

**From:** [Smith, Randy](#)  
**To:** [Folden, H](#)  
**Cc:** [Sutherland, Sue](#); [Reed, Katie](#); [Smith, Randy](#); [Griffiths, Rob](#); [Duffy, Lisa](#); [Hunt, Ryan](#); [Porfeli, Erik](#); [Locascio, Pete](#); [Snyder, Anastasia](#); [Pope-Davis, Don](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal to establish an undergraduate minor in Couple and Family Therapy  
**Date:** Thursday, April 3, 2025 3:27:34 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Gene:

The proposal from the Department of Human Sciences to establish an undergraduate minor in Couple and Family Therapy was approved by the Council on Academic Affairs at its meeting on April 2, 2025. Thank you for attending the meeting to respond to questions/comments.

No additional level of internal review/approval is necessary. This action will be included in the Council's next Annual Activities Report to the University Senate (July 2025).

The Office of the University Registrar will work you with any implementation issues.

Please keep a copy of this message for your file on the proposal and I will do the same for the file in the Office of Academic Affairs.

If you have any questions please contact the Chair of the Council, Professor Sue Sutherland (.43), or me.

Randy



**W. Randy Smith, Ph.D.**

Vice Provost for Academic Programs

**Office of Academic Affairs**

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**Assisted by:**

**Katie Reed**

Executive Assistant

(614) 292-5672

Memo

March 6, 2025

To: W. Randy Smith, Vice Provost – Council on Academic Affairs

From: Pete Locascio, Executive Director of Undergraduate Education, EHE

RE: NEW PROGRAM REQUEST: **Undergraduate Minor in Couple and Family Therapy**, Department of Human Sciences.

Please find materials included for a proposed new undergraduate minor. This packet includes program rationale, curriculum, and appropriate approval letters.

If there are any questions, please contact me at [Locascio.7@osu.edu](mailto:Locascio.7@osu.edu)



February 26, 2025

Dr. W. Randy Smith, PhD  
Vice Provost for Academic Programs  
The Ohio State University

Dear Vice Provost Smith,

I am writing on behalf of the College of Education and Human Ecology's (EHE) Office of Academic Affairs. EHE supports the recent curricular change that was approved by the EHE Curriculum Committee on February 20, 2025:

- Add a new minor in Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) to the Human Development and Family Sciences program area.

The addition of the CFT undergraduate minor provides a new option for undergraduate students to add a mental-health focus to their undergraduate education.

Sincerely yours,

Anastasia R. Snyder, PhD  
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs  
College of Education and Human Ecology

February 12, 2025  
Pete Locascio  
Executive Director of Undergraduate Education  
EHE Office of Undergraduate Education

Dear Pete:

I am writing to express my support for the newly proposed minor, **effective Autumn 2025**:

1. **HDFS, MN (CFT) Couple and Family Therapy Minor**  
Proposal: new minor in the HDFS program area

Attached you will find the necessary documentation outlining proposal details. The CFT minor addition has been approved by the Human Development and Family Sciences faculty. Review of and approval from members of the Department of Human Sciences Undergraduate Curriculum Committee has also been obtained.

There are no negative budgetary implications and no additional funds or human resources necessary for the execution of this new minor, as all courses already exist and are taught in the HDFS, BS and/or the HDFS, MS in CFT degree. Thus, I am in support of the proposal of the new minor as outlined in the attached documents.

If you have any questions or need additional information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



**Sue Sutherland, PhD**

*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

Professor, Associate Department Chair

College of Education and Human Ecology



29 January 2025

Dr. Sue Sutherland  
 Vice Chair, Department of Human Sciences  
 Office of Academic Program Services and Innovation (OAPSI)

Dear Sue,

Deanna and I, on behalf of the HDFS faculty, are requesting approval a new CFT minor in the HDFS program area. The HDFS faculty unanimously approved this change in April 2024.

This minor was largely developed in reaction to the profound mental health challenges that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges not only highlighted the intrapersonal struggles that individuals experienced (i.e., depression, anxiety), but brought to the forefront the role that interpersonal and family relationships have on the development of these challenges. While there are undergraduate courses and minors at OSU focused on intrapersonal behaviors and mental health, there are no structured series of courses or minors focused on interpersonal and family relationships. This undergraduate minor in Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) will equip students with skills to navigate interpersonal dynamics in their personal and professional lives, as well as prepare students for further graduate study in the fields of couple and family therapy, social work, counseling, and broadly interpersonally focused counseling and/or therapy.

The CFT minor is designed for students interested in education, psychology, family therapy, counseling, medicine, social work, public health, and other human services careers who want to work with children, adolescents, and adults utilizing a systemic and interpersonal lens. This minor has an applied focus and will equip students with preliminary intervention skills to use with families around interpersonal dynamics while appreciating contextual issues embedded in families such as developmental transitions and stressors.

Furthermore, we'd like to clarify that the focus of the CFT minor differs from the focus of the current HDFS minor. The current HDFS minor is beneficial for students who plan to work with children, families, and/or individuals in non-therapeutic roles, whereas the CFT minor is beneficial for those who wish a therapeutic role when working with children, families, and/or individuals.

Please let us know if you have any questions about the proposal.

Sincerely,

Gene

H. Eugene Folden, Ph.D.  
 Associate Professor of Clinical Practice  
 Department of Human Sciences  
 HDFS Undergraduate Studies Co-Chair  
 STEP Faculty Mentor/FIT Faculty Mentor  
[Folden.1@osu.edu](mailto:Folden.1@osu.edu); 614-292-5676

Sincerely,

Deanna

Deanna Wilkinson, Ph.D.  
 Associate Professor  
 Department of Human Sciences  
 HDFS Undergraduate Studies Co-Chair  
 College of Education and Human Ecology  
[wilkinson.110@osu.edu](mailto:wilkinson.110@osu.edu); 614-247-4004

## RATIONALE for MINOR

The minor in Couple and Family Therapy is available to all undergraduate students in any college. The minor consists of 12-credit-hours, plus a 3-credit hour prerequisite, which provide a foundation in couple and family therapy theory and foundational helping skills designed to expose students to the CFT field and help prepare students for graduate education in couple and family therapy. The minor can be completed either in-person or online.

This is a minor with an applied focus on couples and families, and foundational skills and techniques of practice that students can choose to pursue in graduate school. This minor will prepare students for further graduate study in the fields of couple and family therapy, social work, counseling, and broadly interpersonally focused counseling and/or therapy.

The minor encompasses coursework to orient students systems thinking through family development (HDFS 2200), common stressors and how those stressors affect their relationships and ability to adapt, respond, and cope (HDFS 4370); preliminary intervention skills when working with couples and families (i.e., reflective listening, I-Statements, open-ended questions, etc.) consistent across therapy, counseling, and human service modalities (HDFS 2210), and finally an overview of practice and theoretical approaches for the interpersonal treatment of couples and families in therapy (HDFS 5200).

The minor in Couple and Family Therapy is unique in its applied, interpersonal and systems focus on family development, stressors and the family's response, and interpersonal relationships. While the minor in Couple and Family Therapy is unique, it also complements other minors offered at OSU. For example, the Clinical Psychology & Individual Differences minor focuses on *intrapersonal* (not *interpersonal*) aspects of psychology including biology, development, behavior, neuro/cognitive, and treatment of mental health disorders. Given the distinct focus of the Clinical Psychology minor on intrapersonal (individual) aspects and the Couple and Family Therapy minor focused on intrapersonal aspects, these two minors are distinct and when paired together may provide students with both an intra (Psychology) and interpersonal (Couple and Family Therapy) foundation in which to grow their future careers.

Upon the completion of this minor, students may (1) may go on to pursue a Master's degree in the *field* of Couple and Family Therapy, using this minor as a feeder into OSU's Master's in Couple and Family Therapy program, OR pursue other mental and/or behavioral health professions (i.e., Counseling, Social Work, Psychology, other allied health professions.), in which this minor provides a background in the *practice* of working with families from a systemic and interpersonal perspective.

Goals of the Minor include:

- Orient students to systemic and interpersonal thinking.
- Provide students with foundational knowledge about family developmental and common family-level transitions.

- Engage students around common stressors facing families and how those stressors affect their interpersonal relationships, adaptations, and reactions.
- Equip students with evidence-based information about intervention skills when working with couples and families.
- Help students understand the differences in different theoretical approaches to working with couples and families in therapy.

**CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED:**

A minimum of 12 credit hours. Courses at the 1000 level shall not be counted in the minor toward this minimum.

**COURSEWORK**

**Required Prerequisite (or equivalent):**

HDFS 2200 (3 cr): Family Development  
 Dynamics of family interaction over the life cycle; emphasis on developmental, social, and cultural influences on the family experience.

**Required Courses:**

HDFS 2210 (3 cr): Helping Skills in Context  
 The study of various strategies and techniques used to assess and work with individuals and families in the context of family service organizations.

HDFS 4370 (3 cr): Families and Stress  
 Examination of normative and developmental stressors and crises that impact on the family; implications for practitioners drawn from conceptual frameworks and recent research.

HDFS 5200 (3 cr): Foundations of Couple and Family Therapy  
 Overview and development of key theories of couple and family therapy.

**Elective Courses, choose one:**

HDFS 2367 (3 cr): American Family Issues  
 Development of writing, presentation, and oral discussion skills while critically examining family and related community issues.

HDFS 2400 (3 cr): Life Span Human Development  
 Survey of human development across the life span directed toward an applied understanding of the individual and forces that shape development.

HDFS 3200 (3 cr): Foundations of Family Science  
 Examination of theories and perspectives of family development with an emphasis on the family systems perspective and application.

HDFS 3440 (3 cr): Human Sexuality and Intersectionality Across the Lifespan  
 This course will examine, through a multidisciplinary perspective, the ways in which race, ethnicity, and gender diversity influence the lens in which we view, study, and experience human sexuality across the lifespan.

HDFS 5340 (3 cr): Intimate Relationships  
 An examination of the individual, couple, and contextual factors that affect the development and maintenance of intimate relationships across the life course.

HDFS 5350 (3 cr): Families with Adolescents  
 This is an upper-level advanced course that is designed to provide students with an understanding of theory, research, and application efforts targeting families with adolescents.

**REQUIRED and ELECTIVE COURSE Matrix**

Required Courses	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	
HDFS 2210		x	x	
HDFS 4370	x			
HDFS 5200	x	x		
Elective Courses				
HDFS 2367	x			
HDFS 2400	x	x		
HDFS 3200	x	x	x	
HDFS 3440	x	x		
HDFS 4750	x	x	x	
HDFS 5340		x	x	
HDFS 5350		x	x	

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the program, the student will

1. define, describe and document a basic understanding of Couple and Family Therapy; major theories; concepts; and methodologies (measured through HDFS 5200)
2. demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and ethical understanding necessary to effectively support individuals facing stress and other emotional challenges (measured through HDFS 2210)



3. demonstrate, orally and/or in writing, the ability to identify and analyze common sources of family stress, understanding the impact of stress on family dynamics, analyzing different family stress models, developing strategies to effectively manage stress within a family unit, recognizing signs of distress in family members, practicing healthy coping mechanisms, and learning how to seek professional support when necessary (measured through HDFS 4370)

## ASSESSMENT

Program: CFT Minor				
College: Education and Human Ecology				
Department: Human Sciences				
Program Area: Human Development and Family Science				
Report to be Submitted by: Gene Folden and/or Deanna Wilkinson				
Submission Cycle: Yearly				
Program Learning Objective	Method of Measurement	Criteria or Threshold Level for Success	Data/Results Collected	Program Changes Based on Assessment Data
SLO #1	Mid-term and final examinations that involve essay questions related to case study/fact patterns.  Written papers that require students to apply reasoning and/or CFT methodology to a specific case study or fact pattern.	70% of students score 70% or better on the exams.  70% of students score 70% or better on the written papers	TBD	TBD
SLO #2	Case Studies and Current Events to be discussed and debated both in class and on exams.	70% of students score 70% or better on the exams	TBD	TBD

	Written papers that require students to apply reasoning and/or ethical decision making in how to support individuals going through periods of stress and other emotional challenges.	70% of students score 70% or better on the written papers		
SLO #3	<p>Case Studies and Current Events to be discussed and debated both in class and on exams and in presentations.</p> <p>Written papers that require students to apply reasoning and/or ethical decision making in helping families deal with stress and its impact on family cohesion and family effectiveness.</p>	<p>70% of students score 70% or better on the exams</p> <p>70% of students score 70% or better on the written papers</p>	TBD	TBD