Introducing University of Montana’s Flexible and Friendly Master of Arts in Intercultural Youth and Family Development (A Peace Corps Master’s International Program)

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http://coehs.umt.edu/departments/counseled/degrees/IYFD/default.php
Dear Interested Student:

Pursuing the Intercultural Youth and Family Development Masters degree is a journey of increasing your knowledge, developing important skills, and pursing deeper self-awareness. Of course, these are also elements of a life-long journey, but if you are accepted into this program, the next few years of your life will include an intensively focus on the learning and skill development necessary to work thoughtfully and effectively across cultures, nationalities, races, and social class.

The core faculty and staff are eager to play a central role in your education. In addition, you are welcome to partake of the larger campus community, taking approved courses from a wide variety of disciplines, to tailor your education to your own interests and callings.

One especially appealing aspect of our program is that it directly links to at least FOUR possible professional certifications and/or degrees. You can simply get the short, interdisciplinary MA and launch into the world with that degree and related experiences, OR you can plan your classes and studies so that you can pursue certain certifications described below, or advanced admission to school or mental health counseling degrees. While you would need to meet admission requirements for these programs and degrees, if admitted, you can count almost every single credit in your IYFD degree towards these larger MA programs. In some cases, some of your intercultural internship experiences can count in these other programs as well.

We especially see a very large need for skilled professionals to be involved in schools and other educational settings internationally. Developing countries increasingly recognize the value of school and mental health counseling services being available to their young people, and the IYFD Faculty are especially interested in the global aspects of such skills and knowledge.

Read through the following descriptions and get in touch if you’d like more specifics!

With best regards,

The IYFD Team
Program Description

Mission Statements:
We will prepare students for success by creating an environment of ideas and excellence that nurtures intellectual, social, economic, and cultural development.

(From Board of Regents Mission Statement)

The University of Montana-Missoula dedicates itself and its resources to the search for truth and new knowledge, the responsibility to disseminate knowledge, and the obligation to provide service to the people of the state, nation, and world. The University strives for excellence in all its endeavors...to assist the people of Montana to achieve their fullest cultural, professional, and personal potential.

(From The University of Montana-Missoula Mission Statement)

Master of Arts in Intercultural Youth and Family Development

Above all, the Interdisciplinary Master’s Degree in Intercultural Youth and Family Development (IYFD) welcomes students from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, cultures, and abilities. We train students in critical thinking and applied skills necessary to effectively and sensitively offer basic helping skills for youth, their families and their communities across the great cultural, racial, and economic divides that exist in the human community. In the context of a facilitated learning community, this program addresses individual interests and educational needs necessary for students to work effectively and wisely with people in systems and cultures very different than their own. The IYFD Program is a Master’s International Partner school with the United States Peace Corps. Other internships are also possible but must be equivalent in nature, well supervised, and approved in writing by the program faculty. In the case of students from cultures other than the dominant cultures in the USA, internships working in helping agencies in the USA are encouraged.

One of the questions that arise concerning this program is, “What exactly do you mean by youth development? The IYFD Program uses the word youth to refer to young people from infancy and early childhood through adolescence & young adulthood.

Development, as we use the word, means to grow, to evolve, and to expand. The study of “Child
Development refers to the natural maturational process which all children and young people experience. The phrase “Youth Development” is also currently used to refer to efforts to intentionally enhance, support, and facilitate the optimal development of young people within the context of their families, schools, and communities. In the IYFD Program, we consider both meanings. We look at developmental processes as they occur in cross-cultural contexts, and we consider the factors involved in empowering young people and enhancing the development of their full potential.

**Valued Characteristics**

The Peace Corps considers the following to be essential qualities for successful cross-cultural work as interns and volunteers. They also describe characteristics needed for success in the IYFD program and in other internship situations:

- **Flexibility**: This includes a willingness to see things from multiple perspectives, and sometimes letting go of prior expectations; your plans and goals may change as you progress through the program, so it’s important to be receptive to this and willing to allow changes to occur.
- **Adaptability**: Our students need to adjust to many new and changing situations, and to accept the uncertainties that often come with being part of a relatively new and still-evolving program, planning internships, and working across cultures.
- **Patience**: There are few if any easy solutions to the problems you will be investigating and working on, and the gratification from doing a job well may be quite delayed. It is important to be as committed to the process as to the outcome of your undertakings.
- **Skill**: Most of your courses on campus will not provide cook-book approaches to working with youth, families and communities, but will contribute to your thinking skills and help you develop ways of analyzing situations and coming to informed ideas about possible solutions.
- **Self-Reliance**: You may often feel very much “on your own” as a graduate student and
afterward as a volunteer intern. We hope to help you develop skills that allow you to function will in a community, as well as becoming more centered and self-reliant.

- **Resourcefulness**: IYFD students typically come into the program with strong evidence of both curiosity and commitment, but sometimes have to rely on their own ingenuity and creativity to solve the problems often encountered when working across cultures.

- **Positive Attitude**: The normal ebb and flow of a semester or an internship may mean that there will be times of intensity and heavy workloads, but also times when the load is lessened; these fluctuations can be managed more easily if you try to maintain a positive attitude.

- **Responsibility**: As an interdisciplinary degree, your IYFD curriculum allows room for you to shape what you take and what you learn. You are responsible for seeking the information you need to make these decisions and solidifying a plan. As adult learners you are expected to be internally motivated, the drive to success coming from within.

- **Sense of Humor**: At times, it is hard to be exposed to all that is “wrong” in the world, and to contemplate your role in being of help. It is wise not to take yourself or the world so seriously that you lose sight of the joy and humor in it all!

The IYFD Program faculty has a strong commitment to relevant and self-directed learning. We steer away from what Paolo Friere referred to as “the banking method” of education (facts deposited and withdrawn) and believe that people learn best when they are actively engaged in co-creating their learning.

**Program Goals**

*Graduates of the IYFD program will be given the opportunity to achieve goals such as:*  
- Understand and be able to apply common concepts of developmental theory cross-culturally (including the work of people such as Vygotsky, Erikson, Maslow, Ainsworth, Bronfenbrenner, etc.)
- Understand and be able to apply the broad spectrum of theories of helping as applied to people from diverse cultural, economic and social backgrounds.
- Be conversant with and able to discuss the UNCRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) both historically and in its present application.
- Understand and be able to explain the limitations of western theories of human development when applied to non-western peoples.
- Show familiarity with and some proficiency in applied skills such as:
  a. Researching and writing grants  
  b. Mediation / conflict resolution  
  c. Appreciative Inquiry  
  d. Participatory needs assessment  
  e. Ability to work with groups  
  f. Curriculum development  
  g. Formal/Informal education  
  h. Community organizing
• Demonstrate familiarity with and practice the core values of social justice, respect for all peoples, and respect for human rights.
• Recognize the importance of continued personal growth and exploration of self as socio-cultural beings, as well as personal biases and assumptions that interfere with multi-cultural competence.
• Demonstrate understanding of key social, political and economic issues as they affect cross-cultural youth and family development efforts.
• Demonstrate knowledge of the following areas:
  i. Trauma
  j. Child Soldiering
  k. Child prostitution
  l. Immigration
  m. HIV-AIDS
  n. Orphans and international adoption
  o. Women’s development and gender issues
  p. Other areas of relevance to IYFD
• Apply knowledge of specific programs to new situations. For example, if you have learned about programs for dealing with childhood trauma in Uganda, how might you have to adapt it to fit if you were going to be working in Tibet?

**WOW, huh?** Of course, this is an impossibly comprehensive list, but it gives you a flavor of what we value and hope students will pursue.

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**Core Program Administrators and Faculty**

**Director:** Dr. Lindsey Nichols  [lindsey.nichols@mso.umt.edu](mailto:lindsey.nichols@mso.umt.edu)

Lindsey Nichols has a B.S. in History, an M.A. in Education (Secondary History and Social Studies) and a Ph.D. in Counselor Education & Supervision. Her interests are focused on education, multiculturalism, and international collaboration. She has worked in K-12 and post-secondary academic settings. As a middle school counselor in eastern North Carolina, she had the opportunity to work with diverse students, and their families, on their academic, career, personal and social development while connecting with various organizations and services in the community. Traveling throughout her life, most recently she helped to develop an international program focused on culture and counseling in Turkey and participated in an immersion experience
Cathy Jenni, Ph.D. – cathy.jenni@mso.umt.edu

Cathy Jenni has been a faculty member in the Department of Counselor Education since 1990. Prior to her faculty position at The University of Montana she was on the professional staff at Counseling and Psychological Services at UM and earlier was an instructor in Early Childhood Education at Solano College in California. Cathy's international activities include being an exchange student through the American Field Service in Istanbul, Turkey; a student at the University of Poitiers (through Stanford University) in France; a Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia, West Africa; a Fulbright scholar for a summer in Southeast China; and a short term instructor in Existential-Humanistic Psychotherapy at Moscow State University. Cathy is trained in coding the Adult Attachment Interview, but not yet certified. She is trained in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy and currently serves as a consultant to Ravalli Early Head Start. Cathy teaches a movement practice called Nia and is trying to play the piano at least as well as she did when she was 13!

Kirsten Murray, Ph.D. – kirsten.murray@mso.umt.edu

Kirsten Murray is an Associate Professor in Counselor Education. Her education background began with a Bachelor’s in Psychology and Interpersonal Communication, then a Master’s in Couple and Family Counseling, and later a Doctorate in Counselor Education and Counseling. Her work experiences include counseling and advocacy work for homeless adolescents and children impacted by sexual abuse, as well as time working with couples and families in a private practice setting. Kirsten’s scholarly interests involve the personal impacts of education, couple and family relationships, social justice, and advocacy practices. She joined the faculty at The University of Montana in 2011 and has found a rich environment to teach her passions for social justice, advocacy, and multicultural considerations from a systemic perspective. After spending time abroad in South America and Europe, her next endeavor will be navigating these adventures with a young family!

John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D. – john.sf@mso.umt.edu

John Sommers-Flanagan, Professor in Counselor Education at the University of Montana, is also a clinical psychologist in independent practice, and a mental health consultant with Trapper Creek Job Corps. He served as executive director of Families First Parenting Programs in Missoula, Montana from 1995 to 2003. He received his doctorate in 1986, from the University of Montana. John primarily specializes in working with children, parents, and families. He is a former columnist for the Missoulian newspaper, former local public radio show co-host of “What Is It With Men?” and coauthor of over 30 professional publications and five books, including “Tough Kids, Cool Counseling” (American Counseling Association, 1997) and “Clinical Interviewing” (John Wiley & Sons, 2003).

Rita Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D. – Chair, Counselor Education – Rita.SF@mso.umt.edu

Rita Sommers-Flanagan is Professor and Chair of Counselor Education and holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. As chair, she also holds the title of Director of IYFD, but shares the leadership and duties of IYFD with Dr. Nichols and Dr. Murray. She completed a B.A. and M.A. in Interpersonal Communication and worked as a rehabilitation counselor for the State of Montana.
and as a group home parent for troubled youth before returning to graduate school and obtaining her Ph.D. at the University of Montana. She has done teaching exchanges in Belize and England, and recently worked with Tibetan school counselors who serve in India. Dr. Sommers-Flanagan's research interests include gender issues in mental health and human development, trauma, and global issues in counseling and intervention. Her specializations include ethics and professional development, clinical interviewing, and theories of counseling. She is a member of the American Counseling Association.

Megan LaPalm, MA – Graduate Teaching Assistant iyfdta@mso.umt.edu

Megan LaPalm is a licensed professional school counselor and doctoral student in the Counselor Education department. She completed her undergraduate studies in forensic anthropology and psychology in 2007 and her MA in counseling in 2011, both at UM. Megan is interested in school counselor advocacy, international school counseling, the effect of stigma upon students, and the well being of introverted students in extrovert-centric schools. Outside of counseling, Megan likes to read, run, practice yoga, bike, hike, sew, cook, and create.

Degree Prerequisites

Master of Arts in Intercultural Youth and Family Development

Pre-Requisites:

- Undergraduate level: The IYFD program does not require a specific undergraduate degree for admission (Yay!!). However, a course in Developmental Psychology, Child/Adolescent Development, or related topic must be completed prior to enrollment. (This may be done online, or audited.) Please check the UM website for possible courses.

Additional Pre-Requisite Information:

- Some background in the social sciences is strongly recommended.
- A Research Design or Applied Research class should be taken at the graduate level, if not already completed.
A Map of Requirements with some Guidance

34 – 36 credits are required, total, unless you wish to stay longer than one year before going on internship.

Core Courses (required when offered):

3 credits: IYFD 501 Intercultural aspects of human development I (fall)
          Same as COUN 560, taken with counseling students.
3 credits: IYFD 502 Intercultural aspects of human development II (spring)
2 credits: IYFD 520 Critical Issues in helping (fall and spring, signed up for in fall)
2 credits: IYFD 510 Applied intercultural skills development (varies)
3 credits: IYFD 595 Helping Skills: Mental Health Facilitation (fall)
1-4 credits: IYFD 698 Intercultural internship (1-2 years)
1-2 credits: IYFD 599 Professional project (credits taken for Final Student Report)
3 credits: COUN 485 Counseling theories in context (fall)
          (Or approved alternative: HHP 485)
3 credits: COUN 575 Multicultural counseling (spring) or approved alternative

In addition, if you have not already taken a research course, please consult with your academic advisor and select one from those available.

Total Core: minimum 18 credits (up to 24, depending on internship, etc.)

Elective Courses:

Students will take elective coursework, to be selected with and approved by the advisor. Choice of electives will be tailored to each student’s own background, needs, language proficiency, and experiences. Faculty in related disciplines will be consulted regarding appropriate courses as part of this process, particularly since admission to a given course may require permission by the professor.

IYFD provides a core of foundational courses, with occasional substitutions as necessary:

In these courses you will become part of an active, self-reflective and hopefully cohesive learning community. Beyond these few core requirements, you build a program that best suits your particular academic and professional interests and needs. For some this may involve more work in child development or special education. Others may want to take advantage of available coursework in counseling, health and human performance, social work, the arts, anthropology, or non-profit management. Of course, not all graduate courses are open to all graduate students, and permission from the instructor or the department might be required. When core courses are offered, they take precedent over any scheduling conflicts with a potential elective, since there are a wide variety of electives, but the core is required.
Possible Tracks to Consider

Here’s the cool thing—with planning, you can make your IYFD Degree into a specialization, or begin a double-masters degree that would ultimately provide you with a licensable degree in school or mental health counseling!!

Possible Tracks or Concentrations:

- **Non Profit Administration** offers excellent training in what it takes to run a successful non-profit. Many of our students have completed this program and found it tremendously useful: [http://umonline.umt.edu/umonlineprograms1/programsfolder/nonprofitadmin.aspx](http://umonline.umt.edu/umonlineprograms1/programsfolder/nonprofitadmin.aspx)

- **Public Health Certification** – (on-line) coursework in epidemiology and other health-related fields. This is an excellent option for those with an interest in Public Health. [http://www.health.umt.edu/schools/pch/default.php](http://www.health.umt.edu/schools/pch/default.php)

- **Community Health** (Health and Human Performance Dept.) – offers excellent training in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), theories of behavioral change, and other topics our students have found particularly helpful when they are in the field. [http://coehs.umt.edu/departments/hhp/graduate_programs/community_health.php](http://coehs.umt.edu/departments/hhp/graduate_programs/community_health.php)

- **School or Mental Health Counseling MA—possible dual enrollment.** These two degrees consist of 52 and 60 graduate credits and have a competitive admissions process. IYFD students who wish to eventually obtain one of these degrees will be given direct access to coursework in these degrees, and can apply these credits toward obtaining one of these two degrees if your performance in the courses offered meets with competitive standards in these tracks. We are especially excited to encourage students to begin thinking of school counseling through a global lens! [http://coehs.umt.edu/departments/counsed/default.php](http://coehs.umt.edu/departments/counsed/default.php)

It is up to each student to identify courses that will best enhance their curriculum and learning experiences while at UM; the program faculty are available to assist and guide you in this process, but students are also expected to be quite self-directed. In selecting courses and individual faculty with whom you would like to work, keep in mind the kind of internship assignment (and location) that you anticipate after the year of coursework. Note that 300 level courses (or below) will not count toward graduate credit.

An individualized program MUST be developed in consultation with the student’s advisor during the first semester of coursework. Elective courses undertaken without prior approval of your faculty advisor may not count toward the degree.
The All-Important Cultural Internship

Of course, this is a Peace Corps Master’s International Program.

The Intercultural Internship is the heart of the degree program. Peace Corps service allows you to integrate theory with practice. It is an excellent opportunity to gain supervised experience. Please discuss your internship goals and needs with your advisor and other IYFD faculty. Peace Corps is our only established internship partner program. If you have not already done so, you should apply to the Peace Corps as soon as possible after being accepted into the program. Remember, admission into the IYFD program does not guarantee acceptance into the Peace Corps. Although we understand that there are reasons to do non-Peace Corps internships, please understand that

Peace Corps is the only Intercultural Internship that:
• Provides intensive language training.
• Provides all volunteers with 3 months of pre-service training.
• Pays all transportation to and from the country of service.
• Has excellent in-country training, supervision and health care.
• Arranges and covers cost of medical or emergency evacuation if necessary.
• Pays over $6,000 to volunteers upon completion of service.

If you are not planning on going into Peace Corps and instead are going on an independently designed internship, be aware that the University will not approve internships where State Department travel restrictions currently exist. Finding a Peace Corps alternative is YOUR responsibility. There are no established NGO internships at this time. Many Non-PC internships are costly. All non-PC internship planning must be done with the approval of the IYFD faculty and must last for a minimum of a full academic year, with two years being strongly encouraged. Under no circumstances can you simply arrange your own internship without faculty approval.

The purpose of this internship is to gain professional experience doing youth development work in an international setting, or in a culture different from your own. Some level of training and supervision must be available in your internship setting. Throughout the internship, students and IYFD program faculty should remain in close and regular contact by mail or email to whatever extent possible.
Other Useful Information

Student Accommodations

If you have any kind of disability that requires – or may reasonably be expected to require later on – any accommodations in terms of physical access or academic functioning, please contact the UM office of Disability Services for Students (DSS) at 243-2243 regarding your needs as soon as possible. It is also important that you keep the IYFD program faculty informed of any accommodations that should be made in this regard.

Use of Faculty Advising and Progress through the Program

Of course, graduate students are expected to move toward independent but collaborative learning, consulting with faculty as necessary while maintaining a clear and focused professional direction. This master’s degree requires significant self-direction, and has the latitude and flexibility to allow students to tailor much of the coursework to their own particular needs and interests. However, we want to be very hands-on at first. Even in your interviews, we will want you to have thought about your future directions in the context of this degree. And later, YOUR IYFD ADVISOR MUST APPROVE ALL ELECTIVE COURSEWORK AHEAD OF TIME. You’ll be glad we’re this involved. Honest!

Exceptions Policy

Students may request exceptions to the set program of study (such as replacing a core requirement if they have already completed a similar course elsewhere); the faculty will review such requests. When exceptions are approved, these will be noted in the student's file. Requests for exceptions to rules established by the Graduate School of the University of Montana must be made in writing to the Graduate School after approval by the faculty. Decisions of the Graduate School Dean are final.

Writing and Research

We expect all written coursework to be of graduate level and professional quality. This applies to the Final Student Report as well. Please be aware that substandard writing may adversely affect your grade in all coursework. Faculty may ask students to seek campus assistance for development and remediation of writing skills as needed. This includes grammar and syntax, cogency of argument, clarity of expression, and the ability to seek, integrate and reference academic sources. Students may be asked to rewrite papers that fail to meet graduate level writing standards. There is a free Writing Center available to all students; call 243-2266 for more information.

The Mansfield Library has a faculty librarian available to students. We encourage you to seek assistance to develop resources, electronic searching skills and other library-based support.
**Frequently Asked Questions**

(Yes, we are in Montana!)

**Does my undergraduate work count towards my graduate degree?**

Basically, no. Pre-requisites cannot substitute for graduate program requirements. No undergraduate course can substitute for graduate course work.

**I have already completed some graduate work elsewhere. What can I transfer in?**

Courses that are transferred must receive the approval of the student’s advisor (during the first semester of enrollment), and may not exceed 9 semester credits, by University policy. These courses cannot be in the workshop or continuing professional education format. They must have been taken for a letter grade and a grade of A or B must have been received. These courses must have been taken at an institution that offers a graduate degree in a very closely related field and must be less than six years old at the time of the student’s graduation from the UM IYFD program.

**What about non-degree course work at The University of Montana?**

Though graduate students can bring in 9 semester credits of non-degree work, these credits need to be specific to the goals of the IYFD program in order to count towards your degree.

**Does the program offer teaching assistantships?**

The program has one M.A. level teaching assistantship that is reserved for an advanced student. There are occasionally other teaching assistantships on campus, available through a competitive application process. Certain schools and community agencies pay for advanced graduate student work too, although this compensation may not be adequate for complete support. There are sometimes a limited number of assistantships available to Native American or foreign students through other UM graduate school programs. Students interested in teaching assistantships should be aware that these positions are considered a major commitment to the program. Therefore, significant employment responsibilities in addition to a teaching assistantship are simply not possible.
What about financial aid and tuition and fees for graduate study?

For financial aid information, visit www.umt.edu/finaid/ or call (406) 243-5373. For information on tuition and fees (accessible with Adobe Acrobat) visit http://www.umt.edu/bussrvcs/studacctserv.htm. Information is also available on the Graduate School website at http://life.umt.edu/grad/name/tuitionandfees.

I am an out-of-state applicant. How soon after I enter the State of Montana can I get “in state” status for tuition and fees?

These rules and designations change over time and are applied system-wide. Students are encouraged to contact the Graduate School (www.umt.edu/grad/), (406) 243-2572 for assistance and additional information. (See also Section 4.4 regarding WICHE students.)

Can I attend graduate school part time?

YES!

What about Summer School?

Certain UM courses are offered during summer sessions, but the number offered at the graduate level is quite limited. None of the IYFD core courses are available in summer sessions. It is not possible to complete this degree by attending only in the summer.

Once I have been admitted to the program, when can I start taking courses?

Students are admitted during the Spring or Summer, and can commence their core graduate courses in the Fall Semester. If you wish to begin study during the Summer, such as to make up for pre-requisites still needed, please notify the advisor first. Courses that will be offered during the summer will be listed in the Summer Session catalog, available from Continuing Education.

What accreditation does the program hold?

The University of Montana is nationally accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NWASC).

Where can I find housing in Missoula?

Two websites that you might find helpful are;
www.umt.edu/housingfinder
www.umt.edu/rentercenter
In addition, Craigslist and local rental agencies are excellent resources,
Congratulations!!!

If you are still reading, we are very impressed. Sometimes, it is easy to get bogged down in the details. Please click on the actual IYFD website to get more information about the technical aspects of applying. We need your GRE scores, a letter of interest, transcripts, and the usual graduate application materials. If you have questions, shoot one of us a quick email and we'll try to help find the answers if they aren’t right at our fingertips. Be sure to put your best foot forward in your application. Unfortunately, we cannot accept everyone who applies, so it is a competitive process. However, we value each and every application, and we wish you the very best in finding the next best steps in your future.