

Introduction

Welcome to the University of Idaho Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), graduate studies. This Handbook was developed and adopted by FCS faculty to assist our graduate students in successfully navigating their graduate education.

What is Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)?

“Family and consumer sciences (FCS) is a field of study focused on the science and the art of living and working well in our complex world” (<https://www.aafcs.org/about/about-us/what-is-fcs>). Formerly known as domestic sciences and then home economics, the name changed in the 1980s to family and consumer sciences, human ecology, or human sciences. The field itself appears complex to many as we are a network of subdisciplines: apparel and textiles, early childhood development, food and human nutrition, human development and family studies. Scholars in these sub-disciplines collaborate through teaching, research, and outreach to address concerns facing individuals, families, and communities at all levels of society. We combine the social sciences with physical and biological sciences in our holistic approach to help humans navigate an ever-changing world.

One of the greatest strengths of teaching, research, and outreach found in FCS is its interdisciplinary nature. Indeed, beginning early in the history of FCS, scholars recognized that they must draw from many disciplines to ask and answer questions about how to establish and maintain a healthy and productive home. As each sub-discipline within the field gained strength in scholarship, each area found richness in collaborations. Theoretical frameworks guiding much of our work centers on systems theory and the human ecological models. We approach the questions with expertise from the sub-disciplines creating deeper thinking within the field of FCS and across the university. It is what makes FCS a powerhouse in teaching, research, and outreach.

Student Expectations and Responsibilities

Graduate students are expected to expand knowledge and gain expertise in a specific area of study and push disciplinary boundaries through research and/or scholarly activities. In addition to the [UI Student Code of Conduct](#) and [UI General Graduate Regulations](#), below are additional academic and professional expectations for FCS graduate students.

Respectful Communication: In any learning environment, it is essential that all members feel as free and safe as possible in their participation. As such, it is expected that graduate students will treat each other with mutual respect and courtesy, with an understanding that all of us (students, instructors, professors, university staff, etc.) will be respectful and civil to one another in discussion, action, teaching, email exchanges, and learning. Should you feel any interactions do not reflect an environment of civility and respect, you are encouraged to express your concern with your major professor or the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences Director. Additional resources for expression of concern or requesting support include the Dean of Students office and staff, the UI Counseling & Testing Center, or the UI Office of Human Rights, Access, & Inclusion.

Common Courtesy is expected. If you will be tardy or absent for a meeting or class, respectfully contact the appropriate person at least 24 hours in advance. If a 24-hour notice is not possible in case of emergency, communicate as soon as safely possible.

Deadlines: There are many deadlines (e.g., thesis, conference abstracts, etc.) throughout the program other than class assignments and exams. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to keep track of and meet all important deadlines. It is important to organize and plan your schedule when making commitments to certain optional deadlines (e.g., conference attendance/abstracts). Graduate school requires a fine balance between quantity and quality of work and learning to not take on too much while at the same time producing to your capacity it is part of the professional growth needed to develop the skill of pushing yourself to optimize your potential while realizing your limitations. Remember, your major professor, other faculty, and staff (as appropriate) are here to help you develop this complex skill and maximize your potential.

Guidelines for professional clothing: Graduate school is not simply an extension of the undergraduate experience. Instead, it represents a shift away from being a student toward becoming a professional. In fact, it might be helpful to see yourself as an apprentice in your field of study instead of a student. You will have committee members made up of professors overseeing your thesis/dissertation, other faculty mentoring you throughout the program, and the occasional surprise of visiting professors/scholars. It is often helpful to have the mindset that graduate school is an extended interview process; many professors and mentors can provide future career opportunities, and you want to make a professional impression to maximize these future opportunities. Formal professional wear is certainly not expected (except special occasions); however, academia is a professional and competitive environment, so we suggest that you generally choose business-casual clothing choices. Put another way, you might want to ask yourself what you would wear to be comfortable and look impressive enough if you were to meet a potential employer on campus today.

Graduate Faculty

Graduate faculty in the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences conduct research in a variety of specialty areas. Find out more about the type(s) of research each faculty conducts below. Faculty members are listed by program.

Apparel, textiles and design

[Sonya Meyer, Ph.D.](#) is a Professor in the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences. Her area of specialization is apparel, textiles, and design and a background in FCS teacher education. Dr. Meyer received her PhD in Adult and Continuing Education from Kansas State University. She teaches courses in historical and cultural perspectives of dress, design, textile structures, and introduction to careers in FCS.

- Functional design of personal protective equipment for wildland firefighters
- Scholarship of design
- History of dress

Child development

[Shiyi Chen, Ph.D.](#) is an Assistant Professor in the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences at University of Idaho. She earned her PhD in Educational Psychology at Florida State University. Her current research projects focus on young children's cognitive and social-emotional development and teacher preparation.

- Children's cognitive and social-emotional development

- Early science education
- Teacher-child relationships
- Teacher preparation (early STEM education)

[Ling-Ling Tsao, Ph.D.](#) is an Associate Professor in School of Family and Consumer Sciences at University of Idaho. She teaches classes in the area of early childhood special education, early intervention, preschool inclusion, and autism spectrum disorders. Her research focuses are social skills intervention, children with autism, and mealtime for young children.

- Sibling relations
- Children with autism
- Social skills
- Play-based intervention

Nutrition

[Yimin Chen, Ph.D., RDN](#) is a human milk researcher with 15 years of clinical experience. She [investigates](#) the effect of maternal mental health on human milk components produced by mothers of preterm infants, and the impact of human milk immunomodulatory components on the infant gastrointestinal and systemic immune response. Dr. Chen uses a full complement of cell culture models, neonatal piglet model, and human studies to examine mechanistic pathways.

- Human milk immunomodulatory components
- Preterm infants
- Gastrointestinal integrity and immunity
- Gut barrier function

[Jang Ho Kim, Ph.D.](#) is an experienced food scientist. He provides evidence-based educational information related to value-added processing and consumer food safety on home food preservation, sanitation, food handling, food recalls, and warnings.

- Microbiological risk assessment of food product
- Study of the effectiveness of various antimicrobial agents
- Study of Biofilm problems of working surfaces in food industry
- Development of various value-added food products using produce
- Develop and maintain consumer food safety educational program
- Collaboration with county faculty and statewide food safety topic team
- Presentation of workshops, seminars and training short courses related to the consumer food safety

[Michelle \(Shelley\) McGuire, Ph.D.](#) joined the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences as its Director in 2018. Her research and teaching expertise focus on maternal and infant nutrition, particularly during the very early neonatal period and during breastfeeding. In addition, Shelley is passionate about delivering accurate nutrition communication to the public.

- Nutrition
- Breastfeeding
- Human milk composition
- Microbiome
- Science communication

[Annie Roe, Ph.D., RDN](#) is an Extension Specialist/Assistant Professor at the University of Idaho and the Director of Eat Smart Idaho, which provides nutrition and physical activity programming to low-resource Idahoans statewide. Her primary research agenda focuses on projects designed to better understand how nutrients, whole foods, and dietary patterns influence brain development, maintenance, and disease prevention for optimal learning, memory, attention, and executive function across the lifespan. Dr. Roe also conducts research related to development and evaluation of nutrition education programs and research related to health and safety of wildland firefighters.

- Nutrients and brain health
- Role of nutrition in health and safety of wildland firefighters
- Community nutrition education

Graduate Assistantships

Overview

There are two types of graduate assistantships offered in the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences: teaching assistantships and research assistantships. In addition to helping you earn your degree without needing to work or take out loans, a graduate assistantship will help you develop and improve your professional skills during your time at the University of Idaho. Graduate assistantships (tuition, fees, and stipends) are funded by the College of Graduate Studies, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, FCS, or research grants obtained by individual faculty members. Some assistantships pay both a stipend and tuition, whereas others only cover a portion of the costs. You will need to talk with your graduate advisor to learn more about whether you will receive an assistantship, what costs are covered, and what are the obligations. It is noteworthy that the College of Graduate Studies sometimes waives the out-of-state portion of tuition for out-of-state students on graduate assistants. The details of the two types of assistantships are as follow.

Teaching Assistantships: Graduate students receiving teaching assistantships (referred to as teaching assistants or TAs) are required to participate in instruction, grading of assignments, delivery of instruction, office hours, and/or providing other assistance related to instruction under the active supervision of a member of the university faculty. A TA helps students learn and grow at the University of Idaho. Details of specific responsibilities should be discussed with your major advisor in conjunction with the Director of the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Research Assistantships: Research assistants (RA) develop competence in performing professional-level work in support of research, scholarship, or creative activity. An RA position allows you to study the issues you are passionate about as well as receive the chance to publish with renowned faculty. It is UI policy that all research be conducted in an ethical manner. For more information regarding UI's research policies, please visit review chapter five of the [Faculty Staff Handbook](#) found online.

Applying for a Graduate Assistantship

A limited number of research and teaching assistantships are available in FCS. At the time of application for graduate study, applicants are advised to indicate their interest in research and teaching assistantship in their cover letter. Current FCS graduate students can apply for graduate assistantships by expressing their needs and intention with their graduate advisors.

Detailed information about graduate assistant selection criteria, terms of appointment, terms of employment, background check, health insurance, payroll, enrollment, mandatory training can be found in the [graduate assistant handbook](#).

Degree Requirements in FCS

University Requirements Students wishing to pursue an MS FCS must satisfy the general requirements put forth by UI's College of Graduate Studies. These include a minimum of 30 credits of which there can be no more than a total of 12 credits of transfer, UI non-degree courses, independent study courses, or overaged courses. Credit from FCS 500 (master's thesis research) course cannot be counted toward the requirements for the non-thesis master's degree. Although there is no limit on the number of credits that may be earned in FCS 500 for a thesis master's degree, only a maximum of 10 credits in FCS 500 can be used on the study plan. Up to five credits of FCS 599 (non-thesis master's research) are allowed to count toward a non-thesis master's degree. A grade of C or better is required in all courses used to meet degree requirements. A cumulative GPA of 3.00 in all courses, whether or not they are used toward the degree, is required in order to receive a degree. A minimum of 18 credits in 500-level courses is required for the thesis option; a minimum of 30 credits in 500-level courses is required for the nonthesis option.

FCS Requirements As part of their study plan, MS FCS students must complete a 400- or 500-level statistics course and a 400- or 500-level research methods course. Students must also take the FCS graduate seminar course (FCS 501) for 2 semesters (2 credits total) and the FCS graduate teaching seminar (FCS 502) for two semesters (4 credits total). The FCS graduate teaching seminar requirement is waived for students serving as TAs; for each semester a graduate student serves as a TA his/her requirement for graduate teaching seminar is decreased by 1 semester. For instance, students who are TAs for an entire year do not need to take the FCS graduate teaching seminar course. In addition, graduate students must take a minimum of six credits of 500-level courses from FCS (**excluding** FCS 500, FCS 501, FCS 599, and the FCS graduate teaching experience course; **can include** FS 517 Scientific Writing). A minimum of 18 credits in 500-level courses is required for the thesis option; a minimum of 30 credits in 500-level courses is required for the nonthesis option.

These courses constitute the core requirements for all of the MS programs in FCS. Students can customize their degree with courses of their choosing to complete the minimum number of credits required for a master's degree. Finally, a thesis or non-thesis requirement will be completed. A summary of course requirements for an MS FCS is provided below.

CORE COURSES

FCS Graduate Seminar (2 credits required)

FCS 501 (1 credit/semester) – to be taken twice (offered each fall semester) during the semesters it is offered

FCS Graduate Teaching Experience (4 credits required)

FCS 502 Directed Study – Graduate Teaching Experience (2 credits) – timing to be determined with major professor and FCS Graduate Program Committee
For every semester that student is funded by TA, requirement decreases by 2 credits.

FCS Course Design and College Teaching (1 credit)

FCS 502 Directed Study - Course Design and College Teaching (1 credit) – spring semester; timing to be determined by major professor and FCS Graduate Program Committee (preferably first year)

400- or 500-level statistics (1 course required)

STAT 431 Statistical Analysis (3 credits) (Stat 251 or equivalent is a pre-requisite)

Or another 400- or 500-level statistics methods course identified by the major professor.

400- or 500-level research methods (1 course required)

HIST 590 Issues and Methods in History (3 credits)

ED 571 Introduction to Quantitative Research (3 credits)

PSYC 512 Research Methods (3 credits)

Or another 400- or 500-level research methods course identified by the major professor.

Additional graduate-level FCS courses (6 credits required; excludes FCS 500, FCS 501, FCS 599):

FCS530/430 Cognition and Motivation in Human Learning

FCS 540 Parent Child Relationships

FCS 534 Adulthood and Ageing within the Context of Family

FCS 545 Issues in Work and Family Life

FCS 565 Nutrition Therapy and Disease

FCS 587 Management and Leadership in Dietetics

Optional graduate-level courses (not an all-inclusive list) may include FCS 502: Directed Study, FCS 504: Special Topics, and other Courses including:

In Apparel, Textiles, and Design

2-Week Summer Study Abroad

Applied Design Research

Sustainability in the Apparel Industry

In Nutritional Sciences

Gastrointestinal Physiology & Immunology

NUMBER OF CREDITS

Minimum requirements for a master's degree are as follows.

- 30 credits
 - Of these 30 credits, ≤ 12 of them can be transfer credits.
 - Thesis option: Of these 30 credits, at least 18 must be from 500-level courses (up to ten 500-thesis credits).
 - Nonthesis option: Require 42 credits (instead of 30 credits). Of these 42 credits, 30 must be from 500-level courses (up to five 599 credits).
- MUST complete all FCS Core Courses [8-13 credits depending on courses chosen (5-7 credits are 500 level); unless waived by Director based on transferred courses]
- At least 6 credits from 500-level FCS courses (not including FCS 501, 500-thesis, and 599).

THESIS OR NONTHESIS OPTIONS

Thesis Option

- Traditional thesis track: The [thesis](#) should generally be completed in a format suitable for a published manuscript, although the decision as to how many chapters and their format is a discussion that should be had with the student, major professor, and committee. It is recognized that different sub-disciplines within FCS have different expectations in this regard. For instance, for some it would be appropriate to have a separate chapter serving as a literature review. Regardless, it is preferred that at least one manuscript be submitted within six months of graduation by the student in close collaboration with the major professor. After six months, the major professor reserves the right to submit the manuscript as the primary (first) author.
- ATD thesis-equivalent track: Requirement includes a comprehensive project that must include a written component addressing a theoretical, historical critical and/or philosophical documentation of the process, and a publicly presented final deliverable. The written document can be and in-depth review of the literature or a written description of the development and the evolution of the creative process.

Nonthesis Option includes two requirements as described below.

- I. Twelve extra graduate-level credits (500-level courses) above and beyond what is needed for a thesis option are required to deepen the knowledge specific to the area of study as agreed upon with the major professor and outlined in the study plan.
- II. An exit requirement (an examination, presentation, portfolio, project, or any research requirement other than a thesis).