

Department of Human Development
Plan for Including Scholarly Ethics and Integrity in Graduate Education

The Department of Human Development (HD) has graduate students located at the Blacksburg campus and the National Capital Region (NCR). As each location has a different makeup of students, detailed below are the plans for the doctoral students on the Blacksburg campus and for the master's students at NCR campus.

Blacksburg Campus

For the Blacksburg campus, we already have in place a Professional Development Seminar (prosem). Currently, all incoming HD students are required to take prosem during their first semester, and many of the topics to meet the scholarly ethics requirements are already taught in this seminar. To ensure that we properly expose students all relevant topics in a comprehensive manner, we will require students to take a second semester of prosem. Because all components will be covered in two semesters of the seminar, students will have received exposure to all relevant topics upon completion of two semesters of prosem.

The seminar's learning objectives, listed below, already fit within the goals of the scholarly ethics and integrity component.

Having successfully completed the seminar, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical thinking and evaluation skills.
2. Express values and describe behaviors associated with striving for excellence in research scholarship, teaching in various settings, and outreach interventions.
3. Understand professional issues and practices in human development.

In each section below, I will specifically address each required topic as well as the optional topics that are relevant to HD. I will detail how we will ensure that students gain the information necessary for each topic. Even though there will be an instructor of record for each prosem offering, faculty members across the department are always involved in our seminar. Having multiple faculty members present will ensure that students are learning about these topics from a variety of perspectives and will allow faculty to draw on their expertise related to these areas. Faculty from all of our discipline areas (Adult Development and Aging, ADA; Child and Adolescent Development, CAD; Family Studies, FS; and Marriage and Family Therapy, MFT).

Required Topics:

1. Plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor Code

2. Proper use of professional conventions in citation of existing research and scholarship, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work

To cover required topics #1 and #2, we will have presentations and discussions about the publication standards from the American Psychological Association, as APA style is the conventions used in our discipline.

3. Ethical standards in teaching, mentoring, and professional activities

Ethical dilemmas will be used to help students understand these issues. Additionally, all students who teach in HD are involved in a structured apprentice program, where these concerns will be further addressed. Because the majority of HD students are involved in teaching at some point in their graduate career here, they will attend the Grad School's GTA workshop.

4. Available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct

Students will complete the online CITI training on Responsible Conduct of Research and further discuss in prose. Topics in RCR include Research Misconduct, Data Management (also relevant for optional topics #1), Authorship (also for optional topic #5), Mentoring (also for required topic #3), Peer Review, Mentoring (also for required topic #3), Conflicts of Interest, Collaborative Research, Research Involving Human Subjects (also for optional topics #3 and 4).

Optional Topics:

1. Appropriate lab procedures and maintenance of lab notebooks and other research documentation

All HD students are required to complete a research team experience. These topics will be covered as part of their direct experience with research.

2. Fair use of publications, software, and equipment

This will be covered as part of our discussions about APA publication standards.

3. Appropriate research protocols involving human and animal subjects; Institutional Review Board and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee certification

Students will be required to complete the online training provided by IRB.

4. Guidelines for maintenance of confidentiality (and, where relevant, anonymity) in research

These topics will be discussed as part of the IRB training as well as when students complete research team.

5. Guidelines for determination of authorship

Students will read articles selected each of the area faculty (ADA, CAD, FS, and MFT), and each area will have a panel discussion with students. As part of these discussions, students will hear about how authorship is determined.

6. Appropriate grant and contract management, including appropriately asserting personal or program capacities and competencies when applying for grants and contracts

Students will learn about these issues during completion and discussion of CITI training.

7. Discipline - or field - specific professional ethics

These topics are woven throughout prose as well as throughout our curriculum and research training. Additionally, our MFT students take a course on clinical ethics.

NCR Campus

For the NCR campus, all incoming HD students will be required to complete Professional Seminar in Marriage and Family Therapy—Ethics (ethics). The ethics course is designed to prepare students for a range of ethical issues they might encounter. It focuses on the following student learning outcomes, which are aligned with the requirements of the accrediting body of the marriage and family therapy program.

The student learning outcomes include the following:

- 1.3. Determine a clear and mutual contract with clients which includes practice setting rules, record keeping, fees, rights and responsibilities of each party, including privacy and confidentiality policies, and duty to care to client or legal guardian.
- 2.9. Maintain appropriate boundaries, manage issues of triangulation, and develop collaborative working relationships with clients, other professionals, classmates, supervisors, and staff.
- 3.5. Demonstrates ability to determine whether client's issues are within the scope of MFT practice.
- 5.1. Routinely observe and assess for indications of abuse, danger to self, or others.
- 5.2. Develop and implement plans to reduce the potential for danger.
- 5.5. With proper consent, regularly communicate with other professionals and stakeholders to inform treatment.
- 7.1. Demonstrate awareness of legal, regulatory and ethical context in which therapy occurs.
- 7.2. Inform clients of the therapist's legal, regulatory and ethical obligations.
- 7.3. Manage mandatory reporting responsibilities appropriately.
- 7.4. Protect client confidentiality.
- 8.4. Pro-actively consult with supervisor if personal issues, attitudes, beliefs or emotional reactions threaten to adversely impact clinical work.
- 8.5. Understand the need for a plan for on-going supervision or peer consultation after graduation.
- 10.2. Evaluate reactions to the treatment process (e.g., transference, family of origin, current stress level, current life situation, cultural context) and their impact on effective intervention and clinical outcome.
- 10.3. Makes use of appropriate resources to deal with reactions to the therapy process and to support therapist well-being.

The majority of the topics for the scholarly ethics and integrity component will be covered in this course. How each topic will be addressed is detailed below.

Required Topics:

1. Plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor Code

2. Proper use of professional conventions in citation of existing research and scholarship, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work

To cover required topics #1 and #2, students will be exposed to the APA publication standards. The Virginia Tech Graduate Honor Code is also discussed during class and a weblink to the written code is provided in the syllabus.

3. Ethical standards in teaching, mentoring, and professional activities

In ethics, students are required to read the state and national ethical standards for their profession. Class discussions highlight the complexities of the professional standards to instruct students on ethical practices. Students are also taught good ethical decision-making practices. While the terminal master's and post-master's students have historically been less involved in teaching practices, students will be exposed to ethical standards for teaching during discussions of ethical professional standards.

4. Available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct

Students are exposed to this material in ethics as it relates to professional activities. They also receive written information about reporting alleged misconduct at Virginia Tech in their student guides which are discussed in their introductory theory course, Clinical Marriage and Family Therapy I: Structural and Strategic Approaches.

Optional Topics:

1. Appropriate lab procedures and maintenance of lab notebooks and other research documentation

All HD master's students will cover this material as part of their thesis or thesis project experience. This will be an optional activity for the clinical post-master's students.

2. Fair use of publications, software, and equipment

This will be discussed when reviewing APA publication standards.

3. Appropriate research protocols involving human and animal subjects; Institutional Review Board and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee certification

All students are exposed to this material in the ethics lecture on "informed consent in research." All HD master's students will be required to complete the online training provided by IRB. This will be an optional activity for the clinical post-master's students.

4. Guidelines for maintenance of confidentiality (and, where relevant, anonymity) in research

Students read and discuss literature related to maintaining confidentiality in research and other professional activities during the ethics course.

5. Guidelines for determination of authorship

HD master's students discuss guidelines for determination of authorship with their thesis chairperson. This is an optional activity for the clinical post-master's students.

6. Appropriate grant and contract management, including appropriately asserting personal or program capacities and competencies when applying for grants and contracts

The terminal master's and post-master's students will not address this topic.

7. Discipline- or field-specific professional ethics

Professional issues in marriage and family therapy is a primary focus of the ethics course and this material is covered throughout the course.