

Department of Human Development and Family Studies

Honors-in-Major Guidelines

GPA Requirements for Honors-In-Major

Students are required to maintain an overall grade point average of 3.5 and a 3.5 grade point average in the major.

Honors-in-Major Courses

Students must successfully complete 12 credits of honors in HDFS at the 600 level or above. Of those 12 credits, only 4 credits may be at the 600 level while 8 credits must be at the 700 level. Students must designate each course as an honor in collaboration with the course instructor and by completing the [Honor Designation form](#).

High-Impact Experience

In addition to completing 12 credits of honors coursework, students must also successfully complete one high-impact experience to receive honors-in-major. High-impact experiences include completion of (1) advanced research engagement, (2) a senior internship program, or (3) a senior honors thesis.

(1) Advanced Research Engagement

Advanced research engagement is a sustained research partnership with a faculty member in the HDFS Department. A student must complete at least 3 semesters as a research assistant working on the faculty member's projects. Students may volunteer or receive credit (HDFS 695, INCO 590, or INCO 790) for their participation, but must take on a leadership role within the research lab. Demonstrations of leadership include but are not limited to a [Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research award or fellowship](#) or co-authoring a publication or research conference presentation. Meeting the requirements of advanced research engagement must be confirmed by the faculty advisor.

(2) Senior Internship

Students must successfully complete one of the two senior internships provided by the HDFS Department. The internship allows students to apply knowledge from their academic studies in a supervised environment while gaining experience that is directly relevant to their career goals. Only students in the Child Development concentration may apply for the department's Early Childhood Education Teaching Preparation Internship Program. Students in the Child Development, Family Support, or Lifespan Development concentrations may choose to complete the department's Family Internship. Both programs are a full-academic-year senior experience. Students apply for internships during their junior year. Internships are competitive and students must be established prerequisites to be selected for the opportunity. More information on the internships, including requirements and expectations, can be found on the [HDFS Department's Internship website](#).

(3) Senior Honors Thesis

Students must receive approval from a faculty advisor with expertise in their area of interest before this option is granted. Students pursuing the thesis option must successfully complete four credits of HDFS 799 – Senior Honors Thesis. HDFS 799 is a two-credit course that is taken pass/fail over both semesters of the student's senior year. As part of the thesis process, honors candidates must present a proposal to their faculty advisors that includes active student participation in original research. Once their research is completed, honors students must present their findings at a seminar and submit a written thesis to their faculty advisor.

Each student completing an honor thesis must submit a thesis proposal by the seventh (7th) week of the Fall Semester of their senior year. Proposals should:

- Be 3-5 pages, double-spaced.
- Include a rationale, objectives, methodology, and timeline, including the submission date for the final written thesis.
- Include a list of resources to be accessed by the student (e.g., scholarly journal articles, books, and professionals in the field).
- Include a summary describing the final outcome of the project, particularly if it will be in an alternative format.

Students must submit their final written thesis to their faculty advisor by the date negotiated with that advisor and present their research findings at a seminar before the end of the second semester of their senior year.