Internships

Child Life Internship
After the completion of coursework, students are expected to complete a semester-long internship in a hospital setting. A child life specialist, who holds a Master's Degree, will supervise the internship. The purpose of the internship is to help the student gain a better understanding of the effects of stress and illness on children's/adolescent's behavior and development, further the student's skills in providing appropriate play activities and procedural preparation and support activities for children and adolescents in a health care setting, gain experience in relations with other staff members and parents, and have opportunities to participate in outreach efforts in the wider community. The graduate internship should differ from the undergraduate internship in that it requires a higher level of skills in working with children, parents, and staff, and in incorporating experiences in administration, evaluation research, and in-service or outreach education. Twice during the semester, the supervising child life specialist will complete a form evaluating the student's work in these areas.

The written work the student will submit to faculty can be divided into three components. First, the student will be required to maintain a daily or weekly journal reflecting his or her experiences and complete two case presentations. The case presentation requires the student to create a thorough and detailed view of a child and family with whom he or she works with during the internship. If the hospital program does not have this requirement, faculty will ask the student to complete the assignment.

A second expectation is that the student completes a report or project. The topic of the report can be anything relevant to the field of child life and the student's internship experience. As an alternative, students may choose instead to complete a project that will benefit both the student and the child life department. Topics for the report or project should be discussed with the supervising child life specialist and the internship coordinator.

Third, the student will write a paper summarizing and evaluating his or her internship experience. This paper should include a description of the ages and diagnoses of the children with whom he or she worked, techniques he or she learned to use to help children cope both before and after medical procedures, practice he or she received in charting, and learning experiences he or she had working with parents, paid staff, and volunteers. We expect the paper to share with us the student's honest reflections about the internship. Additionally the student will need to evaluate the preparation he or she received at MU. Address the appropriateness of the graduate curriculum we offer: Were there courses or experiences that were not useful, or could have been improved? Are there courses that were particularly beneficial? Is there some material that is missing in the present curriculum that should be added?
All Other HDFS Internships

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. **The internship handbook posted on the HDFS webpage is for BOTH undergraduates and graduate students completing an internship for their degree requirements.**

URL to the Internship Handbook:

Internships consist of a supervised apprenticeship or 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. 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 (Form A in Internship Handbook), 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:
  - Brief literature review
  - Methods section (description of how the project will be developed)
  - 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. Unlike HDFS 8090 Research Projects, the project for the internship is not the overriding goal of the internship but fits within the context of the internship site. Internship projects may include, among others, such things as the development of a newsletter, brochure, training session, or a workshop. The internship 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. See the handbook for evaluation forms (Forms B and C).
Along with the internship agreement and project proposal, the additional written work the student will submit to the committee can be divided into two components. Throughout the tenure of the internship, a weekly journal (per 15-25 hours) and bi-weekly Time Sheet (Form E in Internship Handbook) 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/or clients and his or her progress toward meeting internship objectives and completing his or her internship project.

The final written work requires that the student will submit a final paper discussing and evaluating the internship experience and project within the scope of the HDFS 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 final paper to his or her committee, the M3 form is filed.

See internship handbook for more details: