



The University of Georgia

University Council
Athens, Georgia 30602

March 13, 2009

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal to offer a non-thesis option in the existing major in Child and Family Development under the Master of Science degree (M.S.) will be an agenda item for the March 20, 2009, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

David E. Shipley, Chair
University Curriculum Committee

cc: Dr. Arnett C. Mace, Jr.
Professor Jere W. Morehead

Proposal to Add a Non-thesis Option to the M.S. in Child and Family Development**Department of Child and Family Development**

Submitted to: Dr. Maureen Grasso
Dean, Graduate School
University of Georgia

Prepared by: Dr. Leslie Simons, Department Head
123 Dawson Hall
Department of Child and Family Development
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Georgia

Basic Information

Proposed Change: Addition of a Non-thesis Option for Students to the M.S. in Child and Family Development in the Child Life Emphasis Program.

Start Date: Immediately (Students currently in the program and students who enter subsequent to approval).

Program Description

The Department of Child and Family Development requests that a non-thesis option be approved for the M.S. in Child and Family Development Child Life Emphasis. This emphasis is designed for students who intend to pursue careers using clinical analysis and practice. These students are not focused on furthering development of theory or enhancing empirical knowledge through the pursuit of a doctoral degrees. Instead, they plan to acquire the Certified Child Life Specialist designation after completing their Master's degree and then practice as Child Life Specialists in health care settings or seek positions in closely related allied health care professions, (e.g. pediatric hospice). Approval of this non-thesis option is consistent with the department's goal of enhancing and broadening its graduate program. The proposed program's requirements are consistent with other non-thesis options within the College of Family and Consumer Sciences that have already been approved and that shift the focus from a thesis to applied research.

The program of study for students electing the non-thesis option would require all of the core courses required of the thesis track for the department's current M.S. degree (18 hours). These non-thesis students also must complete all aspects of the department's mandatory Master's Requirements as can be seen in Table 1, which insures proficiency in the areas of knowledge, scholarship and research relevant to the field. In addition to these requirements, students will complete 15 credits in the student's area of concentration, and 3 credits in the applied clinical project and a minimum of 3 credits in a Child Life internship in a hospital setting, totaling 21 credits. Specific choices of courses that are consistent with the student's professional orientation and objectives will be made in collaboration with the advisory committee. Students completing the non-thesis program of study would be required to complete the applied clinical project (3 credits) that would be approved by the

student's advisory committee. This applied clinical project is grounded on theory and empirical research in the Child Life field.

The current M.S. in CHFD requiring a thesis is not altered with approval of this proposal. Furthermore, students pursuing an emphasis in Child Life still may choose to complete a thesis. The proposed non-thesis option is only for a select group of Child Life students who are in the Child Life Emphasis Program, and who view their degree as a terminal one. Those students who do not view their degree as terminal, can choose to do a thesis. The following table outlines the current program of study that requires a thesis and the proposed non-thesis option.

Table 1. Current M.S. in CFD with Thesis and Proposed M.S. in CFD Emphasis Child Life Non-Thesis

Current M.S. in CFD with Thesis	Proposed M.S. in CFD with an Emphasis in Child Life with Non-Thesis Option
<i>Core: (18 credits)</i>	<i>Core: (18 credits)</i>
CHFD 6100 Theories and Issues in Human Development (3 credits)	CHFD 6100 Theories and Issues in Human Development (3 credits)
CHFD 6630 Theories in Family Relationships (3 credits)	CHFD 6630 Theories in Family Relationships (3 credits)
CHFD 6640 Issues in Family Relationships (3 credits)	CHFD 6640 Issues in Family Relationships (3credits)
CHFD 6800 Research Methods (3 credits)	CHFD 6800 Research Methods (3 credits)
CHFD 8910 Pro-Seminar (3 credits)	CHFD 8910 Pro-Seminar (3 credits)
ERSH 6300 Basic Graduate Level Statistics (3 credits)	ERSH 6300 Basic Graduate Level Statistics (3 credits)
<i>Area of Concentration (9 credits)</i>	<i>Area of Concentration (15 credits)</i>
Elective coursework (3 credits)	CHFD 6810 Hospitalized Child and Family (3 credits)
	CHFD 7010 Directed Study in Child and Family Development (Health Care Issues) (3 credits)
Elective coursework (3 credits)	CHFD 7210 Problems in Child and Family Development (Child Life Practicum in Hospital Setting) (3 credit minimum)
	CHFD 7130 Creative Activities for Young Children (3 credits)
Elective coursework (3 credits)	ECHD 6050 Teaching and Counseling Children with Chronic Illness (3 credits)
<i>Master's Research: (6 credits)</i>	<i>Clinical Project (3 credits)</i>
CHFD 7000 Master's Research (6 credits)	CHFD 7010 Directed Study in Child and Family Development (Pediatric Health Care/Child Life Issue) (3 credit minimum)
<i>Thesis: (3 credits)</i>	<i>Internship: (3credits minimum)</i>
CHFD 7300 Thesis (3 credits)	CHFD 7910 Internship in Child and Family Development (14-16 week fulltime Child Life Internship in a Hospitalized Setting) (3 credit minimum)
Minimum Total Credit Hours = 36	Minimum Total Credit Hours = 39

The Clinical Project

The thesis requirement is replaced by a rigorous, research-based clinical project completed as the requirement for CHFD 7010, Directed Study in Child and Family Development, under the direction of the major professor. The project applies a review of substantive literature and relevant theory to a problem of an applied nature in a clinical setting. The student's advisory committee will evaluate the project based on its comprehensiveness, completeness and appropriateness in relation to professional work in the student's area of interest. The student also must pass an oral examination given by the student's faculty committee over the research area upon which the specialized clinical project is based. Similar to students in the thesis option, these students will complete an oral defense. A grade of A/F will be assigned by the student's advisor with input from the student's advisory committee for the CHFD 7010 Directed Study in Child and Family Development class. A grade of either A or B is necessary to pass the CHFD 7010 required class.

Faculty Vote

Graduate Faculty in the Department of Child and Family Development voted unanimously in favor of the proposed non-thesis M.S. option.

Justification for the Proposed Non-Thesis M.S. Option

A non-thesis M.S. option is needed for the following reasons:

1. Most current and potential M.S. Child Life students plan to work in health care settings or in closely related fields in the allied health sciences. Specialized course work, a supervised internship and clinical projects meet the needs of Child Life students most effectively and are more pertinent to their professional goals than a thesis requirement, which is valuable to those who plan to go on for a doctorate.
2. Students seeking the nationally recognized Child Life Certification must, prior to sitting for the examination, have a college degree and at least 30 credit hours in Child Development (or closely related field) along with a 480 hour (minimum) internship (40 hours per week for 12 weeks) supervised by a Certified Child Life Specialist. Since a thesis does not enhance preparation for this professional track many students often look to other graduate programs to meet their educational and professional interests. In short, the department loses out on qualified students who are interested in the department's programs, but for whom the department's graduate programs are not flexible enough to meet their educational objectives.
3. Offering a non-thesis M.S. option creates opportunities for the program to grow yet conserve faculty resources. The CFD Department views the non-thesis option as an effective way of using faculty resources to teach a greater number of students while continuing to maintain the emphasis on theory and research that are inherent in all courses CFD students take.

4. We believe that the addition of a non-thesis M.S. option for Child Life to the current selection of graduate programs offered through the Department of Child and Family Development will strengthen our opportunities to educate students in this much needed specialization.

Impact on Current Students

Approval of the non-thesis option would have no negative impact on students currently enrolled in the thesis program. It is anticipated that students who began the M.S. in Child and Family Development with a specialization in Child Life in Fall 2006 and later will have the option of choosing between the current thesis program of study or the Child Life Emphasis non-thesis option.

Impact on Future Students

This nonthesis option will have a positive impact on future Child Life Master's students for several reasons. First, the non-thesis option will allow for a larger cohort group than the thesis option, which can only support 1-2 students per year, and thus allow the program to grow. We anticipate initial annual cohorts in the non-thesis option to consist of 4 students and within three years to number between 6 and 9 students. These numbers are based on current applications to the program. Incidentally, we believe some of the non-thesis students are likely to be non-traditional students. This option will likely draw students with diverse experiences and perspectives thus enhancing experiences of typical students in the department. Second, it is difficult and immensely time consuming for Child Life master's students to proceed through the necessary steps of conducting thesis research in the health care settings in which they are often employed even before they have completed their degree requirements. Seldom do they have opportunities to work on existing funded health care projects in those settings and obtaining permission from hospital Review Boards to conduct nonfunded research projects has been difficult at best. With approval of this option students will be able to complete the final degree project in their health care and child life internship settings. Third, Child Life students are frequently asked to work on applied projects within their health care practica and internship settings. These projects, which assist Child Life Departments in the evaluation and delivery of services to children and families, will provide a venue for our students to complete their clinical projects. Fourth, for our Child Life students a thesis serves more as an academic hurdle than an ongoing step in their career. Since for most, their degree will be terminal, it often serves no long term benefit. For those students seeking positions in the Child Life field, the nonthesis option will allow them to complete a project that will enhance their marketability.

Admission Information

Admission into the Master's in Child and Family Development with an Emphasis in Child Life with a non-thesis option would be based on the same criteria as the current UGA and CFD Department admission standards.

Financial Impact

No additional funds would be required to offer this program. Current faculty, buildings, library, and other facilities are adequate to implement the proposed offering.