DevLab and MELD Overview:
The DevLab@Duke is an applied learning environment that focuses on connecting social scientists at Duke who work in international development with the community of development practitioners to create rigorous programming, collect data, and conduct impact evaluations of development projects. DevLab connects faculty and graduate students across several departments and schools at Duke who have extensive experience in both international development and program evaluation, including a broad range of donor activities in the areas of education, health, governance, environment, labor markets, economic growth, and cross-sectoral programming. DevLab’s Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning for Development (MELD) Program was established in 2019 to promote graduate student engagement in the management and implementation of real-world international development research and evaluation activities. Participation in MELD is an excellent opportunity to develop marketable skills for a career in international development.

Applied MELD Seminar:
A three credit MELD Seminar (PoliSci 727 / Econ 747) will be offered in Fall 2020. This one-semester seminar targeted toward Duke master’s students across departments and programs (such as Political Science, Economics, Public Policy, Global Health, Nicholas School, etc.) is focused on the “real world” of international development monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). MEL encompasses the set of activities whereby international development organizations do research to inform future programs and to evaluate the efficacy of their interventions. This is an applied course that covers the landscape of international development organizations (funders) as well as research organizations (implementers). In addition to the actors involved in MEL for international development, this weekly seminar covers the solicitation and proposal/budgeting process, practicalities of conducting training and fieldwork, and selected international development MEL projects – in other words, “winning the work and doing the work”. One can think of this as a professionalization course to be taken before or during more technical/methods courses such as PubPol 790.01 (Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Practitioners); Econ 522S (Seminar in Applied Project Evaluation); Econ 613 (Applied Econometrics in Microeconomics); PoliSci 690-5 (Advanced Topics in Political Methodology); PoliSci 732 (Research Design and Qualitative Methods); PoliSci 748 (Introduction to Causal Inference); etc.

MELD Internship Program:
In coordination with the MELD Seminar, the MELD Internship Program will provide paid internships and training opportunities during the academic year for master’s students interested in a career in international development research and evaluation. In coordination with DevLab@Duke, the program engages students in the management and implementation of real-world development research and evaluation activities, with the objective of strengthening both research and management skills. MELD interns enroll in the MELD Seminar and work up to two days per week on a designated DevLab project during Fall, Spring, and/or Summer sessions. These projects are funded research that flows through several pre-competed funding mechanisms to which DevLab is a party. Typical DevLab projects available for intern assignment include projects such as impact and performance evaluations, evidence reviews, assessments, and support for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. MELD projects may focus on any number of development sectors, including governance, education, environment, labor markets/economic growth, and health.

Internship Application Process:
To apply for the MELD internship, please complete the MELD internship application form. You must be a Duke graduate student to apply, and students who have taken or will take the MELD Seminar are given priority. (Students do not need to be in the MELD Internship Program in order to take the MELD Seminar, however.) Please note that the application form requests that you upload your resume and provide the email address for one reference, ideally your advisor. Please direct any questions to MELD Coordinator Catherine (Katie) Andrzejewski (catherine.andrzejewski@duke.edu). Applications for MELD Internships are evaluated on a rolling basis. Candidates will be placed into a pool of potential interns to be matched with relevant projects as project opportunities become available.