



# Human Development & Family Science

*College of Family and Consumer Sciences*

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

**Master of Science in**

**Child Life**

**PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

**Fall 2021**

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/graduate-programs-m.s.-child-life>

## Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Human Development and Family Science (HDFS). The goal of our graduate program is to promote the integration of knowledge and professional practice in human development and family science. To accomplish this goal students achieve three objectives: (1) to develop expertise in integrating and applying substantive and theoretical knowledge in individual development across the life course and family relationships; (2) to learn advanced analytic skills and methodologies for conducting and disseminating research on individuals and families; and (3) to develop the skills necessary to translate basic research into application through outreach, clinical practice, or preventative interventions.

The department offers three degrees: (1) A Master of Science in HDFS as part of the University of Georgia's 5-year Double Dawgs program; (2) A Master of Science in Child Life; and (3) A Doctor of Philosophy in HDFS. It is possible to pursue the doctorate in HDFS with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy.

This handbook is designed to guide you as you plan your career as a master's student in the Department of Human Development and Family Science. It is organized according to the major programmatic milestones you will encounter.

Further, this handbook is intended to inform HDFS graduate students and faculty about the basic policies and procedures. Because it does not cover all University regulations governing graduate education at the University of Georgia, it should be treated as a supplement to the *Graduate School Bulletin*, <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/graduate-bulletin/graduate-bulletin-a-c/>, *Theses and Dissertations Guidelines*, <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/theses-dissertations-guidelines/>, and the *Graduate School's Academic Regulations and Procedures*, <http://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/>. Like all graduate programs at UGA, the graduate program in HDFS operates within an administrative structure established by the Graduate School. It is the responsibility of all faculty and graduate students to familiarize themselves with the relevant Graduate School policies.

Although every effort is made to provide accurate and current information in this handbook, the Department reserves the right to change statements in the handbook concerning policies, curricula, or other matters. Students enrolled in the graduate program agree to comply with the Department's rules and regulations and to accommodate to any changes necessary.

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The University of Georgia is committed to the principle of affirmative action and equal opportunity. The Department of Human Development and Family Science will not discriminate in employment, admissions, programs, services, or activities regarding any position for which a student is qualified and will make reasonable accommodation for disabilities. Minorities and members of other underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

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## **Master of Science in Child Life Program**

The Master of Science program in Child Life is designed for students to pursue a graduate degree in preparation for working with children and families in healthcare settings. This program allows a dual focus on the study of issues and development in children and families, along with theory, practice, and research in Child Life. Students in this emphasis will complete the required Human Development and Family Science and Child Life coursework listed in their program of study (see Appendix A). Upon fulfillment of the program requirements, students will graduate with a Master of Science degree in Child Life.

## **Benefit of a Degree in Human Development and Family Science**

There are many benefits to pursuing the study of Child Life within a Department of Human Development and Family Science. Students in this program learn about and apply research skills to their areas of interest, preparing them to work in both the field of Child Life and Human Development and Family Science.

### **1. Study in Human Development and Family Science and Child Life**

A Master of Science in Child Life within a Department of Human Development and Family Science will be beneficial for students pursuing a career in the field of Child Life by providing an education on developmental issues and important topics concerning both children and families. Additionally, students in this emphasis will receive education on Child Life theory, practice, and application within the field. After meeting the program of study requirements, students will apply for and complete an in-depth internship under a Certified Child Life Specialist. The program at the University of Georgia works in congruence with the Association of Child Life Professionals requirements for becoming a Certified Child Life Specialist. Upon completion of both the educational requirements and internship, students will graduate and be eligible to sit for the Child Life certification exam.

### **2. Research**

The Department of Human Development and Family Science believes that research is an integral part of all graduate students' training. Various research and analytical skills are taught and refined throughout the students' studies, which include research presentations and completion of a thesis or a clinical project. These analytical skills will help students solve real-world problems and understand how to read and interpret research, as well as conduct research to contribute to the Child Life field.

## **Timeline for Completing the Program**

Many circumstances affect the length of time necessary for a student to complete a master's degree. The program is designed so that under ordinary conditions students with a bachelor's degree can expect to complete their master's degree in two years, including summers.

All requirements for the degree must be completed within six years beginning with the first registration for graduate courses on the program of study. An extension of time may be granted by the Graduate School only for conditions beyond the control of the individual.

## **Continuous Enrollment Requirement**

The Graduate Enrollment Policy specifies that, "All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) credits

in at least two semesters per year (Fall, Spring, Summer) until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated.” All Graduate Enrollment policies can be found at <https://gradweb01.cc.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/enrollment-policy/>.

## **Advisors and Committees**

### **1. Temporary Advisor**

When you enter the program, you are assigned a temporary advisor. The temporary advisor provides guidance for your educational experience during your first year in the program, or until you have formalized your relationship with a Major Professor. Your temporary advisor will sign necessary forms and answer questions about the program, policies, and other issues. If you have not formalized a relationship with a major professor during the spring of your first year, the initial advisor will present your information to the HDFS graduate faculty during the annual review of graduate students.

Meeting frequently with your initial advisor will help ease your transition into the graduate program. Your initial advisor can also be a helpful resource of information and insights as you consider various major professor options. When making your initial advisor assignment, there was an attempt to match you with a faculty member with whom you seem to have some overlapping interest. You may find that you would like to ask your initial advisor to serve as your major professor. Or, for any number of reasons, you may decide that you would prefer a different faculty member as your major professor. Either approach is acceptable to the faculty member who has agreed to serve as your initial advisor during your first two semesters.

### **2. Major Professor**

During the first year in the program, you are encouraged to spend some time getting to know the faculty members and familiarizing yourself with their research. When considering your options in this very important decision, you should consider the faculty member’s expertise in your area of research and clinical project interest, as well as a good working relationship with that individual. You may want to request a meeting with more than one faculty member to discuss how they play the role of major professor, whether they are willing and able to mentor you in your area of interest, and whether they are accepting new students. You should have formalized this relationship by the end of your second semester in residence.

### **3. Advisory Committee**

The committee must consist of a minimum of two members of the graduate faculty, including your major professor, who will serve as the chair of the committee. This committee, in consultation with the student, is charged with planning and approving the student’s program of study, advising the student on required research skills, approving the proposal for the thesis/clinical project, approving the completed thesis/clinical project, and approving the defense of the student’s work.

Selection of the Advisory Committee should also be done by the end of your first year in residence. All committee member selection decisions should be made in consultation with your major professor. Additional voting members may be appointed to the committee, including no more than one non-UGA faculty, who must hold the terminal degree in their field of study. If there are more than three members, there must be greater than 50% graduate faculty representation. At least two committee members must be from the Department of Human Development and Family Science.

Persons employed by The University of Georgia, and who hold the following ranks, may serve on graduate committees: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, clinical assistant

professor, clinical associate professor, public service assistant, public service associate, senior public service associate, assistant research scientist, associate research scientist, and senior research scientist. Persons having the following ranks may not serve as voting members of graduate committees: instructors, lecturers, and academic professionals. However, these individuals may serve as non-voting members of a committee.

A visiting professor or a part-time or temporary faculty member may not serve on an advisory committee unless that person has sole expertise in a designated area on the student's program of study. The graduate coordinator must send a letter to the Graduate School explaining the need for substitution by the visiting professor, part-time, or temporary faculty member.

When you have comprised your advisory committee, fill out the Advisory Committee form required by the Graduate School. This form can be found through [gradstatus.uga.edu](https://gradstatus.uga.edu) website at: <https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G130>. After completing the form, it will be sent to the Graduate Coordinator for approval and signature. Ultimately, the committee is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the recommendation of the Graduate Coordinator.

## Curriculum

### 1. Coursework Requirements

The Departmental Program of Study for master's students includes research methods and statistics, advanced theory, and courses that are specific to ACLP requirements. The core curriculum for the master's degree is 36 hours of course credit. (Note: HDFS 8910 and 7005 do not count toward this total.) All courses required for the curriculum that are offered in the department must be taken in the department, except electives.

All master's level students are expected to take the core classes (HDFS 6100, 6640, 6800, and 7170), Professional Seminar (8910), several electives, and thesis or clinical project hours. Child Life students have additional course requirements and can choose a thesis option or a non-thesis option. Child Life students should discuss these options with their Major Professor and advisory committee.

While it is permissible for master's students to take 8000- and 9000-level classes, the Graduate School mandates that the *majority* of coursework on the master's Program of Study forms should be at the 6000- and 7000-level.

### 2. Program of Study

An example plan of study for Child Life students is displayed in Appendix A.

### 3. Research Methodology Requirements

You are expected to develop an understanding of a broad range of research methods and demonstrate competence in their use. Through specific coursework you will gain mastery of techniques such as quantitative and qualitative methods and analyses. Required courses include: HDFS 6800: Research Methods and HDFS 7170: Introduction to Applied Statistics in HDFS. Students who already have taken a graduate level research methods or statistics course prior to beginning the program may not be required to take all the courses listed in the curriculum. Submitting official transcripts, course syllabi, or taking a proficiency test may be required for proof of proficiency.

#### **4. Professional Seminar**

All HDFS Child Life students are required to take 2 hours of HDFS 8910: Professional Development Seminar during your first semester. One hour will be spent with other graduate students in the department learning about various aspects of the department, the Graduate School, and the graduate programs in HDFS. You will have an opportunity to meet the HDFS faculty as they attend class to talk to you about various important topics as well as their own program of research. The second hour of the course will be spent with other Child Life students addressing issues specific to the Child Life graduate program. During the next three semesters (excluding summer), you will take 1 hour of HDFS 8910 with other Child Life students to continue addressing issues specific to Child Life.

### **Thesis**

All students in the Master of Science degree in Child Life program will complete a master's thesis or a clinical project. Students are required to select a committee of three faculty members, including a Major Professor who will provide supervision throughout the process.

#### **1. Master's Thesis**

A thesis requires students to apply research and critical thinking skills to a research question of interest within their field. Students who select the thesis option must propose their thesis to their committee members, complete the research project and write a thesis manuscript, and pass a defense with their committee members to be eligible to graduate. See Appendix B for a list of steps to complete a thesis.

#### **2. Clinical Project**

A clinical project is an applied project to address an identified community need in collaboration with an organization. The clinical project requires a literature review, a written proposal, completion of a project that will be useful in the Human Development and Family Science field, and a written report. This is a rigorous, research-based project, completed in collaboration with a hospital, child life specialist, or other community partner under the direction of the student's major professor and committee. The clinical project applies a review of substantive literature and relevant theory to a problem of an applied nature in a clinical setting. The process for a clinical project closely follows that of a thesis. Students pick a topic for the project in collaboration with a community partner, complete a comprehensive literature review, propose the project to the committee, complete the project and a written report, and defend the project and report. The student's committee will evaluate the project based on its comprehensiveness, completeness, and appropriateness in relation to professional work in the student's area of interest. See Appendix C for a list of steps to complete a clinical project.



## **Child Life Practicum**

Students will gain knowledge in the field of Child Life by completing practicum experiences at a pediatric hospital. Each student will register for a practicum during one semester of their graduate coursework. Practicum experiences will include traveling to a children's hospital at least twice weekly to shadow Child Life Specialists. During the practicum, students will gain approximately 120 hours of experience in a clinical setting. Students will have practicum experience in multiple units of the pediatric hospital in order to experience a variety of Child Life interventions. Students will also complete assignments to be turned in to their on-site practicum supervisor. During the practicum, students will have the opportunity to observe clinical skills important for Child Life, such as assessing patient needs, evaluating coping, and developing interventions to support children and families in the healthcare setting. The goal of practicum is to enable students to gain appropriate experiences to prepare them to obtain and complete a Child Life internship. Students who have completed a child life practicum prior to admission will have the option to complete an additional practicum during their graduate program, in consultation with the Child Life Director. See the Previous Practica and Internships section for more information.

## **When to Complete the Practicum**

Students complete a practicum at different times in their graduate work, depending on the availability of practicum sites, coursework schedules, and assistantship responsibilities. Many students complete a practicum during fall of their second year, but this is not the only option. A practicum usually requires the student to be available 2 or 3 full days per week. Students register for HDFS 7210: Problems in Human Development and Family Science as one of their regular courses during the semester of their practicum.

## **Practicum Application Process**

Each hospital has different application requirements for practica. It is the responsibility of students to apply to practicum programs by the application deadline. Many students complete practica in hospitals near Athens (including Atlanta and Macon), but completing a practicum at another location during the summer between a student's first and second years is also an option. UGA does not specifically arrange practica for Child Life students, and students are not limited to any particular hospital or program. The Child Life Director and Child Life Coordinator will work closely with each student to help find the practicum placement that best meets his/her needs.

## **Child Life Internship**

A Child Life internship is a required component of the program. An internship allows students to work intensively with Certified Child Life Specialists in healthcare settings and to participate in preparation, developmental assessments, support groups, procedural support, normalization activities, bereavement activities, and documentation. Students also work directly with patients and learn how theory is applied to their work. The internship experience provides students with extensive hands-on clinical training, as well as the ability to develop professionalism and knowledge of Child Life practice.

UGA does not arrange internships for Child Life students, and students are not limited to any specific hospital or program. Students apply and interview with multiple hospitals in order to secure an internship position.

## 1. When to Intern

Students are eligible to participate in a Child Life internship upon completion of their program of study requirements. Most students complete their internship during the summer of their second year, but fall and spring internships are also available. An internship is a full-time commitment; students cannot complete coursework or assistantship responsibilities while on internship. Keep in mind that students will still enroll and register for internship hours at the University of Georgia during their internship.

## 2. Internship Application Process

Before entering a Child Life internship program, students will need to find and apply to programs, interview with hospital staff, and be extended a formal offer into the internship program. Students research various Child Life internship programs in order to determine which programs and hospitals best suit their needs and interests. The Child Life Director and the Child Life Coordinator will provide input on each student's list of possible hospitals, and will alert students if they have identified a hospital where UGA cannot complete a MOU. In order to apply, students complete and submit the common [Child Life internship application](http://bit.ly/CommonChildLifeApp) (available online at <http://bit.ly/CommonChildLifeApp>), along with any supplemental application materials individual hospitals require. Once the completed application has been received, hospital staff will screen applicants and contact some students for interviews. Interviews typically take place on the hospital campus, although a few hospitals offer interviews via Skype and other technologies. After the interview process is complete, hospital staff extend offers to selected applicants on a standard offer date. Students have the option to accept or decline each hospital that has offered them an internship position.

As soon as the student has accepted an internship offer from a hospital program, the student will work with HDFS department staff to complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the hospital unless UGA has a pre-existing MOU with that hospital. A Memorandum of Understanding is a legal agreement between the University of Georgia and the hospital where the internship will take place concerning the student's role and educational goals throughout the internship. This legal document must be completed and signed by both UGA and the hospital prior to starting an internship. The process can be time consuming and arduous, and students should work with the designated department support staff to begin the process as soon as they accept an internship placement. **The MOU must be signed and executed prior to starting the internship.**

## 3. Previous Practica or Internships

Some students may have completed a Child Life practicum or internship prior to their studies at the University of Georgia. Although a previous practicum or internship is not required for admission into the graduate program, it is beneficial. Students who have already completed a Child Life internship prior to admission to the graduate program will not be required to complete a second internship. Instead, they will take additional coursework that fits with their academic and career goals. This additional coursework will be selected in consultation with the student's major professor.

## **Volunteer Work**

Child Life graduate students balance coursework and applied practicum experiences during their fall and spring semesters. In addition, volunteer work is an excellent way to gain experience with children of different ages and abilities, to learn more about Child Life or Human Development and Family Science, and to be eligible for child life internships. Students in the Child Life program are encouraged to participate in volunteer work throughout their graduate studies whenever possible, especially during the summer of their first year. There are many local opportunities for volunteer work that allow students to apply their knowledge and develop applied skills in Human Development and Family Science. Possible volunteer options include the Child Life Graduate Volunteer program at Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center, Child Life programs at other hospitals near Athens (and in other locations during the summer), child care programs at the Child Development Lab at the McPhaul Center and at other locations, working with children and youth at specialized programs such as Extra Special People, and summer camps for children with chronic illnesses such as Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge, GA and Camp Will-A-Way in Winder, GA.

## **Professional Development**

There is a wide range of opportunities available to promote professional development while studying at the University of Georgia. Students are strongly encouraged to seek out and participate in various activities and organizations as a means of professional development. The following are examples of professional development opportunities students have previously participated in during their graduate studies:

### **1. Membership in the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) and Other Professional Organizations**

Students in the Master of Science in Child Life program are required to join the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP), which is the professional organization in the field of Child Life. Students should join this organization as soon as they begin their studies and are expected to maintain membership throughout the duration of their coursework. Students pay an annual membership fee to join the ACLP. Members receive a monthly newsletter concerning Child Life topics, have access to important literature online, and are eligible for reduced ACLP conference rates. Members are also able to read and participate in the online Child Life forum, which allows students to gain valuable information on issues and topics in Child Life, communicate with professionals in the field, and view current job openings.

Aside from the Association of Child Life Professionals, there are also other Human Development and Family Science related organizations that students are encouraged to join, depending on their specific interests. These include, but are not limited to, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR), the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), and the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS).

## 2. Conferences

Opportunities to develop professionalism in the field of Child Life vary from an annual two-day seminar at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) to professional conferences held throughout the United States. Many Child Life students choose to attend the annual Child Life Conference hosted by the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP). Participation at these professional conferences offers students unique opportunities to expand their knowledge in the theory and practice of Child Life as well as network with professionals currently in the field.

In addition to conferences and professional development events in Child Life, there are many conferences on Human Development and Family Science and Child Life held both locally and nationally. Previous students have attended conferences hosted by the Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children (GAEYC), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). Conference and seminar attendance is not mandatory; however, these events can be important to a graduate student's professional development.

## 3. Presentations

Students are encouraged to deliver guest lectures and lead discussions on Child Life or other Human Development and Family Science topics. Previously students have presented at the GAEYC and Florida Association of Child Life Professionals (FACLP) conferences. Participating in presentations, trainings, and conferences allows students to share knowledge, practice presentation style, and develop leadership skills.

## Professional Requirements for the MS in Child Life Degree

Because the Master of Science in Child Life is a degree program designed to prepare students to become certified child life specialists, rather than to pursue careers in academia, students are required to complete and document a series of professional requirements that will prepare them to be successful in their career post-graduation. The Professional Requirements are intended to familiarize students with the child life field, provide opportunities for them to network with child life specialists, and enable them to build a professional portfolio of experiences that will prepare them for the child life field.

The requirements must be completed before the final defense of your thesis or clinical project. You will share your online portfolio and highlights of your professional accomplishments at the final defense meeting. Your advisory committee members will sign the Master of Science in Child Life Professional Requirements Approval Form, [https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL\\_ProfRequirements\\_Approval.pdf](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL_ProfRequirements_Approval.pdf), approving your completion of these requirements. After obtaining signed approval from your advisory committee, submit the signed form to the Graduate Program Assistant.

Professional requirements for MS in Child Life students are as follows:

- Become a student member of the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) during fall semester of their first year, and maintain active student membership throughout the degree program
- Attend one child life conference (either national or regional)
- Attend the 2-day Beyond the Classroom seminar at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (or a comparable child life seminar at another children's hospital)
- Create and present an in-service training workshop related to child life (minimum of 1 hour; can take place in a course, conference, or community setting)
- Complete a child life practicum or a directed study with children (minimum of 100 hours)
- Create an online portfolio based on the ACLP competencies for certified child life specialists

All of these requirements must be completed during the Master's degree; experiences completed before beginning the MS in Child Life are also helpful but will not count for these requirements.

## **Graduates of the Child Life Program**

Graduates of the Child Life program have obtained positions within various hospitals, pediatric hospice settings, and other child or family support organizations. The vast majority of Child Life graduates obtain jobs as Child Life Specialists in healthcare settings such as Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children, M.D. Anderson, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and many others. Other positions our graduates have held include community-physician liaison, national outreach coordinator for local hospitals, extension agent, program coordinator of Children's Miracle Network, hospice specialist, and director of marketing and public relations at the Georgia Transplant Foundation. By pursuing a degree in Child Life within a Human Development and Family Science department, students are able to study diverse issues on children and families, while maximizing their career potential.

## **Graduate Assistants**

Paid graduate assistantship positions in the Department of Human Development and Family Science are available but are limited in number. Applicants to the department will be considered for assistantships during the admissions process, and students will be notified if they have been awarded an assistantship position. Students who obtain an assistantship position receive a monthly stipend and will have their tuition waived; however, students with an assistantship are still responsible for paying student fees each semester.

### **Minimum Enrollment for Students on Assistantship**

The Graduate School requires that all students on assistantship be enrolled in 12 hours per semester. We usually recommend that students take 9 hours of *coursework* per semester. In order to comply with the Graduate School's minimum enrollment policy, students on assistantship can enroll in 1-3 credit hours using the course code for HDFS 7005, in addition to the 6+ hours of content or practica courses. There is no classroom time or work assignment associated with HDFS 7005 hours beyond the tasks you have already been assigned as part of your assistantship. If you are enrolled in 12 hours of academic course credit, you will meet the Graduate School's minimum enrollment policy and do not need to register for HDFS 7005.

Before enrolling in assistantship hours, however, Child Life students should verify with the Major Professor whether there are additional content courses they should take for their program of study.

The department's assistantship policy has four components: award, assignment, evaluation, and continuation. Each component is described below:

#### **1. Awarding Assistantships**

Assistantships are awarded to both incoming and continuing students. They generally are awarded for a term of one academic year although some graduate school assistantships are awarded for two years. Written notice regarding an assistantship award is customarily made before the end of summer semester preceding the award year. It is expected that students with positive annual evaluations can receive assistantships funded by the department for a maximum of two years in the master's program.

## 2. Assignment

Graduate assistantships are assigned by the Department Head in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator and faculty. Faculty needs and preferences are matched to skills and preferences of students insofar as is possible. Assignment preference is given to faculty who are funding assistantships with grants as long as overall department needs are not placed in jeopardy.

## 3. Evaluation

It is the UGA Graduate School's policy that all graduate assistants be evaluated annually. These evaluations are consequential in determining continued assistantship funding. The department evaluations proceed as follows:

Each student will prepare and submit information regarding completed coursework, research productivity, teaching, and professional service experience. Students will receive developmental feedback from the graduate faculty after the evaluation meeting. The procedures for the annual evaluation are outlined as follows.

- a. Graduate Coordinator Assistant distributes the Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation forms to faculty supervising graduate assistants. Typically, the forms will be returned to the Graduate Program Assistant by December 1<sup>st</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>, for the Fall and Spring semester, respectively.
- b. Graduate students submit an annual progress report and other required documents to their Major Professor or temporary advisor by mid April.
- c. Each student will be evaluated initially by their Major Professor and advisory committee. If the student has a Major Professor, but not a committee, it will be done by the Major Professor. Should a student not yet have a Major Professor or committee, the evaluation will be done by the temporary advisor.
- d. Each student's progress shall be evaluated using the following 4-level classification system:
  - Satisfactory (the expected norm)
  - Satisfactory with concerns (a plan for improvement is imposed)
  - Unsatisfactory (a timeline for improvement is imposed)
  - Dismissal

In general, the following are the criteria for each rating:

Satisfactory students are:

- completing 12 hours of coursework per semester with mostly A's and no grade lower than B in each course (excluding students who have completed coursework and may only be taking a minimum number of hours to comply with the Graduate School's continuous enrollment policy OR part-time students who are taking only 3-6 hours per semester).
- completing programmatic milestones in a timely manner (e.g. portfolio activities/approval, oral exams, thesis/dissertation proposal, etc.).
- engaged in appropriate scholarly activities (e.g., attending conferences, making presentations, producing publications, working on thesis/dissertation proposal or the actual thesis/dissertation, depending on their stage in the program).
- engaged in the appropriate clinical work or internship (if appropriate for their program of study) and performing those roles in a satisfactory manner.
- performing their TA or RA role in a satisfactory manner. Assistantship Supervisor will fill out the Graduate Assistant Evaluation form each semester.

- performing their instructor role in a satisfactory manner.
- other criteria the faculty may feel is appropriate to assess for a given student

Satisfactory with concerns students are:

- to some extent falling short on one or more of the above criteria.
- provided with a detailed plan for remediation for the student as well as a timeline on which the plan will be assessed.
- expected to return to satisfactory progress no later than the next evaluation period.

Unsatisfactory students are:

- to some extent falling short on one or more of the above criteria.
  - provided a plan for remediation as well as a timeline on which the plan will be assessed.
  - likely to be dismissed from the program if they receive two consecutive unsatisfactory annual evaluations.
- e. Dismissal would be recommended by the Graduate Faculty for students who are falling short in a significant way despite previous remediation OR there is a transgression considered by the faculty to be serious enough to warrant dismissal without a plan for remediation first being put into place.
  - f. Recommendations for students' annual evaluation will be approved by the Graduate Faculty at an end of the Spring semester meeting.
  - g. Upon the Graduate Faculty's approval, major or temporary advisors will provide the Graduate Coordinator a narrative summary of the discussion about each of their student's evaluation. The purpose of this feedback is developmental. That is, it should help students identify strengths as well as potential areas for improvement. For areas that need improvement, suggestions for the course of actions are also included. The Graduate Coordinator incorporates the narrative summary into a letter to be sent to the student by the end of the spring semester.

#### **4. Continuation**

The continuation of an assistantship is not automatic. Assistantship evaluation and annual evaluations will be used to determine whether assistantships will be continued, and all continuations are dependent upon available funding.

### **Additional Policies**

Additional UGA policies with which students are expected to be familiar and adhere to:

- (a) Grievance Policy found at [https://legal.uga.edu/grievance\\_and\\_disciplinary\\_review\\_policy](https://legal.uga.edu/grievance_and_disciplinary_review_policy)
- (b) Academic Honesty Policy found at <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>
- (c) Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy at <https://eoo.uga.edu/policies-resources/ndah-policy/>.
- (d) Sexual misconduct policy at <https://eoo.uga.edu/sexual-misconduct-policy/>.
- (e) Responsible Conduct in Research policy <https://research.uga.edu/compliance-training/rcr/>

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to these policies.

The University of Georgia is committed to the principle of affirmative action and Equal Opportunity. The Department of Human Development and Family Science encourages applications from qualified minorities and women.



## Appendix A: Sample Program of Study for Master of Science in Human Development and Family Science with an Emphasis in Child Life (Thesis and Non-Thesis Options)

YEAR 1		
Fall	Spring	Summer
HDFS 6080 Advanced Child Development	HDFS 6640 Issues in Family Relationships	
HDFS 6830 Death, Dying, and Bereavement Across the Lifespan	HDFS 6800 Research Methods	
HDFS 6810 Hospitalized Child and the Family	HDFS 6820 Child Life Interventions for Children and Families in Health Care Settings	
HDFS 6100 Theories in Human Development	HDFS 7130 Therapeutic Benefits of Play	
HDFS 8910 Current Research and Issues in Human Development and Family Science	HDFS 8910 Current Research and Issues in Human Development and Family Science	
YEAR 2		
Fall	Spring	Summer
HDFS 7210 Problems in Human Development and Family Science (Hospital Practicum)	HDFS 7010: Directed Study in Human Development and Family Science (non-thesis clinical project)  OR HDFS 7300 Master's Thesis	HDFS 7920 Internship in Human Development and Family Science (Child Life internship in hospital)
HDFS 7170 Introduction to Applied Statistics in HDFS	HDFS 6910 Early/Middle Childhood	
HDFS 6900 Seminar in HDFS (Child Life issues seminar)	Graduate elective course	
HDFS 8910 Current Research and Issues in Human Development and Family Science	HDFS 8910 Current Research and Issues in Human Development and Family Science	

Curriculum may need to be altered depending on student's background; electives may be chosen by student in consultation with Major Professor to ensure a well-rounded background in child development and child life issues.

## Appendix B: Steps to Complete a Thesis

### 3. Prospectus

Students must obtain approval from their committee for the thesis they wish to write, including format (traditional or article), content, and method.

### 4. Procedures for Thesis Defense

*Thesis Defense.* At least two full weeks before the date of the defense of your thesis, you must notify the Graduate Program Assistant of the day, time, and place of the defense,

[https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Announcement\\_of\\_Oral\\_Defense\\_of\\_Thesis,\\_Non-Thesis,\\_or\\_Clinical\\_Project\\_1.pdf](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Announcement_of_Oral_Defense_of_Thesis,_Non-Thesis,_or_Clinical_Project_1.pdf). No notification to the Graduate School is needed for master's students.

*Thesis Defense Requirements.* The student must be registered for a minimum of three hours of credit the semester the defense is held. This is a Graduate School rule and students who are not registered for 3 hours will not be allowed to graduate. The student also must apply to graduate within the semester prior to the one in which degree requirements are completed (the deadline to apply for graduation is EARLY in the preceding semester). The application for graduation form is available online at [athena.uga.edu](http://athena.uga.edu). Instructions for applying for graduation can be found: <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/instructions-for-filing-application-for-graduation/>. When the Major Professor is satisfied with the completed thesis, he or she will certify that it has their approval and is ready to be read by the advisory committee. The copies of the thesis will then to be distributed to the remaining members of the advisory committee and a final oral defense will be scheduled. The committee members will have three weeks to read and evaluate the completed thesis. Written assent of two of the three committee members will be required before it will be approved as ready for a final defense. If the advisory committee declines to approve the thesis as ready for the final defense they will determine the steps, strategies, and/or guidelines in preparing the thesis for the final defense.

The defense of the thesis will be chaired by the student's Major Professor and attended for the entire defense by all members of the advisory committee. If a member cannot be present, the student must choose one of the following options:

- The absent member may participate via a teleconference in which all participants can listen to each person's comments. The chair of the committee must sign the approval form for the absent member and register his/her vote and indicate that member's participation was by teleconference.
- A substitution may be made with another faculty member who can replace the former member in expertise of the subject field and who has knowledge of the student's research project. A revised advisory committee form must be submitted to the Graduation Office prior to the examination.
- The defense may be rescheduled for a later date.

The advisory committee must approve the student's thesis and defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing using the Approval Form for Master's Thesis, Defense and Final Examination <https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G140>.

The Major Professor's vote of approval is required for the student to pass the examination. An abstention is not an appropriate vote for the defense of the thesis. The committee, after having read the

thesis, should verify whether human subjects were used in the student's research and indicate so by verifying that the appropriate box is checked on the approval form. The student must provide the IRB protocol number for the defense form.

The "Master's Thesis, Defense and Final Examination" form must be submitted to the Graduate School before the corrected copy of the electronic thesis will be accepted as the final official copy. The deadline for this is two weeks prior to graduation.

## **5. Using Manuscript Style for Thesis**

According to the *Theses and Dissertations: Student Guide to Preparation and Processing* published by the Graduate School, there are two formats for the organization of the main-body sections for theses. The first format, referred as *chapters*, is the traditional format. The other format, referred as *manuscript style*, is the alternative format approved by the graduate school. In manuscript style format, journal manuscripts or articles are used as regular chapters for the main-body sections of theses.

HDFS graduate students may choose either format to organize the main-body sections for their theses. In addition to the graduate school's guidelines for formatting, students must adhere to the following guidelines when applying the manuscript style:

- The student must obtain the advisory committee's approval at the prospectus meeting. Signatures of the advisory committee members are required on an intent letter to the Graduate Coordinator.
- A minimum of one manuscript with 20 or more pages in each is required.
- The manuscripts must have a coherent theme and be serial in nature.
- Manuscripts that are theoretical/conceptual reviews or empirical reports based on qualitative and quantitative data may be included. However, at least one manuscript must be empirically based, employing qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.
- The manuscripts have been or will be submitted to scholarly journals related to Human Development and Family Science involving rigorous peer review processes.
- The student must be either the sole author or the first author of all manuscripts.
- When manuscripts have been published or accepted for publication, evidence of permission to use articles must be included in the thesis.

## **6. Upon Completion of the Defense**

All requirements associated with the thesis must be completed within one semester after the defense, including making any revisions required by your committee. If these are not completed within one semester, the student must re-defend the thesis.

## 7. Thesis Submission

The thesis will not be forwarded to the University Library until the degree is conferred. **All theses must be submitted online (PDF) at <https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G129> and must conform to the Graduate School style manual located at: <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/theses-dissertations-guidelines/formatting/>.**

If the student hires a typist, it is the student's responsibility to inform the typist of the formatting guidelines set forth in the Graduate School Style Manual. Any questions concerning formatting should be directed to the Graduation Office at: (706) 542-4803, or [gradinfo@uga.edu](mailto:gradinfo@uga.edu).

Difficulties with electronic submission or questions about electronic PDF format and computer related problems should be referred to the ETD Help Desk Website at [etdhelp@gradsch.uga.edu](mailto:etdhelp@gradsch.uga.edu) or call (706) 583-8095.

## Appendix C: Steps to Complete a Clinical Project

A clinical project is an in-depth applied project to use research evidence to address an identified community need, in collaboration with a hospital or other organization.

The following are the basic steps to complete a clinical project. Students who choose a clinical project are strongly encouraged to identify a Major Professor early in the spring of your first year of study, and to discuss options for the project with the Major Professor as early as possible. Keep in mind that a clinical project is a rigorous, research-based effort to create an in-depth project that will have practical application in the Human Development and Family Science field.

1. **Choose a collaborating organization and identify a contact at that organization.** Collaborating organizations could be a hospital, a group of Child Life Specialists with interest in a particular topic, a camp serving children with health care needs, or a community-based organization that serves children with physical and/or mental health needs.
2. **Identify a Major Professor and advisory committee.** Discuss clinical project ideas with your Major Professor, the Child Life Director, and/or the Child Life Coordinator as early in your program of study as possible. When you have selected your Major Professor and advisory committee members, and they have agreed to serve, get the appropriate signatures on the departmental form.
3. **Meet with your organization contact** (in person if possible) and discuss needs of the organization that you could help meet. You could develop a set of therapeutic activities, a guide for parents and/or patients to meet a specific need, or any other in-depth resource that helps further the mission of the organization.
4. **Choose a specific topic.** Discuss the topic with your Major Professor and organization contact to ensure that it is appropriate for a clinical project and that it meets the community's needs. This is also an appropriate time to discuss any specifications the organization has (e.g., specific colors or formats), and to identify people related to the organization who could review the project and provide feedback.
5. **Review the research literature related to your topic.** This includes identifying a theoretical model that you will use to guide your work, as well as specific literature about the topic that is relevant to your work.
6. **Write a clinical project proposal.** Your Major Professor will guide you in this process. Your proposal should include the following sections:
  - a. Introduction
  - b. Literature Review (including theory)
  - c. Method
    - i. Description of collaborating organization
    - ii. Description of proposed project (with specific outline if possible)
    - iii. Proposed method of collecting reviews from collaborating organization
7. **Hold a proposal meeting** with your committee to formally propose your project. Your proposal meeting should be scheduled with your advisory committee members as early as possible. Your committee should receive a copy of your proposal about two weeks in advance of the meeting. During the proposal, you will use slides to summarize your literature review and proposed project. Committee members will ask questions and make recommendations related to your proposal.
8. **Develop your clinical project** in collaboration with the organization.

9. **Conduct a readability analysis** to determine whether the reading level of your project is appropriate for the audience. Make edits if needed to achieve an appropriate reading level. Readability analyses can be conducted using Microsoft Word and/or online tools.
10. **Collect reviews of the clinical project** from your collaborating organization, based on the review plan you included in your proposal. Review the comments and make revisions as needed to address reviewers' issues.
11. **Complete a final clinical project report.** This should be an expanded version of your proposal, including literature review, a description of the collaborating organization and project, a summary of reviews you received, and modifications made to address the reviews, a summary of your readability analyses, a description of how the completed project will be shared with the collaborating organization, and information about how the organization will use and distribute the completed clinical project.
12. **Schedule a final defense of your clinical project** with your committee members. Complete the Request for Announcement of Thesis/Clinical Project Defense form and return it to the department contact so your defense can be announced at least 2 weeks in advance, [https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Announcement\\_of\\_Oral\\_Defense\\_of\\_Thesis,\\_Non-Thesis,\\_or\\_Clinical\\_Project\\_1.pdf](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Announcement_of_Oral_Defense_of_Thesis,_Non-Thesis,_or_Clinical_Project_1.pdf). Your committee should receive a copy of your paper and completed clinical project about two weeks in advance of the meeting.
13. **Hold your final defense.** Bring copies of the Departmental M.S. Non-Thesis Clinical Project Presentation and Exam Form to your defense. Your committee will sign that form upon successful completion of your defense.

*Note: These steps refer only to the clinical project itself. It is the responsibility of the student, in consultation with the Major Professor, to ensure that all required steps are completed prior to Graduate School deadlines. Other steps to consider include committee approval of the Program of Study, completion and committee approval of the Master's Portfolio, and application for graduation.*

# Appendix D: Master of Science in Child Life Professional Requirements Approval

Department of Human Development and Family Science  
The University of Georgia

\_\_\_\_\_’s online portfolio of professional requirements has been reviewed and approved by her/his advisory committee.

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Major Professor	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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Committee Member	Signature	Date
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## Checklist of MSCL Professional Requirements

Maintain active student membership in the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) throughout the degree program

Attend one child life conference (either national or regional)

Attend the 2-day Beyond the Classroom seminar at CHOA or a comparable child life seminar at another children’s hospital

Create and present an in-service training workshop related to child life in a course, conference, or community setting

Complete a child life practicum or a directed study with children (minimum of 100 hours)

Create an online portfolio based on the ACLP competencies for certified child life specialists

Online Portfolio URL: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E: Sample Cover Page for the Portfolio**

Master's Portfolio of

Your Name

A Departmental Requirement for  
The Fulfillment for the Degree of  
Master of Science

Under the Direction of

Your Major Professor's Name

Semester and year Approved (e.g. Fall 2021)



## Appendix F: Graduate Study Forms

1. Department declaration of Major Professor and Advisory Committee (HDFS Department form)  
[http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Department\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Major\\_Professor\\_and\\_Advisory\\_Committee\\_Department\\_of\\_Human\\_Development\\_and\\_Family\\_Science\\_mc\\_edits.pdf](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Department_Declaration_of_Major_Professor_and_Advisory_Committee_Department_of_Human_Development_and_Family_Science_mc_edits.pdf)
2. Advisory Committee for Master of Arts and Master of Science Candidates (Graduate School form)  
<https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G130>
3. Program of Study form (Graduate School form)  
<https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G138>
4. Change of Degree Objective (Graduate School form)  
<https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G136>
5. Master of Science in Child Life Professional Requirements Approval Form (HDFS Department form)  
[https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL\\_ProfRequirements\\_Approval.pdf](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSCL_ProfRequirements_Approval.pdf)
6. Request for Announcement of Thesis/Clinical Project Defense (HDFS Department form)  
[http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Thesis\\_Announcement\\_new.pdf](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Thesis_Announcement_new.pdf)
7. Instructions for Applying for Graduation (Graduate School list)  
<https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/instructions-for-filing-application-for-graduation/>
8. Graduate School M.S. Thesis and Final Oral Examination Approval Form  
<https://gradstatus.uga.edu/Forms/G140>
9. Departmental M.S. Non-Thesis Clinical Project Presentation and Exam Form (HDFS Department form)  
[http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Non-thesis\\_Approval\\_new.pdf](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Non-thesis_Approval_new.pdf)
10. HDFS 7010 Directed Study Agreement: Special Problems in Human Development and Family Science (to be completed for clinical project course credit)  
<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/hdfs-7010-agreement>