

EYE ON IOHRM

Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management
Appalachian State University

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About the IOHRM Program

The Industrial-Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management (IOHRM) program at Appalachian State University is a nationally ranked, interdisciplinary Master of Arts degree program offered by the Departments of Psychology and Management. For more information, click the icons below or visit our [website](#).



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Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kemp Ellington



Let's Play Pickleball!

For our Annual IOHRM Spring Social, the program went to The Summit and played indoor pickleball. Outside of the classroom, our students and faculty are super competitive! A huge thank you to our IOHRM Professional Foundation for funding this event! The program had so much fun spending time together!

Support the IOHRM Program

Thank you for considering financial support of the IOHRM program! Contributions can be made to the IOHRM Professional Foundation through our PayPal account. The mission of the IOHRM Professional Foundation is to enhance the development of IOHRM professionals across business, industry, non-profits, and government through mentorship, networking, continued professional development, and engagement. The foundation also advocates for students and alumni seeking employment within the field.

Give Here

IOHRM Highlights

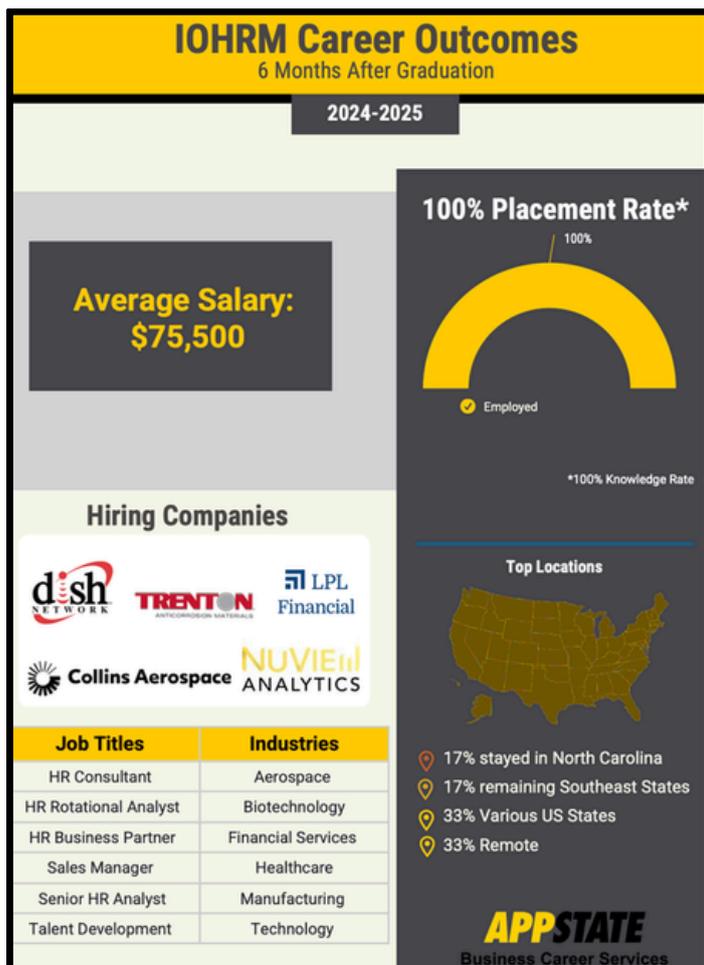
Appalachian Safety Summit

Save the date for the 11th Annual Safety Summit at Appalachian State University. The conference will be held April 22-23, 2026 and will “Elevate your Approach to Behavioral Safety!” Our featured speakers will include former executives from Oil & Gas Services, Global Mining Construction, Petrochemical Refining, and Naval Aviation.



HR Summit Fall 2026

Save the date for our Fall 2026 HR Summit! The Summit will be held on Thursday, October 15th, with the IOHRM Family reception to follow. Master classes will be held on Friday, October 16th. There will be more information to come. We hope to see you there!



App State’s Business Career Services recently highlighted the results of our 6-month post-graduate survey. We are proud to share that IOHRM graduates achieved a 100% placement rate within six months of graduation! We are incredibly proud of our alumni and look forward to seeing where our current second-year students go after graduation!

Defending Theses and Completing Comprehensive Exams

Our second-year students are currently defending their theses and completing their final oral comprehensive exams. We are so proud of them and look forward to celebrating them at their Hooding Ceremony soon! Take a look below to see what topics students are pursuing for their theses.

- **Brenna McNamara:** Brenna’s research focuses on the impact of trainer characteristics on outcomes of sexual harassment prevention training for young workers, particularly trainer gender and status (professor vs. student).
- **Claire Parson:** Claire’s research examines how psychological safety influences the identity management strategies used by employees with invisible disabilities, and how factors such as anticipated stigma, disability visibility, and disability identity shape these relationships and ultimately affect employees’ sense of authenticity at work.
- **Madalyn Stephens:** Madalyn’s research addresses a gap in workplace hazing literature by examining how hazing experiences impact organizational commitment and perceived group cohesion.
- **Drew Sipe:** Drew’s research focuses on neurodivergent employees’ workplace accommodations and how accommodation satisfaction impacts employee outcomes.

Class of 2027 Summer Internships

Many of our first-year students have already secured their upcoming summer internships! Take a look below to see where they will be interning and what they will be doing in their roles.



Delaney Clark Financial Technology Partners (San Francisco, CA)

Delaney will be working as a People Operations Intern. She will be assisting with new hire onboarding and US Summer Intern Team coordination, maintaining Summer and Full-time Analyst Program training calendars, taking notes on exit interviews, updating onboarding guides, and acting as the San Francisco training liaison.



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PARTNERS



Jamie Da Costa Swire Coca-Cola, USA (Draper, UT)

Jamie will be working as the Uncapped Potential HR Intern. She will be focusing on real-world HR operations and gaining insights on the Customer Packaged Goods (CPG) industry as a member of the People team. She will participate in high-impact projects designed to support large-scale bottling and distribution workforce.



Ella Drawbridge Seattle City Light (Seattle, WA)

Ella will be working as the People & Culture Business Partner Graduate Intern. She will document processes and assist with improvements related to onboarding, engagement, and employee development. She will also research People & Culture topics, analyze data trends, assist with project management, and collaborate with People & Culture Business Partners and Centers of Excellence.



Kaylee McElrath ECR Software Corporation (Boone, NC)

Kaylee will be working as the HR Intern. She will support a range of HR functions including onboarding, HRIS data management, employee engagement initiatives, and internal communications. She will also assist with job description reviews and compliance-related projects such as FLSA classification analysis.



Class of 2027 Summer Internships



Ailyn Sanchez Corral Feralloy Corporation (Chicago, Illinois)

Ailyn will be working as a Learning & Development Intern. She will lead the development of a structured risk assessment process and an aligned training plan to reduce risk-taking behaviors. This will include designing a practical risk assessment framework tailored to operational environments, with the goal of presenting her findings and recommendations to leadership.



Sydney Steelman Ahold Delhaize USA (Salisbury, NC)

Sydney will be working as the Workforce Planning & Insights Intern. She will be supporting workforce planning efforts, contributing to strategic projects through meaningful storytelling with data, and uncovering insights that will shape how the organization plans for the future.



Charlie Wills Southern Glazer's (Remote)

Charlie will be working as a People Analytics Intern. He will be working on a small team that uses R to complete statistical analyses with people data. This will allow Charlie to build on his knowledge of programming and gain experience coding in the workplace.



Marleigh Zettle Duke Energy (Charlotte, NC)

Marleigh will be working as a Change Management Intern. She will be supporting and executing plans to prepare, equip, and support others through change. This will include sponsorship, coaching, communications, training, and resistance management plans. She will also support the development and execution of easy-to-understand communication and training.



Research Spotlights

HR Science Research Projects:

Integrating an AI Chatbot to Improve Eugene Exploration Platform

Ella Drawbridge is currently working with undergraduate students on her HR Science team on a website, called Eugene, that serves as a tool for undergraduate psychology students at App State. This website was created by the HR Science team previously and allows students to input the psychology courses that they have taken and receive back a list of KSAs they have gained in their courses, along with potential job opportunities they may be qualified for, based on their courses. Ella worked on using Microsoft Copilot to create a chatbot to be implemented into the Eugene website that will give students access to immediate feedback and clarification throughout the Eugene process. Her team is now in the process of testing and training the chatbot's guardrails, and the team plans on implementing the chatbot into the Eugene website later this semester.

Automating Insight: AI-Driven KSA Extraction for Career Clarity

Brenna McNamara, Claire Parson, and Jamie Da Costa's HR Science team previously asked psychology faculty at App State to rate the O*NET work activities that Eugene is built on. After collecting the ratings, group members conducted meetings with faculty to talk through the ratings and reach further consensus on final work activity ratings. The team is currently working to make this process less burdensome for faculty, which includes creating an AI agent through Azure that is trained on course materials for psychology courses and is asked to provide initial ratings for the work activities based on the materials. Next, the team will input the ratings into a survey that will be sent to faculty so that they can further consider and adjust the ratings. The team plans on piloting this rating methodology later this semester with a small number of psychology faculty.

Replicating Safety Reporting Effects on Incident Outcomes and Report Quality

The Safety HR Science team is working on three projects, with the main project focusing on replicating the effect of observations on reducing incident likelihood. Additionally, teams are researching the effects of production variance on incident likelihood, and using AI to grade safety report quality, examining how the quality of safety reports reduce incident likelihood. Teams are currently performing initial regressions and getting preliminary results for conferences. The team will be presenting at ARBS, SIOP, and the Appalachian Safety Summit this year.



Research Spotlights

Faculty/Student Collaboration:

“Leader” and “Manager” Terminology and Supervisor Incivility Perception

Elizabeth Russell (current IOHRM student) is working on a research project with Caleb Pollard (IOHRM 2025 graduate), and Dr. Jack Carson (IOHRM faculty). This team used a between-subjects event-recall design to identify potential differences in working persons’ open-ended explanations for recently experienced supervisor incivility prompted with either “manager” or “leader” terminology to refer to the supervisor. Explanations were coded for intent indicators, and comparison of “manager” and “leader” conditions have yielded no meaningful differences yet, which they contend is a meaningful finding! Analysis is ongoing. The project has been presented at the River Cities I/O Conference in 2025 and will be presented at the Appalachian Research in Business Symposium Conference in 2026. The team is wrapping up analysis and preparing the manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

GenAI and Your Work: A Practical Guide to Getting Started

Jamie Da Costa and Dr. Shawn Bergman led a workshop at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) on the strategic integration of generative AI into evidence-based practices for I-O psychology. The session was grounded in Dr. Bergman’s recent work, “Evolution, Not Revolution: How I-O Psychology Education Needs to Adapt to the Rise of AI,” a collaboration with Dr. Cunningham at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Jamie developed a human-first workflow-mapping framework to help professionals determine when, if, and how to integrate AI into their work. Rather than beginning with AI tools, the framework guides individuals to first analyze and structure their job workflows, evaluate task characteristics, and then strategically assess the appropriate use of AI. The framework incorporated generative AI tools to refine its structure, decision criteria, and evaluation stages, and then the framework was implemented into an AI agent that was programmed to guide users step-by-step through workflow mapping and AI integration decisions.



Alumni Updates

IOHRM Professional Foundation

The Professional Foundation Board exists to create deep and lasting connections to App State's IOHRM students and alumni with a focus on fostering mentorship, fundraising, professional development, and networking. Read below to meet the board members and learn about how the IOHRM program impacted them. We are grateful for their continued dedication to the program!



Annie Jankura | Treasurer | Class of 2019

Annie works as a Senior People Analytics Consultant at NiSource. She shared, "The IOHRM program gave me lifelong friends and mentors, and it taught me how interconnected every part of HR really is. This perspective helps me go beyond simply answering the question asked by my clients. Instead, I can provide the data and insights people actually need to make better decisions."



Danielle Graff | Chairman | Class of 2015

Danielle works as an Organization and Talent Strategy Manager at Accenture. She shared, "The IOHRM program laid the analytical and behavioral foundation for my work in enterprise transformation. The program grounded me in organizational theory, workforce analytics, change management, and evidence-based design. This equipped me to translate business strategy into scalable organization architecture backed by data and shaped by human-centered, behavioral insight."



Erin Marion | Board Member | Class of 2020

Erin works as an Operations Coordinator for the international division of BL Harbert International, LLC. She shared, "The IOHRM program gave me many things - from professional development, to personal growth, to lifelong friends, but above all, it gave me a home when I needed it most. I'm hoping that through the Professional Foundation, we can help continue to make IOHRM a place where others can find their home away from home, while setting themselves up for a successful future."



Lindsey Wuerfel McKaig | Secretary | Class of 2020

Lindsey works as a Senior Manager, Talent & HR Strategy at Ruger. She shared, "The IOHRM program shaped how I think, teaching me to approach challenges with a consultative, strategic mindset rather than just a tactical one. It also refined my communication skills and business acumen, enabling me to earn credibility with leaders and expand my influence within the organizations I've served."



Ryan Felty | Board Member | Class of 2012

Ryan works as a Global Talent Development Director at Dawn Foods. He shared, "I am deeply grateful for my time in App State's IOHRM program. It instilled in me a commitment to lifelong learning, intentional development, and results-driven problem solving. I joined the Board in hopes that it exists to ensure the resources, connections, and experiences to maintain a vibrant, rewarding program for all current and future alumni."