

FAMILY SCIENCE (FMSC)

Graduate Degree Program
College: Public Health

Abstract

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Family Science provides an interdisciplinary, research-oriented approach to the discovery and application of knowledge about families and health. The program examines both internal family processes and the dynamic interaction of families with the biological, psychological, social, political, and economic aspects of their environment. The program of study provides doctoral students with a broad knowledge of family theory, multiple research methodologies, family policy, family programs, racial/ethnic minority families, and major issues confronting contemporary families. Students also learn to design and implement culturally responsive interventions addressing family needs, to design and perform culturally relevant program evaluations, and to analyze the consequences of public/private policies on family health and well-being.

The Department of Family Science prepares students to describe, explain, and improve the quality of family life and health through applied research, education, therapy, human services, policy analysis, and advocacy. The approach is interdisciplinary, emphasizing individual, interpersonal, and social change. The program of study is based on a system or ecological paradigm, combining the perspectives of interrelated professional fields including family science, couple and family therapy, family health, family policy, behavioral science, and human services. Graduates are prepared for careers in the public, non-profit and private sectors, including university teaching, research, family policy analysis, and administrative positions in human service and public health programs.

Students applying to the PhD program in Family Science should have a Master's degree in Family Science or a related behavioral or social science.

Financial Assistance

Fellowships and Graduate Assistantships are available to students admitted into the Family Science Ph.D. program.

Contact

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Website: sph.umd.edu/phd-family-science (<https://sph.umd.edu/academics/doctral-degrees/phd-family-science/>)

Courses: EPIB (<https://umd-curr.courseleaf.com/graduate/courses/epib/>) FMSC (<https://umd-curr.courseleaf.com/graduate/courses/fmsc/>) SPHL (<https://umd-curr.courseleaf.com/graduate/courses/sphl/>)

Relationships: Epidemiology (EPID) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/epidemiology-epid/>) Psychology (PSYC) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/psychology-psyc/>) Sociology (SOCY) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/sociology-socy/>)

ADMISSIONS

The **Ph.D. program in Family Science** accepts applications through the TerpEngage Graduate Admissions System (<https://terpengage.force.com/community/CustomLoginPage/?GradApp=True>).

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree
- Minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA
- Transcripts from all previous coursework
- English proficiency test score (TOEFL, IELTS or PTE) (international applicants (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements/>))
- Statement of purpose and objectives, including career and educational goals, professional experience, areas of interest, and faculty you are interested in working with
- Response to personal experiences question(s)

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree in a relevant field
- Letters of Recommendation (3)
- CV/Resume
- One writing sample is required. (up to two more optional).
Examples of writing samples include published manuscripts, undergraduate or graduate theses, research papers, etc. If you submit a published manuscript and you are not the first author, describe the contributions you made to the publication.
- Supplemental Application (required):
 - Please provide a personal statement (1 page) addressing the following: (1) how your personal and professional experiences contribute to the social, intellectual, or cultural diversity within a campus community and the discipline and (2) any past experiences with advancing social justice as well as your vision for how your scholarship will contribute to advancing social justice in the discipline
 - Upload the statement using the specific form (linked above)
- GRE scores are **not required** for this program and won't be reviewed
- Applicants being considered for the program will be invited for an interview

Note for applicants with foreign credentials:

- The UMD graduate application requires the upload of unofficial transcripts issued in the original language along with a literal English translation. Visit the Graduate School website for additional information (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/international-admissions/>)
- Evidence of English Language proficiency is required if the applicant does not hold a degree from a U.S. institution or one of the English-

speaking countries listed on the Graduate School website (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements/>)

state-of-the-art facility. Master's and doctoral students use data collected at the Center for research projects.

For detailed instructions on how to apply, please visit the School of Public Health Website: sph.umd.edu/graduate-application-process (<https://sph.umd.edu/graduate-application-process/>)

Application Deadlines

Type of Applicant	Fall Deadline
Domestic Applicants	
US Citizens and Permanent Residents	December 5, 2025
	The priority deadline to apply is November 7, 2025.
International Applicants	
F (student) or J (exchange visitor) visas; A, E, G, H, I and L visas, and immigrants	December 5, 2025
	The priority deadline to apply is November 7, 2025.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

Program Website: sph.umd.edu/phd-family-science (<https://sph.umd.edu/academics/doctoral-degrees/phd-family-science/>)

Application Process: gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/application-process/step-step-guide-applying (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/application-process/step-step-guide-applying/>)

Admissions FAQ: sph.umd.edu/graduate-application-faqs (<https://sph.umd.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-application-faqs/>)

Department Graduate Assistantship Policies: <https://umd.app.box.com/s/ivvw3ccbchudy4vj18e0yth5eg82r9qv> (<https://umd.app.box.com/s/ivvw3ccbchudy4vj18e0yth5eg82r9qv/>)

REQUIREMENTS

- Family Science, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/family-science-fmsc/family-science-phd/>)

FACILITIES AND SPECIAL RESOURCES

The University's close proximity to the nation's capital, the state capital in Annapolis, federal executive departments, and headquarters of national professional and public interest associations provide research and internship placements for studying family policy unmatched by any other graduate program in the discipline. The Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area offers rich opportunities for research on culturally and socioeconomically diverse families. The campus and department have excellent computer facilities. Students have ready access to the University's extensive library systems, as well as holdings from the Library of Congress, the National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Archives, and many other library collections.

Center for Healthy Families: This Center is the training and research arm of the Couple and Family Therapy Program in the Department of Family Science. Departmental graduate students and faculty provide clinical and educational services to families from surrounding communities in this