



# Human Development

## Why people become who and what they are

Human Development is a multidisciplinary field of study that spans development across the life course. Human Development majors explore the psychological, social, cultural, and biological development of people from conception through old age, focusing on the processes and mechanisms of growth and change over the life span. An important emphasis is the role that social factors such as schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and culture play in human development, as well as the influence that developing humans have on their environment.

### Program Highlights

- Aging and health
- Cognitive development
- Human neuroscience
- Law, psychology, and human development
- Social and personality development

Courses in Human Development cover a range of issues and approaches, and are organized into two areas: *Mind, Health, and Behavior*, which is focused on the social aspects of human development, and *Cognition, Brain, and Behavior* which is focused on the biological and cognitive aspects of development. Students will pursue coursework in each area and are encouraged to then specialize in one of five areas including Aging and Health; Cognitive Development; Human Behavioral Neuroscience; Law, Psychology, and Human Development; and Social and Personality Development.

Faculty members in the department represent multiple disciplines, including clinical psychology, developmental psychology, neuroscience, and sociology. Their research provides an expansive view of human development and includes issues such as the neurobiological basis of personality, the role of childhood

attachments in the development of adult romantic relationships, the acquisition of language in infants, the effects of environmental stressors on children's cognitive development, interventions to prevent and mitigate the impacts of child maltreatment, risk-taking during adolescence, risk and resilience factors affecting reactivity to stress across the life course, the epidemiology of elder mistreatment, healthcare decision-making among older people, and strategies to prevent social isolation and promote social integration across the life course.

### Curriculum

The college's liberal arts-based requirements include the social and natural sciences, humanities, writing, and statistics.

Human Development students build on foundation courses that cover *Infancy and Childhood (HD 1150)* and *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood (HD 1170)*.

## Requirements in the Major

**Thirty six credits in Human Development courses, including:**

### Two foundation courses

- Introduction to Human Development: Infancy and Childhood
- Introduction to Human Development: Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

### One course in each of the breadth requirement areas

- Mind, Health, and Emotion
- Cognition, Brain, and Behavior

### A concentration in one of the following areas:

- Aging and Health
- Cognitive Development
- Human Neuroscience
- Law, Psychology, and Human Development
- Social and Personality Development

**Six courses (18 credit minimum) must be taken at the advanced level of the major.**

## Selected Graduates

**Assistant professor of psychiatry**, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland

**Attorney**, Fitzmaurice & Freeman, Stamford, Connecticut

**Business analyst**, Deloitte Consulting, Washington, D.C.

**Communications adviser**, DKT Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

**Community health educator**, Independent Contractor, San Francisco, California

**Director of special services**, Edgemont Schools, Scarsdale, New York

**Health policy analyst**, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.

**Human resource associate**, Prudential, Newark, New Jersey

**Marketing research consultant**, Cogem Research, Inc., Montreal, Quebec

**Medical doctor**, Winthrop University Hospital, Mineola, New York

**Obstetrics/gynecology nurse practitioner**, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Psychiatric social worker**, Carney Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts

**Psychologist and coordinator of family support service programs**, Metropolitan Hospital Center, New York, New York

**Publisher**, Careers and Colleges Magazine, New York, New York

**Recruiting Coordinator**, Towers Perrin, Chicago, Illinois

**Researcher**, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland

**Senior Scientist**, Braceland Center for Mental Health and Aging, Hartford, Connecticut

Students can prepare for professional degree programs, including those in medicine, dentistry, law, public health, clinical and counseling psychology, education, and business, as well as for immediate employment, through an area of specialization listed above.

Those pursuing pre-med will add calculus, physics, chemistry, and additional biology courses to their schedules.

## Special Opportunities

Beyond the required course work, students may take advantage of many other educational opportunities, most of which involve working with Cornell faculty members or other professionals

## Field Placements

In addition to the Urban Semester in New York City, Capital Semester in Albany, Cornell in Washington, and study-abroad programs, Human Development majors can arrange internships in local agencies and institutions. Recent internship placements have included projects with: Tompkins County Office of Aging; Tompkins County Human Service Coalition; Tompkins County Youth Bureau; Kendal of Ithaca; local schools; and Citizens Concerned for Children, Inc.

## Laboratory Courses

Human Development students may earn credit toward the major by taking courses designed to teach laboratory and other research techniques, including study design, data collection, and data analysis.

## Faculty Research

Many Human Development students work as research assistants on faculty projects. Students receive further training in research techniques such as laboratory experiments, surveys, and scientific behavioral observation, thereby gaining experiences that graduate and professional schools expect from their top applicants. Recent projects have included the study of language acquisition among infants in bilingual households or settings; experimental studies of risky decision-making among teens; and the impact of poverty on stress responses in children and in teens.

## Independent Research

Some advanced students with research experience complete an honor's thesis in an area of interest under faculty supervision. Students apply to enter the Honors program during the first semester of their junior year.

## One-Year Master's Degree

The Department of Human Development offers a one-year master's degree that can be treated as an extension of a four-year undergraduate degree or that can stand alone.

## Careers

Human Development majors gain excellent preparation for rewarding careers in advocacy, business, clinical psychology and other mental-health professions, education, law, medicine (particularly pediatrics, geriatrics, and psychiatry) and other health-related professions, and not-for-profit management.

The major also provides a solid foundation for those planning to pursue academic careers in human development, psychology, or sociology.

A recent university-wide survey of graduating seniors showed that approximately 43 percent of all Human Development majors accepted immediate employment in business, education, nonprofit agencies, and government. About 33 percent pursued advanced study in psychology, medicine and related health programs, law, education, and communication. The remaining 23 percent were pursuing graduate or professional school, seeking employment, or pursuing other endeavors at the time of the survey.

## For More Information

[www.human.cornell.edu/hd](http://www.human.cornell.edu/hd)

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