



## **Family and Consumer Sciences Education Student Handbook**

Revised 2023

### **Welcome**

You have been admitted to a unique online program which will give you the opportunity to obtain your master's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences Education from a distance while working with college faculty from multiple universities and students from a variety of backgrounds. We are committed to working with you and helping you develop your plans to reach your goals throughout the program.

This program is offered and administered by a group of universities and therefore has some unique procedures that will be addressed in the following information. We hope that this handbook will assist you in completing your program by providing a guide for your enrollment and program progress.

### **Purpose of this Manual**

The purpose of this manual is to supplement the [Great Plains IDEA Student Handbook](#). The goal is to help you efficiently and effectively succeed in your master's program. It is in your best interest to carefully read the entire manual and refer to it frequently as you proceed throughout the program. Manual updates will be posted on the GP IDEA website.

Another critical resource for your success is the [FCS Orientation Website](#). It will help you understand how the program works, where to find additional resources, and introduce you to the faculty team.

Please talk to your adviser about any unclear points. This manual does not displace or in any way void the graduate school bulletin at your home institution. Additionally, while this document is updated periodically, it may be superseded by the Great Plains IDEA faculty decisions or changes in university policy. We would appreciate receiving your input and suggestions for future editions of this manual.

## Program Descriptions

Courses are offered on a regular basis, with the participating institutions sharing the teaching responsibilities for the courses. There are two options:

### **Option A: Master's degree in FCS Education for those seeking initial teacher certification**

Option A is a 38- to 41-credit-hour program of study for students with a bachelor's degree in an FCS Education content specialization or a related area who seek initial teacher certification or licensure in FCS Education. This includes 2 credit hours of practicum and 6-9 credit hours of student teaching (depending on certification requirements). Standards for teacher certification vary by state. Students are responsible for identifying and meeting requirements in the state where they want to be certified. This may include additional coursework, tests, or other requirements.

### **Option B: Master's degree in FCS Education for certified FCS teachers and professionals**

Option B is a 36-credit-hour program of study for professionals in FCS Education including certified teachers and Extension educators who seek professional development and career advancement. This program provides continuing education to maintain and sustain high quality FCS programs in middle/junior and high schools, Extension, administrative, and other settings.

## About the Great Plains IDEA Partners to FCS Education Program

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (Great Plains IDEA) is a partnership of 19 public university members providing access to the best educational opportunities by collaboratively developing and delivering high-quality online academic programs in high demand professional fields.

Six Great Plains IDEA institutions or affiliates are currently participating in the graduate program in Family and Consumer Sciences Education. Additional institutions may join the group as it continues. Degree titles vary by institution. The current institutions and degree titles are:

Central Washington University	Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences Education
North Dakota State University	Master of Education in Family and Consumer Sciences Education
Oklahoma State University	Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences Education
South Dakota State University	Master of Science in Human Sciences—Family and Consumer Sciences Education Specialization

Texas Tech University	Master of Science in Family and Consumer Sciences Education
University of Nebraska—Lincoln	Master of Science in Child, Youth, and Family Studies

## Glossary of Terms

In addition to the terms identified in the [Great Plains IDEA Student Handbook](#), the following terms are important to the Family and Consumer Sciences Education students.

**LMS—Learning Management System (or Course Platform)**—The delivery system used to access a course (e.g., Blackboard, Canvas, or D2L)

**White List or Safe Sender List** – A list that identifies addresses from which you **do** want to receive mail (e.g., participating universities, your instructors, and Great Plains IDEA Campus Coordinators).

**Certification Officer** – A professional who (1) ensures a teacher certification program complies with the state department of education’s rules and regulations for teacher certification, and (2) verifies candidates have met the state requirements to be recommended for state certification.

## Graduate Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Graduate school differs from your undergraduate experience. You will need to take on more responsibility and initiative than you did as an undergraduate student in order to successfully complete your program. Time management and motivation are essential to your success in classes and other program requirements.

You will need to:

- Become familiar with the information in the [Great Plains IDEA Student Handbook](#) and this addendum and with the applicable rules, regulations, and procedures they contain.
- Learn and adhere to the academic rules, procedures, and policies of your home institution.
- Ensure that you have adequate technical skills, adequate computer hardware, and high-speed Internet access.
- Check and adhere to deadlines of your home institution.
- Meet the requirements for degree completion in a timely manner.
- Follow scholarly guidelines for maintaining academic integrity.
- Exhibit the highest standards of professionalism in teaching, research, and scholarship.

## Family and Consumer Sciences Master's Degree Course Requirements

To qualify for the master's degree, students must complete the course work and meet the master's degree requirements of their home institution. The degree requirements for each of the options are listed below.

### Option A: Master's degree in FCS Education for those seeking initial teacher certification

The Option A master's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences Education is a 38-41-credit hour post-baccalaureate program of study. It is intended for those who are seeking to become licensed in teaching Family and Consumer Sciences. The program consists of the following:

- Ten 3-credit online courses
- Two practica of 1 credit each (2 credits total) which can be completed near the student's location
- A student teaching experience with variable credit (6-9 semester credits), depending on certification requirements of the state in which students plan to work in. To clarify if you can enroll for course certification and state requirements, please consult your campus coordinator or academic adviser.

Click here to find course descriptions for [Option A](#)

The titles of the required courses and number of credits are listed below.

Education in a Pluralistic Society	3
Exceptional Learners in the Secondary School Classroom	3
FCS Methods I (taken concurrently with a practicum)	3
FCS Methods II (taken concurrently with a practicum)	3
History and Philosophy of FCS & Career & Tech Ed	3
Occupational Programs in FCS	3
Practicum (two for 1 credit each)	2
Psychology of Adolescence	3
Reading in the Content Area	3
Research in FCS	3
Teaching FCS with Technology	3
Student Teaching (10 weeks minimum)	6-9

\*\*In addition, subject matter courses may be needed to meet licensure requirements

**Teacher Certification and Licensure.** Teachers must be certified within the state they wish to teach. Each state has different requirements. This program will provide the pedagogy portion needed for teacher certification. Students will need to seek subject matter courses offered through distance technology or take courses from institutions within their area to meet certification requirements.

Assistance will be provided to candidates in contacting the licensing authority in their home states and understanding the requirements for licensure prior to completion of the program. After completing the degree, it is the students' responsibility to complete the required application process, which may include a background check, in their state for certification or licensure.

**Option B: Master's degree in FCS Education for certified FCS teachers and professionals**

The Option B master's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences Education is a 36-credit hour post-baccalaureate program of study. It is intended for those already licensed in teaching Family and Consumer Sciences or those who are seeking professional development and career advancement in FCS professions such as Extension. Click here to find course descriptions for [Option B](#). The program consists of the following:

Required Core Courses (21 credits)

- Evaluation and Assessment in FCS Education Programs (3 credits)
- History & Philosophy of FCS Ed. and Career and Technical Ed. (3 credits)
- Occupational Programs in FCS (3 credits)
- Reading in the Content Area (3 credits)
- Research Experience in FCS (3 credits)
- FCCLA (3 credits)
- Teaching FCS with Technology (3 credits)

Supervision and Administration—choose 1 course (3 credits)

- Administration of FCS Education Programs (3 credits)
- Techniques of Supervision (3 credits)

Approved FCS Content or Education Electives – (9 credits)

- Curriculum Development (3 credits)
- Education in a Pluralistic Society: Foundations and Issues (3 credits)
- Exceptional Learners in the Secondary School Classroom (3 credits)
- Psychology of Adolescence (3 credits)
- Adult Learners (3 credits)
- Critical Science Perspectives in FCS Education (3 credits)
- Family Issues and Social Action (Public Policy) (3 credits)
- Profession in Focus (3 credits)

Research/Thesis (1-6 credits)

- Required or elective courses such as creative components, directed studies, practica, research and theses are available through your home university. Consult with your academic advisor about course selection and scheduling.

## Application and Admission

Your first step is to determine which institution to choose as your home institution and then apply to that institution for admission. In terms of curriculum and fees, it does not matter which institution you choose as all share a flat-rate common price. [Visit the Great Plains IDEA website to learn how to apply.](#)

[Tuition information can be found on the Great Plains IDEA website.](#)

## After Admission

If you change your name at any time during the program, please make sure your advisor and Campus Coordinator know. You may need to change your email address and login information at one or more institutions.

Complete these five steps before your first day of class to ensure you're ready to start your master's program.

1. **Explore the [FCS Orientation Website](#).** This resource was created by faculty just for you! It will help you understand how the program works, where to find important resources, and introduce you to the faculty team.
  2. **Visit the [GP IDEA website](#).** Specifically, check the [Newly Admitted](#) and [Processes and Forms](#) sections.
  3. **Activate your Student Email.** Your email address for your home institution will be sent to you when you are accepted into the program. Your email address is the primary method of communication between you and your instructors and your home institution. Your home institution will provide you with an email account. It is strongly recommended that you use your home institution email account as your link between you and your home institution. Other accounts often hinder communication because messages may be filtered as spam. The [Communication](#) GP IDEA page includes some tips concerning email.
- Official Communication Tool. It is the responsibility of each student to establish and regularly check their individual university email account(s). Program and course announcements are *only* issued on these accounts.
  - Appropriate Use of Email. Use of electronic mail and network connections at the participating institutions is a privilege and not a right. It is the student's responsibility to follow computer and network use policies of any of the participating institutions. Examples of unacceptable email account usage includes sending advertising, junk mail, chain letters, mass mailings, and harassing or intimidating messages.

- Assuring that you Receive Emails. Students should check their spam or junk mail folders and white list for any email address from participating universities (Campus Coordinators, advisors, instructors, etc.) going into these folders. To help assure receiving messages from these groups, place these addresses in your email address book and in your white list or safe sender list.
  - Email Etiquette. It is expected that all messages to other students, faculty, and Campus Coordinators will be sent with a relevant subject line as many programs automatically send messages with no subject line to a spam folder. Students are encouraged to learn about other guidelines for email and discussion board etiquette and to follow these as they participate in their classes.
4. **Prepare your Technology.** Technology access and use is obviously crucial to any online course or program.
- Recommended Technology. You will need to have high speed Internet and an updated web browser for your courses. Check to see if there is a preferred browser for each LMS. You will also need email access. See more information at the [Technology Requirements FAQ](#).
  - Virus Software is Essential. Students are expected to use and regularly update antivirus software on their computers. Some institutions use virus detection software to scan email entering and leaving the system. However, delivery systems used in the Great Plains IDEA Family and Consumer Sciences Education program (e.g., Desire2Learn, Blackboard, and Canvas) may not have antivirus software built into these systems. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to scan all materials to be submitted for course work. Because of the nature of the program and the extent to which materials are shared between and among students and institutions, students are strongly advised to acquire and install antivirus software on each of their computers and to keep their antivirus definition files up-to-date.
5. **Investigate Financial Aid/Scholarships.** Students may be eligible for financial assistance and scholarships through their home institution. Consult your home institution's Office of Financial Assistance for details about how to apply. For additional resources, see the GP IDEA website [Cost](#) page.

## Registering for Classes

Students enroll in courses at their home institution through their Campus Coordinator and according to the enrollment dates set at their university. Course names and numbers vary by institution. Each course has a corresponding course information webpage for [Option A](#) or [Option B](#). The course information webpage contains instructor contact information, textbook information, and course access information. The anticipated rotation of courses is available in the course planner for [Option A](#) or [Option B](#). Course descriptions can be found for [Option A](#) and [Option B](#).

Check the following GP IDEA pages for more information on registering for classes:  
[Enrollment](#) and [Enrollment Checklist](#)

## Taking a Class

**Email Set-up and Access.** When you enroll in class you will be given instructions on how to set up your email. Your email address will be different at each institution--please follow instructions on how to set up your email for the class and how to check that email. In most cases, you will need your student number/ID to establish your email account. At some teaching institutions your student ID and email address and password will remain the same for the duration of the program and at others those numbers will change periodically. At some institutions the email ID remains the same but the password changes.

**Purchasing Textbooks.** Program faculty will provide the Campus Coordinator with a list of textbooks to be used in their course at least two weeks prior to the start of the class. Prior to the beginning of each semester, the Campus Coordinator will direct students to the course information webpages for the course(s) in which they are enrolled. The course information page ([Option A](#) or [Option B](#)) will indicate the required text or materials for the course. If the materials/text is available at the teaching institution, information for ordering will be given. Some students choose to purchase texts from other vendors (e.g., Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.); however, students are expected to be attentive to the edition of the textbook being used when ordering from other sources.

**Course Delivery System.** Students access courses through the Course Management Systems (CMS)/Learning Management System (LMS)/Course Platform at the teaching institution for a given course. Visit our [LMS webpage](#) to learn more about the LMS used by each university.

**Tuition Billing.** Tuition billing and payment are done by the student's home institution. Some institutions mail bills to the students and others place tuition bills/receipts online at a designated location.

**Dropping a Course.** A Great Plains IDEA student requesting to drop a course must follow the student's home institution's policies and procedures. If you need to drop a course, you must notify your home institution Campus Coordinator, the teaching institution Campus Coordinator, and the instructor of the course. Refunds are based on the policies of the student's home institution.

**Leave of Absence.** If you find you are unable to take any courses during a semester, please check with your advisor to make sure any necessary forms have been filed to eliminate the possibility of a penalty being imposed for not having continuous enrollment.

## Academic Performance and Standards

Students are expected to maintain a minimum grade point average in their program. Only grades of “A,” “B,” “C,” or “S(atisfactory)” or “P(ass)” are acceptable for graduate credit. Some programs do not accept grades below a certain level. Students should identify the regulations regarding grades in their home institution. Students are expected to meet the standards for performance at their home institution regarding incomplete grades, time to complete the degree, yearly reviews, and other standards.

**Filing a Degree Plan or Program of Study.** You must file a program of study or degree plan according to the guidelines of your home institution in consultation with your advisor.

**Academic Writing in the Digital Age.** Your online classes will include a variety of digital communication methods. Although you may have communicated digitally in the past, it is important to remember that, when taking a course, you need to be communicating in a professional manner. Writing resources can be found at the GP IDEA [Writing Resources](#) page or by visiting the OWL website: <http://owl.excelsior.edu/posts/view/265>

**Academic Integrity Policy.** Please see and follow the policies found on the GP IDEA [Academic Integrity](#) page. You also must follow the academic integrity of your home institution.

**Grade Appeals.** Grade appeals for all courses will be handled by the teaching university. You will not have access to the grade appeal process at your home university unless it is also the teaching university for the relevant course. [Grades and Academic Integrity](#)

**Grievances.** Please see the [Complaint and Grievance Process](#) information on the GP IDEA website.

## Resources

**Library.** Great Plains IDEA students will have access to the online library system of their home institution. Students may receive access to the library resources at the teaching institution if the instructor expects students to use such resources. Also see the [Research and Library Resources](#) GP IDEA page.

### Disability Support Services.

Any students with disabilities or individuals who need accommodations throughout this program are encouraged to consult the Disability Support Services Office at their home institution. Please see the GP IDEA [Disability Support Services](#) page for more information.

### People You Will Find Helpful.

Family and Consumer Sciences Education Faculty Coordinators (Institutional Representative). Each participating institution has one faculty member designated as the coordinator of the program for that institution. The Faculty Coordinator helps students with initial admission

and enrollment questions or refers the student to the appropriate program faculty member or Campus Coordinator.

Program Faculty Members. A list of program faculty members can be found at the bottom of [our program webpage](#). These faculty:

- Teach the courses in the program at each institution
- Answer questions related to the courses they teach
- Refer the student to appropriate sources for help

Faculty Advisors. A faculty advisor will be assigned when a student is admitted to the program. The advisor can assist with course planning, course substitutions, internships and other needs/concerns that arise during the course of the program. The advisor should help students keep up-to-date with program and university policies, procedures, and requirements.

Campus Coordinators. The Great Plains IDEA Campus Coordinator is the “go to” person for questions about the program. The Great Plains IDEA Campus Coordinators can be found on the [FCS webpage](#). The Campus Coordinator may help the student in the following ways:

- Answer questions or refer student to appropriate individuals
- Clarify graduate policies and forms such as Certification Plan, Program of Study, Student Acknowledgment Form, intake, midterm, exit surveys, and faculty evaluations
- Inform students about time to register and assist with the registration process
- Refer students to the websites and facilitate referrals for technical assistance. Answer basic technical questions.

**Specific Institution Offices.** Each institution has specific offices that can be helpful for a variety of questions. Phone numbers and email addresses are found on the website of each institution.

Registrar and/or Distance Education Office. For questions about tuition or registration, the Campus Coordinator may be able to help or direct you to the Registrar’s Office or the Extended Education Office.

Information Technology Help Desk. For technical questions about email or course platform issues, check your home institution’s technology help desk or the help desk at the institution through which you are taking the course. Keeping a master list of email addresses and passwords used at each institution is useful. This will come in handy when you have a problem.

Financial Aid Office. If you want to seek financial aid, inquire in the financial aid office of your home institution.

## **Graduation/Degree Completion**

At least two semesters before your anticipated graduation you should contact your academic adviser and your Campus Coordinator. These individuals will provide institution-specific information for degree completion requirements. Institutions may require additional exams/projects in order to complete. Please also see the GP IDEA page [Planning for Graduation](#).

Students are more than welcome to participate in commencement! It may be a great opportunity to see your university and your advisor. Please check with your home institution for forms and deadlines relating to commencement events.