

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT and FAMILY SCIENCES PRACTICUM INFORMATION

Students in HDFS are required to take six hours of practicum. These six hours can be a combination of HDF 355, HDF 352, or HDF 652F. Skills mastered in the practicum are excellent for entry into the job market or for an advanced degree. All practicums are professional placements, and students must be able to commit to the time required and be able to attend the weekly seminars associated with each practicum. Absences are not tolerated. A description of the different practicums and common questions are below.

HDF 355 – Research practicum: 10 hours per week for one semester, with a weekly one-hour seminar meeting. Students work closely with an HDFS faculty member and graduate students. This practicum provides students with a variety of skills, such as research methodology, coding, interviewing, and a deeper understanding about the theoretical framework of human development and family sciences. Students are limited to 12 credit hours, including HDF 355.

HDF 352 – Applied practicum: 10 hours per week for one semester, with a weekly one-hour seminar meeting. Students are placed at an Austin site that works directly with clients. HDF 352 is rarely offered and students are not permitted to repeat HDF 352.

HDF 652F – Applied practicum: 20 hours per week for one semester, with a weekly one-hour seminar. Students are placed at an Austin site, including the Priscilla Pond Flawn Lab School. Students are limited to a total of 9 credit hours.

COMMON QUESTIONS

I don't know which practicum I want to do. Is this a problem? No, it is not. Most students are unsure about their placements. We look over your application and make an effort to match your career goals and schedule with a site. We also look at what different faculty members and sites are wanting in a student. It's important that it be a good fit for everyone involved. It is recommended that you volunteer before your practicum, but it is not required. One thing you gain by volunteering is learning what you don't like as well as what you do.

Why do I have to apply so early? The application deadline is so early to accommodate sites. Faculty need to be aware of how many students they will have to work on their projects, and applied sites need to plan for supervision of students. In addition, the application process allows the committee to recommend that students volunteer, take classes, or defer their practicum. Certain practicum have an additional application process, and our dates must be before theirs.

I only want to do research. Is that possible? Yes and no. It is not a problem to do two 355's. However, the committee will look at your application and decide if research is the best route for you. There are a limited number of research spots, and the number and placements will vary from semester to semester.

I only want to do the applied practicum. Is that possible? Yes and no. We work hard to give students their first priority. However, the committee will look at your application and your career goals and decide if the applied practicum is the best route for you.

Is it okay to take one HDF 355 and one HDF 352? Yes, it is, but rarely is it allowed. Again, to sound like a broken record, it depends on your career goals, research needs, and applied site needs.

Can I take more than 6 hours of practicum? And can I mix them? Yes, to both questions. If you are in a UT catalog from 2004 on, any courses over your required 6 practicum hours can be counted as an elective or toward certain HDF degree requirements. Work closely with your advisor to make sure you meet all degree requirements.

Why must I take a lighter class load my practicum semester? The practicum is unlike any other class you've taken. It is 10 or 20 hours per week, plus additional outside work. You are expected to treat your practicum placement as a professional appointment and placement is dependent on the flexibility of your schedule. It can be a very stressful semester if you are working and/or have a heavy class load. It is recommended that you take no more than 12 hours for 355 and 352, and no more than 9 for 652F, including your practicum. Many students take no other classes their 652F semester.

I really want to do 652F, but I am required to take 12 hours for financial aid/insurance/scholarship, etc. Help! The practicum coordinator has a letter that states The University requests you limit your course load to 9 credit hours the semester of HDF 652F. Most students have had success with this, but there is no guarantee. It is highly recommended that you check before you assume it is approved.

I want to do the applied practicum, but have no idea where I want to be placed or what I want to do. Does this mean I won't get a good placement? Not at all. Most students have no idea. We utilize many sites in Austin with extremely competent supervisors, and work diligently with students and with sites to make sure there is a good fit.

I know exactly where I want to be placed. Can it happen? It depends. Some times yes, sometimes no. For research, the coordinator and faculty member must also agree. For the applied, the practicum coordinator and site supervisor must also agree and the site must meet specific requirements.

Is the practicum offered in the summer? At this time, only HDF 355 is offered in the summer. It is offered on a very limited basis, and you are limited to one 355, which is usually offered only for the full summer session (12 hours per week for 12 weeks).

Can I take two 355s in one semester? Not usually. Most faculty prefer that 355s be spread out over two semesters.

When is the best time to take the practicum? It is best to take 652F your last semester, excluding summer school. HDF 355 can be started as soon as you have had EDP 371 and HDF 315L. However, priority for placement will be given to students who need HDF 355 to graduate, but there are usually spots available for committed undergraduates.

What about the references? There are two reference forms attached to the application. One MUST be completed by an HDFS UT faculty member (including Lab School) or TA. The other form can be work, faculty, volunteer work, etc. When giving them to the individual, provide an envelope with my name (Mary Jane Burson) and mail code (A2700), or have it addressed with a stamp if the individual is off campus. Please indicate if you waive your rights of access to the reference, meaning they are confidential. Some references will not complete the form unless you have waived your rights.

Is there a priority for placement? Not exactly, but these factors come into play for placement. 1) application received by due date 2) date of graduation 3) flexibility of schedule 4) references 5) GPA and 6) the interview. All sites (community and professors) interview students and you must be accepted.

I've changed my mind since I turned in my application. Should I notify you? There is no need. All applications will be updated at the meeting prior to placement. We all know that a lot can happen in 4 months to change our focus and goals. I do need to know about email and phone changes.

I missed the application due date. Yikes! Late applications are not accepted. If you missed the due date, apply for the following semester. If there are vacancies in HDF 355, we will go to the next group to see if anyone wants to start their HDF 355 practicum early. HDF 652F late applications are not accepted. (Example, you missed the May 1 due date for spring, so apply for the December 1 deadline. If there are vacancies in the spring for HDF 355, we notify students who have applied for the following fall to see if anyone wants to start their HDF 355 practicum).

Are special courses needed? Yes: For Early Childhood Intervention, prereqs are Introduction to Early Childhood Intervention and Advanced Early Childhood Introduction: For Child Life, prereqs are HDF 366 and volunteering at Children's Hospital of Austin: for the Priscilla Pond Flawn Child and family Lab, prereqs are HDF 338 and HDF 366.

Where can I find out more information? From Mary Jane Burson, 471-0601, burson@mail.utexas.edu, or at the HDFS web site: <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/he/hdfs/hdfsundergrad1.htm>

So I've turned in my application. Now What? Here is the time line:

- Turn in application by December 1 for the following summer and fall and by May 1 for the following spring
- When you turn in your application, you will be notified by email that it has been received.
- Approximately three weeks after the due date, you will be notified by email that you have been denied or accepted. Recommendations will be made based on the information provided on your application.
- Mid-semester of the semester prior to your practicum you will be notified, via email, about a general meeting that you MUST attend, where you will update your application and we will discuss different practicum options.
- Shortly after that meeting, you will be notified if you have been accepted into 352, 652F, or 355. You will begin the placement and interview process.
- By the end of the semester, you will know where you will be spending your next semester.