UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
Human Development & Family Studies

GRADUATE STUDENT

HANDBOOK

https://hdfs.illinois.edu/

The HDFS Graduate Handbook details our departmental policies regarding student admissions, advising, degree requirements, employment, milestones, timelines, and evaluation of progress. We encourage students and advisers to consult this handbook for answers to common questions when preparing to take qualifying and preliminary exams, and when preparing to submit theses or dissertations.

In addition to the below HDFS Handbook, students and advisers are encouraged to consult the Graduate College Handbook, which describes University policies and procedures that apply to all graduate students, including those that govern assistantships. Also, the department has elected to use the Graduate College policy for formal grievances (informal grievances should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Program Director).

OVERVIEW OF GRADUATE STUDY IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

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Graduate Degree Programs in Human Development & Family Studies

Graduate Majors:

Human Development and Family Studies, MS
Human Development and Family Studies, PhD

The HDFS doctoral program prepares students to be researchers, educators, policy developers, or professionals who develop, evaluate, and implement programs for children, families, and communities.

Students who enter the doctoral program without a master's degree will complete one as the first part of their doctoral requirements. Students who enter with a master's degree but without an approved master's thesis will complete a thesis equivalency.

Admission

Admission is based upon both academic record and the applicant's fit with faculty research programs. We examine grade point average (GPA), previous academic experiences, letters of recommendation, a personal statement, and a critical writing sample. Applicants are required to submit a writing sample that reflects their ability to think critically and systematically about a social, behavioral, interpersonal, or policy-related issue. The writing sample should be a document you wrote alone or took the lead in writing. Examples include, but are not limited to, an honor's thesis; a critical review of literature in a topical area; or a manuscript published, accepted for publication, or submitted for publication.

International applicants from non-English speaking countries must pass the relevant English proficiency test as specified by the graduate college. All applicants are expected to have previous coursework in a relevant area of social or behavioral sciences. Our application deadline is December 15 for possible admission the following fall semester. We admit students for fall enrollment only. Please refer to our department website for further information.

Please note that we have a "full-time student" department culture and thus do not enroll part-time students or encourage outside employment during the program. Full-time status is defined by the graduate college as enrollment in at least 8 credits per academic semester (fall and spring).

Admission FAQ's

The minimum grade-point average for admission is 3.0 (A = 4.0). HDFS uses a holistic application process that considers both quantitative data and qualitative indicators to obtain a full picture of each applicant's attributes and potential to thrive as graduate students. In addition to academic potential, we carefully assess the match between applicant interests and career goals and the focus of our program and its faculty. We encourage applications from potential M.D./Ph.D. students (Medical Scholars).

Admission Requirements

Letters of Reference

All letters are managed through the online application process. The easiest way to do this is to have an email address for the people writing letters and enter this information as a part of your application process.

Transcripts

You must list on your online application each institution of post-secondary education from which you have earned credit. You must also submit your transcript / academic record (and diplomas or certificates of degrees if your degree is awarded and not listed on your transcript) for each of these institutions.

Transcripts / academic records (and diplomas or certificates of degrees if your degree is awarded and not listed on your transcript) must be uploaded directly to the online application. English translations should also be uploaded if the credentials are not in English.

Official Academic Credentials

All credentials uploaded to the online application are considered unofficial. You will only be asked to submit official or attested credentials (transcripts, academic records, diplomas, certificates of degrees, etc.) in a sealed envelope, with a certification stamp across the seal if you are admitted. These must be submitted during your first term of enrollment at the University of Illinois.

More about transcripts

GRE Scores (optional)

GRE scores are completely optional. If you choose to send scores, contact the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to send official test scores to the University of Illinois. Our institution code is 1836 and the program code is 4602.

Academic and Personal Statement

Please write a statement that answers the following questions (1,000 words max):

Question #1: Please describe pivotal experiences, opportunities, and/or challenges (including any financial or access barriers) that have influenced your educational and professional development.

Question #2: At Illinois, we value a student's ability to contribute to a community of inclusion, belonging, and respect where our graduate students can learn and collaborate productively and positively. Please provide an example of how you contributed to or engaged with a community of students or colleagues with different perspectives, abilities, and experiences to achieve a positive outcome, and reflect on what you learned from this experience.

Question #3: If you believe that your academic record does not demonstrate your true capabilities, please explain why. You may also discuss any gaps in your academic and professional experience.

Question #4: If there is something that you would like to share with the admissions committee that you have yet to discuss in other areas of the application, please do so here. If needed, you may also use this space to expand upon the topics discussed in the above essays.

Essays remain set at 250 words maximum with essays #1-2 required and #3-4 optional.

AI Guidance: Applicants are expected to write authentic responses to these prompts. While AI and search engine services can provide guidance and suggestions, admissions committees are looking for your unique experiences and perspectives. Responses generated exclusively by AI should not be submitted.

Admission Procedures

How do I apply?
The graduate application process begins with the completion of an online application form. Instructions and further information on applying are available at the Graduate College.

If you are ready to apply, go to the application form

What is the deadline?
All applications for fall enrollment are due by December 15.

Late applications are not accepted, and we do not allow mid-year enrollment.

Where do I send my application?
The application process for graduate school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is online.

What happens if my application is incomplete?
Incomplete applications will not be considered for admission.

Where do I find a complete list of instructions for applying?
Here are a complete list of instructions

Is there an application fee?
Yes, there is a non-refundable application fee. The amount of the fee is determined by your citizenship and/or visa, but here are more precise instructions about qualifications for these rates and fee waiver instructions.

Who can I contact about this program?
You can contact the Graduate Program Director, Brian Ogolsky at 217-244-1199 or by email at bogolsky@illinois.edu.

How are applications evaluated?
The Director of Graduate Programs chairs the Admissions Committee. They are responsible for overseeing and coordinating general inquiries from applicants, making certain that applications are available for review by faculty, and for communicating with applicants whom the committee decides to admit. The Director of Graduate Programs assigns at least 3 faculty reviewers to each application. All faculty members are allowed to review all admission files at their discretion. However, assigned reviewers are responsible for assessing academic quality and the applicant's fit with the program. They then communicate their assessment of each applicant to the Director of Graduate Programs

An offer of admission will only be made if:

1. The applicant meets our stated academic potential standards
2. At least one faculty member wants to advise the student
3. The applicant's research interests and career goals are a good fit for their chosen program
4. Faculty and/or HDFS have the money to provide funding at our standard level

Non-Degree Admission

Students seeking non-degree admissions into HDFS must fulfill the same requirements and meet the same admissions criteria as students applying for on-campus graduate study. Acceptance as a non-degree student does not guarantee acceptance into the degree program nor does it entitle a student to financial assistance through the department. Please see the Graduate College Handbook for further information.

International Applicants

All international applicants are required to demonstrate that they have adequate financial resources to cover the cost of their education while in the United States. Official financial documentation is required as part of the application process in order for visa eligibility documents (I-20 or DS-2019) to the U.S. to be issued.

Are international students required to demonstrate English Language proficiency?
Yes, international applicants from non-English-speaking countries must demonstrate English language proficiency.

See Graduate School information on English Language Proficiency for further information

Graduate Teaching Experience

We do not require students to teach but recognize the importance of teacher development for their future marketability. Thus, we make teaching assistantships available and encourage students to pursue a variety of teaching experiences as well as mentorship from experienced instructors. We also encourage our students to utilize the variety of teacher training resources that are available across campus.

Faculty Research Interests

Faculty information is available on our department website at http://hdfs.illinois.edu/directory/faculty.

Centers, Programs, and Institutes

Child Care Resource Service
Child Development Lab
Family Resiliency Center
University of Illinois Extension
Bevier Hall
Child Development Lab
Doris Kelly Christopher Hall
Early Child Development Lab

Financial Aid

We are committed to funding all students who are making timely progress. All students who are admitted to the PhD program are provided with a minimum of 50% funding and full tuition remission. Students who enter without a master's degree are funded for a minimum of 4 years. Students who enter with a master's degree are funded for a minimum of 3 years. Funding may include fellowships, research assistantships, and/or teaching assistantships. These opportunities typically include stipends and tuition waivers. In some cases, fees are also waived. All applicants are automatically considered for all department funding opportunities; there is no separate application process. Federal and state financial aid is completely separate from the support provided by our department. For information regarding federal and state financial aid, please refer to https://osfa.illinois.edu/.

Departmental Structure

The Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), is 1 of 7 departments within the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES).

The Head of the Department is Dr. Ramona Oswald (roswald@illinois.edu, 222 Bevier Hall).

The Director of Graduate Programs is Dr. Brian Ogolsky (bogolsky@illinois.edu, 244-1199, 233 Bevier Hall).

> The Director of Graduate Programs coordinates graduate program affairs, including admissions, T.A. assignments, fellowship awards, annual reviews of student progress, and approving students' petitions for waivers of department requirements. They serve as the general advisor and advocate for all graduate students and is the primary point of contact for graduate students.

The Academic Program Office Manager is Ashley Negangard (arnegan@illinois.edu, 231 Bevier Hall).

> The Academic Program Office Manager records official papers, and general information about the graduate program as well as fellowship and award processing. They also provide administrative support to the program directors, organizes graduate student events and assists graduate students with making travel arrangements and processing reimbursements. They are responsible for course scheduling, classroom reservations, and textbook orders.

The Administrative Aide is Carie Arteaga (carteaga@illinois.edu, 222 Bevier Hall).

> The Administrative Aide assists Dr. Oswald, provides specialized Administrative Support to the faculty and business office, and oversees departmental activities, visits, and events.

The HDFS Business Office is located in 222 Bevier Hall.

> Darcy Meents, Assistant to the Head (eichel@illinois.edu)
>
> Amanda Hart, Payroll (afuqua@illinois.edu)
>
> Johanna Lira, Accounting Assistant, (jl247@illinois.edu)

Master's Degree

The Master's Thesis

A research-based Master's thesis is required of all HDFS doctoral students who enter our program. If you enter without a Master's degree, we expect you to complete your thesis by approximately the end of your 2nd year in our program. If you enter with a non-thesis Master's degree, you must complete a thesis equivalency, which differs from a Master's thesis as detailed below.

This requirement exists to give you practical experience in the design, implementation, interpretation, and written description of a research project. We strongly encourage you to write your thesis as a publishable manuscript.

The Thesis Committee

For the Master's thesis you must select a 2-person thesis committee, consisting of a chair (usually your adviser) and a 'second reader,' each of whom must be members of the graduate faculty. Both committee members must approve a brief research proposal prior to beginning your project, supervise data collection, and evaluate the completed project as fulfilling the thesis requirement. You should form the committee in consultation with your chair/advisor. The student's chair/advisor should write a memo to the Director of Graduate Programs identifying the student and the members of the student's committee. This step in the thesis process should be completed as soon as you have identified a thesis topic.

Planning the Thesis

Work with your chair/adviser to identify a thesis topic and prepare a research proposal by roughly the end of your first year. The proposal should include a succinct review of the literature building towards your research questions and method. Most commonly, thesis proposals are directly linked to your chair/adviser's past or present research, although it is acceptable to propose an independent project. The research plan should be approved by both your chair/advisor and the second reader before data collection or analysis occurs. In addition to rigor, your proposal should be evaluated in terms of feasibility; you should strive to complete the proposed research by the end of your second year.

All research must be approved by the University of Illinois IRB before data collection begins. The timeline of obtaining permission should be considered when planning the thesis.

Expediting Completion of the Master's Thesis

HDFS expects students to complete their MS in approximately 2 years (The Graduate College requires that all Master's degree requirements must be completed within 5 years of the 1st registration). Getting students through their MS work within 2 years largely depends on the interactions between students and their advisors. The following guidelines are recommended:
Follow the appropriate degree checklist closely so that you complete your MS coursework on time while working on the thesis.

1. Follow the suggested timeline for proposing and completing your thesis by the end of your second year.

2. Propose a thesis that can be realistically completed within the recommended time frame. Consider using existing data so that you are not delayed by IRB procedures or data If collecting your own data, the summer after your 1st year is a good time to start.

3. Write your thesis as a publishable manuscript (roughly 30 pages max, including references).

4. Develop a professional relationship with your adviser/chair. This includes openly addressing any questions or concerns in a timely and constructive manner. You may always consult with the Director of Graduate Programs for advice on managing professional relationships.

Submitting the Master's Thesis

Your thesis must be approved by your committee. Your chair/adviser and your second reader will work with the graduate program secretary to ensure that the proper forms are completed. It should be noted that failure to complete the thesis or thesis equivalency satisfactorily may result in termination from the program. After your thesis is approved by your advisor/chair and second reader, you must submit it to the HDFS Thesis Checker for our department approval process.

Early in the semester when you intend to submit, clarify submission deadlines with the HDFS Thesis Checker. To ensure that you graduate within the desired semester, you must submit your correctly formatted thesis to the HDFS Thesis Checker **at least 2 weeks** prior to the Graduate College deadline (see timetable below). They will help you complete the required Application for Degree form.

Before submitting your thesis to the HDFS Thesis Checker, you must format your thesis in accordance with Graduate College style requirements (see http://www.grad.illinois.edu/graduatecollege-thesis-requirements).

In addition, you must follow HDFS formatting rules. We expect you to follow the publication guidelines of the American Psychology Association (APA). One important difference between APA and Graduate College format is the placement of tables and figures. The placement of tables and figures must conform to the Graduate College requirements.

The HDFS Thesis Checker WILL NOT accept incorrectly formatted theses. It is your responsibility to know and use the required formats. Consult with the Thesis Checker before submitting if you have any questions.

The thesis must be submitted to the Graduate College, after approval by the thesis committee, thesis checker, and the Department Head. A checklist to complete before depositing the thesis is available at https://grad.illinois.edu/thesis/format. Consult with the HDFS Thesis Checker if you have any questions about forms.

Submitting the Master's Thesis/Dissertation for Review		
When	Forms Needed	Instructions
To ensure that you graduate within the desired semester, you must submit your correctly formatted thesis/dissertation to the HDFS Thesis Checker ***at least 2 weeks prior*** to the Graduate College deadline.	*TDA Form signed by all committee members and returned to thesis checker*	1. Carefully edit your thesis or dissertation document into what you believe is "perfect" condition (formatting, references, etc.). If your committee requested revisions after your defense, you should make them and obtain your advisor's approval. 2. Department head (who serves as the citation/reference checker) will email you to schedule a time to meet in-person or on Zoom (if Zoom, you will need to be able to see me doing a screen share). You will upload your dissertation document into the citation checker. This program will check your in-text citations against your reference list and generate a report. 3. You will have 2 days to fix all errors identified in the report and use the link provided to upload your thesis or dissertation back into the citation checker. Run another report and repeat until you are error-free. 4. Once your document is error-free, please email it to department head, who will then check the formatting of your reference list. She will send it back to you to make any needed corrections. 5. Once your in-text and reference list citations are all correct, you will send your document to the thesis checker. She will then check the format against the Graduate College guidelines and return it to you for any corrections. 6. After correcting any formatting errors, send the final document to the thesis checker and department head. 7. They will give you final approval and department head will sign the TDA form and Thesis checker will upload it to the Grad College Portal. Once it is uploaded to the Grad College Portal, thesis checker will email you so that you can submit the final document to the Graduate College.

Master's Thesis Equivalency

The Master's thesis equivalency is similar in structure to the Master's thesis but does not require official submission to the graduate college. Students should follow the instructions above regarding the Master's thesis contents and committee. However, students need not follow formatting guidelines listed above. Once the document is approved by the advisor and a second reader, students need only to report final approval to the director of graduate programs so they can document completion in the student's file. The thesis equivalency does not need to be submitted to the thesis checker or the graduate college upon completion. The thesis equivalency should be completed by approximately the end of the second year.

Doctoral Degree

The requirements for the Ph.D. degree vary depending on whether the student enters with a Bachelor's or a Master's degree. It is expected that for students entering with a Bachelor's degree, the Master's degree should take roughly 2 years, and the Ph.D. degree roughly 3 years beyond that. For students coming into the program with a Master's degree, 4 years is the approximate duration of study for the Ph.D.

Requirements for a Ph.D. degree in HDFS include:

Graduate College Stage I
If entering with a Bachelor's degree, you must successfully complete a MS degree in HDFS. This MS degree includes 24 coursework hours and 8 thesis hours. Specific course requirements are detailed in our HDFS degree checklist. See also the Master's Thesis information above.

If entering with a Master's degree from another institution or from another UIUC Master's program, a thesis equivalency paper must be completed unless a research Master's thesis has been completed elsewhere and is approved by the director of graduate programs. This approval of an outside Master's thesis should occur during your first semester. To request approval, students should submit an email request to the Director of Graduate Studies with a complete PDF of the thesis in English for review. A final decision will be made prior to the start of the spring semester. If completing a thesis equivalency, follow the guidelines provided above.

Graduate College Stage II
You must successfully complete your required coursework as detailed in the HDFS degree requirement checklist. All required courses must be taken for a letter grade or a satisfactory/deferred grade (cannot be for credit/no credit), and all should be 500-level courses, unless a specific exception is made by the Director of Graduate Programs. Courses taken as a part of the Master's curriculum do not count toward the 64 credits required for the PhD.

Required courses include all theory, method/statistics, and two of four substantive courses that are required of students in the HDFS concentration. Electives do not have to be completed prior to taking the qualifying exam. Students are expected to earn grades above B- in their course work. **Grades of C+ or lower will result in academic probation.** Student work must also be original. Plagiarism of any kind will not be permitted.

HDFS instructors will report any allegations of plagiarism through the Faculty Academic Integrity Report (FAIR) portal.

When your required coursework is complete, you must pass the qualifying exam and oral defense. See additional information below.

After passing your qualifying exam, you must pass your Preliminary Exam (aka "oral defense of the dissertation proposal"). See additional information below.

Graduate College Stage III
You will now be considered ABD, which means "all but dissertated."

You must successfully carry out and defend your dissertation as per your dissertation proposal. After a successful final defense, you must submit your dissertation to the Graduate College.

See additional information below.

PhD in Human Development & Family Studies (HDFS)
Degree checklist and recommended timeline for students who enter our program with a master's degree

If the student has a master's thesis it should be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies at the beginning of the student's first semester. If the thesis is not approved, or if the student has a non-thesis master's degree, then they are expected to complete a "thesis equivalency" by the end of their second year in the program.

YEAR ONE
Fall semester (13 hours)
- HDFS 500: Professional Development (1)
- HDFS 501: Human Development Theories (4)
- HDFS 590: Advanced Research Methods (4)
- HDFS 599: MS Thesis Research (4)

Spring semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 521: Family Theories (4)
- HDFS 582 or 591: Qualitative Methods (E or G) (4)
- HDFS 594: Intermediate Statistical Analysis (4)

YEAR TWO
Fall semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 597 or other Advanced Statistical Analysis (4)
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research (0 - 4) _____

Spring semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 591: Qualitative Methods (E or G) (4)
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research (0 - 4) _____
- Thesis equivalency should be approved by now

(Summer qualifying exam cycle if eligible)

YEAR THREE
Fall semester (12 hours)
- Qualifying exam (eligible after completing all theory & methods plus 2 Substantive Courses)
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research (12) _____

Spring semester (12 hours)
- Preliminary exam (eligible after passing the Qual)
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research (12) _____

YEAR FOUR
Fall semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 500: Professional Development (1)
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research (11) _____

Spring semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research _____
- Final defense and deposit of dissertation

The PhD Degree

The PhD consists of required courses (advanced statistics and two of three qualitative methods 582, 591E or 591G) plus 4 substantive courses, 2 HDFS 500 credits, and enough elective courses to reach the required 42 total coursework hours. In addition, the PhD requires 22 PhD thesis hours for a total of 64 hours.

Thesis hours help the student maintain full time status during the academic year as well summer. Although there is no limit to how many thesis hours a student can take, only 22 will be counted towards the PhD.

Substantive courses are 500 level HDFS courses that focus on a specialized empirical area (see list).

HDFS 450 and 550 are internship courses and thus do not meet the substantive requirement. They are recommended, and may be counted as electives.

No more than 8 hours of HDFS 598 may be used as elective credit.

Students who enter our PhD program with a master's degree typically do not need to take any elective courses. Students are allowed to take electives, but they may not be necessary.

HDFS Substantive Courses

HDFS 503: Social-Emotional Development
HDFS 505: Advanced Adolescence
HDFS 523: Ethnic Families
HDFS 526: Intimate Partner Violence
HDFS 527: Family Resiliency
HDFS 528: Parenting
HDFS 533: Community in American Society
HDFS 534: Neighborhood and Human Development
HDFS 540: Gender and Sexuality
HDFS 561: Child and Family Program Development
HDFS 562: Child and Family Program Evaluation
HDFS 580: Survey Research Methodology Fundamentals
HDFS 581: Participatory Research Methods
HDFS 586: Health & Leisure in Recreation, Sport & Tourism
HDFS 595: Seminar
No more than 4 hours of HDFS 598 (readings course)
Other approved 500 level substantive courses

MS & PhD in Human Development & Family Studies (HDFS)
Degree checklist and recommended timeline for students who enter our program without a master's degree

YEAR ONE
Fall semester (13 hours)
- HDFS 500: Professional Development (1) (counted on PhD)
- *HDFS 501: Human Development Theories (4)
- *HDFS 590: Advanced Research Methods (4)
- *HDFS 599: MS Thesis Research (4)

Spring semester (12 hours)
- *HDFS 521: Family Theories (4)
- *HDFS 582 or 591: Qualitative Methods (E or G) (4)
- *HDFS 594: Intermediate Statistical Analysis (4)

YEAR TWO
Fall semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 597 or other Advanced Statistical Analysis (4)
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- *HDFS 599: MS Thesis Research (4) _____

Spring semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 582 or 591: Qualitative Methods (E or G) (4)
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- HDFS Substantive Course (2 or 4) _____
- *HDFS 599: MS Thesis Research (4) _____
- Deposit master's thesis

YEAR THREE
Fall semester (12 hours)
- Qualifying exam (eligible after completing all theory & methods plus 2 substantive courses)
- Elective Courses: _____
  _____
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research _____

Spring semester (12 hours)
- Preliminary exam (eligible after passing Qual)
- Elective Courses _____
  _____
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research _____

YEAR FOUR
Fall semester (12 hours)
- HDFS 500: Professional Development (1)
- Elective Courses: _____
  _____
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research _____

Spring semester (12 hours)
- Elective Courses _____
  _____
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research _____

YEAR FIVE (12 hours each fall and spring)
- HDFS 599: PhD Thesis Research _____
- Final defense & deposit of dissertation

MS Degree Requirements

The MS consists of YEAR ONE required courses (24 hours, designated by an *) plus the master's thesis (8 hours) for a total of 32 hours.

The master's thesis should be deposited by the end of YEAR TWO.

The PhD Degree

The PhD consists of required courses (advanced statistics and two of three qualitative methods 582, 591 E or 591 G) plus 4 substantive courses, 2 HDFS 500 credits, and enough elective courses to reach the required 42 total coursework hours. In addition, the PhD requires 22 PhD thesis hours for a total of 64 hours.

Thesis hours help the student maintain full time status during the academic year as well summer. Although there is no limit to how many thesis hours a student can take, only 22 will be counted towards the PhD.

Substantive courses are 500 level HDFS courses that focus on a specialized empirical area (see list).

HDFS 450 and 550 are internship courses and thus do not meet the substantive requirement. They are recommended, and may be counted as electives.

No more than 8 hours of HDFS 598 may be used as elective credit.

Students who enter our PhD program with a master's degree typically do not need to take any elective courses. Students are allowed to take electives, but they may not be necessary.

HDFS Substantive Courses

HDFS 503: Social-Emotional Development
HDFS 505: Advanced Adolescence
HDFS 523: Ethnic Families
HDFS 526: Intimate Partner Violence
HDFS 527: Family Resiliency
HDFS 528: Parenting
HDFS 533: Community in American Society
HDFS 534: Neighborhood and Human Development
HDFS 540: Gender and Sexuality
HDFS 561: Child and Family Program Development
HDFS 562: Child and Family Program Evaluation
HDFS 580: Survey Research Methodology Fundamentals
HDFS 581: Participatory Research Methods
HDFS 586: Health & Leisure in Recreation, Sport & Tourism
HDFS 595: Seminar
No more than 4 hours of HDFS 598 (readings course)
Other approved 500 level substantive courses

Thesis (599) Credits and Expectations

As per graduate college policy, grades of "S" (satisfactory) or "U" (unsatisfactory) must be awarded by the 599 instructor of record during the grade reporting period at the end of each semester. Only credit hours with grades of "S" will count toward credit hours required for the degree. According to graduate college policy, 1 credit hour = 3 hours of effort per week over a 16-week semester. For example, students enrolled in 8 hours of 599 credit in a fall or spring semester should expect to allocate approximately 24 hours of academic effort to their research, on average, for each week in the semester.

There are often instances in which a graduate student performs research for both academic credit and to fulfill research assistantship duties. It is important to understand that the time allocation for academic credit is **in addition to** employment obligations. For instance, a student may have a half-time RA and be registered for 8 hours of 599 credit. They would be expected to spend, on average, about 20 hours a week on the RA duties and about 24 hours a week associated with the 599 credits, for a total of 44 hours. The same work cannot be counted for both an RA appointment and 599 credit. Faculty advisors are expected to discuss and document 599 expectations with students prior to each semester. Understanding that research can be unpredictable, faculty advisors should work with students to adjust the plan as needed during the semester. It is recommended that advisors and advisees create and maintain an individual development plan throughout each semester that lays out research goals and progress in order to explicitly document research progress. Grades of "S" should only be awarded if students make demonstrable progress on their own research (e.g., dissertation, thesis, qualifying exam). Therefore, it is expected that students will receive "U" grades if research progress is not made in the semester for which the grade is given. Grades of "S" or "U" are listed on academic transcripts but do not count toward final GPA calculations.

The Qualifying Exam

The purpose of the QE is to determine whether the student has acquired the knowledge and skills that are essential for professional success in HDFS. Required coursework is designed to give the student this exposure and help them develop their writing and critical thinking skills. Thus, only students who have completed required theory, method/statistics, and at least two substantive courses are eligible to take the QE (as per the HDFS program checklist). Elective courses are not required before taking the QE.

The overall aims of the QE are to:

- Demonstrate expert knowledge in a particular substantive area in which they intend to conduct their dissertation research.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically review (evaluate) and integrate (synthesize) this substantive literature using theory.
- Demonstrate methodological competence by evaluating the methods used to study a particular substantive literature.

The QE paper may take one of two forms:

1. An ***Integrative Critical Analysis Paper***, which consists of the following:
    a. An integrative literature review
        i. Integrative reviews critique and synthesize a representative selection of literature on a topic in in order to build new frameworks and perspectives on the topic
    b. An evaluation and **integration** of **multiple** theoretical perspectives
    c. A discussion of how the integration of theoretical perspectives advances the chosen field of study

OR

2. A ***Scoping Critical Analysis Paper***, which consists of the following:
    a. A scoping review of the relevant literature
        i. Scoping reviews involve mapping key literature on a given topic or research area and identifying/defining key concepts, gaps in the knowledge, and areas of future growth.
    b. An evaluation and **critique** of **prominent** theoretical perspectives on the chosen topic
    c. A discussion of the steps needed to address the major theoretical and/or methodological gaps in the chose field of study

In addition, all QE papers regardless of form must include:

a. An introduction with a rationale for the chosen topic
b. An analysis and critique of the methodological approaches used to study the chosen topic

The QE Process

Step 1: Form the Committee

Students notify the Director of Graduate Programs that they intend to take the QE exam in the next cycle. The Director of Graduate Programs asks the Department Head to appoint a QE Exam Chair. Students then consult with their adviser (who is the second member of the committee) and the relevant QE Chair to identify an appropriate third committee member. This faculty member's willingness to serve should be communicated to the Director of Graduate Programs before a student writes their proposal (step 2).

Step 2: Propose the Qualifying Exam Paper

Prior to starting the exam, the student must provide their QE committee with a 2-3 page proposal (plus references) for the paper (see schedule at the end of this document for specific due dates for each QE cycle). This proposal should identify the format of the paper, the student's substantive area, and the theoretical and methodological literatures they will use to critically analyze that substantive

literature. Students may include a proposed reading list as an appendix. No additional appendices should be submitted with the proposal (e.g., paper outlines). The QE Committee will then meet with the student to discuss the proposal and identify any needed changes. This meeting should include the student as well as all three committee members. This meeting may be held in-person or virtually.

The QE Committee should have a clear idea of, and approve, the format, scope, and content of the paper before the student starts writing. Any input from committee members about what the paper should cover must be resolved before writing starts. After approval, the QE chair should send the student an email describing the agreed upon exam structure and contents. Upon receipt of that email, the student works independently according to the time table below, and the committee evaluates the student's independent work after submission.

It is possible that the QE Committee may feel that a student is not ready to begin writing their paper. In this case, the committee chair should give the student clear feedback via email regarding what changes they need to make in order for their proposal to be approved. The student should then wait until the next exam cycle and follow procedures accordingly.

Step 3: Write the Paper

Before writing, it is suggested that students create a table of all empirical studies to be reviewed in the paper, organize the table by theory, research question, methods, and findings, and then write the paper from the table. Students should then write their paper as agreed upon by their QE Committee. Students should work independently. It is acceptable for students to talk about their exam with other students. They should not, however, receive any feedback from any faculty member including their QE Committee members. Any communication should be between the student and the QE Chair and should be limited to clarifying questions only. For example, "The committee agreed I would evaluate interview methodologies, does this include both standardized protocols and open-ended designs?"

The paper is limited to 30 pages (1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, double- spaced), plus up to 10 pages of references. Students should use American Psychological Association (APA) or American Sociological Association (ASA) style, as appropriate to their content area.

Step 4: Submit the Paper to the QE Committee

Students should submit a final document that has been carefully and thoroughly proofread to ensure there are no spelling, grammatical, or style errors. Students may consult with the UIUC Writing Lab for editing purposes, if desired. The QE Committee will evaluate the paper in terms of how successfully it meets the aims of the QE process described above. The evaluation decision should be made during a meeting of all three committee members. This meeting may be held in-person or virtually. The student should not be present for this meeting.

The Committee has one month from the due date to evaluate the paper. All communication will be by email between the Chair and the student. The decision and feedback must be documented on the "Qualifying Exam (Written) Form," which can be found here. There are three possible outcomes:

1. If the committee evaluates the paper as a "pass", the student proceeds to Step 5. Passing means that the Committee agrees that the student has demonstrated their expertise as per the specific goals stated in this document and the student's agreed upon proposal.

2. The committee will evaluate the paper as "pass with minor revision" when the Committee agrees that the student's overall work demonstrates expertise as per "pass" criteria, but there are a few issues that require effective rethinking and rewriting before a "pass" can be granted. The student will have 10 calendar days to make the appropriate changes and submit their revision to the QE Chair. Along with the revised paper, the student must submit a memo detailing how they responded to the Committee concerns, and where in their paper these changes were made. To ensure that the student understands what this memo entails, the QE Chair will provide an example memo. If the Committee agrees that the revisions are satisfactory, the student will receive a "pass" decision and proceed to step 5. If the Committee agrees that the revisions are unsatisfactory, the student will receive a "fail" decision. Failing the revised exam will result in termination from the HDFS doctoral program.

3. If the committee evaluates the originally submitted paper as a "major revision," the student will have only one opportunity to resubmit their exam. A "major revision" will be given when the Committee agrees that the student's overall work fails to demonstrate expertise as per "pass" criteria. The student will have 30 calendar days to make the appropriate changes and submit their revision to the QE Chair. Along with the revised paper, the student must submit a memo detailing how they responded to the Committee concerns, and where in their paper these changes were made. To ensure that the student understands what this memo entails, the QE Chair will provide an example memo. The evaluation of the submitted revision will be evaluated as either "pass," or "fail". If pass, the student proceeds to step 5. If fail, the student will be terminated from the HDFS doctoral program. The committee may not issue a "conditional pass" or require a revision to an exam that was already revised.

Step 5: The Oral Examination

After passing the written portion of the exam, the Oral portion of the Qualifying Examination may be scheduled. The purpose of the oral examination is to have students demonstrate their ability to analyze their substantive area from other critical perspectives, to apply their knowledge to support or extend their critical analysis, and to have them "think on their feet" and address a problem from a new angle.

The oral examination is expected to occur within two weeks of receipt of the decision on the written portion of the exam. The duration of the oral examination must be at least one hour but not more than two hours total. Oral examinations are closed to anyone other than the student and committee members.

The oral defense will be evaluated as "pass" or "fail." "Pass" means that the Committee agrees the student adequately answered all of the questions posed during the oral examination. "Fail" means that the Committee agrees that the student did not adequately answer the questions posed during the oral examination. If the student fails the oral examination, the committee may make one of two decisions: (a) allow the student to retake the oral examination one time after a period of preparation specified by the committee, or (b) elect for no repeat examination and terminate the student from the program. If a repeated oral examination is permitted but evaluated as a "fail", the student will be terminated from the program. The result of the oral portion of the qualifying examination must be made by the committee chair on the oral examination result form found here no longer than 24 hours after the conclusion of the examination.

The calendar below assumes a "pass" at every step. Dates will be modified as appropriate if the student receives a pass with minor revision, or a major revision, on either part of their QE.

Step 1	**Step 2**	**Step 3**	**Step 4**	**Step 5**
Form the Committee	Committee with finalize QE proposal	Student submits paper to Committee	Committee student QE Feedback on the appropriate form	Oral
Before April 15	Before May 15	September 1	October 1	October 16
Before October 15	Before November 1	January 15	February 15	March 1
Before January 15	Before February 1	April 1	May 1	May 16

Students who encounter extenuating circumstances during the qualifying exam period should contact the director of graduate programs to discuss available accommodations.

Critical Analysis Result Form (Written Exam)

Student's Name: Exam Date:

Written Examination Result (Circle One):

PASS MINOR REVISION* MAJOR REVISION* FAIL

(Second exam only)

Specific Feedback

Strengths of the exam:

Areas for improvement:

Additional questions/issues to consider prior to oral examination:

***Specific revisions required:**

Committee Chair:

Committee Member (Advisor):

Committee Member:

**This form must be submitted electronically to the Director of Graduate Programs and the student immediately following the examination.

Critical Analysis Result Form (Oral Exam)

Student's Name:

Oral Examination Result (Circle One):

PASS FAIL

Specific Feedback

Strengths of the exam:

Areas for improvement:

Additional Comments:

Committee Chair:

Committee Member (Advisor):

Committee Member:

**This form must be submitted electronically to the Director of Graduate Programs and the student immediately following the examination.

The Dissertation (Doctoral Thesis)

The doctoral dissertation should (1) establish the student's ability to analyze, interpret, and synthesize information; (2) demonstrate the student's knowledge of the literature relating to the project or at least acknowledge prior scholarship on which the dissertation is built; (3) describe the methods and procedures used; (4) present results in a sequential and logical manner; (5) display the student's ability to discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results. If an experimental problem, the work must be described in sufficient detail to permit an independent investigator to replicate the results; and (6) be original work.

In its most general sense, 'original' work describes research that has not been done previously or that creates new knowledge. Although a dissertation should not duplicate another researcher's or scholar's work, the topic, project, or approach taken need not be solely that of the graduate student. Students are encouraged to explore a particular topic or project with the idea that they will independently develop the 'thesis' of the dissertation. The student should be able to demonstrate what portion of the research or scholarship represents his or her own thinking.

The dissertation is the beginning of one's scholarly work, not its culmination. Dissertation research should provide students with hands-on directed experience in the primary research methods of the discipline, and should prepare students for the type of research/scholarship that will be expected of them after they receive the Ph.D. degree. Scholarly activity and research is encouraged from the outset of a student's graduate program.

(Adapted from *The Role and Nature of the Doctoral Dissertation*. Council of Graduate Schools Task Force, 1990)

Forming the Dissertation Committee

It is important to note that the Graduate College approves the Preliminary Examination Committee and the Final Examination Defense Committee, but not the Dissertation Committee. The Graduate College has specific rules about the composition and duration of Examination Committees. Please refer to the Graduate College Handbook for more information about these distinctions: https://grad.illinois.edu/handbooks-policies. The Dissertation Committee may or may not include members of either Examination Committee.

The HDFS policy described below specifically refers to the **Dissertation Committee**.

In preparing for the dissertation (or 'doctoral thesis'), the student (in consultation with their advisor) should identify faculty members who would serve on the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee. A Dissertation Committee is required for each student submitting a dissertation and it is expected that the student's adviser serve as the primary "Director of Dissertation Research". It is acceptable to have Co-Directors.

The specific roles that other committee members play in directing the dissertation will vary and should be explicitly negotiated and documented in writing. Although appointment to an Examination Committee has strict time limits, there is no time limit on a Dissertation Committee other than the length of time that the student is allowed to complete their degree.

Because HDFS expects that membership on Examination Committees will typically be the same as membership on a student's Dissertation Committee, the HDFS rules for forming a Dissertation Committee are consistent with Graduate College Examination Committee rules:

1. The Dissertation Committee should include at least 3 members of the HDFS faculty who represent the breadth of departmental expertise, as well as at least 1 member from outside the department. Faculty with zero time appointments in HDFS may be considered as either inside or outside faculty.

2. In accordance with Graduate College Requirements, at least 3 of the committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty, and at least 2 must be tenured or have tenure status at the Urbana-Champaign campus of the University of Illinois. The Graduate College's list of graduate faculty is now accessible at: https://apps.grad.illinois.edu/grad_faculty/

3. It is possible to have a Dissertation Committee member who is not on the UIUC Graduate Faculty. However, the Dean of the Graduate College must approve, in advance, individuals who are not members of the Graduate Faculty who will serve as voting members of the committee. To request the approval of a non-Graduate Faculty member to vote, a curriculum vitae for the individual and a justification from the Chair of the committee must accompany the request for appointment of the doctoral committee, and the individual must have an earned terminal degree in their field of study.

4. There is no "Chair" of the Dissertation Committee – that role specifically refers to Examination Committees where the Chair is responsible for convening the committee, conducting the examination, and submitting the Preliminary and Final Exam Result forms to the HDFS Graduate Secretary. The Chair of an Examination Committee must be a member of the Graduate Faculty and it is recommended that the committee chair and/or research advisor should be a department member. If appointed, a co-chair must meet all the requirements that apply to the chair. The Chair may or may not also be the student's Director of Research.

5. A faculty member who resigns or retires is terminated from membership on the Graduate Faculty unless the department requests that the faculty member continue for a specified period of time. Those retired or resigned faculty members who continue on the Graduate Faculty without current appointments may serve as a voting member and chair a doctoral examination committee. Those who do not continue on the graduate faculty list must be replaced by a current member of the Graduate Faculty.

6. Once the committee has been agreed upon by student and advisor, the advisor should send a memo to the Graduate Secretary identifying the members of the committee for review and approval by the Department Head. A formal request for their participation by submission of the Request for Appointment of a Doctoral Examination Committee to the Graduate College does not have to be made until the preliminary exams are scheduled.

Although the committee provides guidance on the dissertation, it is the student's responsibility to be aware of all deadlines and requirements for completing the degree.

The Preliminary Examination (aka "defense of the dissertation proposal")

The preliminary exam consists of an oral defense of the dissertation proposal. This defense typically should be completed within 1-2 semesters following the qualifying exams.

As per Graduate College policy, the student must be registered for the entire academic term in which the preliminary exam occurs.

Students are responsible for starting the process to appoint a preliminary exam committee through submitting a request through the Graduate College Student Portal. The request will be sent to the department for review and submission to the Graduate College. Students should submit their committee appointment request at least three weeks before the date of the intended exam. This is essential so that the committee can be reviewed and approved by all relevant units before the exam. If the committee is not appointed before the day of the exam, it could mean that the exam will need to be rescheduled. The Examination must occur within 180 days of the appointment date.

The student is responsible for working with the Graduate Secretary to reserve a room and equipment.

The complete dissertation proposal should be submitted to all Preliminary Examination Committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the oral defense.

Following the exam, the committee should sign the *Certificate of Result of Preliminary Examination for the Doctoral Degree* and return it to the Graduate Secretary or follow the procedures specified by the graduate college regarding electronic signatures. Students should never be in possession of this paperwork; it should always be handed from faculty member to secretary and back again.

Three outcomes are possible from the exam:

Pass	The student may proceed with their proposed research.
Fail	HDFS may, but is not required to, grant the student another opportunity to take the examination after completing additional course work, independent study, or research, as recommended by the committee. However, if a second attempt is given, a new committee must be appointed by the Graduate College. The new committee may, but does not have to, consist of the same members as the original committee.
Decision Deferred	The committee is in temporary adjournment until some later date (which must be within 180 days). The same-committee must re-examine the student and the outcome of the second exam must be pass or fail.

Paperwork Needed for The Preliminary Exam		
When	Process	Instructions
At least 3 weeks before preliminary exam	*Students are responsible for starting the process to appoint a preliminary exam committee through submitting a request through the Graduate College Student Portal. The request will be sent to the department for review and submission to the Graduate College.*	Link to the Graduate College Student Portal
At the preliminary exam	*Preliminary Exam Form – Grad Secretary will email the forms 1 week prior to the exam*	Committee signs form indicating result of the exam; Chair returns it to the Graduate Secretary and copies Director of Graduate Studies

The Final Examination (aka “dissertation defense”)

An oral final defense of the thesis is required. The Graduate College requires that all doctoral candidates be registered for the entire academic term during which they take the preliminary examination and the term during which they take the final examination, regardless of when the dissertation will be deposited or when the degree will be conferred. For this purpose only, "academic term" is defined as extending to and including the day before the first day of the following academic term. If enough thesis credits have been accumulated, registration for zero hours is acceptable.

The final examination should only be held if the Director of Research (student’s adviser) believes that the student’s dissertation is defensible. To arrange the final exam, the student should meet with their Director of Research to determine whether and when the final examination should be held. Once the exam is approved by the Director of Research, the student will be responsible for arranging a date and time when all committee members can participate in the exam (members can participate using appropriate technology if it is not possible to be physically present). Once the date and time is finalized, the student should start the process to appoint a preliminary exam committee through submitting a request through the Graduate College Student Portal. The request will be sent to the department for review and submission to the Graduate College.

The defense of the dissertation is oral and open to the public. It also must be held on the UIUC campus or via online conferencing software as permitted by the graduate college. The student is responsible for notifying the HDFS Graduate Secretary at least 3 weeks in advance of the defense so that an announcement of the time, place, and topic of the proposal or dissertation can be distributed to the department.

All voting members of the committee must be present in person or participate via teleconference or other electronic communication media for the entire duration of the final examination, and the deliberation and determination of the result.

Decisions of the committee for final examinations must be unanimous and are recorded on the Final Exam Result form. The committee may make one of three decisions:

Pass	Pass the candidate with no revisions required. In this case, the committee may sign the Thesis/Dissertation Approval form after the completion of the examination and give it to the student.
Pass with revisions	Pass the candidate pending revision of the dissertation; the candidate will receive the signed Thesis/Dissertation Approval form when the prescribed revisions have been completed.

Fail	HDFS may, but is not required to, grant the student another opportunity to take the examination after completing additional research or writing, as recommended by the committee. However, a new committee must be appointed by the Graduate College. The new committee may, but does not have to, consist of the same members as the original committee. After a fail result a student will only be allowed to take the final examination one additional time while working toward the completion of any one program of study.

Paperwork Needed for Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation		
When	Forms Needed	Instructions
At least 3 weeks before final exam	*Students are responsible for starting the process to appoint a final exam committee through submitting a request through the Graduate College Student Portal. The request will be sent to the department for review and submission to the Graduate College.*	Link to the Graduate College Student Portal
At the final exam	*Final Exam/Dissertation Approval Forms – Grad Secretary will email the forms 1 week prior to the exam*	Committee signs form indicating result of the exam; Chair returns it to the Graduate Secretary who will upload them to the Graduate College and copies Director of Graduate Studies

The Dissertation Format

The dissertation must be written in accordance with Graduate College formatting requirements that are described here: https://grad.illinois.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/format-requirements.

In addition to these formatting requirements, HDFS students should use current APA style guidelines for their in-text citations and reference list.

It is the responsibility of the student and the dissertation committee chair to ensure that the dissertation is in final form and properly formatted before it is forwarded to the designated Thesis Checker who will then forward it to the Department Head. The Thesis Checker may refuse to accept an incorrectly formatted dissertation.

If there are any questions regarding format, the student should contact the designated Thesis Checker.

Dissertation Approval and Submission

After the *Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form (TDA)* form has been signed by the dissertation committee, the dissertation must be approved by the Department Head.

The dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate College after it has been approved by the dissertation committee and the Department Head.

All dissertations must be deposited in the Graduate College by the published deadline to receive a degree. A checklist to complete before depositing the dissertation is available at: https://grad.illinois.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation/deposit-checklist.

An electronic copy of your dissertation MUST be submitted to the Graduate Secretary before the degree will be granted.

Deadlines for Receiving the PhD Degree

Doctoral degrees are conferred in May, August, and December. In order to receive a degree, a student must be on the graduation list for the appropriate graduation date.

To be placed on the graduation list, the student must (1) place themselves, by using UI Integrate Self-Service, on the appropriate degree list, and (2) meet the Graduate College deadline depositing for the dissertation. The deadlines for both of these requirements are published in course schedules, the Graduate College Calendar, and on the Graduate College Website: https://calendars.illinois.edu/list/3259.

Please notify the Graduate Secretary once you have placed your name on a degree list.

The Graduate College requires all departments to confirm that students on the graduation list have completed all requirements. The Graduate Secretary will remove the names of students who are ineligible for graduation.

Exit Interview

An exit interview will be conducted with each student upon completion of the doctoral program. Students should contact the Graduate Secretary to arrange for an exit interview with the Department Head when scheduling the Final Oral Examination.