How to Get Started in Human Development for One-Year MA STUDENTS
2012-2013

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Goals of the program

The goal of the one-year masters program is to provide an opportunity for qualified students to gain additional research experience and increase credentials for application to a PhD or other advanced degree program where knowledge of Human Development may be helpful. These fields include Psychology, Sociology, Public Policy, Law, Medicine, and Public Health. The overall aim of the program is to prepare students for more advanced research-based degree programs. Completing an empirical, research-based thesis is the primary end-point of the program.

Basic Degree Requirements

Each student in the one-year masters program has been assigned a Special Committee Chair upon admission to the program. The Special Committee consists of a chair, who will take primary responsibility for directing the thesis, and a second member, who must be chosen in the first
semester (as early as possible). The Chair of the Special Committee in conjunction with the student decides which particular courses the student will take. It also decides on the topic of the thesis. Both of these decisions are aimed at taking account of the student's professional and academic goals. The specific courses, the type of research undertaken, and the content of the final thesis are decided jointly by the student and the Special Committee.

Courses
This one-year MA program requires a total of 30 credit hours (15 hours per semester). The credit hours must include at least two formal courses in each semester with the remaining credits consisting of supplemental course work and/or research participation for credit that culminates in a written thesis. MA students should take two semesters of statistics, HD6750 (fall) and HD6751 (spring) (and, of course, statistics counts as a formal course). Other courses are chosen with advice from the chair of one’s special committee. Participation in a department research laboratory is important for completing a thesis in one year.

There is also a first-year seminar (HD 6200) that MA students may take in the fall if they wish. In the fall, the main focus is on learning about research in the department and the writing and submission of a thesis proposal to the Special Committee. Masters students may also be interested in submitting a funding proposal to an outside funding agency (e.g., NSF) to support future education. Masters students have the opportunity to present their masters theses analyses to the HD faculty and other graduate students in May, the first week after classes end.

Timeline
Time management is critical for completing 30 credits of course work and an empirical thesis in a one-year period. The following tasks should be accomplished in the first semester of residence for the masters thesis: (1) 15 hours of course work; (2) selection of thesis topic; (3) identification of a second committee member; (4) completing the Graduate School paperwork (available on-line through Student Center) to add a second committee member; (5) completion of a thesis proposal; and (6) submission of outside funding proposal (if applicable to immediate future career plans).

The following tasks should be completed in the second semester of residence: (1) completion of the required 30 hours of course work; (2) analysis and writing of the masters thesis; (3) preparation for the required oral thesis defense; (4) official scheduling of the masters thesis defense one week in advance with the Graduate School and official registration of the results for the thesis defense; and (5) official submission of the thesis to the Graduate School, meeting their official submission requirements. (Graduate School forms are required to schedule the exam and register its completion). The Graduate School allows students to extend the completion of the thesis through June and July of the summer following your two semesters of course work.

Applications for outside funding
MA students who take the first-year seminar and decide to apply for outside funding will, of course, enhance their chances of admission to a Ph.D. program if they bring funding with them. The application procedures and qualifications for the NSF awards will be discussed at the seminar. Bonnie Biata has a DVD of a talk that Valerie Reyna graciously gave that summarizes helpful tips for such applications. The DVD can be signed out. Additional resources for writing these proposals are listed at the end of this handbook.
Human Participants Education Requirement

Cornell University requires that all those who take part in research involving human participants take and pass the CITI Training Program. The CITI training program takes several hours to complete and is available at the Cornell IRB website:  http://www.irb.cornell.edu/

MA students in Human Development should complete the CITI training as soon as possible after arriving at Cornell University. To be included in an ongoing research project you will be required to complete and pass CITI training. Some students may have completed this training at their previous institutions; however you still need to register any existing CITI training with the Cornell IRB. Note that there is now a continuing education requirement at Cornell and that during your career at Cornell you will be required to update your human participants training if your previous training has officially expired.

The Masters Thesis

Expectations for the thesis

The masters thesis must be an original empirical research study. This is a Graduate School and a Human Development field expectation. The Graduate School expects that a thesis in some way contributes new knowledge in the field. Human Development requires that the thesis be an empirical research study rather than a review of others’ findings.

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School must conform to Graduate School formatting requirements. Specifically, it should conform to the typographical and formatting guidelines included in the “Doctoral Dissertation and Master’s Thesis Guide: Formatting, Production, and Submission Requirements” Guidebook (http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/pubs_and_forms/pubs/thesisbook.pdf)

You must follow all requirements in this guide.

Masters students work on an empirical thesis that grows out of and dovetails with a faculty member’s ongoing research program. This is strongly encouraged because students do not have a lot of time to complete the thesis. Most students and their Special Committees have found it most productive to organize the thesis in the form of a research paper while it is being developed. Most theses written in the research paper style use American Psychological Association publication guidelines for internal formatting (e.g. the organization and general content of the Method, Results, and Discussion sections as well as table, figure and reference formatting).

Many MA students work on theses that will eventually be presented at professional meetings or published. Thus, at some point, it is important for students to discuss with the Special Committee chair what the order of authorship will be and to consult American Psychological Association guidelines (which can be accessed online) about this issue.

Defense of the thesis in an oral exam with the Special Committee is a requirement for completing
Many committees will require revision of the thesis after the defense and it is important to budget enough time to complete those revisions so that the thesis can be submitted to the Graduate School by the degree deadline. Typographical errors and other formatting issues should also be addressed.

An important point also to keep in mind is that this is a two-semester program. (It is also possible to use part of the summer after the two semesters to finish the thesis; there is no registration fee for summer if you are registered in the spring). However, for students who are committed to completing the MA in two semesters, it will be important to discuss with the Special Committee a reasonable time-table for doing this. It might require doing a more modest thesis than otherwise, or it might require doing research that it more closely integrated with the faculty mentor’s project, such as analyzing findings from an existing dataset.

\textbf{Graduate school requirements and forms}

\textit{It is important to note that the Graduate School requires that} the defense of the thesis be registered with them a week before the defense takes place. This requires scheduling a defense time in advance, booking a room with the staff member who works on room scheduling, downloading a form from the Graduate School website, obtaining the necessary signatures (members of the Special Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies), and returning the form to the Graduate School. At the end of the defense, the Special Committee will also sign a form recording the outcome of the defense. It is the student’s responsibility to download a copy of that form from the Graduate School website, get the signatures of the Special Committee and the DGS, and returning the form to the Graduate School. Masters students are also responsible for submitting a corrected, properly formatted copy of the thesis to the Graduate School.

The degree cannot be awarded if these requirements are not met on time.

\textbf{Other Important Issues}

\textbf{Research space}

Every graduate faculty member has dedicated laboratory or research space (in MVR or in Beebe Hall), and a faculty member’s graduate students typically have access to this space for data collection and analysis tasks, such as interviewing, coding and entering data, internet access, and data analysis. In addition, there are several college research rooms that students can sign up to use. If you’d like to use a room, just talk to Angela Stedwell in G77 MVR, who can help you with room reservations.

\textbf{Useful references (most are on the web)}

a. There are several sources of support to help you apply for outside funding. The Graduate School maintains a list of funding sources. Here is the url:

\url{http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/index.php?p=132}
The library has also created an online guide to external funding (thanks to Matthew Stief for this information):

http://guides.library.cornell.edu/grants

There are two comprehensive grant and fellowship databases, the Community of Science (CAS) and the Illinois Researcher Information Service (IRIS). Both of these are paid services that Cornell subscribes to. You have to search from a Cornell IP address, but they are comprehensive:

Community of Science (COS)
Illinois Researcher Information Service (IRIS)

b. Power Point: how to avoid misusing it (thanks to Henry Ricciuti)

http://www.communicateusingtechnology.com/articles/pptsurvey_article.htm

c. Job searches (thanks to former student Yarden Kedar)

http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~jasonh/advice.html

d. Writing a research article:

Bem, D. J. (2003) Writing the Empirical Journal Article. This is a single-column pdf file (easiest to read in a browser).

Bem, D. J. (2003) Writing the Empirical Journal Article. This is the same pdf file but in a double-column format (easiest to read offline).


(N.B. a copy of The Compleat Academic is in the Grad Lounge and has several useful articles on searching for a job, interviewing, time management, etc.)
Top 10 Things to Do to Increase Your Success of Winning NSF Grant & Graduate Fellowships

1. Start planning now. Time management is critical! Give yourself a lot of time to prepare this proposal, at least 2 months

2. Register with NSF Fastlane. Peter Farley and Debby Smith in G77 MVR (the main HD office) can help you with this process if you have trouble registering yourself through NSF. Register WELL in advance of your due date because the process can take multiple days.

3. Read the NSF program guidelines

4. Talk to Program Officers at NSF

5. Network with prior award recipients and try to get a copy of funded proposal

6. Get to know CU internal proposal submission process. In the HD main office, consult with Peter Farley and Debby Smith. Do this at least one month in advance of submission. The deadline for submitting through sponsored programs at Cornell is well before the sponsor’s published deadline, usually 10 working days (longer around holidays)

7. Download and review a Form 10, which is the Cornell routing form for all proposals. Peter Farley and Debby Smith can help you with this. This needs to be done at least two weeks before the proposal is due.

8. Allow plenty of time for review by your adviser(s), the department budget process, the college, and Cornell sponsored programs (that is why all proposals are due early). Peter and Debby are available to help you with all forms, the budget, and other technical issues

9. Re-read the NSF program guidelines (this can’t be emphasized enough)

10. Don’t expect to get service at the last minute. You have been warned!