

**Preparing students for a changing world:  
Modifying HDFS curricula to attract, support, and  
prepare undergraduate students**

**NCFR Session #103-01 on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, 11:00 – 12:15pm EST**

*Interactive session accepted through Advancing Family Science (AFS) Section*

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## Focus Group Recruitment:

### To HDFS Majors

#### **You are cordially invited to “HDFS: Dinner and a Conversation”**

HDFS faculty and staff are committed to helping you learn, grow, and achieve your personal and professional goals. As we look to the future and think about how to best meet your needs, we want to hear from YOU - our HDFS majors!

*Why did you become an HDFS major? What you love about HDFS?  
What you would change about HDFS? What are your career goals and interests?  
What else can we do to help you learn about and prepare for careers?*

Please join us for “dinner and conversation” on:

**Insert Date/Time/Location Information**

Space is limited to the first eight students who sign up. To sign up, please use the link below:

**We used signup genius**

We look forward to hearing about your experiences, perspectives, and needs as we continue to support you on your journey!

*Note: If you go to sign up and all spots are full, note that there will be more opportunities to share your thoughts coming soon. If your plans change, please remove your name from the sign up so another student can join the group.*

### To students are interested in social sciences and helping professions, but who are still exploring majors and minors:

#### **You are cordially invited to “HDFS: Dinner and a Conversation”**

HDFS faculty and staff are committed to helping all students learn, grow, and achieve their personal and professional goals. As we think about how to meet your needs, we would love to learn from YOU – students enrolled in our courses who are interested in social sciences and helping professions, but who are still exploring majors and minors.

*What are your interests/goals? What majors are you considering? What information would help you decide?  
What do you know (or want to know) about HDFS?  
What you like and dislike about HDFS, based on what you already know?  
Do you have ideas about how we could better meet your needs?*

Please join us for “dinner and conversation” on:

**Insert Date/Time/Location Information**

Space is limited to the first eight students who sign up. To sign up, please use the link below:

**We used signup genius**

Note, this is not a presentation to sell the HDFS major. We want to hear about your experiences, perspectives, and needs as we continue to support you on your journey! If you are an HDFS major or minor, there will be other opportunities for you to share your thoughts!

*If your plans change, please remove your name from the sign up so another student can join the group.*

## Student FOCUS Group Protocol: HDFS MAJORS

<b>Area of Focus: Decision About Major</b>	
<p><u>Goal 1:</u> To understand more about why students who are interested in relevant careers are not choosing HDFS as a major (or minor).</p> <p><u>Goal 2:</u> To understand what students know about the internship, how they feel about it, and whether the internship requirement is influencing decisions</p> <p><u>Goal 3:</u> To be able to market the major and/or improve the major to better meet student needs.</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Let's begin by talking about why you chose HDFS as your major. When did you select your major and what factors did you consider as you made your decision?</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When/how did you learn about HDFS? And when did you decide?</li> <li>○ What factors were most important to you choosing HDFS? (e.g. Parents? Careers? Fun? Money? Internship?)</li> <li>○ Did other people's reactions to HDFS influence your decision-making?</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>The Lifespan Human Services option within HDFS requires an internship at the end of the program...how do you feel about the internship requirement, and did this influence your decision?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>Are you familiar with the Lifespan Dev Science Option? What do you know about it?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Area of Focus: Reputation and Perceptions</b>	
<p><u>Goal:</u> To get a broad sense about how HDFS is perceived by various groups, so we can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve branding</li> <li>• Challenge misperceptions</li> <li>• Improve our reputation</li> <li>• Improve what we do</li> </ul>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Now, when you say you're an HDFS major or tell someone about your major, what's the reaction you get from people (like your friends, parents, employers, volunteer organizations, etc.)?</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are people impressed? Confused? Skeptical? Interested?</li> <li>○ Do you feel like you have to defend or justify your choice of major?</li> </ul>
<b>Area of Focus: Describing HDFS</b>	
<p><u>Goal:</u> To understand how students describe the degree, so we can...</p> <p>**a) evaluate alignment b/w dept &amp; student conceptions of HDFS - and -</p> <p>b) use student-generated <span style="background-color: #e0f0ff;">language</span> in marketing, surveying students, revising/rethinking, &amp; in describing the degree</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>You are all HDFS majors. So let's talk about how you describe the HDFS major. For instance, when you meet someone unfamiliar with HDFS, what do you tell them? How do you describe it?</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are you studying/learning?</li> <li>○ What do you like about HDFS? Is there anything you don't like about HDFS?</li> </ul>
<b>Area of Focus: Careers, Discovery, &amp; Future Directions</b>	
<p><u>Goal 1:</u> To understand...</p> <p>(a) what students think they can do with an HDFS degree (perceived value)</p> <p>(b) what students want to do (Did they find HDFS because of goals or did HDFS help establish goals? To sort out the extent to which HDFS really is a "discovery" major)</p> <p><u>Goal 2:</u> To collect information to enable us to identify and market concentrations as well as identify strengths and weaknesses so we can focus on strengths and improve/eliminate weaknesses.</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>What are your career goals? What experiences or information have shaped your goals?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>How well do you think HDFS is preparing you to meet your goals?</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>What (if anything) would improve your HDFS experience? In other words, do you have any thoughts about what the department could do better, how we could better guide you, or better prepare you for your future?</i></p> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Finally, the department is considering creating a way for students to further specialize there area of study based on career interests. What do you think about this idea? What "specializations" would you be interested in and why?</i></p>

## Student FOCUS Group Protocol: HDFS MINORS

Area of Focus: Decision About Major and HDFS Minor	
<p><u>Goal 1:</u> To understand more about why students who are interested in relevant careers are not choosing HDFS as a major (or minor).</p> <p><u>Goal 2:</u> To understand what students know about the internship, how they feel about it, and whether the internship requirement is influencing decisions</p> <p><u>Goal 3:</u> To be able to market the major and/or improve the major to better meet student needs.</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>You are all HDFS minors – so we have that in common. Let’s start by getting to know each other a bit by sharing about <u>your major</u>, why you chose your major, and why you chose to minor in HDFS.</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why did you choose your major over HDFS? And When/how did you learn about HDFS?</li> <li>○ What factors were most important to you choosing your major and/or HDFS minor? (e.g. Parents, Careers, Fun, \$, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>For HDFS majors pursuing our Lifespan Human Services option, they complete a required internship at the end of the program...what do you know about it and how do you feel about it? Did this (or would this) influence your decision to consider HDFS as a major?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>Are you familiar with the Lifespan Dev Science Option? What do you know about it?</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>If you had known about HDFS sooner, would you have chosen HDFS? Why or why not?</i></p>
Area of Focus: Describing HDFS	
<p><u>Goal:</u> To understand how students describe the degree, so we can...</p> <p>**a) evaluate alignment b/w dept &amp; student conceptions of HDFS - and -</p> <p>b) use student-generated <span style="background-color: #e0f0ff;">language</span> in marketing, surveying students, revising/rethinking, &amp; in describing the degree</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Let’s talk about how you describe HDFS. For instance, when you meet someone unfamiliar with HDFS, what do you tell them? How do you describe it?</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are you studying/learning?</li> <li>○ What do you like about HDFS? Is there anything you don’t like about HDFS?</li> <li>○ What value does your HDFS minor add to your degree(s)?</li> </ul> <p><u>Follow Up (if appropriate/needed):</u> <i>What kinds of careers do you think HDFS prepares students for?</i></p>
Area of Focus: Reputation and Perceptions	
<p><u>Goal:</u> To get a broad sense about how HDFS is perceived by various groups, so we can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve branding</li> <li>• Challenge misperceptions</li> <li>• Improve our reputation</li> <li>• Improve what we do</li> </ul>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Now, when you say you’re an HDFS minor or tell someone about your minor, what’s the reaction you get from people (like your friends, parents, employers, volunteer organizations, etc.)?</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are people impressed? Confused? Skeptical? Interested?</li> <li>○ Do you feel like you have to defend or justify your choice of minor?</li> </ul>
Area of Focus: Careers, Discovery, & Future Directions	
<p><u>Goal 1:</u> To understand...</p> <p>(c) what students think they can do with an HDFS degree (perceived value)</p> <p>(d) what students want to do (Did they find HDFS because of goals or did HDFS help establish goals? To sort out the extent to which HDFS really is a “discovery” major)</p> <p><u>Goal 2:</u> To collect information to enable us to identify and market concentrations as well as identify strengths and weaknesses so we can focus on strengths and improve/eliminate weaknesses.</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>What are your career goals? What experiences or information have shaped your goals?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>How well do you think your major and your HDFS minor are preparing you to meet your goals?</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>What (if anything) would improve your HDFS experience? In other words, do you have any thoughts about what the HDFS department could do better, how we could better guide you, or better prepare you for your future?</i></p> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>The HDFS department is considering creating a way for students to further specialize there area of study based on career interests. What do you think about this idea? What “specializations” would you be interested in and why?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>Do you think you would be/would have been more likely to major in HDFS if these (or specified) options were available? Explain.</i></li> </ul>

## Student FOCUS Group Protocol: Non-majors/Non-minors – Undecided or Students with General Social Science Interests

Area of Focus: Decision About Major	
<p><u>Goal 1:</u> To understand more about why students who are interested in relevant careers are not choosing HDFS as a major (or minor).</p> <p><u>Goal 2:</u> To understand what students know about the internship, how they feel about it, and whether the internship requirement is influencing decisions</p> <p><u>Goal 3:</u> To be able to market the major and/or improve the major to better meet student needs.</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Let's start by getting to know each other a bit. Let's chat about what majors you may be considering and what factors are influencing your thoughts about which major to select.</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What factors are most important to you? (e.g. Parents? Careers? Fun? Money? Internship?)</li> <li>○ What kind of information are you using currently, and is there additional information that would be helpful?</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Now, about HDFS specifically... when/how did you learn about HDFS and are you thinking about it as a major or minor? Why or why not?</i></p> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>The Lifespan Human Services option within HDFS has a required internship at the end of the program...what do you know about it and how do you feel about it? Do you think this may influence your decision?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>Are you familiar with the Lifespan Dev Science Option? What do you know about it?</i></li> </ul>
Area of Focus: Describing HDFS	
<p><u>Goal:</u> To understand how students describe the degree, so we can...</p> <p>**a) evaluate alignment b/w dept &amp; student conceptions of HDFS - and -</p> <p>b) use student-generated <span style="background-color: #e0f0ff;">language</span> in marketing, surveying students, revising/rethinking, &amp; in describing the degree</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Let's talk a bit more about what you know about HDFS. Imagine you meet someone unfamiliar with HDFS, what would you tell them? How would you describe it?</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you think HDFS students are studying/learning?</li> <li>○ What do you think HDFS students want to do? In other words, what kinds of careers are they preparing for?</li> </ul>
Area of Focus: Reputation and Perceptions	
<p><u>Goal:</u> To get a broad sense about how HDFS is perceived by various groups, so we can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve branding</li> <li>• Challenge misperceptions</li> <li>• Improve our reputation</li> <li>• Improve what we do</li> </ul>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Have you talked to anyone about possibly being an HDFS major or minor? If so, what is the reaction you get from people (like your friends, parents, employers, volunteer organizations, etc.)?</i></p> <p>Sample probes (to use as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are people impressed? Confused? Skeptical? Interested?</li> <li>○ Do you feel like you have to defend, justify, or explain away your interest?</li> </ul> <p><u>Follow Up:</u> <i>Are you taking others thoughts about HDFS into consideration as you decide? In other words, do you feel the perceptions of others is influencing your decision about your major or minor?</i></p>
Area of Focus: Careers, Discovery, & Future Directions	
<p><u>Goal 1:</u> To understand...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(e) what students think they can do with an HDFS degree (perceived value)</li> <li>(f) what students want to do (Did they find HDFS because of goals or did HDFS help establish goals? To sort out the extent to which HDFS really is a "discovery" major)</li> </ul> <p><u>Goal 2:</u> To collect information to enable us to identify and market concentrations as well as identify strengths and weaknesses so we can focus on strengths and improve/eliminate weaknesses.</p>	<p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Finally, what are your career goals? What experiences or information are shaping your goals?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>How well do you think HDFS might prepare you to meet your goals? Explain.</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>What (if anything) could the HDFS department do that would help you evaluate whether HDFS is a good fit for you?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>Is there anything we could do to help you understand what kinds of careers our student pursue?</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion Starter:</u> <i>Finally, the department is considering creating a way for students to further specialize there area of study based on career interests. What do you think about this idea? What "specializations" would you be interested in and why?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <u>Follow Up:</u> <i>Do you think this type of structure would make you more or less likely to be interested in HDFS?</i></li> </ul>

## HDFS Undergraduate Survey Notes

### Different versions/skip patterns for:

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- **HDFS majors**
  - **HDFS minors**
  - **Non-HDFS majors/minors who have social science interests**
  - **Non-HDFS majors/minors whose interests are un-related to HDFS/non-social science**
  - **Undecided**
- 

During your first year at Penn State, how much did you rely on each of the following sources for information about potential classes, majors, and opportunities?

When did you learn about HDFS? How did you first learn about HDFS?

What was the first HDFS class that you took? How many HDFS courses have you taken?

When did you select HDFS as your major?

Were your parents/family supportive when you chose HDFS as your major?

What do you think your parents' or family's concerns were? (list to choose from)

How much did your parents' or family's preferences influence your choice of major?

As you thought about possible majors, how helpful would it have been to have the following kinds of information about each major you were considering? (list to choose from)

How difficult or easy do you think HDFS courses are?

When you mention "HDFS" to someone (e.g., a friend, family member, co-worker), how frequently do you find yourself having to explain what "HDFS" is?

How easy or difficult do you think it is to describe what HDFS is?

How well do you think HDFS fits with the following types of careers? (list to choose from)

Do you think students who major in HDFS will need to earn a graduate degree to earn a decent living?

In general, how well-prepared do you think HDFS students are for careers when they graduate?

Students take many things into consideration when selecting a major. We are especially interested in understanding which factors are the most important and which are less important. Please let us know how important each of these factors was to you as you selected your major. (list to choose from)

Now that we know the factors that were important to your decision, we are interested in learning how well you thought HDFS would meet your needs in each area. When you selected HDFS as your major, how much did each of the following factors attract you to the HDFS major or deter you from selecting HDFS? (list to choose from)

## *HDFS Internship Supervisor Survey: SAMPLE ITEMS*

The general area(s) of your work/agency work and age group of interest/work

How important is it for students to have the following skills to be successful in your field?

- Facilitate a group
- Manage a caseload
- Find and apply evidence-based information to inform practice
- Design and field a simple survey (e.g. client satisfaction)
- Gather data to assess programs and services
- Analyze administrative, program, or survey data for reports

Are there skills that recent college graduates tend to lack that we should be sure to teach our students?

Are there specific training programs, credentials, or certificates that would help prepare students for positions in your field? If so, what are they?

Based on your experience with recent PSU HDFS interns, how well prepared are they to enter your field?

Based on your experience with recent PSU HDFS interns, how well prepared are they to advance in your field?

If you were reviewing resumes for a job opening, how useful would you find each of the following?

- A portfolio of a potential employee's work (e.g. grant proposal, budget, blog post)
- A certificate of specialization for students who complete courses in a specific area
- Badges or micro-credentials awarded to students who exhibit basic competence in a core skill such as effective written communication, group facilitation, or data analysis
- Badges or micro-credentials awarded to students who exhibit excellence in a core skill such as written communication, group facilitation, or data analysis

When you assess the preparation of someone for a college-level position in your organization, how valuable do you find the following experiences?

- Hands-on learning experiences (e.g. week long service learning projects)
- Volunteer experience in your field or a related field
- Trainings and workshops in your field
- Paid work experience in a lower-level position in your field or a similar field
- A supervised, part-time (<20 hours/week) internship in your field
- A supervised, full-time (32-40 hours/week) internship in your field

For students with substantial financial and family responsibilities, full-time internships can be difficult. From your perspective, what kinds of experiences or combination of experiences (if any) would be equivalent in value to a full-time internship in your field? Please explain.

From your perspective as an internship supervisor, how many hours per week do students need to intern at your site for them to be useful to your work or organization?

Please let us know how much you agree or disagree with the following statements, based on your experience as an internship supervisor.

- The level of responsibilities I give an intern depends a lot on his/her past experience in the field.
- The level of responsibilities I give an intern depends a lot on how many hours per week the intern is on site.
- It is difficult to give students completing part-time internships real responsibilities during the internship.
- It's easier for me to write strong references for students who complete full-time internships than for students who complete part-time internships.
- Students completing part-time internships miss out on many meetings and valuable learning experiences because they are not around.
- It feels like more work to host a part-time intern than a full-time intern.

Do you have any other thoughts to share about internships, from the perspective of an internship supervisor or from the perspective of a potential employer?

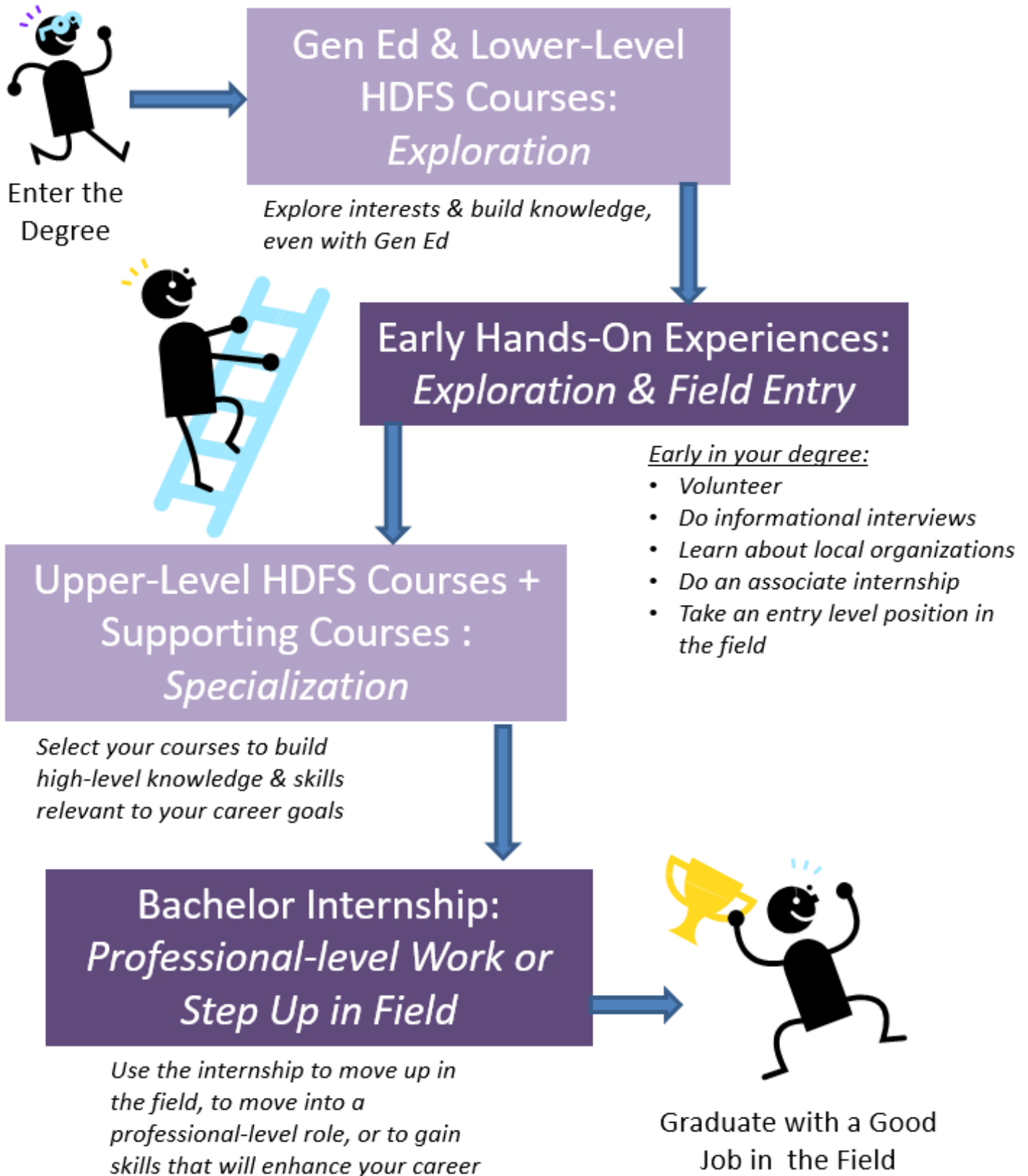
Are there other needs for training, certificates, or education in your field that are not currently being filled by Penn State or other education providers? If so, please let us know.

If you have additional thoughts, have opportunities you would like to share with us, or want to discuss anything about our students' curriculum, training, or internships, please add them here.



## The HDFS Undergraduate Journey.

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**SKILLS: General College-Level Skills Progressing into HDFS-Specific Skills**

<b>Skill Area</b>	<b>Examples of Skills to Develop (Content Knowledge is Separate)</b>
Professional Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion participation</li> <li>• Discussion facilitation</li> <li>• Presenting</li> </ul>
Professional Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality emails</li> <li>• Consistently appropriate grammar</li> <li>• Short factual reports</li> <li>• Case notes</li> <li>• Newsletter, blog, or website text</li> <li>• Grant proposals</li> </ul>
Professional Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate professional dress</li> <li>• Punctual for meetings, phone calls, and work</li> <li>• Time management and organization</li> <li>• Anger management</li> </ul>
Identify Quality Information Sources & Use them to Inform Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct internet and library searches to identify appropriate sources of information</li> <li>• Reject low-quality information sources</li> <li>• Integrate across information sources to draw conclusions</li> <li>• Apply information to inform decisions</li> </ul>
Understand & Generate Basic Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and understand reports with descriptive statistics</li> <li>• Understand the importance of sample size, sample composition, and margin of error</li> <li>• Gather basic information in a short survey</li> <li>• Analyze and report on that information</li> </ul>
Knowledge of ethical standards; ability to apply knowledge to situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and study ethical standards in specific field</li> <li>• Understand broad ethical standards across fields</li> <li>• Practice applying standards to inform decisions, including seeking feedback, discussing difficult situations, and documentation</li> </ul>
Interpersonal / Helping Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Observation &amp; rating scales</li> <li>• Appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses to situations</li> <li>• Ability to establish &amp; maintain relationships prof boundaries</li> <li>• Conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• Ability to constructively accept feedback and improve</li> <li>• Ability to work as part of a team</li> <li>• Ability to advise or provide counsel</li> </ul>
Human Service Administration Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Grant writing</li> <li>• Volunteer &amp; personnel management</li> <li>• Microsoft Excel, Word, PPT</li> </ul>
Basic understanding of human service fields and careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career exploration across fields</li> <li>• Understand structure of organizations &amp; human service networks</li> <li>• Explore many different organizations and positions</li> </ul>

Specific knowledge about own career path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify career path</li> <li>• Learn about skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to be successful – read, informational interviews, shadow</li> <li>• Generate plan to acquire those things</li> <li>• Begin to develop professional network &amp; join field</li> </ul>
Field Specific Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Here we need to think about how to make sure students have specific skills and knowledge in their career path area –</i></li> <li>• 1 – 2 professional experiences on their resume</li> <li>• Supporting courses related to field of interest</li> </ul>
Other things we need to be sure students can do / get	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality academic &amp; professional references – internship supervisors, interaction with instructors, faculty?</li> <li>• Writing sample for graduate school</li> </ul>