# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 3  
IFCS Program: Overview, Requirements, and Support .............................................................................. 5  
  Program Overview ...................................................................................................................................... 5  
  Clemson Academic Calendar ..................................................................................................................... 6  
  Program Locations ..................................................................................................................................... 6  
  Course Delivery .......................................................................................................................................... 6  
  Admission Requirements and Procedures ................................................................................................. 6  
  Current Students ........................................................................................................................................ 7  
  Past Students ............................................................................................................................................. 7  
  Faculty and Staff ......................................................................................................................................... 7  
  Key Supports ................................................................................................................................................ 8  
  Annual Student Meeting ............................................................................................................................... 9  
  Curriculum and Degree Requirements ....................................................................................................... 10  
  Cultural Area Studies ................................................................................................................................. 11  
  Research Project ........................................................................................................................................ 11  
  Taking Courses in Other Departments or at Other Institutions to Fulfill IFCS Requirements ................. 11  
  Plan of Study ............................................................................................................................................ 12  
  Course Waiver Requests ............................................................................................................................. 14  
  Transfer Credit ........................................................................................................................................... 14  
  Annual Student Reviews ............................................................................................................................. 14  
  Official Writing Style ................................................................................................................................. 15  
  Writing Assistance ...................................................................................................................................... 15  
Dissertation/Advisory Committee .................................................................................................................. 16  
  Dissertation/Advisory Committee Chair .................................................................................................. 16  
  Dissertation/Advisory Committee Chair’s Responsibilities ..................................................................... 16  
  The Dissertation/Advisory Committee ..................................................................................................... 17  
Comprehensive Examination .......................................................................................................................... 18  
  Purpose ...................................................................................................................................................... 18  
  Procedures .................................................................................................................................................. 18  
Doctoral Dissertation ...................................................................................................................................... 23
Dissertation Proposal ................................................................. 23
IRB Approval .............................................................................. 23
Writing the Dissertation .............................................................. 23
Graduate School Deadlines ......................................................... 24
The Dissertation Defense .............................................................. 24

Graduate Student Assistantships: Working at Clemson & YFCS ......................................................... 26
Overview and Availability of Graduate Assistantships .......................................................... 26
Duties & Supervision ................................................................... 26
Evaluation .................................................................................... 26
Payroll and Paydays ..................................................................... 26
Holidays and Personal Leave ............................................................. 27
Termination .................................................................................... 27
Office Procedures ......................................................................... 28

Thriving as a PhD Student in IFCS .................................................. 29
Overview ....................................................................................... 29
Office Space .................................................................................. 29
Mailboxes ...................................................................................... 29
Communication ............................................................................ 29
Research Projects ......................................................................... 29
The Curriculum Vitae (CV) ............................................................... 30
Clemson Student Resources .......................................................... 30

Appendices ..................................................................................... 31
Appendix A: GS2 Proposed Plan of Study Worksheet .................................................................... 32
Appendix B: Course Waiver Request Form .............................................................................. 33
Appendix C: IFCS General Dissertation Proposal Guidelines ......................................................... 34
Introduction

We have prepared this handbook as a convenient source of information about the policies, procedures, services, and facilities related to the International Family & Community Studies PhD and Certificate Programs. This handbook, which will be relevant throughout a student’s graduate studies, will be updated yearly.

The Department of Youth, Family and Community Studies and the Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life

The Department of Youth, Family and Community Studies (YFCS) is one of 8 departments within the College of Behavioral, Health and Social Sciences. The department offers a unique interdisciplinary graduate curriculum, drawing from the humanities, social sciences, health sciences, community development, and policy studies.

The department is also home to the Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life (IFNL), whose goals are to generate, share, and apply the research foundation for youth, family, and community development. Work at IFNL starts from the premise that strong communities support strong families and vice versa, and that both are necessary for the healthy development of children and youth. To accomplish these goals, faculty and staff conduct empirical research, perform policy analyses, develop and evaluate programs, and provide technical assistance and community education.

At YFCS and IFNL, we work at all levels, from neighborhood to global. A comparative perspective offers insights into understanding grassroots phenomena in neighborhoods and assists in developing effective responses in public policy and community development practice.
Clemson University Graduate School Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures of the Clemson University Graduate School have been established to ensure a consistent set of standards from the admissions process to the awarding of degrees for every Graduate School program. In general, students are subject to the policies in effect when they first matriculate into their graduate program. Minor changes in policy that will not affect students’ progress toward a degree may be implemented immediately when that is determined to be in the best interest of students and/or the University, or if the changes are required by a legislative or regulatory body. These changes, along with all other substantive changes, will be noted in the “Changes to Graduate School Policy, Annotated” page(s) of the Graduate School Policy Handbook and summarized in a table on the Graduate School Policy & Procedures web page.

All [Graduate School policies and procedures may be found online](#), including the Graduate School Policy Handbook for 2018-2019, which includes important information about degree requirements, tuition, and academic integrity.

Other important resources include [guidance for newly admitted students](#), and Clemson’s [Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy](#).
Program Overview

The International Family and Community Studies (IFCS) program offers a unique interdisciplinary curriculum drawing from the humanities, social sciences, health sciences, community development, and policy studies. Graduate courses focus on family and community life, human rights and social justice, community development and policy analysis, cultural area studies, and social research methods. Our programs benefit current or prospective university educators, interdisciplinary researchers, NGO leaders, government officials, community developers, social workers, psychologists, public health workers, and others.
Clemson Academic Calendar

Please refer to the online Clemson University Academic Calendar for registration deadlines, semester beginning and end dates, and holiday schedules, for current and future semesters.

Program Locations

The International Family & Community Studies program is based at the University Center in Greenville, South Carolina, where most of our courses are taught. Most faculty offices are located on the Clemson campus in Clemson, but faculty are available to meet with students on campus, at the University Center, or by phone or web-conferencing.

Course Delivery

Students who reside in the Greenville/Clemson area typically attend classes in person at University Center in Greenville, SC. For those students whose job or place of residence prevent them from attending courses at the University Center, courses are delivered in a synchronous, online format that delivers the same high-quality curriculum, but through a flexible virtual environment. This synchronous format allows students to participate and interact with faculty and fellow classmates in real time using web conferencing (currently Adobe Connect).

Admission Requirements and Procedures

Applicants must hold a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited degree program. In addition to strong academic performance, experience in volunteer and/or professional public service is desirable. In most circumstances, students should submit the following:

- Resume or CV
- Unofficial transcripts (Official transcripts will need to be submitted upon acceptance.)
- GRE test scores
- Three letters of recommendation from professionals familiar with the applicant's academic work and/or professional experience.
- A 500-word personal statement about the applicant's career aspirations and goals and their relation to this graduate program.
- A writing sample that demonstrates the applicant’s writing proficiency (e.g., a course paper from the past or a recent substantial writing effort, such as a grant proposal).
- Students for whom English is not their first language are also required to submit scores from one of the following tests: TOEFL, IELTS, or PTE-Academic. More information about English proficiency requirements and possible exemptions may be found on the Graduate School’s Frequently Asked Questions page.
Both U.S. and international students are welcome, as are both new graduates and experienced professionals. We do not have set requirements for acceptance into our program. Each application is evaluated individually based on a student’s entire application package, taking into account the student’s undergraduate/graduate record, GRE scores, recommendation letters, personal statement, and writing sample. Research experience or employment in areas relevant to family and community studies also carries weight.

New PhD students are accepted once a year and begin classes in the fall semester (mid-August). Applications must be submitted through Clemson University’s web application system (which opens in September) and must be received by February 1 for consideration for the following fall semester.

**Current Students**

Currently, 34 students are pursuing a PhD in International Family & Community Studies. These students hail from 10 countries and 5 U.S. states and territories.

**Past Students**

Since our PhD program began in 2006, 32 students have received a PhD in International Family & Community Studies. An additional 13 have received a Certificate. Of our PhD graduates, 43% work in education; 23% in non-profit organizations, 13% are employed in the public sector, 13% are consultants, 3% work in a healthcare profession, and 3% work in the business sector.

**Faculty and Staff**

There is a diverse group of faculty and staff who support the students in the IFCS program. Faculty welcome opportunities to collaborate with students on research projects and serve as members of students’ dissertation/advisory committees. Students are encouraged to get to know our faculty and staff and to ask for assistance whenever needed. There are also more than 20 Adjunct Faculty who are affiliated with our department, who represent colleges and universities around the world.
Key Supports

Graduate Studies Coordinator. Shelli Charles, our Graduate Studies Coordinator, serves as our graduate student advisor, in consultation with the YFCS faculty (herein referred to as “the faculty”) until students select their dissertation/advisory chair (DAC Chair).

Dissertation/Advisory Committee and Chair. Once students have completed 80% their coursework (or earlier if desired), students should select their dissertation/advisory committee (DAC) and Chair (see “Forming the Dissertation Committee” section). The DAC Chair will serve as the student’s academic advisor until graduation. He or she will guide the student, in coordination with DAC members, through comprehensive examinations and the dissertation process. The selection of a DAC Chair is an important decision. Prior to making this selection, students are encouraged to reach out to faculty to become familiar with their research interests and community-based work.

Graduate Program Director. Sue Limber serves as the IFCS Graduate Program Director. In this capacity, she serves as the coordinator of graduate studies within the department. Together with the Graduate Studies Coordinator, the graduate program faculty, and the department chair, the Graduate Program Director shares responsibility for guiding the PhD and Certificate programs.

Instructional Technology Support. The university and the IFCS program incorporates modern instructional technologies to facilitate the process of teaching and learning. Our interactive synchronous blended program delivers the curriculum through a flexible virtual environment. This synchronous format allows students to participate and interact with faculty and fellow classmates in real time using web conferencing. Students are encouraged to email Marian Turcan (turcan@clemson.edu) with any issues or concerns regarding class access or instructional technology. Students will need a fast computer and a high speed Internet connection. The Clemson computer store provides recommendations for computer configurations.

Computer Support. Clemson Computing and Information Technology (CCIT) provides technical support for Clemson’s faculty, students, and staff. CCIT staff can be reached online (ithelp@clemson.edu), by phone (864-656-3494), or in person (on campus at Cooper Library or at the University Center).

International Student Support. The Office of Global Engagement's International Services area works with Clemson’s international students, scholars and faculty, as well as university administrators, to provide information, services, and advice to meet the needs of our international community. International Services is a valuable resource for students’ immigration, employment, and support needs. Students who are not US citizens should contact International Services as soon as possible after accepting our offer of admission.
**Library Support.** Clemson Libraries offer extensive services to support students’ research needs. Visit the library’s home page or our IFCS library research portal to access these services. Peggy Tyler, ptyler@clemson.edu, is the Clemson librarian assigned to the IFCS program. Students should feel free to contact her directly or through the [IFCS portal](#).

**Health and Wellness.** Student Health Services strengthens Clemson University by providing quality medical and mental health care, public health leadership, and initiatives that enhance the academic success of our students and promote health, safety and well-being of the campus community. Visit their [website](#) or call them at: 864-656-1541

**Annual Student Meeting**

An annual student meeting for IFCS is held in August each year, usually the weekend prior to the start of the Fall Semester’s classes. Students are expected to attend in person if at all possible. If students are unable to travel to the Clemson, they are expected to participate via web conferencing. This yearly event provides an opportunity to:

- Officially welcome our new students and provide networking opportunities for returning students
- Provide tools and information for successful completion of the program
- Clarify policies and procedures
- Get to know each other (new students, returning students, faculty, and staff) and each other’s areas of research and interest
- Provide returning students an opportunity to hone their research and presentation skills
- Provide returning students an opportunity for in person meetings with faculty &/or their committees
- Become familiar with supportive resources at Clemson University
Curriculum and Degree Requirements

With its focus on family and community life, the program touches on the most fundamental aspects of people's everyday lives. Blending the humanities, social sciences, and various professional disciplines, the program may be unique in its integration of normative analysis (i.e., philosophical, legal, and religious studies), empirical research, and community development. With a foundation in the study of human rights as applied to children and families around the world, the program builds a comparative understanding of U.S., foreign, and international law and policy on child and family issues and of the significance of democracy for the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Students acquire an appreciation of the role of civil society (e.g., voluntary associations and nonprofit organizations) and primary community institutions (e.g., schools) in promoting and maintaining democracy. Such studies provide the foundation for an understanding of the principles and practices of community development and transformation, humanitarian assistance, and responsive human services. The important role and features of effective informal mutual assistance mechanisms in community life and their meaning for children and families are also explored.

A minimum of 63 credit hours are required of students enrolling post-baccalaureate. The IFCS curriculum requirements and electives are as follows:

**Family and Community Life (6 credits):**
- Life in the Global Community (FCS 8100) (required)
- Human Development and Family Life in Cultural Context (FCS 8110) (required)

**Research Methods (12 credits):**
- Social Research Methods in IFCS I (FCS 8130) (required)
- Social Research Methods in IFCS II (FCS 8340) (required)
- Topics in Societal and International Research (FCS 8400) (elective; focus and number of credits vary by semester)
- Secondary Data Analysis (FCS 8410) (elective)
- Special Topics courses (FCS 8920) (elective; focus varies by semester)

**Human Rights and Social Justice (6 credits):**
- International Human Rights Law (FCS 8200) (required)
- International Law and Policy on Children’s Issues (FCS 8510) (elective)
- The Right to Health (FCS 8520) (elective)
Community Development and Policy Analysis (9 credits):

- Community Development: Principles and Practices (FCS 8300) (required)
- Community Transformation (FCS 8310) (required)
- Policies and Programs in Human Services (FCS 8320) (elective)
- Humanitarian Assistance (FCS 8330) (elective)

Cultural Area Studies (6 credits):

- Cultural Area Studies (FCS 8360) (two 3-credit courses required; focus varies by semester)

Research (up to 24 credits):

- Six (6) credits of Research Project (FCS 8900) required if entering post baccalaureate
- Eighteen (18) credits for the Doctoral Dissertation (FCS 9910).

Cultural Area Studies

Cultural area studies (CAS) courses are intended to provide students with an understanding of families and communities in at least two world regions in addition to their own. We try to offer at least one cultural area studies course each fall and spring semester.

Research Project

Students who enter the program post baccalaureate (i.e., without a master’s degree) are required to complete a 6-credit research project (FCS 8900). Students may sign up for FCS 8900 and begin the research project after completing 18 credits of coursework in the IFCS program (including the completion of 6 credits of coursework in Research Methods). An IFCS faculty member or outside faculty member who has been identified by the student and approved by the IFCS faculty will oversee the student’s research project. The research project must be finished prior to beginning comprehensive examinations.

Taking Courses in Other Departments or at Other Institutions to Fulfill IFCS Requirements

Students may find courses in other departments that they would like to take to fulfill IFCS course requirements. This is particularly likely within the areas of Cultural Area Studies and Research Methods. If a course in IFCS is not germane to a student’s interests or intended career path, the requirement may be met by taking courses from other departments within Clemson or other colleges or universities. However, the course but must be approved by the IFCS faculty prior to enrolling. No more than 4 courses (12 credits) may be taken outside of IFCS. Students should contact the Graduate Studies Coordinator to request this approval.
**Plan of Study**

The doctoral plan of study serves as a roadmap for completing the PhD degree, so students should begin to work on it their first semester with Shelli Charles, Graduate Studies Coordinator. Also referred to as the GS2, the Plan of Study should be based on the Curriculum and Degree Requirements as found in the IFCS Graduate Handbook that was published the year students began the program. The proposed Plan of Study should indicate:

- The courses students plan to take and when they plan to take them
- Information about possible requests to waive courses
- Information about courses for which students might want seek approval to take in other Clemson departments or from other institutions
- When students plan to complete their comprehensive exams
- When students plan to work on their dissertation, and the timeline for earning the necessary credits

It is expected that students will submit their proposed Plan of Study early in their first semester of the program (see Appendix A). The Graduate Studies Coordinator, in consultation with the IFCS faculty will review and approve each student’s plan. The proposed plan will be kept in the student’s file and can be revised as needed. When a student’s coursework is nearing completion and he or she is ready to begin comprehensive exams, the student will select a Dissertation Committee Chair and members and submit an online version of the Plan of Study (GS2) in iRoar, Clemson’s Student Information System. This typically takes place no later than the end of the second year (for full time students) or when part-time students have completed 80% of their coursework. If changes in the Plan of Study or committee makeup are needed, the GS2 can be amended. A final version of the Plan of Study (including final DAC membership) must be recorded online before graduation.
IFCS classes are offered based on the following schedule:

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<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer I, II</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1st Year Students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8100 Life in the Global Community</td>
<td>8110 Human Development</td>
<td>8330 Humanitarian Assistance*</td>
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<tr>
<td>8300 Community Development</td>
<td>8310 Community Transformation</td>
<td>8520 The Right to Health*</td>
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<tr>
<td>8130 Research Methods in IFCS I</td>
<td>8340 Research Methods in IFCS II</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2nd Year Students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8510 Intl Law and Policy on Children’s Issues</td>
<td>8360 Cultural Area Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>8360 Cultural Area Studies</td>
<td>8200 International Human Rights Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>8400 Topics in Social Research or another Research Methods Elective</td>
<td>8400 Topics in Social Research or another Research Methods Elective</td>
<td>8320 Policies and Programs in Human Services**</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3rd &amp; 4th Year Students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Methods Elective &amp;/or 8900 Research Project†</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exams</td>
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<td>Comprehensive Exams</td>
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<td>9910 Doctoral Research</td>
<td>Research Methods Elective 9910 Doctoral Research</td>
<td>9910 Doctoral Research</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Required courses are bolded

† Six (6) credit hours required for students entering without a Master’s degree or equivalent

*Courses offered in even years (i.e. 2018, 2020, etc.)

**Courses offered in odd years (i.e. 2019, 2021, etc.)
Course Waiver Requests

Students who come to the PhD program with a master’s degree should meet with the Graduate Studies Coordinator during the first two weeks of the first semester to review the graduate-level courses they have taken during their master’s program. The purpose of this review is to consider whether any of these courses (or other relevant work experiences) might provide the basis for waiver of an IFCS course. Students who wish to request a waiver of an IFCS course will submit a Course Waiver Request (See Course Waiver Request Form in Appendix B) to the Graduate Studies Coordinator, for review by the faculty. This request should be submitted by the end of the first week of September.

In this Course Waiver Request Form, students will describe in detail why they believe they should be granted a waiver for each course. If they are basing their request on the completion of a graduate level course taken in the last 5 years, they also must submit a course syllabus and a copy of their transcript for each course taken. The faculty will carefully review the request and determine whether or not the student’s prior coursework or experiences are sufficient to grant the requested waiver. The faculty will make this decision no later than the first week of October. Waived courses must be included on the GS2, but credit hours for waived courses must be listed as “0” credits on the GS2, and they do not count toward the total course credits required for the PhD.

Transfer Credit

Students who plan to request the transfer of graduate credits from other universities, should review the relevant section (currently found in Chapter 2) of the Graduate School Policy and Procedures Handbook.

Annual Student Reviews

First Year Self-Evaluations. At the end of the spring semester of the first year of graduate work, all students must complete their First Year Self-Evaluation, which includes:

- An annual progress report that discusses achievements, areas of perceived growth, challenges experienced, goals for the coming year, and potential dissertation/advisory chair and dissertation topic (if known)
- An updated GS2
- A copy of their current curricula vitae (CV)

Students will receive a formal (email) request to complete their First Year Self-Evaluation near the end of the spring semester, with instructions and a timeline for its return. The material will be reviewed by the IFCS faculty at their next monthly meeting. The Graduate Program Director and
Graduate Studies Coordinator will share, in writing, the faculty’s individual evaluation to students soon after. After receiving their individual evaluations, students may be asked to meet with the faculty to discuss their evaluation and student’s impressions of the graduate program. Students may also request these meetings.

**Annual Self-Evaluations of Students After the First Year.** For each subsequent year that students are in the IFCS program, they will be asked to complete a short Annual Self-Evaluation, which will be shared with the Department Chair, the Graduate Program Director, the Graduate Studies Coordinator, and the student’s DCC, as appropriate. The yearly evaluation will provide students the opportunity to share their achievements, their perceived areas of growth, their concerns, and their plans for completing the balance of the program. Students will be asked to provide an updated GS2 and a current CV.

Although the First Year and Annual Self-Evaluations are important tools to keep us updated on students’ progress and areas of concern, students should never feel they must wait to share their questions and concerns. Students are encouraged to regularly communicate with the Graduate Studies Coordinator, Graduate Program Director, DAC Chair, and DAC, and to contact other faculty and staff whenever needed.

**Official Writing Style**

The style of writing set forth in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (Sixth Edition) is required for all student papers, research projects, comprehensive exams, and dissertations. APA format is commonly used to cite sources in the social sciences. Students are encouraged to purchase a copy of the latest version of the APA manual. Online resources, such as [apa.org](http://apa.org), the [Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)](http://owl.purdue.edu), and the [Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin](http://writingcenter.wisc.edu) provide quick answers to questions about APA style. The APA style includes guidelines for the formatting of documents. The most important aspects of these guidelines for most academic writing are the formatting of the references cited in the text of the document, headings, and reference lists.

**Writing Assistance**

The Clemson University Writing Center is available to assist all members of the Clemson community become more confident and effective writers. Services are free. Students for whom English is a second language may find the assistance particularly helpful. Students may learn about the Writing Center’ [services available](http://writingcenter.clemson.edu/services) and [schedule an appointment](http://writingcenter.clemson.edu/appointments) online.
Dissertation/Advisory Committee Chair

At the time a student is about to finish 80% of their coursework (or earlier), they should select their Dissertation/Advisory Committee (DAC) Chair. Typically, the chair is a member of the regular IFCS faculty, who also meets the requirements for advisory committee membership described below. The chair may be a faculty member in another department if a co-chair, or at least half of the committee have a primary appointment in YFCS. Students are encouraged to consult with the graduate studies coordinator and/or members of the IFCS faculty in selecting a chair.

Dissertation/Advisory Committee Chair’s Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a DAC Chair are to:

• Provide support and information to the student regarding the PhD program, department, and university policies, recognizing that it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to understand and follow all such policies.
• Advise the student concerning any needed changes to the student’s Plan of Study.
• Assist the student in the selection of dissertation/advisory committee (DAC) members and assume responsibility for clarifying their roles.
• Work with student to schedule committee meetings, as needed, for purposes of program planning, defenses of comprehensive exam and dissertation proposals, oral defense of the comprehensive exam, and oral examination in defense of the dissertation.
• Chair committee meetings.
• Provide guidance as the student develops his or her comprehensive exam proposal.
• Provide guidance as the student prepares his or her dissertation proposal, conducts the research, and prepares the dissertation.
• Determine when the dissertation is satisfactory for distribution to the DAC for review, preceding the final oral defense.
• Help students develop professional skills relevant to their career aspirations, including writing of scholarly papers, preparation of grants, and participation in scholarly and public forums.
• Facilitate the student’s career development, including advising regarding about career options; assisting in preparation of application materials for fellowship, grant, and other opportunities; and writing letters of reference and recommendations.
• Prepare and submit the GS5D (Results of the Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy Form) and the GS7D (Dissertation Defense and Approval Form) forms to the Graduate School. Submit other forms, as required.
The Dissertation/Advisory Committee

Students select their Dissertation/Advisory Committee (DAC) members in consultation with their DAC Chair. A minimum of four faculty members must be selected by a student to serve on his or her DAC. All members of a DAC must be current members of the graduate faculty. The majority of the committee, including the chair, must include full-time Clemson University Regular or Administrative faculty as defined in the Faculty Manual. Special faculty (e.g., adjunct faculty, research faculty) or Emeritus faculty may serve as co-chairs or committee members as long as the chair is a permanent faculty member appointed to the graduate faculty and the Special faculty or Emeritus faculty member(s) are members of the graduate faculty. The chair, co-chair, or at least half of the committee must have a primary appointment in the IFCS program. A DAC chair or the Graduate Studies Coordinator can assist students in clarifying if a faculty member is eligible to serve on a student’s committee.

In consultation with the student, the DAC reviews and approves the student’s final Plan of Study, comprehensive exam proposal, comprehensive exams, dissertation proposal, and dissertation, and initiates the recommendation for awarding the degree. DAC members serve as important mentors during the graduate program and often beyond, so careful attention should be given to the selection of DAC members. In doing so, students are encouraged to become familiar with as many of the faculty as possible during the semesters preceding that selection. This may be accomplished by enrolling in courses taught by varying faculty members, reading faculty publications, and meeting with faculty members to exchange ideas either in person or by video conferencing.

If students find that they need to make a change in the composition of their committee once it has been designated, they should feel free to pursue this option. Prior to making such changes, students are encouraged to consult with their DAC Chair, the Graduate Studies Coordinator, or the Graduate Program Director to discuss a process for making such changes. The same procedure is suggested to replace committee members lost through retirement or resignation. However, faculty who retire are eligible to remain on the committee but may not serve as chair. Any changes in committee makeup must be reflected on a student’s online GS2 and finalized prior to submission of the dissertation.
Comprehensive Examination

The doctoral comprehensive examination (DCE), also referred to as a qualifying examination, or “comps,” is a major step on the way towards earning the PhD. This exam marks a transition from the more formal phase of the degree program involving coursework to the important phase of the intensive pursuit of an independent research project.

Purpose

The DCE is a University-required component of the doctoral program of study. The goals of the DCE process are to:

- demonstrate integration and synthesis across and beyond specific course content;
- enhance professional expertise and research competency in targeted subject matter areas; and
- demonstrate professional potential through the following competencies:
  - an understanding of the research process
  - the application of theory and research to address practical problems with diverse populations
  - the effective conceptualization and communication of complex ideas

Students who pass the DCE are advanced to candidacy and may proceed to the dissertation.

Procedures

Preparation. Around the time all coursework is completed and the DAC Chair has been selected, students should determine their plan for the DCE. The DAC (or a minimum of three tenure-track faculty from YFCS) in discussion with the student, determines and approves the content, process, and deadlines for the exam. (Note: As per the CU Graduate School Policies and Procedures handbook, the DAC includes a minimum of 4 faculty. Alternatively, for purposes of comprehensive exams, three tenure-track YFCS faculty may serve as the comprehensive exam committee, with one designated as chair.) The exam involves both written and oral components.

No student takes the comprehensive examination until the following requirements are fulfilled:

1. the student's plan of study (GS2) has been filed with the Graduate School, and
2. the student has completed 80% of the coursework in the program (excluding dissertation hours) and FCS 890 is completed. (FCS 890 is required only if the student does not have a master’s degree.)
In addition, students must be enrolled during the semester the DCE is defended.

**Possible Exam Formats.** Comprehensive exams must include at least **two** of the following:

- Publishable paper (one or two permitted), with the student as first author;
- Grant proposal (one permitted), with the student as the primary author;
- Comprehensive course development (one permitted), including syllabus, all readings and learning activities, and the instructor’s PowerPoint presentations + lecture/discussion notes for at least one-half of the class meetings;
- Written open-book exam (one or two permitted; see section below for details).

**Publishable Paper as Comprehensive Exam.** Possible formats for publishable papers may include, but are not limited to: original empirical studies, literature reviews (e.g., meta-analyses, systematic reviews), concept analyses, and theoretical articles. Papers written for class cannot be used for comprehensive exams.

**Written Open-Book Exam.** Written open-book examinations include questions from one or two of the following areas: (a) family and community life; (b) human rights and social justice; and (c) community development and policy analysis. The number of areas covered depends upon whether the student is choosing to complete one or two examinations in this format. In each examination, students may be expected to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate research methods. Students will be provided 3-5 questions per area, based on the aims of their exams, as decided with their DAC. Students will be expected to answer all but one of the questions.

Students will be expected to produce 15 or more pages for each area covered in the open-book exam (adhering to the Publication Manual of the APA). No reading list will be provided, and no questions will be provided to the students prior to the start of their 4-day examination period. Students may consult any scholarly sources in preparing answers to the questions, but they must properly credit such sources (using APA format).

**Comprehensive Exam Proposal.** In consultation with their DAC Chair, students complete a DCE proposal, which is 2-6 pages (double-spaced) in length. Figures, tables, references, and other relevant material are not included in this page limit. As noted below, the proposal includes a summary of **all proposed products**.

The DCE proposal includes the following:

- Student’s name and student ID number
- DAC Chair and DAC members (or alternatively, DAC chair plus two additional tenure-track YFCS faculty who will review the comprehensive exam.)
• General Summary (approximately ½ page): A brief summary of the proposal, stating how the proposal meets the goals of the IFCS DCE (see above) and will be useful to the student’s academic and professional development (e.g., increase peer-reviewed publications, improve teaching skills, improve grant writing skills, etc.)

• Timeline for completion

• Signature lines for all members of the DAC to indicate their approval of the DCE proposal.

• For open book exams, students should also include:
  • The one or two suggested areas to be covered by the examination and the rationale for selecting the areas. Areas include: (a) family and community life, (b) human rights and social justice, or (c) community development and policy analysis.

• For written exams (publishable papers, grant proposal, or course development), students should also include:
  • A description of each proposed written product (approximately 1 page each), including:
    • The format (publishable paper, major proposal, or comprehensive course development)
    • The background and significance of the written product in advancing knowledge in the field (i.e., a description of the current state of literature or field, concentrating on gaps in current understanding that this DCE product is designed to fill)
    • Source and type of data, if applicable
    • Analysis plan, if applicable
    • Likely publication outlet, if applicable
    • Student’s role in the product development process (particularly if there are additional authors on a publication or other PIs on a grant proposal)
    • Potential challenges and opportunities to complete the product

Once the proposal is completed, the DAC Chair arranges a meeting, during which the DAC members and the student review and discuss the proposal. This discussion will include the relationship of the student's goals to the examination, the format of the exam components, the grading process, and timeline. Once the proposal is approved, all DAC members sign and date the DCE proposal and submit a copy to the Graduate Studies Coordinator.

In cases where students are completing an open-book examination, the DAC will prepare 3-5 questions for each area selected (one or two), and students will be expected to answer all but one question.
Timeline for Completion

**Publishable paper, grant proposal or course development:** Students have six months to complete these written comprehensive exams.

**Open-book written examination:** Students have four days to complete each open-book written examination. If students are completing two open-book written examinations, they must both be completed within a two-week timeframe.

**Involvement of Faculty or Other Students in Preparation of the DCE.** The comprehensive examination is designed to evaluate the student’s intellectual creativity and written communication skills. As such, involvement of the DAC Chair, other faculty member, or other students in the writing or review of the examination is not permitted prior to its formal submission to the DAC Chair. Students who struggle with clear communication in written English are encouraged to seek help from the Clemson University Writing Center (https://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/writing/) or other sources of support for writing.

**Evaluation.** With the exception of the open-book written exam format, all components of the exam must be submitted to the DAC Chair at the same time. (See timeline above for the open-book written examination). For all exam formats, The DAC Chair does not comment on or edit the exam but immediately distributes the exam to all members of the DAC. The DAC members have two weeks to review the exam. DAC members provide written feedback on all components of the exam to the DAC chair, who shares the feedback with the student at least one week prior to the oral defense.

The oral defense of the comprehensive examination occurs after the student has successfully completed both components and DAC members have had an opportunity to review the products. The defense is scheduled within four weeks of the DAC Chair’s submission of the comprehensive exam to the DAC, and the defense includes the student, the DAC Chair, and all DAC members. The defense may take place online or in person. The purpose of the defense is to assess the student’s ability to integrate his or her previous experiences and knowledge gained in the doctoral program as they relate to his or her DCE products. Typically, the defense is 60 minutes in length. When products include a publishable paper, grant proposal, or course development, the defense includes a 10-minute summary of each DCE product by the student (approximately 20 minutes for both products), followed by approximately 30-40 minutes of questions/comments from each DAC member. For open-book examinations, the defense includes approximately 60 minutes of questions from each DAC member. At the conclusion of the Q&A/discussion period, the student is excused, and the DAC meets in executive session. During this time, the DAC discusses the DCE, and each DAC member evaluates the success of the DCE (the written products and oral defense together), using the evaluation categories below. A majority of members must vote for a
pass; a tie vote is considered a fail. Once the committee has reached its decision, the student re-
joins the meeting so that s/he can be informed of the committee’s deliberations and discuss next
steps, as appropriate.

The results of a student’s performance on the comprehensive examination is recorded on the
GS5D form, which is completed by the DAC. Each DAC member must sign (not print or type) his
or her own name. The GS5D form is submitted by the DAC Chair or the Graduate Studies
Coordinator to Enrolled Services. Copies are also given to the student and placed in the student’s
file.

**Evaluation Categories.** Final evaluation of the written and oral comprehensive examination is
based on a majority DAC vote using the categories below. To advance to candidacy, students must
achieve a Pass.

- PASS WITH DISTINCTION, based on superior performance.
- PASS, acceptable performance.
- FAIL WITH THE OPPORTUNITY FOR REMEDIATION AND REPEAT OF THE
  EXAMINATION, based on fair performance in some areas and minimal or unacceptable
  performance in others.
- FAIL WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY TO REPEAT, based on minimal or unacceptable
  performance in almost all areas.

Students who fail the comprehensive examination may be offered the opportunity to repeat the
exam one time. Retakes on the comprehensive examination shall be taken within one year of a
failure.
The doctoral dissertation is perhaps the most important stage in a graduate student’s career.

Dissertation Proposal

The first step is to write a dissertation proposal. A typical proposal includes the first three chapters of the dissertation: (1) introduction, (2) literature review, and (3) research design and methods. Students should put a good deal of thought and preparation into the proposal, as it will be the core of their written dissertation. The more complete the proposal can be, the better the DAC will be able to understand the proposed project and properly advise the student, and the less work will need to be done to complete the dissertation. See Appendix C for more detailed information about preparation of the dissertation proposal. The DAC Chair acts as the student’s advocate to the DAC. The Chair will consult with the student to develop the proposal, provide feedback on the proposal, distribute it to the rest of the committee, and arrange for a time and location for a proposal defense.

The proposal defense takes place 2-4 weeks after DAC members have received the proposal. During the defense, the student provides a brief presentation of the proposed study, and DAC members are given an opportunity to ask questions and provide suggestions. If approved, all DAC members sign and date a copy of the proposal and submit it to the Graduate Studies Coordinator. If not approved, the student revises the proposal, in consultation with the DAC Chair, and re-submits the proposal to the committee for feedback and approval. Once approved, the student may begin his or her dissertation research.

IRB Approval

Those dissertation research projects that involve human subjects must have approval from Clemson University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before a student may begin to conduct any research. The IRB website contains important information to help the student and DAC Chair determine if the project requires IRB review and what procedures must be followed.

Writing the Dissertation

After the DAC has approved a student’s dissertation proposal and IRB approval has been granted, work on the dissertation may proceed. This work is supervised by the Chair, but each member of the DAC should be engaged in the ongoing process since they all must approve the finished draft of the dissertation. Any significant changes from the dissertation proposal should be approved in
writing by the DAC. Many students find it useful to join or develop a dissertation support group with other students.

The heading and citation style of the dissertation should follow the APA Publication Manual (6th Edition). Clemson University has many helpful online resources, including Clemson University Thesis or Dissertation: Guidelines, Tips & Tools.

After the DAC Chair indicates that the dissertation is in completed form and acceptable for examination by the DAC, the student must submit an electronic form of the completed dissertation to the Chair, who will distribute it to all members of the DAC. As per Graduate School policy, DAC members must have a minimum of three weeks to review the student’s work before the dissertation defense.

**Graduate School Deadlines**

As per Clemson University policy, all requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within eight (8) years from the date students matriculated into a doctoral degree program at Clemson. A student may petition the Graduate School for additional time with approval of the DAC.

When planning a timeline for completion of the dissertation, students should pay close attention to Clemson’s graduation deadlines.

**The Dissertation Defense**

The dissertation defense is a University-required component of the doctoral program. Defending one’s research is a fundamental facet of scientific scholarship. It is through this process that the student clarifies, validates, and demonstrates the significance of his or her research. As such, the oral defense represents the culmination of the matriculation process.

**Scheduling the Defense.** Students should work with their DAC Chair to schedule their dissertation defense, which must be held at least two weeks (14 calendar days) prior to the deadline for submission of the GS7D form, or a minimum of four weeks (28 calendar days) prior to the commencement at which the student plans to graduate. This provides minimal time for edits and responses to the defense, formatting review, and further edits based on formatting review. Students are encouraged to schedule defenses as early as is practical. Students must be registered for at least one credit hour during the semester in which the defense is conducted and they plan to graduate.

**Notification of Enrolled Services.** Students should notify Enrolled Student Services of the date, time, location and other details of their defense at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the defense. To do this, students should complete the online defense form that will add their defense to the
CU student defense calendar. Submitting the form will generate an email to Enrolled Services, and this email will serve as the official written notification.

Structure of the Oral Dissertation Defense. The dissertation defense is a presentation of the research carried out in the dissertation, including the theory and literature upon which the study was based, research questions, methodology, findings, and implications. Typically, the presentation lasts 30 minutes, followed by 40-60 minutes of questions and discussion. All DAC members must participate in the dissertation defense, either in person or online. No defense should be scheduled when a member of the committee cannot attend. The dissertation and the student’s performance on the final oral examination must be approved by a positive vote by at least three-fourths of the DAC, and with no more than one dissenting vote from among the committee members.

Completion. Students revise their dissertation to respond to written and/or oral DAC recommendations. Once the student’s dissertation has been approved, the Chair submits a Dissertation Defense and Approval Form (GS7D) to Enrolled Services. This form must include signatures by all DAC members.

Electronic Submission to the Graduate School. Upon final approval of the dissertation by DAC members, students must ensure that the manuscript is formatted properly, consistent with Graduate School regulations, and then electronically submit the dissertation to the Graduate School.

Public Defense. After successfully concluding the oral defense with the DAC, it is highly recommended that the student schedule a public presentation of the dissertation. Although the public presentation is not mandatory, it is recommended as an opportunity for the student to share research results with the public. It also is an opportunity to hone students’ research communication and presentation skills.
Overview and Availability of Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are meant to provide students with some of the financial resources necessary to complete their degrees. Full-time IFCS PhD students in good standing may be supported as Graduate Assistants (GAs), depending on the availability of funding. Assistantships carry a work obligation of 10-20 hours a week, provide a tuition waiver, and a stipend. Funding for graduate assistantships comes from a variety of sources, such as faculty research grants or general department funds. Assistantships are normally limited to students based in the upstate of South Carolina.

Duties & Supervision

The duties of GAs vary depending on the projects they are assigned and with whom they are working. Each GA should clarify their responsibilities and work schedules with his or her direct supervisor. Their supervisor will also instruct the GA on the Clemson on-line reporting system. Most GA positions require students to be self-directed, but students are encouraged to ask their supervisor for assistance, as needed, to carry out their duties. We want to ensure that students maintain a healthy work-study balance. Students should communicate regularly with their supervisors regarding the number of hours per week they are working, concerns they may have, and any events that might prevent them from fulfilling their responsibilities.

Evaluation

The GA’s performance will be reviewed, in writing, at the end of the spring semester and earlier if necessary. IFCS Graduate Assistantships are usually 12 month appointments and are assigned on a year-to-year basis. Renewals are not guaranteed and are at the discretion of the department, based on satisfactory progress in a student’s academic program, work responsibilities, and fund availability.

Payroll and Paydays

Graduate Assistants are considered Clemson University employees and are paid bi-monthly, on the 15th and the last day of each month. Students will need to complete the necessary hiring paperwork before their first paycheck can be issued. Graduate Assistants should be aware that Clemson operates on a two-week payroll lag and it may be a month after their start date before they receive their first paycheck. Students should complete their paperwork as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delays in the issuing of their first paycheck. Paychecks are distributed by direct deposit. Mikah Jones in the CBSHS Business Office assists students in completing their
paperwork. Mikah can be reached at mikahj@clemson.edu. If students have any questions about their assistantship they are encouraged to contact the IFCS Graduate Studies Coordinator, Shelli Charles at shellic@clemson.edu or 864 656-3410.

Assistantship stipends are considered income and are taxable, so state and federal taxes will be withheld from stipends. Students should contact Clemson’s Human Resource Office if they have questions. International students must work with Clemson’s Office of Global Engagement to insure the proper documentation is provided to be approved to work at Clemson. They may also want to make an appointment to meet the International Human Resource specialist to discuss their individual tax situation.

Holidays and Personal Leave

Graduate students are considered Clemson employees and entitled to paid days off when the University is officially closed. The Human Resources website lists specific holiday dates. As employees, students will be expected to work during traditional student breaks (fall break, winter break, spring break) unless prior arrangements are made with their supervisor. If the university is open, GAs should consider it a work day.

Clemson University does not provide vacation for graduate assistants. However, it has been YFCS policy to allow graduate assistants to accrue up to 10 days of paid personal leave per academic year (mid-August to mid-August). Personal leave may be used for vacation or illness. By University policy, students may request up to 4 weeks of unpaid leave annually for one’s own or a family member’s illness or a death in the family. Up to 6 weeks of unpaid maternity leave is also available. Personal leave should be coordinated with the student’s supervisor, so there is minimal interference with research projects. Students must submit a written request to use paid personal leave, which should be copied to the Graduate Studies Coordinator. Any leave beyond the 10-day allotment requires approval from of the supervisor and notification of the Graduate Studies Coordinator and the Department Chair. GAs are not paid for unused leave, nor are they allowed to carry their leave over from one academic year to another.

International students, on a student visa, may not be permitted to work outside Clemson University. For more information, students should consult the Office of Global Engagement.

Termination

Assistantships may be terminated by the department for poor performance, failure to meet academic requirements (GPA or credit hours), or lack funding. Every effort will be made to give adequate notice if an assistantship is being reduced or terminated.
Office Procedures

Office supplies, the copier, and the FAX machine are located in room 2038 Barre Hall and in Suite E3 at the University Center in Greenville (UCG). Office supplies are meant to be used for work associated with the assistantship. If supplies are needed, students should contact their supervisor.

Long distance access codes are available for work-related calls. A GA’s supervisor or the Graduate Studies Coordinator can provide the codes, as needed. Long distances calls to the 864 area code (South Carolina Upstate) do not require a long distance access code.

Students may be asked to copy materials by their supervisor. They should ask for the correct code to use when making copies, as all copying is charged to specific contracts or grants.

Students should not use the copier or printers for material related to their coursework, unless specifically directed to do so by the course instructor. Copying in volume is expensive and we are not able to support copying for personal use, even when connected with students’ academic program. Students are provided a copying/printing allowance each semester that can be used on campus or at Clemson facilities in Greenville.
Thriving as a PhD Student in IFCS

Overview

Graduate students are pursuing an education to become the next generation of scientists, scholars, and policy experts. The field of International Family and Community Studies will move forward to the extent that students are well educated; therefore, students should think about the requirements of the program as a means to an end. The end for each student is to become the best scientist, teacher, policy expert, or scholar possible. The means are coursework, research projects, comprehensive exams, assistantship assignments, and dissertation. Students are encouraged to remain focused on their fundamental goals and try not to get distracted by minor problems and issues. It is important for students to think about all the components of their education—not just course requirements.

Office Space

Students have shared office space in the Graduate Studies Room in Barre Hall at Clemson and shared open space in our suite at the University Center (UCG). Students may reserve a carrel at the Cooper Library in two-hour blocks.

Mailboxes

Student mailboxes are located in room 2038 Barre Hall at Clemson and in our suite at the UCG. See YFCS staff for a box and for the code at Barre Hall Clemson or a key to the door to E3, our suite, at the UCG.

Communication

PhD program, department and university announcements will be sent by E-mail to your Clemson email address. It is important to check your Clemson email account regularly.

Research Projects

The dissertation is certainly an important research product; however, a successful graduate student should consider the dissertation to be only a part of the process in developing herself or himself academically and professionally. It is critical that students become involved with other research projects, varying the type and extent of involvement on each so as to get the most out of every experience.
Students are encouraged to join the Data Analysis and Writing Working Group (DAWG). The purpose of the DAWG is to provide IFCS students with an opportunity to refine their data analysis skills and gain experience in writing for publication. This group is specifically aimed at IFCS students who may wish to use existing data to submit an article for publication, submit a paper or poster for presentation at a conference, and/or complete a comprehensive exam component. Participation in DAWG is either in person or via Adobe Connect. Although the DAWG may be an excellent resource for students to access a database and develop an idea for a written comprehensive exam, the comps product must be the student’s own work and not a collaborative effort. For more information about the DAWG, contact Matt Hudson-Flege (mflege@clemson.edu).

The Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Students are encouraged to begin to prepare their CV from their first day in graduate school. For assistance, students should consult their advisor, fellow graduate students, and/or Clemson University’s Center for Career and Professional Development.

Clemson Student Resources

Clemson University offers a wide variety of resources for students, including clubs, student organizations, leadership, and advisory groups. Particularly for students located in the Upstate of South Carolina, there are many ways to get involved on campus.
Appendices

Appendix A: GS2 Proposed Plan of Study Worksheet
Appendix B: Course Waiver Request Form
Appendix C: IFCS General Dissertation Proposal Guidelines
Appendix A: GS2 Proposed Plan of Study Worksheet

### GS2 - PLAN OF STUDY

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CUID#: Degree Sought: Major: Minor:

If doctoral degree, does student have master’s degree? [ ] Yes [ ] No

- Master’s Non-thesis, GS-7 required
- Master’s Non-thesis, no GS-7 required
- Other

The following undergraduate deficiencies, departmental and language requirements must be met prior to admission to candidacy:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREDS COURSES (GRADUATE LEVEL ONLY)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course Prefix and No. (ex: ENGL 809)</td>
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<td>Title of Course as Listed in Catalog</td>
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<td>Semester Credit Hrs.</td>
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<td>Date Completed or to be Completed</td>
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**IMPORTANT:** INITIAL BELOW AND CONTINUE ON TO THE NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.

Student [ ] Committee Chair [ ] Co-Chair [ ] Committee Member [ ] Committee Member [ ] Committee Member

Electronic version of the GS2 Plan of Study Worksheet: [https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/plan-of-study/index.html](https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/plan-of-study/index.html)
Appendix B: Course Waiver Request Form

Name________________________________________________ Email________________________________

Undergraduate School:_____________________________________________ Major:____________________ Degree:____________________

Graduate School:_____________________________________________ Major:_________________________ Degree:____________________

Graduate School:_____________________________________________ Major:_________________________ Degree:____________________

Student Signature:______________________________________________________

Course Waiver Requested: Number________________ Course Name:__________________________________________________________

Relevant Coursework (Transcripts and syllabi must be attached)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Date Taken (Not more than 5 years ago)</th>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
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Relevant Work Experience (Attach Resume):

*Brief explanation of relevant work experience (Please use additional pages to expand this section, if needed)*

*List attached relevant documents that support your work experience*

---

**Faculty Decision:** On the basis of your prior coursework and experience, your request to waive the following course is: Approved Denied

________________________________________  ____________  ______________________________
Faculty Committee Signature Date Department
Appendix C: IFCS General Dissertation Proposal Guidelines

In general, a dissertation proposal should follow the format of the first three chapters of your dissertation. The length will be agreed between you and your DAC chair but the proposal should adhere to the following guidelines:

**Title Page**

The title should include the exact title of your study, the month and year of the proposal, your name, and the name of our doctoral program. The title page is not numbered.

**Abstract**

A one to two page summary of the purpose and content of the proposal. The abstract includes the problem statement and a description of the methodology and procedures. The abstract is written in the future tense.

**Chapter I**

This is the introduction and explicates the reasons you are undertaking the study. It includes a clear and concise statement of the problem, defined in specific terms, a summary of the literature supporting the study, the relevance of the study to the field, and the aims of the study. State your research questions and hypotheses. Provide conceptual definitions of the major constructs included in your study. Summarize the chapter and state what follows chapter I.

**Chapter II**

This is a review of the literature and begins by explaining the purpose of the review. Organize the literature by subject headings reflecting your research questions. The literature review presents the context of your study. Each construct relevant to your study should be included and irrelevant constructs excluded. Present relevant previous work in each conceptual area with appropriate citations. You want to highlight what is known and what is not known (gaps in the literature). Present significant findings and major conclusions from the literature interpreting and evaluating the works you cite and noting their impact on the field and on your study. Remember that you are laying out a logical argument for your study, leading the reader from a general understanding of the state of the field to a specific understanding of the concepts included in your study. End with a summary and a clear statement as to why your study is important to the field.

**Chapter III**
This is the methods section, indicating in detail the manner in which the study will be conducted. Start with a clear statement of the overall design of the study (a one-factor completely randomized design, a cross-sectional, correlational design). Define your study population and indicate how the sample will be drawn. Provide conceptual and operational definitions for each construct included in your study and indicate how each construct will be measured, including the psychometric properties of measures to be used. Discuss the procedures to be used to collect data and how the data will be organized and stored. Detail your approach to data analysis, including data checking and cleaning, data transformations, and your major approaches to analysis. Include a discussion of the limitations of your study and how these will be handled. Remember that your research methods and approach to analysis should align with the purpose of your study and your research questions and hypotheses.

References

Be sure to include a reference list in accordance with APA style.