# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
Curriculum ..................................................................................................................... 2
Timeline for Completion ............................................................................................... 2
  Progress through the Program ...................................................................................... 2
Examination Requirements ............................................................................................ 2
  Masters Final Comprehensive Examination Process .................................................. 2
Program Evaluation ...................................................................................................... 3
Portfolio Requirements .................................................................................................. 3
  Introduction and Rationale ........................................................................................... 3
  Format and Contents of the Portfolio ............................................................................. 3
  Presenting and Evaluating the Portfolio ........................................................................ 4
  Areas of Competency/Proficiency ............................................................................... 4
Graduate Research ......................................................................................................... 6
Financial Support ........................................................................................................... 6
Graduate Student Associations ...................................................................................... 7
  Chi Sigma Iota ............................................................................................................... 7
  The Graduate Student Association (GSA) .................................................................... 7
  Professional Associations ............................................................................................. 7
Professional Development .............................................................................................. 7
  University Student Counseling Center ......................................................................... 7
Licensure and Certification .............................................................................................. 8
  Counseling Credentials Currently Available .............................................................. 8
Instructor Training and Development ............................................................................. 9
Pathways to Success Workshops ................................................................................... 9
Graduate Research Forum .............................................................................................. 9
Graduate Excellence Awards ........................................................................................... 9
Other .............................................................................................................................. 10
Job Search ...................................................................................................................... 10
  UCF Career Services and Experiential Learning Center ............................................ 10
Forms ............................................................................................................................ 10
Useful Links ................................................................................................................... 11
Grad Faculty .................................................................................................................. 11
Contact Info .................................................................................................................. 12
Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy MA

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

Introduction

The Marriage and Family Therapy MA program requires a minimum of 63 credit hours beyond the bachelor’s degree, including six credit hours of core courses, 45 credit hours of specialization courses, and 12 credit hours of professional clinical experience. In addition, students must create and defend a portfolio during their final internship course, and also must take an exit examination.

The curricula for the degree comply with the standards for state and national accrediting groups and certification or licensure requirements. More importantly, the curriculum is designed to prepare students to be effective entry-level counselors in a variety of settings (school, agency, hospital, religious, business and industry, community mental health, college/university). The Counselor Education program is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The School Counseling track is approved by the Florida Department of Education for School Counselor Certification.

Criteria for awarding the degree require that candidates demonstrate the following program goals (program objectives are found on each course syllabi):

- Knowledge and understanding of the nature and needs of individuals and families at all developmental levels;
- Ability to examine personal feelings, cognitions, beliefs and behaviors in relation to their professional development and to be receptive to new learning and experiences;
- Knowledge and understanding of major counseling theories and their uses in school and community settings including cognitive, affective and behavioral approaches and counseling interventions explained by these theories;
- Ability to explain and critique a research model including problem identification, objectives, hypotheses, method and design, implications and conclusions;
- Understanding operational structure of schools or agencies to implement a counseling program;
- Understand group development, dynamics and methods and the ability to design and conduct effective structured and unstructured groups;
- Knowledge and understanding program development - rationale, needs assessment, objectives, implementation strategies and program evaluation procedures;
- Understanding basic concepts and principles of assessment and evaluation and ability to select, administer and interpret interest, aptitude, personality and intelligence tests;
- Understanding counseling and consultation process and development of appropriate counseling skills for work with clients from a variety of special populations;
- Understanding current issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society and acceptance and respect for individuals of varying ethnic, cultural, religious and economic backgrounds;
- Understanding aspects of professional functions (testing, role organizational structure, credentialing) and an understanding of the Ethical Standards of the American Counseling Association and the ability to solve ethical problems which arise in the practice of counseling;
- Understanding career development and interrelationships among work, family and other life factors;
- In-depth knowledge in students’ areas of particular interest; and ability to work with clients as demonstrated in closely supervised practica and internship settings.

Curriculum

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

Timeline for Completion

Progress through the Program

Your progress through the program is developed to meet individual needs. Progress through the program will be less stressful if you remember the following guidelines:

- Become familiar with University policies/procedures for graduate students.
- Know your advisor. Personally meet with your advisor early in your coursework.
- Know the academic year, special dates, holidays, etc., both for the University and for the program.
- Because this program is competency and performance-based, coursework frequently invites students to deal with personal and professional issues, both situational and developmental in nature. Some courses will allow students the opportunity of taking psychological assessment instruments in order to learn how to interpret them. Others will contain small group activities that may foster self-disclosure. These tests and experiences are considered to be an integral part of the counseling students total growth process. Therefore, students will be required to take part in these experiences as training components of the program. If there are concerns regarding these experiences, seek the counsel of your advisor. If personal and professional issues arise during such in-class experiences that students feel a need to explore more fully, it will be recommended that they seek counseling at the University Counseling and Testing Center.
- As professionals who adhere to the ethical standards of the profession, faculty are committed to an on-going screening process designed to assist students whose issues interfere significantly with their progress in the program.
- When faculty members identify students with developmental or remedial issues, they will be referred to the appropriate campus resource coordinated through the Students Academic Resource Services (SARS).

Examination Requirements

Masters Final Comprehensive Examination Process

The comprehensive examination process includes completion of the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE), by the last semester and typically after completion of the content courses, and a presentation of their portfolio during their final internship. The cutoff score may change due to the changing means of the test. Contact the program office for the current cutoff score. The internship instructor in consultation with their advisor assigns a “pass” or “fail” grade.
Program Evaluation

The UCF Counselor Education program faculty seeks to continually evaluate the program in order to provide quality training to students and to protect the interests of clients. To determine factors that are related to counselor effectiveness, counselor education practices and supervision of counseling, students in the counselor education program will be given various questionnaires and instruments assessing a variety of variables including, but not limited to, self-efficacy, wellness, relationship dimensions, and counseling skills/knowledge. These instruments will be administered at various times throughout the students' program. While the primary reason for data collection is an ethical obligation to show effectiveness in teaching and learning and to monitor the outcomes of counselor trainee's impact on individuals seen in the clinic to insure that the training program advantages community members who seek services from the CCC, the data base will be available to faculty and students for research purposes. Hardcopy data is stored under lock and key by college staff and electronic data is stored on a secure server with restricted access controlled by the Clinical Research Associate and Program Coordinator. While data is maintain by these individual in a confidential manner data is released for authorized research with data in a form that does not allow for individual identification.

Portfolio Requirements

Introduction and Rationale

The portfolio was developed so that students will develop connections between courses and integrate knowledge. When completed, the portfolio becomes a resource for students to review their learning and identify areas of strength and weakness. It serves as a way of determining if state and national standards have been covered in the student's preparation. In their professional life, students can utilize the portfolio to build confidence and credibility and to shape the direction of their careers. In addition, the portfolio encourages students to develop depth in areas of interest and specialty. It helps them connect their learning to career opportunities since the portfolio requires the development of a professional resume and asks them to focus on specific populations and diagnostic groups. In addition, it provides a medium for faculty to encourage extracurricular learning. By requiring extracurricular activities as part of the portfolio, it is expected that students will become more involved with those in the field and strengthen their professional identities. For the graduate faculty, the portfolio will provide an assessment tool. From it, we will begin to see if the curriculum is meeting the goals of the program. It allows us to take a look at a student's development from the beginning of a student's preparation to their completion and recognize growth. Second, the portfolio helps us gain a better understanding of the student's outside activities in volunteer work or other external learning experiences and therefore provides a stronger basis for faculty recommendations.

Format and Contents of the Portfolio

The portfolio is not just a collection; it is an organized, structured argument stating the student has developed competencies in several categories during the program. The portfolio can be presented in notebook form using plastic sheet covers or any other methods including a computer presentation. Every portfolio should have an introductory section which contains a curriculum vita (or resume), a detailed table of contents and a one page Introduction and Values Statement.

The Statement should summarize the student's philosophy of counseling and values (belief and guiding principles). In addition should provide an overview of the portfolio. The binder should be no more than 3 inches thick and contents should be placed in sections by competencies. Do not use plastic sheet protectors. Each area of competency should be tabled and labeled. For each competency, the two-page Portfolio Reflection Form is required. It identifies the products in each section and asks the student to look back in that particular area and discuss his/her progress and growth during their time in the program and plans for the future. The following is a
list of items that a student may wish to utilize in making the case that he or she has achieved proficiency in that area:

- Audio or videotaped counseling sessions, presentations, interviews or programs
- Research Papers produced
- Letters of reference
- Field Experiences summarized and verified
- Conferences and Workshops attended and verified
- Written transcripts of interviews
- Computer printouts, e-mails, spreadsheets and web pages
- Audio or videotaped
- Other work Products
- Students are to include rubrics used to grade assignments when these are available

**Presenting and Evaluating the Portfolio**

The student begins constructing the portfolio in the Introduction to the Counseling Profession class, MHS5005. The faculty will review the portfolio on two occasions. The advisor reviews the portfolio when the student applies for Practicum I. When the student files the practicum application, the advisor must certify that the portfolio has been reviewed. Finally in the internship class, the student will present the portfolio and the internship instructor and the student’s advisor will evaluate it. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the presentation and invite the academic advisor. These two faculty members make a joint recommendation to the program faculty in the Counselor Education Program as to whether the portfolio should be accepted or rejected based on the rubric. If the portfolio is rejected, the faculty as a whole will design a remediation plan for the student. When the plan is complete, the faculty again votes on the acceptability of the portfolio.

Listed below are the seven competencies needed to pass the oral defense of the portfolio. Beneath each competency is a listing of suggestions for items that might serve as evidence. For each area, the student is to submit the required elements and one other element of his or her choosing. **Required items are marked with an asterisk (*)**.

**Areas of Competency/Proficiency**

1. **Professional Identity and Ethics** (CACREP II K.1.) (FEAP 6, 11)

Contents include:

- Evidence of involvement in a professional organization,
- conferences attended, papers, presentations,
- *responses to cases on ethical and legal issues,
- A professional disclosure form that discloses experience, degrees as a client handout,
- *professional identification position paper or similar material.
- A professional resume
- Evidence of continuous improvement, continuing education
- A personal development plan for continuing education
- A paper on the role of the counselor
- Interviews with counselors and administrators about the counseling profession
2. Social and Cultural Diversity and Human Development Across the Life Span (CACREP II K. 2, 3) (FEAP 5, 7)

Contents include:

- Evidence of clinical experiences with culturally and developmentally different clients in practicum and internship
- One or more papers on cultural diversity
- Development of a guidance unit on understand and interacting with human differences
- Foreign travel and other cross-cultural experiences
- Interviews with persons from special populations,
- Journal entries, personal reaction papers,
- Assessment/treatment plans for specific cases with cultural videotapes of real or role-played sessions with clients from an ethnic group different from the student's own background.
- Papers dealing with differences in religion, race, culture and gender, sexuality
- Evidence of ability to utilize theories of human development to assess and help clients

3. Use of Technology and Assessment Skills (CACREP II K. 4, 7) (FEAP 1, 2)

Students will show evidence of ability to:

- Use word-processing, computerized therapeutic record keeping, e-mail and the use of the world wide web to search for treatment alternatives and support groups evidence of ability to administer and interpret tests for career development or assessment of personality or achievement
- Evidence of ability to utilize computer assisted career development programs
- Ability to use specialized assessment and interview techniques for clients with particular disorders.

4. Clinical, Consultation and Communication Skills (CACREP II. K. 5, 6, 7) (FEAP 2, 4, 8, 9, 10) *(Note: if is required for school counselors) (one optional element required)

Students will provide the following evidence of effective counseling and consulting:

- Final transcript from techniques class
- Feedback from supervisors in practicum and internship *
- Peer feedback
- Treatment plans from practicum or internship or guidance units
- Video from practicum or classroom guidance unit showing ability to stimulate critical thinking skills in students or clients.
- Evidence of ability to create a positive learning environment through videotape of classroom guidance or through live supervision or live evaluation.
- Feedback from observations by faculty and onsite supervisors
- Evidence of ability to stimulate problem solving
- Evidence of ability to work with parents, teachers, and other counselors, physicians and treatment providers.
- Evidence of ability to work effectively with groups
- Evidence of ability to help clients solve career related problems

5. Specialty (such as adolescence, marriage and family therapy, play therapy etc.) (CACREP II G & H) (FEAP 8)

(all elements in this area required- no optional element needed)

Students will show both academic and practical experiences in working with the chosen Specialty as follows:

- Transcript of client interviews using special knowledge
- Paper, workshop on the specialty area or treatment plans from practicum or internship that demonstrate this competency.
6. Personal Growth and Wellness (FEAP 3)

Students must demonstrate that they have attempted to grow personally and engage in self-examination and reflection:

- This must include eight counseling sessions which may be individual, group, couple or family counseling with a licensed professional.
- Students fulfill this requirement by presenting reaction papers based on the reflective practitioner model.
- In-service training experiences,
- evaluations of personal health and wellness.
- *A personal wellness plan and
- *A plan for continuous improvement and lifelong learning

Note: Each student must develop a wellness plan for their time in the program and as they begin their career. The plan will be developed as a requirement in MHS 5005 in consultation with the professor. The plan must be approved by the student’s advisor at least three times throughout the program.

7. Research and Program Evaluation (CACREP II K. 8) (FEAP 1)

- *Student demonstrates ability to conduct program evaluations for specific services in a school, mental health or marriage and family setting and outcome measures for individual clients
- *Student is able to write a literature review utilizing scholarly tools and APA style
- Student collaborates with faculty in conducting research
- Student is able to write a research proposal
- Student is a participant in a research study
- Student fills out Institutional Review Board paperwork
- Student presents research at a conference
- Student attends three conference presentations on research topics

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: 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 > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

Financial Support

Limited financial aid opportunities in the form of grants, loans, assistantships, and fellowships are available for graduate students. Students should apply for all assistance programs that interest them. More than one award is sometimes possible. Students are automatically considered for College of Education and Human Performance fellowships upon completion of their program application. Some named scholarships are available after
matriculation. Check with your advisor or other faculty members in the Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences for employment possibilities associated with grants or graduate assistantships.

For additional information about funding for graduate school, please visit the Funding for Graduate School section of the Graduate Student Handbook on the College of Graduate Studies students website at graduate.ucf.edu/students/.

If you are interested in applying for loans or externally funded need-based awards, visit the Office of Student Financial Assistance website at finaid.ucf.edu/ and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available January 1 each year.

Graduate Student Associations

Chi Sigma Iota

[link]

Chi Sigma Iota is an academic honorary society specifically in the area of graduate programs in counselor education. The association is very active and provides opportunities for professional development for students and professionals in the Central Florida area.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA)

SGA is UCF’s graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students’ personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/. For individual department or graduate program organizations, please see program advisor.

Professional Associations

Students and counseling professionals should belong to professional associations after they earn their degrees if they are to stay current in the field and keep abreast of new trends and issues. Active participation in professional associations is vital to professional success. At a minimum, each graduate student is expected to join at least one organization. Membership dues are usually less for students and members receive professional newsletters, journals and announcements of professional activities. All students are encouraged to join the American Counseling Association (ACA). Students may call 1-800-347-6647 (ACA) or go online to counseling.org/ to obtain an application form. Many other professional associations exist for students to join including the American Mental Health Counselors Association, the American School Counselor Association, the Association for Play Therapy, the National Career Development Association, and the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors. Most national organizations have state divisions that students may join.

Professional Development

University Student Counseling Center

The University Counseling Center offers a professional staff of counselors and psychologists to assist students through educational, vocational, and career counseling; and personal, social, relationship, marriage and family counseling. The Center presents special programs throughout the year, including training in relaxation and coping skills, self-hypnosis training, stress reduction training and group psychotherapy. All Center services are free to UCF students.
Licensure and Certification

Depending on the degree program, graduate students in the Counselor Education Program will be qualified at the completion of the degree with all necessary course work to apply for either Florida Certification as School Counselors, and/or as Florida Licensed Mental Health Counselors, and/or Florida Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, if they have completed all Marriage, Couple and Family Therapy Graduate Certificate courses prior to graduation. The latter two have additional post-degree requirements.

Mental Health Counselors and Marriage and Family Therapists must be licensed in the State of Florida to practice their profession. Licensure not only entitles counselors to practice counseling, it also demonstrates that counselors are legally mental health professionals or marriage and family therapists. All students should be planning their programs so that they will be eligible to take the licensure exam in the future. Information on licensure may be obtained by contacting the Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling at 850-488-0595 or floridasmentalhealthprofessions.gov/. School counselors must be certified by the Florida Department of Education (fldoe.org/) to serve in a school.

To apply for certification, an application can be picked up at the Office of Student Affairs.

Counseling Credentials Currently Available

In addition to licensure and school Counselor certification, many other credentials are available to counselors. All students should review the list that follows and write for information if there are credentials available that seem appropriate to their particular interests. At a minimum, all students should plan to become National Certified Counselors through the National Board of Certified Counselors after graduation.

If students investigate requirements and inform themselves of various credentials while they still are in graduate school, often they can select electives and sites for practica and internships that will meet credential requirements.

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
171 K. Street, NW #407
Washington, DC 20006
202-429-1825

American Association for Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists
Eleven Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 220
Washington, DC 20036
202-462-1171

The American Art Therapy Association, Inc.
1980 Isaac Newton Squire, South
Reston, Virginia 22090
703-437-6012

American Association for Music Therapy
Post Office Box 359
Springfield, New Jersey 08081
201-379-1100

American Dance Therapy Association
2000 Century Plaza
Columbia, Maryland 21044
301-997-4040


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. The sessions cover a variety of topics, including course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic freedom.

- **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.

Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit [graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/).

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.

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/ > Awards](http://csgs.org/ > Awards).

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

**Job Search**

**UCF Career Services and Experiential Learning Center**

UCF Career Services ([career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/)) assists students in looking for professional positions as they near graduation. Students should tell all of their professors if they are looking for a position. Many job leads are passed informally to professors. If faculty members know students are searching, they will assist students in any way possible. The College of Education and the University hold a number of job fairs throughout the year. For information on these job fairs contact UCF Career Services.

**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.
Useful Links

- Marriage, Couple, and Family Therapy MA
- College of Community Innovation and Education
- College of Graduate Studies
- Academic Calendar
- Bookstore
- Campus Map
- Computer Labs
- Counseling Center
- Financial Assistance
- Golden Rule Student Handbook
- Graduate Catalog
- Graduate Student Association
- Graduate Student Center
- Housing and Residence Life
- Housing, off campus
- Knights Email
- Learning Online
- Library
- NID Help
- Pathways to Success
- 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

Barden, Sejal  
College: College of Community Innovation and Education  
Disciplinary affiliations: Education  
Contact Info: Sejal.Barden@ucf.edu

Butler, S. Kent  
College: College of Community Innovation and Education  
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Hagedorn, W. Bryce  
College: College of Community Innovation and Education  
Disciplinary affiliations: Counselor Education  
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Contact Info: Bryce.Hagedorn@ucf.edu
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College: College of Community Innovation and Education  
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