



Family Financial Planning Student Handbook

Last Updated May 2023

This handbook provides the most basic and essential information relevant to every student in our Family Financial Planning program. The information in this handbook *must* be used in conjunction with the requirements and expectations set by each of the seven home institutions. For the most current information on our program, please visit the [Family Financial Planning program webpage](#) to learn more.

The Family Financial Planning program mission is to engage in the development of quality, ethical, financial counseling and planning professionals through graduate training based in the family and human sciences. Our graduate certificate and master’s degree distance programs are conducted entirely online asynchronously, making it possible for students to complete a program at their convenience from virtually anywhere.

Six participating universities operate as one cohesive program to offer graduate degrees and certifications in family financial planning and financial counseling. By combining our resources, we are able to provide a much deeper level of expertise in the wide-ranging field of financial planning.

Requirements vary slightly across institutions. The degree or certificate is issued by the home university, not Great Plains IDEA, and students need to follow all expectations set by their home university.

Degree and certificate titles vary by university, but the content is the same. Click on the university to learn more about that university’s requirements.

Participating University	Master’s Degree	Financial Planning Graduate Certificate	Financial Counseling Graduate Certificate
Iowa State University	Master of Family and Consumer Sciences: Family Financial Planning	Family Financial Planning Certificate	
Montana State University	Master of Science in Family Financial Planning		
North Dakota State University	Master of Science in Human Development and Family Science: Family Financial Planning	Graduate Certificate in Financial Planning	Graduate Certificate in Financial Counseling
Oklahoma State University	Master of Science: Family Financial Planning	Family Financial Planning Certificate	
South Dakota State University	Master of Science	Family Financial Planning Certificate	Financial Counseling Certificate
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Master of Science	Family Financial Planning Certificate	Financial Counseling Certificate

Our core program learning outcomes are:

1. Construction of a professional, comprehensive financial plan.
2. Implementation of ethical standards in financial planning as prescribed by the CFP Board of Standards.
3. Demonstration of listening and counseling skills needed to help families with financial management.
4. Apply time value of money calculations in financial planning.

In addition to these outcomes, family financial planning programs meet all the [student-centered learning objectives](#) set by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards as well as those set by the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning. To learn how to become a CFP® Professional visit the [CFP Board](#). To learn how to become an Accredited Financial Counselor, visit the [AFCPE site](#). Great Plains IDEA universities do not certify individuals to use the AFC® or CFP® marks. This certification is granted only by AFCPE and the CFP Board to those persons who, in addition to completing an educational requirement such as this program, have met its ethics, experience and examination requirements.

	Hours	CFP	AFC
Master's Degree	36*	X	X
Financial Planning Certificate	18	X	
Financial Counseling Certificate	18		X

***Plans are currently in the works at the participating universities to decrease the required number of credits for a master's degree to 30.**

Your Home University

While courses are offered among the participating universities, students will choose one institution as their "home university". The home university is where students initially apply for admission and (if admitted) receive support in order to complete the degree or certificate program. At the home university, students will:

- Be matched with a faculty member who serves as their major professor/advisor,
- Register for courses with the assistance of the home university's [GPIDEA Campus Coordinator](#),
- Be [billed for tuition](#) regardless of which GPIDEA partnering institution is teaching the course(s) they take, and
- Complete the program requirements in order to ultimately receive their degree or certificate. The degree or certificate is issued from the home university, not GPIDEA. Program requirements may vary slightly across institutions, and students are expected to follow all policies and procedures as set by their home university.

Program Requirements

Master's Degree

The master's degree in Family Financial Planning is a 36*-credit post-baccalaureate program of study. To qualify for this degree, students must be admitted to the master's degree program at one of the seven participating universities, complete the necessary coursework, and meet the master's degree requirements of their home university.

Detailed course descriptions are located on the [Great Plains IDEA website](#). Planning for courses can be done with the help of the interactive [Course Planner](#) and your [University Contact](#). The program is very flexible. A sequential order of courses is recommended, but not required. However, it is helpful to take Fundamentals, Insurance, and Personal Income Tax early in the program and Financial Planning Case Studies (capstone course) near the end. Full-time students typically take nine (9) credits of coursework in a semester. If working full-time, the reasonable credit load is 3 to 6 credits.

Recommended Sequence for Coursework (24 credits - each course is 3 credits):

- Fundamentals for Family Financial Planning -- Not required in all programs.
 - Fundamentals should be taken by students who do not have a background in the field as well as students who are interested in sitting for AFC accreditation. Fundamentals should not be taken concurrently with other core courses.
- Insurance Planning for Families
- Personal Income Taxation
- Investing for the Family's Future
- Retirement Planning, Employee Benefits, and the Family
- Estate Planning for Families
- Case Studies (The above core courses must be completed prior to enrolling in Case Studies)
- Financial Theory and Research I (may be taken at any time)
- Financial Counseling (may be taken at any time)

Elective courses in the master's in Family Financial Planning in recommended sequence (select any 12 credits - each course is 3 credits):

- Financial Theory and Research II
- Military Personal Finance
- Housing and Real Estate
- Family Financial Planning Practicum (should be taken after core courses are completed)
- Professional Paper
- Professional Practices (should be taken after core courses are completed)
- Seminar (topics vary)

****Plans are currently in place for participating universities to reduce the number of credits to 30.***

Graduate Certificates

The graduate certificate in Family Financial Planning is an 18-credit hour post-baccalaureate program of study designed for students who want coursework that meets the educational requirement to sit for the CFP® certification examination. Students must be admitted to the graduate certificate program at a participating university, complete the necessary coursework, and meet the graduate certificate requirements of their home university.

Required courses for the Certificate in Family Financial Planning (18 credits, each course is 3 credits)

- Estate Planning for Families
- Insurance Planning for Families
- Investing for the Family's Future
- Personal Income Taxation
- Retirement Planning, Employee Benefits and the Family
- Financial Planning Case Studies

Course descriptions may be found on the [Great Plains IDEA website](#) and offerings in the coming semesters are found in the [Course Planner](#).

The graduate certificate in Financial Counseling is an 18-credit hour post-baccalaureate program of study designed for students who want coursework that meets the educational requirement to sit for the AFC® certification examination. Students must be admitted to the graduate certificate program at a participating university, complete the necessary coursework, and meet the graduate certificate requirements of their home university. Course descriptions may be found on the [Great Plains IDEA website](#) and offerings in the coming semesters are found in the [Course Planner](#).

Required courses for the Certificate in Financial Counseling (12 credits, each course is 3 credits)

- Financial Counseling
- Financial Theory and Research I
- Housing and Real Estate
- Fundamentals of Financial Planning

Elective courses for the Certificate in Financial Counseling (6 credits required, each course is 3 credits)

- Retirement Planning, Employee Benefits, and the Family
- Personal Income Taxation
- Insurance Planning for Families
- Estate Planning for Families
- Investing for the Family's Future
- Military Personal Financial Readiness
- Practicum

Who to Contact for Help

Academic Advisor

Your academic advisor is the faculty member/staff person there to help you as you make your academic decisions and as you progress through the program. You should consult your academic advisor for assistance with the following:

- Course planning and selection (including elective approval)
- Transfer credit questions
- Plan your internship/practicum work (if applicable)
- Help with research interests

Academic advisors are assigned by the home university after acceptance in the program.

Campus Coordinator

Campus Coordinators are available to help students navigate their home institution. Campus Coordinators are available at every institution to help with questions regarding courses taken from other teaching institutions. Coordinators serve as a first point of reference for general questions and the following information:

- Enrollment processes (contact your academic adviser for course selection)
- General policy information at your home university
- General Great Plains IDEA information and policies
- Assistance with the Learning Management System

A list of campus coordinators can be found on the [Family Financial Planning webpage](#) in the right sidebar titled “University Contacts.”

Class Expectations

As a community of learners, we commit to...

- Engaging asynchronously
- Sharing our experiences
- Mutual respect
- Self-direction and internal motivation
- Kindness and encouragement
- Accountability to our colleagues
- The transformational power of learning
- Being a mentor and receiving mentorship
- Learning with, and about, new technologies
- Ethical and trustworthy conduct
- Coming to each engagement ready to learn

Key for Course Titles and Numbers

Alliance #	Alliance Title	ISU #	MTSU #	NDSU #	OSU #	SDSU #	UNL #
FFPLN 501	Estate Planning for Families	FFP 540	HDFP 530	HDFS 766	HS 5403	CA 704	CYAF 823
FFPLN 504	Financial Counseling	FFP 535	HDFP 555	HDFS 677	HS 5353	CA 612	CYAF 822
FFPLN 505	Financial Planning - Case Studies	FFP 595	HDFP 572	HDFS 769	HS 5803	CA 755	CYAF 836
FFPLN 506	Fundamentals for Family Financial Planning	FFP 530	HDFP 510	HDFS 770	HS 5303	CA 640	CYAF 824
FFPLN 507	Housing/Real Estate	FFP 541	HDFP 550	HDFS 768	DHM 5503	CA 715	CYAF 841
FFPLN 508	Insurance Planning for Families	FFP 555	HDFP 515	HDFS 765	HS 5553	CA 680	CYAF 821
FFPLN 509	Investing for the Family's Future	FFP 583	HDFP 520	HDFS 771	HS 5603	CA 660	CYAF 883
FFPLN 510	Personal Income Taxation	FFP 565	HDFP 540	HDFS 763	HS 5653	CA 735	CYAF 840
FFPLN 511	Professional Practices in FFP	FFP 570	HDFP 560	HDFS 767	HS 5703	CA 745	CYAF 835
FFPLN 512	Retirement Planning, Employee Benefits, and the Family	FFP 545	HDFP 525	HDFS 762	HS 5453	CA 725	CYAF 828
FFPLN 513	Military Personal Finance	FFP 550	HDFP 594	HDFS 790	HS 5483	CA 645	CYAF 826
FFPLN 514	Financial Theory & Research I	FFP 520	HDFP 545	HDFS 740	HS 5333	CA 621	CYAF 848A
FFPLN 515	Financial Theory & Research II	FFP 525	HDFP 594	HDFS 741	HS 5343	CA 721	CYAF 848B
FFPLN 516	Seminar	HD FS 590I	HDFP 594	HDFS 790	HS 5110	CA 790	CYAF 890D
FFPLN 599	Family Financial Planning - Practicum	FFP 591	HDFP 576	HDFS 794	HS 5240F	CA 595/788	CYAF 897B