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Welcome

You have been admitted to a unique online program which focuses on the positive aspects of human development in the second decade of life.

These programs are part of a multi-state, multi-institution consortium offering fully online graduate programs in the human sciences. The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance or GP IDEA offers degrees in Human Sciences and Agriculture and Natural Resources. Each program is supervised by the Board of Directors of the Alliance and each member institution has a representative on the Board.

Programs are facilitated and supported by eleven public research universities, each of which brings unique strengths to the academic programs. Several universities share knowledge through a body of faculty with expertise in Gerontology. It allows each campus to contribute course offerings to the degree, while allowing students to learn from the best scholars in the field without applying to several different universities.

In the Gerontology Program, participating institutions include: Michigan State University, Kansas State University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, North Dakota State University, Iowa State University, Texas Tech University, and the University of Missouri. All institutions have a history of success in distance education.

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (GP IDEA) was founded in 1994 capitalizing on the institutional resources of 11 major research universities to sponsor graduate education programs through distributed learning technologies. The Alliance offers fully-online graduate coursework and program options in high-demand professional fields. Academic programs are the core of the Alliance. Each member institution awards academic credit and degrees for programs in which they participate. Curricula are developed by inter-institutional faculty teams. Every program meets the requirements of these accredited institutions of higher learning.

You have been admitted to and are considered a graduate student at The University of Missouri, with the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as students who take classes on campus. As a new graduate student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the information in this handbook and with the applicable rules, regulations and procedures it contains. We hope this handbook will assist you in completing your program by providing a guide for your enrollment and program progress.
Glossary of Terms

Because of the unique nature of these programs, the following terms will be helpful to understand as you read through this document and as you move through your chosen degree program.

**Home Institution** – The institution that you applied to and were admitted to for the Gerontology program and from which you will receive your degree or certificate. Your home institution is the University of Missouri.

**Teaching Institution** – The institution that is teaching the class in a particular semester. You are typically a guest student or visiting scholar at this institution.

**Course Management System** – The online software program used for access to course materials at a university. These sites are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Examples of what you would find there could include: class e-mails, documents are posted here for access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, discussion boards and announcements. The course management system used for Mizzou courses is Canvas, found at: [https://courses.missouri.edu](https://courses.missouri.edu). Other institutions may use Blackboard, Desire 2 Learn, or other online management system. It is your responsibility to learn how to use each management systems from each institution in which you enroll for coursework. It is a good idea for new students to set up their computer login IDs as soon as possible and access the Course Management System. Most have tutorials or demos to familiarize you with the layout.

**Campus Coordinator** – Person at your home institution who coordinates your registration with the teaching institution. There is a campus coordinator at each institution. Your campus coordinator at the University of Missouri is Nita Smarr. She can be reached at smarrj@missouri.edu.

**Wait List** – The process used for enrolling students into courses when a course reaches capacity before the first day of class AND after the enrollment information exchange date. The wait list is used after the enrollment information exchange date as a way to ensure students from all institutions receive equal, first-come, first-serve change at enrollment.
Roles

Student
As a graduate student at the University of Missouri, you are responsible for:

- Learning and adhering to the academic rules, procedures and policies, of the University of Missouri and those outlined in this Great Plains IDEA Gerontology Student Handbook
- Meeting the requirements of the University of Missouri for degree or certificate completion pertaining to your Gerontology degree program in a timely manner
- Following scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research, and professional activities
- Exhibiting high-standards of professionalism in program course work
- Understanding and using the most recent American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual for formatting and style

The University of Missouri publishes the M-Book, which lists the rights and responsibilities of graduate students. This document can be found at:

http://mizzoulife.missouri.edu/resources/m-book/

Academic Advisor
When you are admitted to the program, you will be assigned a faculty advisor. All University of Missouri Gerontology MA and certificate-seeking graduate students are currently advised by Dr. Jacquelyn Benson. She can be reached at bensonjj@missouri.edu. Dr. Benson can assist you with:

- course planning
- transfer credit questions
- electives and course substitution approvals
- internship plans, if necessary
- your research interests
- staying up-to-date with program and university policies, procedures, and requirements

Campus Coordinator
At the University of Missouri, the Campus Coordinator for the Gerontology program is Nita Smarr. She can be reached at smarrj@missouri.edu. Ms. Smarr has the following responsibilities:

- send the intake survey to newly admitted students
- help students navigate through a distance education program
• inform students of upcoming course schedules to assist them in completing their degree program
• keep on file the Student Acknowledgement Form allowing the university to share student information with the other Great Plains IDEA institutions
• inform students when it is time to register for courses according to the Great Plains IDEA calendar
• assist students with referrals to technical help desks; answer basic questions.
• enter student admissions and enrollment data into the Alliance database
• send exit and alumni surveys

Please fill out the surveys to help us improve the program and services to future students.

**Director of Graduate Studies**

At the University of Missouri, the Director of Graduate Studies is Dr. Ashlie Lester. She oversees the graduate education programs and represents all graduate students in the Human Development and Family Science Department at MU. Dr. Lester’s responsibilities include:

• Helping students navigate program and university policies, procedures, and requirements
• Assisting with departmental and university paperwork (e.g., M1 forms)
• Meeting regularly with academic advisors and issuing annual progress letters
Program Requirements

Admissions Criteria

Admission to the Gerontology master’s degrees and graduate certificate programs are based on an applicant’s undergraduate grade point average (GPA) on the last 60 hours of credit earned, the extent to which our programs match the applicant’s academic objectives, and the applicant’s potential for graduate study as reflected by transcripts, a personal statement, and letters of recommendation. In general, the applicant’s undergraduate GPA on the last 60 hours of credit earned must be 3.0 ("B") or better, although in exceptional cases we might admit, on provisional status, a professional who has practiced in the field for years, if her or his GPA is less than 3.0. Students whose GPA is below 3.0 may be limited to take only 3-4 credit hours their first semester. Admission is not contingent upon having a specific type of undergraduate degree. Applicants who hold a graduate degree must have earned a 3.0 GPA in that degree program to be admitted.

Master of Arts Process

- After completing 18 credit hours and before your final semester of coursework, submit the M1 plan of study form to the DGS. The plan of study is a list of courses you intend to take to fulfill the degree requirements. Your advisor will help you create your plan of study, including helping you choose a capstone experience (i.e., comprehensive exam or internship). All forms can be found on the Office of Graduate Studies’ web page: http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/
- Consult with your advisor to invite faculty members to serve on your committee.
- In your final semester of coursework, apply for graduation (http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/search/?q=application+for+graduation) and begin your capstone experience.
- After successfully defending your capstone experience to your committee, submit the M3 form to the DGS.

Master of Arts in Human Development and Family Science, with an Emphasis in Gerontology (36 credits)

The 36 credit master's degree program (MA) consists of eight required core courses, elective courses, and either an internship experience or a comprehensive exam.

Courses are selected from (36 hours minimum):

Required:

HDFS 7252: Adult Development (3)
HDFS 7255: Economics, Public Policy, & Aging (3)
HDFS 7256: Environments and Aging (3)
HDFS 7257: Aging in the Family (3)
HDFS 8251: Perspectives in Gerontology (3)
HDFS 8253: Physical Health in Aging (3)
HDFS 8254: Gerontology Research Methods and Program Evaluation (3)
HDFS 8258: Professional Seminar in Gerontology (3)

Suggested Electives*:

HDFS 7259: Mental Health & Aging (3)
HDFS 7260: Women and Aging (3)
HDFS 7261: Biological Principles of Aging (3)
HDFS 8221: Gerontechnology (3)

*Or Any Advisor-Approved Course

Independent Effort

Comprehensive Exam (no credit hours)

OR

HDFS 8972: Internship (variable credit hours)

NOTE: Up to 6 credits can be transferred from other graduate programs if the courses are deemed relevant by your advisor.

HDFS 8972 Internship

Students who plan to complete their master's degree with the HDFS 8972 Internship must assemble a committee consisting of 3 faculty members (their advisor and two other faculty). Students should work with their advisor to select the other committee members.

Internships consist of a supervised field experience and a related project. The project must be planned in collaboration between the graduate student, the student’s committee, and the internship supervisor. Students should note that because the proposal must be approved prior to starting the internship, students should contact their advisor 6 months or more in advance to begin planning and writing the proposal. Internship placement must be approved by the student’s committee before beginning the internship. Students are responsible for securing their own internship placements - the HDFS department does not provide an internship matching service. Before embarking on the internship, the student should provide the following items to the committee for approval:

- Internship Agreement form, which includes:
  - Description of measurable internship objectives as well as activities that will meet those objectives
• Internship project proposal (approximately 10 pages) that includes the following components:
  o Brief literature review
  o Methods section (description of how the project will be developed)
  o An outline of how the project will be evaluated

The internship project shall consist of a tangible contribution to the internship site that draws on the student’s expertise and fits a program need. The project for the internship is not the overriding goal of the internship but represents a small component that fits within the context of the internship site. Projects can include, but are not limited to, such things as the development of a newsletter, brochure, training session, or a workshop. The project proposal must be approved by the student’s 3-member committee as well as the internship site supervisor.

Twice during the semester, the internship supervisor will submit a written evaluation regarding the student’s work and progress at the internship site. Reassignment of the student may be required.

Throughout the tenure of the internship, a bi-weekly journal (1-2 pages) and time diary should be submitted to the student’s advisor. The journal should report on the tasks being performed, and activities participated in, at the internship site. The student should discuss his or her experiences interacting with staff and clients and his or her progress toward meeting internship objectives and completing his or her project.

The final written work requires that the student will submit a final paper discussing and evaluating the internship experience within the scope of the Gerontology curriculum. This final paper, along with a sample or copy of the finished internship project, will be submitted to the student’s committee for review 2 weeks prior to the oral defense of the internship experience. The student is responsible for coordinating a time and securing a location for the defense. The student’s defense of his or her internship and project may be conducted via video conferencing (e.g., Skype) when face-to-face meetings are not practical.

Once the student has successfully defended the project and final paper to his or her committee, the M3 form must be completed and filed with the HDFS Department in order for the student to graduate. The M3 form can be found at the HDFS Department website at http://hdfs.missouri.edu Under the current students tab, select the forms button to find the M3 form within the list of Masters Forms.

**Comprehensive Exam**

The comprehensive exam process is designed to evaluate your critical understanding of theory, research, HDFS content, and practice specific to your degree program (e.g., lifespan development, Gerontology, family and community services). As such, you must complete the comprehensive exam in the final semester of coursework, or as advised by your advisor and committee. The exam is comprised of two parts: a written exam and an oral defense. Both are evaluated by your committee; committee members will be selected in conjunction with your
advisor. All written work must use APA-6 style and formatting in text and in references and be formatted with 1” margins, double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font.

Exam Proposal

Prior to beginning the written exam, you will electronically submit a 2-page essay to your committee that (a) outlines your career goals (i.e., how your degree program has influenced your future direction; one paragraph maximum) and (b) summarizes your proposed exam topic (1½ pages). The purpose of the proposal section is to give your committee members a preview of your final exam paper. It should include a clear thesis statement, key literature findings used to justify the importance of your topic, identification of a relevant theory/framework, and implications for future programs/practice. The more specific your proposal is, the more helpful feedback your committee can provide. Consult your advisor for individual feedback before submitting to the committee. Your committee members will provide feedback and approval on the proposed topic before you may begin the exam process. Committee members will share their feedback electronically to you and to the other committee members. All committee members must approve the exam topic and sign the M2.5 form.

Written Exam

For the written exam, you will choose a topic associated with your emphasis area that needs to be addressed by practitioners. This topic could be a challenge or a need for the population being served or for those working with the population. In a 10-15 page paper, you must include the following:

a) Literature review on the topic. The literature review must include scholarly research/sources and needs to be organized by themes relevant to the topic/thesis statement. Include in the literature review a theory/framework from your degree program relevant to understanding the topic. Provide explicit connections between research themes and theory. Include limitations of or gaps in our current understanding of the topic.

b) Review of current practices related to your topic. “Practices” is defined broadly to be relevant to your topic, and it could include prevention/intervention programming, government policies, organizational policies, or strategies/approaches common to your field. Critically evaluate current practices, and review any available evidence related to implementation and outcomes of the practice (this may include, but is not limited to, formal program evaluations). Describe how well the practice aligns with research and theory reviewed in the previous section.

c) Implications for practice. Provide clear, action-oriented suggestions for practice, based on the literature or on theory, that will create, improve, or replace existing programs/practices/policies. Justify the suggestions you make (i.e., why will the suggested intervention/solution be effective? What information from literature or theory leads you to this conclusion? Under what conditions might this practice be most effective, and why?).
The committee will be looking for evidence that you can integrate knowledge gained from your coursework in the program, effectively summarize relevant literature and draw logical conclusions, and demonstrate problem-solving skills related to practice.

**Oral Defense**

You will orally defend your written exam to your committees 2-4 weeks following the submission of the written exam. To meet Office of Graduate Studies deadlines, the oral defense must occur prior to the last week of courses. You have the option of completing the oral defense by telephone, video-conferencing, or in-person on the MU campus.

During the oral defense, you will be asked to briefly outline the key points from your written exam. You should be prepared to answer questions from the committee related to the written exam (e.g., to clarify unclear points or to ask for additional hypotheses) and/or related to your career goals. Sample questions may include: What other theory or concepts would be helpful in understanding the topic? How might the suggested practices be different in different circumstances? As you think forward to your future, what ethical issues might occur within career settings relevant to your degree program? How might you go about resolving these issues? Where would you turn when answers to these questions are not immediately clear? Be advised the committee will likely ask other questions not included here.

The committee will evaluate your work based on the totality of the written work and oral defense. At the conclusion of the defense, the committee will vote to pass with minor revisions (meaning the work is of sufficient quality) or vote to delay voting until significant revisions are made (meaning the current work is of insufficient quality to pass). If significant revisions are required to bring your work to passing quality, you will have to significantly revise or redo your written portion and submit it to the committee the following semester. This will delay your graduation date. The committee will determine the scope of and timeline for submitting the revision and the need for an additional oral defense. Students who are revising in the subsequent semester must enroll in at least one credit hour to be eligible for graduation. If revisions remain of insufficient quality, the committee will vote to fail the exam, and students will be dismissed from the program.

**In conjunction with your advisor, you should contact your committee members by or before the submission of your proposal to set an oral defense date. The oral defense and all revisions suggested by the committee must be completed before the final week of coursework to meet the deadline for graduation set by the Office of Graduate Studies (i.e., the M3 form submission date). All documents must be submitted to your committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral exam.** Please refer any questions about this document to your advisor.

**Timeline**
The following is the timeline for those completing the comprehensive exam in Fall or Spring semesters. Consult with your advisor in finalizing specific dates for your timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Work with your advisor to identify an appropriate issue or topic. Begin writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Continue writing. Contact your advisor for additional feedback. Submit proposal to your committee members by the end of Week 2. Schedule the oral defense meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Committee members have one week to return any feedback on the proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Review the committee’s feedback and begin independent writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Independent writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Independent writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Independent writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Submit your final exam paper to your committee. The oral defense must occur 2 to 4 weeks following this submission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Committee review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Committee review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Oral defense. The committee might require additional revisions before they will pass a student and sign the M3 form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Submit all revisions to your advisor (and committee, if needed) for approval. Submit M3 form and all necessary paperwork to the Office of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is the timeline for those completing the exam in the Summer term. Similar to taking courses in the summer, the work product will be the same, but it must be completed in half the time. Discuss the feasibility of this timeline with your advisor and be sure all committee members will be available in the summer months, as many faculty are on 9-month appointments. Consult with your advisor in finalizing specific dates for your timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Work with your advisor to identify an appropriate issue or topic. Submit proposal to your committee members by the end of Week 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Committee members return feedback on the proposal by the end of Week 2. Schedule the oral defense meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Independent writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Independent writing; submit your final exam to your committee by the end of Week 4. Committee members have two weeks to review the exam prior to the oral defense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Committee review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Committee review; oral defense at the end of Week 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Submit revisions to your advisor (and committee, if needed) for approval. Submit M3 paperwork and all necessary paperwork to the Office of Graduate Studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rubric
The written exam will be evaluated according to the following rubric. Please keep in mind that the committee will assign a pass or fail decision based on the written exam, oral defense, and any required revisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction: Topic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Topic is appropriate for student’s field of study and clearly stated; thesis or purpose statement clearly specified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significance of the topic is documented using current literature and theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specifies the purpose of the exam and describes how the paper is organized thematically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature Review: Research and Theory</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation of relevant literature is logical and integrative across sources; is clearly organized in thematically-relevant ways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current literature, scholarly research, and primary sources are used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theory or theories (or other relevant frameworks) used are appropriate to the topic, thoroughly described, and accurately applied. Theory is integrated throughout the paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patterns and/or gaps in the literature are clearly identified and discussed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practice Review and Suggestions</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practices are critically evaluated (i.e., strengths, limitations, and evidence of effectiveness included)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Suggestions of practices are clearly identified and justified by the presented research/theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships between the topic, research, theory, and current/suggested practices are clear and explicit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary and Conclusions</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concise conclusions flow logically from a summary of the topic and current literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Future research and/or practice needs are identified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style, Format, Grammar, Cohesion</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• APA style and formatting is used throughout;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing is clear, coherent, logical, and professional in style; references are current, scholarly, and relevant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduate Certificate in Gerontology (21 credits)**

Required (15 hours):
HDFS 7252: Adult Development (3)
  HDFS 8251: Perspectives in Gerontology (3)
  HDFS 8253: Physical Health and Aging (3)
  HDFS 8254: Program Evaluation and Research Methods (3)
  HDFS 8258: Professional Seminar in Gerontology (3)

Suggested Electives (6 hours):

  HDFS 7233: Basic Grant Development and Management (1)
  HDFS 7235: Administration and Program Management (3)
  HDFS 7255: Aging Policy (3)
  HDFS 7256: Environments and Aging (3)
  HDFS 7257: Aging and the Family (3)
  HDFS 7259: Mental Health and Aging (3)
  HDFS 7260: Women and Aging (3)
  HDFS 7261: Biological Principles of Aging (3)
  HDFS 7262: Long-term care Administration (3)
  HDFS 8238: Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation (3)

Transfer and Shared Credits

Contact your advisor to see if you are eligible to transfer credits into your graduate degree program. For MA students, up to 6 credits can be transferred from other graduate programs if the courses are deemed relevant by your advisor. For students in two MA programs, these 8 credit hours may be applied to one or the other degree program, or divided between them. For Certificate students, up to 3 credit hours can be transferred from other graduate programs.

For students enrolled in two degree programs, a limited number of courses may appear on both programs of study. For students in two MA programs, 6 credit hours may appear on both programs of study. For students in an MA and a certificate program or in two certificate programs, only 3 credit hours may be shared.

Process

Registration

When students are accepted to the Gerontology MA or certificate-seeking programs they will receive:
  • a welcome letter from the Human Development and Family Science Department
  • a welcome letter from the University of Missouri Office of Graduate Studies including:
    o a student ID or student number from the Graduate School
    o MU pawprint and password from the Graduate School
    o approval to enroll in coursework from the Graduate School
You will use your pawprint and password to set up an e-mail address and computer login ID. Please save this important information to avoid future problems.

Students register for all courses through their home (admitting) institution. If the course is also taught by your home institution, you will also access the class through your home institution’s Course Management System. At the University of Missouri, students can use MyZou (http://myzou.missouri.edu) to access their records, but all enrollments and drops must be submitted through Mizzou Online (http://online.missouri.edu). Blackboard (https://bblearn.missouri.edu) is MU’s course management system.

If the class is taught at another institution, you will be assigned guest or visiting scholar status at the teaching institution and receive another student number, computer login ID, and e-mail address through the teaching institution. You will also access the course through the teaching institution. Important links to other institutions are listed later in this handbook.

Please note that courses are listed with different course numbers at different institutions. The course number you enroll in at your home institution will be different than at the teaching institution. So, please remember you will have a student number, computer login and password for more than one institution.

Before the Semester Begins

Prior to the beginning of each semester (about two weeks) students will receive a course information sheet for the course(s) in which they are enrolled. The course information sheet will include:

- Required text or materials for the course
- Instructor contact information
- Campus Coordinator contact information for the teaching institution
- Textbook information

Most students choose to purchase texts from non-university vendors (Amazon, Barnes and Noble, half.com, etc.), however, be attentive to the edition of the textbook being used when ordering. Many professors only use online resources such as academic journals though Google Scholar or the teaching institution’s libraries collection. Professors try to be considerate of cost, whenever possible.

Enrollment

You will enroll in all courses (regardless of teaching institution) through your home institution (see registration instructions above). Due to popular demand, please be aware that enrolling for the course through your home institution will not guarantee you a spot in the class at the teaching
institution. We encourage you to enroll as early as possible to avoid problems. Know your home institution’s enrollment dates.

MU’s academic calendar can be accessed at:
http://registrar.missouri.edu/dates-deadlines.php

All participating GP-IDEA institutions have common start/end dates across universities, which may differ from your home institution. Please see http://www.hsidea.org/programs/course-matrix/?program=geron for up-to-date course offerings. The program is designed so that students can finish the MA degree in approximately 2 years.

Grades

You will be taking courses from institutions with different grading systems. The teaching university will provide your grade to your home university according to the matrix. Your university will then translate the grade according to the matrix and your home institution’s standards. The following chart represents the Gerontology programs only; the complete matrix is available at: http://www.gpidea.org/policy-procedure/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University of Missouri</th>
<th>Kansas State University</th>
<th>Iowa State University</th>
<th>North Dakota State Univ</th>
<th>Oklahoma State University</th>
<th>Texas Tech University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A – 4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A – 4</td>
<td>A – 4</td>
<td>A – 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A – 4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A – 4</td>
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At the end of the semester, grades are reported on the transcript at the home institution. There is no need to request a transcript from the teaching institution. Grades will be posted within 10 days to 2 weeks after the end of the semester.

At MU, students can view their grades by accessing their MyZou account:
http://myzou.missouri.edu
Graduation Procedures

Early in the semester that a student plans to complete all of their coursework, they are to file the necessary application for graduation or other paperwork with their home institution. Students are responsible for knowing, following and meeting the deadlines and procedures of their home institution when filing for graduation. Students will receive a diploma from their home institution, with no distinct difference noted because of the online format with this degree program. Students are encouraged, but not required to participate in any commencement activities.

The application for graduation from MU is found at:
http://gradschool.missouri.edu/policies/commencement/

Academic Standards

Students are expected to maintain a minimum overall grade point average in their program according to their home institution’s policies and to make adequate yearly progress toward their degree or certificate. Students who require interruptions in their programs are urged to discuss this with their advisors.

Each student must make satisfactory progress in the degree program. As a Gerontology student enrolled through MU, to be considered satisfactory, the student must:

1. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater. In Departmental courses (i.e., any course intended toward completion of the degree and/or to be included in the M1 form) taken for graduate credit, the student should earn a B or above. A grade of C or below is permissible only once and will result in academic probation. Earning a C or below in any subsequent Departmental graduate course is grounds for immediate dismissal from the degree program.
2. Maintain continuous enrollment in the degree program and/or communicate official leave requests with his/her advisor and the University of Missouri Graduate School. Any student who does not enroll and/or complete courses in three consecutive semesters may be dismissed from the degree program. Failure to enroll in or complete courses for any semester without notice may result in probation. Official Leaves of Absence may not exceed three consecutive semesters.
3. Any grade of Incomplete must be successfully resolved by the end of the following semester. If the Incomplete is not resolved, the student will be placed on academic probation. For example, an incomplete for a Fall semester course must be resolved by the end of the Spring semester in order to avoid probation.
4. File the M1 form after the completion of 18 hours of coursework but before the start of the final semester of coursework.

The M1 form can be found at http://hdfs.missouri.edu. A sample M1 form is provided at this webpage, as well as at the end of this handbook.
The student’s advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies will review each student’s progress jointly at the end of each semester. Students will be notified in writing of their status. If a student is placed on academic probation, the conditions and consequences of probation for the subsequent semester will be outlined in the letter. If, at the end of the next review, the student has not met the probationary conditions, the consequences outlined in the letter will be enforced (including possible dismissal from the GERONTOLOGY program).

Additionally, each Fall and Spring semester all students are required to electronically update their academic activity and progress toward degree completion via the Graduate Student Progress System at: https://gsps.missouri.edu/

Policy on Appealing a Dismissal

Students who have been dismissed from any Gerontology graduate program may appeal to the Human Development and Family Studies Department after the student has been notified of their dismissal. The student may submit a letter appealing the dismissal to the Director of Graduate Studies who will present it to the Graduate Committee. The student has the option of also providing other supporting documentation (i.e., a letter of support from their advisor or a professor). The Graduate Committee will vote to:

1. Continue the student on probation with the conditions of the probation defined
   OR
2. Deny appeal.

Academic Integrity

The Great Plains IDEA Board of Directors Academic Integrity policy is appended at the end of this handbook. In addition, students should note the following:

- Students will be responsible for assessing the validity and fidelity of online sources. When possible, students should utilize primary academic resources over web sources.
- Although students may find common volumes between courses, recycling of materials for assignments is not permitted.

Wikipedia is not considered an academic source. Do not use!

Student Grievance Procedures

Students who have a grievance in a course are to follow the following protocol: first, contact the course instructor in writing and discuss the issues in an open, positive, factual and reflective
manner. If the concern needs further resolution, the Department Chair at the teaching institution may be contacted and subsequently the Dean at that teaching institution.

Students may also discuss their concerns with their assigned academic advisor or campus coordinator. The advisor or campus coordinator will inform the student of the appropriate procedures in the grievance process. Students who contact the department chair first will also be informed of the grievance procedures. Please also see the M Book (which explains rules and regulations of the University) at [http://mbook.missouri.edu](http://mbook.missouri.edu) and the University’s Collected Rules and Regulations on grievance procedures: [https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/grievance/ch390/grievance_390.010](https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/grievance/ch390/grievance_390.010).

**Resources**

**Physical or Learning Accommodations**

Please inform your campus coordinator after admission into the graduate program if you require any accommodations because of a physical or learning disability. All institutions have offices to ensure compliance with ADA guidelines. You must register to receive services.

MU’s Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities can be reached at: [http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu/index.php](http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu/index.php)

(573) 882-4696 Voice or VP (573) 234-6662, or email at disabilityservices@missouri.edu

**E-mail**

E-mail is the official mode of communication in the Gerontology programs. Use of electronic mail and network connections at the participating institutions is a privilege and not a right. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that use of his or her account does not violate the computer and network use policies of any of the participating institutions. Please review your home institution policies on acceptable uses of technology.

MU’s Acceptable Use Policy: [http://doit.missouri.edu/about/policies/aup.html](http://doit.missouri.edu/about/policies/aup.html)

Each teaching institution has its own e-mail system. **Institutions will only send e-mail messages using the university’s e-mail accounts.** If students forward their e-mail to an AOL, Hotmail, or g-mail account, or change their e-mail account, it is their responsibility to ensure they are receiving messages.

It is the responsibility of each Gerontology student to establish and regularly check their individual university e-mail account(s) **at least once per day** during an enrolled semester.
Students should also check their spam or junk mail folders and white list any email address going into these folders from participating universities.

MU’s e-mail system is located at:  [http://webmail.mizzou.edu/](http://webmail.mizzou.edu/)
Activate your e-mail as soon as possible.

**E-Mail Etiquette**

It is expected that all messages to other students, Gerontology faculty and Great Plains IDEA Gerontology Campus Coordinators will be sent with a relevant subject line, full name, and student number. Do not send advertising, junk mail, chain letters, mass mailings, and harassing or intimidating messages.

**Virus Software**

Because of the nature of the program and the extent to which materials are shared between and among students and institutions, students are strongly advised to install anti-virus software on each of the computers they use. It is also advised to keep their anti-virus definitions up-to-date. Any file detected to have been forwarded with a virus is subject to penalties as identified by the course instructor in their syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to scan all materials to be submitted for course work.

At MU, all students can download an anti-virus package to their computers, **free of charge**. For more information go to: [http://doit.missouri.edu/software/anti-virus.html](http://doit.missouri.edu/software/anti-virus.html)

Problems with technology and internet access happen. However, having technical difficulties, losing documents or missing deadlines due to connection problems, viruses or other malfunctions are not accepted reasons in an online program for missing deadlines.

Plan ahead and backup your work!

**Course Management Systems**

Each institution has a course management system, which is an online, internet-based repository for course materials. It is often used to communicate with students and with instructors. The sites are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Library Access

Students are granted access to library materials according to the teaching institution’s policies.

**MU:** Students currently enrolled in online courses from MU are eligible to use all the services through MU Libraries at [http://library.missouri.edu](http://library.missouri.edu). To gain access, students must use their pawprint and password when prompted.

Students may place articles or book requests at this site, chat with a librarian or connect to the extensive online resource network. Students can view abstracts of articles and books, or full-text articles, in most cases.

**MSU:** Students currently enrolled in online courses from MSU are eligible to use all the services through the Library Distance Learning Services at [www.lib.msu.edu/ldls/](http://www.lib.msu.edu/ldls/). The first part of your e-mail address will act as your netid and allow you to sign in (e.g., sparty@msu.edu is the MSU e-mail address, sparty is the MSU netid).

Students may place articles or book requests at this site, chat with a librarian or connect to the extensive online resource network. Students can view abstracts of articles and books, or full-text articles, in some cases. Questions or problems using MSU library’s e-resources may call the help desk at 800-500-1554. The helpline is available 24/7 in the US (except University holidays).

**UNL:** Students currently enrolled in distance courses from UNL are eligible for distance library services. These services include remote access to databases, e-books, and e-journals; liaison librarian consultation; reference assistance; and delivery of materials from the UNL Libraries collections. The Libraries' Distance Education Coordinator sends an email message to UNL distance students the first week of the semester. The message to each distance student includes a unique library user number; UNL students use their NUID number. The Libraries' Distance Education Coordinator may be reached at: kadams1@unl.edu or 402-472-2560.

**KSU:** All non-KSU students will create an electronic ID (e-ID) that will act as their email account, K-State Online access (Course Management System) and K-State Library access user ID. About one week in to the course this e-ID will be manually authenticated which will allow library access.

**NDSU:** The North Dakota State University Libraries provide services to NDSU’s distance learning community equivalent to those available on the physical campuses via this website: [http://library.ndsu.edu/research-help/distance-education/](http://library.ndsu.edu/research-help/distance-education/). Students can access online databases, book, journals, and so forth, similar to on-campus students.

**TTU:** Distance learners at Texas Tech University may request library materials, access databases and electronic journals, search the library catalog, and request research assistance from a librarian. All these resources can be accessed at [http://library.ttu.edu](http://library.ttu.edu).

**ISU:** Students currently enrolled in online courses from ISU are eligible to use all the services through the ISU Library at [http://www.lib.iastate.edu/info/6219](http://www.lib.iastate.edu/info/6219). To gain access, students must
use their ISUCard number and password when prompted. These numbers will be provided to the student by the campus coordinator.
Finances

Financial Aid

This program is considered eligible for financial aid, as any other graduate program. You may be eligible for university, college or department level scholarships, fellowships or awards. Keep in mind, each individual student, school and your status will determine your aid package.

See [http://financialaid.missouri.edu/eligibility/enrollment-requirements.php](http://financialaid.missouri.edu/eligibility/enrollment-requirements.php) for information on minimum enrollment requirements to be eligible for financial aid. Always fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid!

Tuition and Billing

Students pay a negotiated common price/credit hour to the institution at which they matriculate. There are no out-of-state versus in-state tuition fee scales. To inquire about tuition and fees contact MU’s Office of Cashiers at [http://cashiers.missouri.edu/](http://cashiers.missouri.edu/) or 573-882-3097.

MU will post financial aid awards, scholarships and bills in MyZou at: [https://myzou.missouri.edu](https://myzou.missouri.edu)

Course Drops/Withdrawals and Tuition Refunds

A Great Plains IDEA student requesting to drop a course, with or without a refund, or withdrawal for the semester is subject to the student’s home institution’s policies and procedures.

To drop or withdraw from a course, you must contact your campus coordinator to assist you in filing the appropriate paperwork. Note that there is a difference between dropping a course, and withdrawing from a course. Students may drop a course through the end of the business day of the fifth week or the 25th class day of the semester. It will have no effect on the grade point average and you are not required to contact the course instructor. After the last day to drop, students are withdrawing from a course if they choose to leave the course. The course instructor must be notified. Students may withdraw from a course through the end of the business day of the 10th week or 50th class day of the semester. At this point a grade of W for withdraw is recorded if the student was passing at the time of withdrawal. If the student was failing at the time of withdrawal, the course grade is F. The instructor determines which grade to assign. A W grade does not affect the grade point average, while a grade of F does. Students who remain enrolled in a class, but fail to complete a significant portion of the work may be assigned a grade of FN. This indicates that the student did not attend and may have implications for future financial aid. The grade generally will not appear until all grades for the course are submitted at the end of the semester.
Please note: Dropping your last class, or all classes, is considered a complete withdrawal from the University and must be completed before the last day the class meets or the last day of the term for regularly scheduled classes. Finals are not included as part of the term for this purpose.

Students who engage in a pattern of dropping credits after the semester has started or failing to complete coursework for which he or she is enrolled may be put on probation or dismissed from the program. Failing to complete coursework may also result in a loss of eligibility for financial aid. (See note about FN above)
Contact Information

Enrollment: First, contact the Campus Coordinator at your home institution for assistance and information about course availability.

- MU: Nita Smarr at smarrj@missouri.edu

Office of Cashiers (tuition, fees and billing):

- Online: http://cashiers.missouri.edu/
- Phone: 573-882-3097

Financial Aid:

- Online: http://financialaid.missouri.edu/index.php
- Phone: 573-882-7506

E-mail Account Help:

- MU: Helpdesk 573-882-5000
- KSU: Helpdesk, 800-865-6143
- UNL: Help Desk, 866-472-3970
- MSU: Helpdesk, 800-500-1554
- NDSU: Helpdesk, 701-231-8685, Option 1
- TTU: Helpdesk 806-742-4357
- ISU: Helpdesk, 515-294-4000
  *These numbers are subject to change. Please refer to the specific University’s website for updated information.

Course Management System:

- MU: https://courses.missouri.edu
- MSU: https://angel.msu.edu/default.asp
- KSU: https://signin.k-state.edu/WebISO/login
- NDSU: https://bb.ndsu.nodak.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp
- UNL: https://my.unl.edu/
- TTU: https://eraider.ttu.edu/
- ISU: https://bb.its.iastate.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp
  *These websites and management systems are subject to change. Please refer to the specific University’s website for updated information.
Academic Integrity Policy

Appendix E.4

Academic Integrity Statement for Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance
(Great Plains IDEA)

(Modified with Permission: General Catalog 2001-2, Colorado State University, pp.33-34)

The foundation of higher education is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic dishonesty. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one’s own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the Great Plains IDEA are responsible for and affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty (see examples below) undermines the educational experience offered through the Great Plains IDEA, lowers morale by engendering a skeptical attitude about the quality of education, and negatively affects the relationship between students and instructors.

Instructors are expected to use reasonably practical means of preventing and detecting academic dishonesty. Any student found responsible for having engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to academic penalty and/or disciplinary action.

Students are encouraged to share the responsibility for the academic integrity of the Great Plains IDEA by reporting incidents of academic dishonesty. Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

1. **Cheating**
   Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance on any form of academic work. Examples include copying the work of another student; taking an exam or completing homework for another student; possessing unauthorized answer codes; and falsifying exams or other graded activities.

2. **Plagiarism**
   Plagiarism includes the copying of language, structure, ideas, or thoughts of another, and representing them as one’s own without proper acknowledgment. Examples include a submission of purchased research papers as one’s own work; paraphrasing and/or quoting material without properly documenting the source.

3. **Unauthorized Possession or Disposition of Academic Materials**
   Unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials includes the unauthorized selling or purchasing of examinations or other academic work; stealing another student’s work; unauthorized entry to or use of material in a computer file; theft or mutilation of library materials; and using information from or possessing exams that an instructor did not authorize for release to students.

4. **Falsification**
   Falsification encompasses any untruth, either verbal or written, in one’s academic work. Examples include receiving unauthorized assistance on an exam, inaccurate reflection of an individuals participation in a group activity, or lying to avoid taking an exam or turning in other academic work.
5. Facilitation of Cases of Academic Dishonesty
Facilitation of any act of academic dishonesty including cheating, plagiarism, and/or falsification of documents also constitutes violation of the Great Plains IDEA’s academic integrity. Examples include knowingly discussing specifics of the content of a test or examination you have taken with another student who has not yet taken that test or examination or facilitating, by sharing one’s own work, a student’s efforts to cheat on an exam or other academic work.

If an instructor has evidence that a student has engaged in an act of academic dishonesty, the instructor will notify the student of the concern. The student will be given the opportunity to give his/her position on the matter. If the student admits to engaging in academic dishonesty or if the instructor judges that the preponderance of evidence supports the allegation of academic dishonesty, the instructor may then assign an academic penalty consistent with their institutional policy. Examples of academic penalties include receiving a reduced grade for the work, a failing grade in the course, or other lesser penalty as the instructor deems appropriate. If, after making reasonable efforts, the instructor is unable to contact the student or collect relevant evidence before final course grades are assigned, he/she shall assign an interim grade of incomplete and notify the student of the reason such grade was given.

If the student disputes the allegation of academic dishonesty he/she should inform the instructor of their intent to appeal. The appeal is made through the Great Plains IDEA university representative at the student’s home institution, using instructional policies and procedures at that institution.

The Great Plains IDEA university representative at the student’s home institution shall be responsible for facilitating communication between the student and the instructor and guiding the appeal process with due diligence.

All work submitted by the student is to be their original products. When quoting other sources standard citations, using APA standards, are expected.

Students submitting the work of others or in any other way plagiarizing materials will be subject to the academic integrity policies of their home institution.

Grade Appeal Process:

a. Students wishing to appeal a grade will follow all procedures at the teaching institution.

b. The teaching institution will contact the Great Plains IDEA representative at the student’s home institution to inform them that a grade appeal has been initiated.

Note: When students sign the “Student Acknowledgment Form,” the form will state that they “agree to substitute the grade appeal process at the “teaching institution” for my “home institution’s” process (see attached draft of Student Acknowledgment Form).—Appendix A

Approved by Great Plains IDEA Graduate Dean Team, 02/23/06; Approved by Great Plains IDEA Board of Directors, 03/02/06
Appendix A

Program of Study for the Master’s Degree
(Submit to the Graduate School, 210 Jesse Hall by the end of the second semester)

Student name: Jane Doe
Mizzou ID number: 000555000

Anticipated graduation date: May 2014

Academic program: Human Development and Family Studies
Degree (i.e. MAMS, etc.): MA
Major: Gerontology

Emphasis area: (If applicable)

Graduate minor: (If applicable)
Graduate certificate: (If applicable)

Final Exam Option (choose one):

- Thesis
- Project
- Portfolio
- Comprehensive Exams
- Other (please describe): Exam OR Other: Internship only

Schools attended & degrees received: College USA, BA in Education 2008

LIST ONLY COURSES REQUIRED FOR THE DEGREE.
Put an “X” next to courses taken through Extension. When requesting transfer credits, indicate where these courses were taken, the correct titles and course numbers, and provide the Graduate School with official transcripts.

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Course Title for Approved Elective #1
Course Title for Approved Elective #2
Course Title for Approved Elective #3

*These courses are 8000-level beginning spring 2011. **Students must enroll in HDFS 8972 OR 8590, not both

Total Hours 36
8000-Level Hours 30 min.
(12 min. for MA, 15 min. for all others)
Problems, Readings & Research Hours (maximum of 40% of required credit)

The plan of study is approved as stated. Subsequent changes must be reported on a Plan of Study Course Substitution form.

Student’s signature Date
Faculty Adviser’s signature Date
Director of Grad Studies’ signature Date
Graduate Dean’s signature Date

08/09