



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Early Childhood Development and Education MS Graduate Program Handbook

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# Early Childhood Development and Education MS

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Course Requirements

- Plan of Study Form completed during first semester enrolled in the MS Early Childhood Development and Education program
- Two research core courses (6 credit hours)
- Advanced Early Childhood professional courses (18 credit hours)
- Additional courses from any approved electives (6 credit hours)
- One of the following:
  - Thesis (6 credit hours) *or*
  - Practicum AND Comprehensive Exam (6 credit hours) *or*
  - Two additional approved electives AND Comprehensive Exam (6 credit hours)
- Achieve a minimum overall 3.0 GPA
- Complete a LiveText Professional Portfolio according to program guidelines

## Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

## Course Schedule

The Plan of Study Form includes a course outline and schedule for the MS in Early Childhood Development and Education requirements. Plan of Study forms must be completed during the first semester.

## 1st Year of Graduate Training

### Fall

- EEC 5205 Programs and Trends in Early Childhood Education (3)
- EDF 6481 Fundamentals of Graduate Research in Education (3)
- EEC 6269 Play Development, Intervention, and Assessment (3)

### Spring

- EEC 6405 Home-School-Community Intervention in Early Childhood Education (3)
- EEC 6606 Global Issues in Early Childhood (3)
- EEX 6222 Observation and Assessment of Young Children (3)

### Summer

- EEC 6216 Communicative Arts in Early Childhood Education (Recommended Elective 1/2) (3)
- EEC 6406 Guiding and Facilitating Social Competence (3)
- Elective 2/2 – Choose one (3):
  - EEX 6017 Typical and Atypical Child Development
  - EDP 6056 Advanced Educational Psychology
  - EEX 5702 Planning Curriculum for Pre-Kindergarten Children with Disabilities
  - EEX 5750 Communication with Parents and Agencies
  - MHS 6403 Techniques of Play Therapy and Expressive Arts
  - MHS 6421 Foundations of Play Therapy and Play Process
  - SPS 6125 Infant Development Assessment
  - Other Course of interest with consent of faculty

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

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Semester Total: 9 credit hours

## 2nd Year of Graduate Training

### Summer

- EDF 6401 Statistics for Educational Data (3)
- EEC 6908 Research Report (6) (For Non-thesis Option)  
or
- EEC 6908 Thesis (6) (For Thesis Option)

Semester Total: 9

## Examination Requirements

If you are choosing the non-thesis option for the Capstone Experience, you are required to take the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination is offered every Fall, Spring and Summer. In preparation for the comprehensive examination, students will receive five questions written by faculty of the Early Childhood Development and Education program before the examination. Students will be able to prepare in the weeks preceding the examination, and the examination will consist of three of the five questions given to the students. The examination is graded on a pass/fail basis.

## Thesis Requirements

The thesis is the culminating experience for those who conduct an original research study as part of a thesis-option program. The thesis consists of a common theme with an introduction and literature review, details of the study, and results and conclusions. Since the work is original, it is very important that care is taken in properly citing ideas and quotations of others. Academic dishonesty in thesis, research report and dissertation work may result in termination from the degree program.

An oral defense of the thesis is required. The approved thesis must be written and prepared in accordance with program, college, and university requirements. The UCF Thesis and Dissertation Manual describes formatting requirements for theses and outlines the steps that graduate students must follow in order to submit their theses electronically to the UCF College of Graduate Studies.

Additionally, the Thesis and Dissertation Office offers online and face-to-face workshops to inform graduate students about procedures, deadlines, and requirements associated with preparing a thesis.

Thesis students are required to submit their thesis electronically. Electronic thesis/dissertation (ETD) submissions are archived by the UCF library in digital format that is widely accessible. The electronic thesis may include video and audio clips as well as other formats that are appropriate for the field of study.

All theses that use research involving human subjects, including surveys, must obtain approval from an independent board, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to starting the research. Graduate students and the faculty that supervise them are required to attend training on IRB policies, so this needs to start well in advance of the research start date. It is imperative that proper procedures are followed when using human subjects in research projects. Information about this process can be obtained from the [Office of Research and Commercialization](#). Click on "Compliance" and the IRB Policy and Procedures Manual is available. In addition, should the nature of the research or the faculty supervision change since the IRB approval was obtained, then new IRB approval must be sought. Failure to obtain this prior approval could jeopardize receipt of the student's degree.

Students who wish to complete their degree requirements in a given semester must take their oral defense and submit their final electronic copy to the UCF College of Graduate Studies by the dates shown in the [Academic Calendar](#).

## University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

**The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:**

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

## Graduate Research

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. Students are responsible for being informed of rules, regulations and policies pertaining to research. Below are some general policies and resources.

**Research Policies and Ethics Information:** UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For polices including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g. surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see their website: <http://www.research.ucf.edu/> > Compliance.

**UCF's Patent and Invention Policy:** In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will according to this policy share in the proceeds of the invention. Please see the current UCF Graduate Catalog for details: [catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4](http://catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4) > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

## Early Childhood Development Education Research Opportunities

Graduate students interested in pursuing research have a variety of options available.

- Students will pursue an individual research project within a graduate course.
- Students may engage in research with members of the Early Childhood faculty
  - Parent-infant interaction, infant development, and home visitation: Dr. Culp
  - Immigrant and refugee students: Dr. Szente
  - Parenting and social-emotional development: Dr. Levin

For more information about research opportunities for graduate students, please contact the faculty listed below.

- Dr. Anne Culp: [anne.culp@ucf.edu](mailto:anne.culp@ucf.edu)
- Dr. Judit Szente: [judit.szente@ucf.edu](mailto:judit.szente@ucf.edu)  
Dr. Judy Levin: [judith.levin@ucf.edu](mailto:judith.levin@ucf.edu)

# Financial Support

Graduate students may receive financial assistance through fellowships, assistantships, tuition support, or loans. For more information, see [Funding for Graduate School](#), which describes the types of financial assistance available at UCF and provides general guidance in planning your graduate finances. The Financial Information section of the Graduate Catalog is another key resource: [catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=238](http://catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=238).

If you are interested in financial assistance, you are strongly encouraged to apply for admission early. A complete application for admission, including all supporting documents, must be received by the priority date listed for your program under "Admissions."

You must be admitted to a graduate program before the university can consider awarding financial assistance to you.

If you want to be considered for loans and other need-based financial assistance, review the UCF Student Financial Assistance website at [finaid.ucf.edu/](http://finaid.ucf.edu/) and complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form, which is available online at [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa](http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa). Apply early and allow up to six weeks for the FAFSA form to be processed.

UCF Graduate Studies awards university graduate fellowships, with most decisions based on nominations from the colleges and programs. To be eligible for a fellowship, students must be accepted as a graduate student in a degree program and be enrolled full-time. University graduate fellowships are awarded based on academic merit and therefore are not affected by [FAFSA](#) determination of need.

Please note that select fellowships do require students to fill out a fellowship application (either a university fellowship application, an external fellowship application, or a college or school fellowship application). For university fellowship applications, see [Fellowships](#).

## Scholarships

There are a variety of scholarships available for graduate students. For more information, visit the Office of Student Financial Assistance [finaid.ucf.edu/types-of-aid/scholarships/](http://finaid.ucf.edu/types-of-aid/scholarships/).

## Graduate Student Associations

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)  
Contact Dr. Judit Szente ([judit.sezente@ucf.edu](mailto:judit.sezente@ucf.edu))

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) [naeyc.org/](http://naeyc.org/)

World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH)  
Contact Dr. Anne Culp ([anne.culp@ucf.edu](mailto:anne.culp@ucf.edu))

Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)  
Contact Dr. Anne Culp ([anne.culp@ucf.edu](mailto:anne.culp@ucf.edu))

Student National Educational Association (SNEA) at UCF  
Contact Elizabeth Brumer ([ebrumer@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:ebrumer@knights.ucf.edu))

Graduate Student Association (GSA) at UCF [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/)  
Contact Matt Bagwell ([gsa\\_president@ucf.edu](mailto:gsa_president@ucf.edu))

Student Personnel Association (SPA) at UCF  
Contact Ashley Vance ([avance@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:avance@knights.ucf.edu))

Zero to Three: [zerotothree.org/](http://zerotothree.org/)

Child Life Council: [childlife.org/](http://childlife.org/)

## Professional Development

- The program of study includes advanced professional development in early care and education for careers with direct and indirect services for young children and families. Direct early education services to young children and families can include homes, schools, and other community settings such as child care and Head Start. Indirect services can include: child assessment, program evaluation, child care resource and referral, early learning coalitions, and community college instruction.
- Graduates of this program are expected to partner and bridge school and community with direct and indirect services. The program course work also nurtures graduate students' leadership and advocacy skills.

## Instructor Training and Development

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. They offer several programs for the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UCF.

- **GTA Training** (mandatory for employment as a GTA)  
This training provides information and resources for students who will be instructors in a two-day workshop. The seminars cover a variety of topics, including course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic freedom. Those interested in additional training can also attend an optional training session that normally follows the mandatory training.
- **Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty Program**  
This certificate program (12-weeks) consists of group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors. Textbooks and materials are provided.

For more information: [fctl.ucf.edu/](http://fctl.ucf.edu/) > Events > GTA Programs or call 407-823-3544.

## Graduate Research Forum

The Graduate Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF's diverse colleges and disciplines. It is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information, contact [researchweek@ucf.edu](mailto:researchweek@ucf.edu).

## Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

**Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant** – This award is for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)



**Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching** – This award is for students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

**Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis** – It recognizes graduate students for excellence in the master's thesis. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field. The university award will be forwarded to a national-level competition sponsored by the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) when the thesis discipline corresponds to the annual submission request.

**Innovative Thesis or Dissertation Award** - The Award recognizes cutting-edge use of technology in theses and dissertations. The focus of this award is on the technical innovation of the student's thesis or dissertation through the application of renderings, photos, data sets, software code and other multimedia objects.

For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see the College of Graduate Studies website [graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/).

## Other

Students should take opportunities to present a poster or a topic of research at a conference. To obtain financial support to present at a conference (other than through your program) or to engage in comparable creative activity at a professional meeting, visit the Graduate Travel Fellowship section at [graduate.ucf.edu/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/).

For information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, see their website: [csgs.org/](http://csgs.org/) > Awards.

For grant-proposal writing resources: [uwc.cah.ucf.edu/](http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/)

## Job Search

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at [career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/).

For specific services or resources provided by the academic program, please contact the graduate program director or academic advisor.

## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
Required form of graduate students who would like to take advantage of resources available on another campus, but not available at UCF; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections.

## Useful Links

- [Early Childhood Development and Education MS](#)
- [College of Community Innovation and Education](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)
- [The Children's Campaign](#)
- [Computer Labs](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Early Childhood Education](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Healthy Families America](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Learning Online](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Maternal and Child Health Bureau](#)
- [National Center for Children in Poverty](#)
- [National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families](#)
- [National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#)
- [National Family Partnership](#)
- [National Head Start Association](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Parents as Teachers](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Prevent Child Abuse](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Register for Classes](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [UCF IT](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

## Grad Faculty

**Asterisk** = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as vice chair

### **Culp, Anne \***

College: College of Community Innovation and Education

Disciplinary affiliations: Early Childhood Development and Education

Contact Info: [aculp@ucf.edu](mailto:aculp@ucf.edu)

**Culp, Rex \***

College: College of Community Innovation and Education

Disciplinary affiliations: Early Childhood Development and Education

Research interests: Early Child Development, Child Maltreatment, At-risk Parenting

Contact Info: [rex.culp@ucf.edu](mailto:rex.culp@ucf.edu)

**Cummings, Tracy**

College: College of Community Innovation and Education

Disciplinary affiliations: Early Childhood Development and Education

Contact Info: [Tracy.Cummings@ucf.edu](mailto:Tracy.Cummings@ucf.edu)

**Englehart, Deirdre**

College: College of Community Innovation and Education

Disciplinary affiliations: Early Childhood Development and Education

Contact Info: [Deirdre.Englehart@ucf.edu](mailto:Deirdre.Englehart@ucf.edu)

**Levin, Judith**

College: College of Community Innovation and Education

Disciplinary affiliations: Early Childhood Development and Education

Contact Info: [jlevin@ucf.edu](mailto:jlevin@ucf.edu)

**Szente, Judit \***

College: College of Community Innovation and Education

Disciplinary affiliations: Early Childhood Development and Education

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## Contact Info

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