meeting with Advisory Committee and submit signed M-2 to the DGS.

Before completion of 21 credit hours

- Enroll in FAM 768.

Mid-term of first semester enrolled in FAM 768 (residence credit)

- Have a *proposal meeting* with Advisory Committee and submit signed M-3 to the DGS.

At least one semester prior to graduation semester:

- Take a data analysis course (either quantitative or qualitative) or a program evaluation course.

First 30 days of graduation semester

- Submit application for degree to the Graduate School.

Minimum 30 days prior to final examination

- Schedule final examination in consultation with Major Advisor and Advisory Committee members.

Minimum 2 weeks prior to final examination

- Schedule final examination with the Graduate School.

Six years from initial enrollment

- Thesis or scholarly project must be completed and the final examination passed.

VII. FORMS

Department of Family Sciences (fam.uky.edu/forms)

- M-1: Advisory Committee
- M-2: Plan of Study
- M-3: Project Proposal

UK Graduate School (www.research.uky.edu/gs/forms.html)

- Petition for Post Mid-Term Withdrawal from Class(es)
- Request for Transfer of Credits
- Thesis Approval Form
- Final Examination Recommendation
- and many other forms...