COUNSELOR EDUCATION AND SUPERVISION, PH.D.

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is a terminal degree in Counselor Education. The program features a variety of preparation options for students, including preparation for professional positions as counselor educators and supervisors in colleges and universities, researchers, and appointments as clinicians working in governmental agencies, non-profit settings, or private practice. A common core of preparation in the doctoral study includes advanced theoretical foundations, counselor education, counselor supervision, research, leadership and advocacy, and counseling theory. The doctoral program meets the accreditation criteria of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

Admissions

Cohort admission decisions for Fall of each academic year are made at the following deadlines:

Priority Deadline* - December 15th

**Applicants who apply by the priority deadline will be able to compete for graduate assistantships.*

Applicants can expect a response to their application materials within one month after the deadline.

Faculty reserve the right to revisit the application pool after final decisions are made should doctoral student spots remain available. Applicants who submit their materials after the deadline may have their applications denied admission or requested to be reviewed in the subsequent review period.

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, the information below is needed for the application to be considered complete:

- CV/Resume
- A Statement of Purpose containing (a) applicant's reasons for seeking a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision; (b) the applicant's aptitude (e.g., skills, traits, and/or previous experiences) for graduate-level study in a digitally delivered program (see Statement on Digital Delivery); and (c) the applicant's approach to working with various populations and respect for cultural differences.
- At least two letters of recommendation (three preferred) from individuals who can speak about their academic and professional qualifications in the field of rehabilitation counseling and graduate studies. These should come from current or former professors (preferred), supervisors, or mentors who are familiar with the applicant's capabilities and can attest to their potential for success as a doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision.

Finally, an applicant for doctoral study must:

1. Earn a master's degree in Counseling (e.g., Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling, etc.) by the time of initial enrollment at UA (preferred from a CACREP-accredited program)
2. Be willing to complete supplemental master's-equivalency courses to comply with the CACREP-accredited course of study for a master's degree in a specific counseling track if the applicant does not graduate from a CACREP-accredited master's program
3. Pass a pre-admission doctoral interview for formal pursuit of the doctoral degree in Counselor Education

Admission decisions are made based on submitted application materials and a pre-admission doctoral interview with the Admissions Committee. After reviewing application packets, the Admissions Committee, which is comprised of program faculty members, will schedule a pre-admission doctoral interview. Dates and times of interviews will be determined and communicated to potential candidates by program faculty.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Curricular Requirements

Curricular Requirements		Hours
Required Courses		
BCE 618	Adv Theory Counseling	3
BCE 619	Supervision in Counselor Ed	3
BCE 625	Advanced Internship	9
BCE 633	Advanced Seminar	3
BCE 635	Teaching & Scholarship in Coun	3
BCE 636	Leadership & Advocacy in Couns	3
Foundation Courses		
Graduate-level foundational coursework in (1) any BEF or BEP courses or (2) any non-research methods courses outside the student's department		6
Educational Research		
Students will work with advisors to identify appropriate research courses		6
Students must take:		
BER 631	Qual I: Found of Qual Inq	3
BER 640	Adv Statistical Methods in Ed	3
Dissertation Research		**18**
BCE 699	Dissertation Research	
Total Hours		**60**

Per CACREP Policy A.2.e: Beginning July 1, 2026, programs, regardless of program delivery method, require and deliver an in-person, synchronous experience to observe and assess counseling skills and professional dispositions for all students at least at two points throughout the student's program of study of which one occurs prior to the practicum.

Transfer Credit

Graduate School information on Transfer Credit.

Doctoral Plan of Study

Graduate School information on the Doctoral Plan of Study.

Doctoral Preliminary and Comprehensive Exam

The policy of the UA Graduate School is that a comprehensive examination must be completed by all students seeking to graduate from any UA graduate program. The content and scheduling of the PhD comprehensive examination in Counselor Education are consistent with this expectation. Per Graduate School policies, students have two (2) opportunities for successful performance on the comprehensive examination established for their program/department.

Eligibility for the initial attempt to secure a passing score on the Ph.D. comprehensive examination in Counselor Education is granted in the

semester in which students are completing their final semester of coursework (see below), excluding the foundational course. The second attempt can be scheduled to occur no earlier than the subsequent semester of a failure on the student's initial attempt. Otherwise, the Graduate School policy limiting students to two (2) opportunities for successful performance on the comprehensive examination will lead to the student's dismissal from the program.

The Comprehensive Examination in the Counselor Education & Supervision consists of a Portfolio, which serves to help evaluate doctoral student learning experiences across five key training domains (i.e., counseling, research, supervision, teaching, and leadership/ advocacy).

In the final semester of minimum required coursework (defined below), excluding Foundational courses, students form their Dissertation Committee and will begin and defend the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination (i.e., Doctoral Portfolio). Minimum required coursework that must be completed by or during the final semester of coursework, includes all BCE core content and BER core content courses (defined as four courses listed below), specifically including:

BCE Courses:

- BCE 619 Supervision in Counselor Ed
- BCE 618 Adv Theory Counseling
- BCE 636 Leadership & Advocacy in Couns
- BCE 635 Teaching & Scholarship in Coun
- BCE 633 Advanced Seminar
- BCE 625 Advanced Internship

BER Core Research Courses (12 Hours Total):

- BER 631 Inqry As Interp: Qual I
- BER 640 Adv Statistical Methods in Ed
- BER Core Research Course 3
- BER Core Research Course 4
  - For Students starting in Fall 2022 or Prior, BER 540 Statistical Methods In Educ (or its equivalent), will count as a one of the core BER courses
  - For Students starting in Fall 2023 or Later, BER 540 Statistical Methods In Educ or equivalent will be considered as a pre-requisite for BER 640 Adv Statistical Methods in Ed, and will not be included as one of the core research courses

Graduate School information on Comprehensive Exams.

Fieldwork/Practicum/Internship Requirements

While the skills necessary to perform in classroom settings are fundamental to the educational process, a significant element of the training program or any degree sought in the Program in Counselor Education is the applied experiences. In many ways, the activities associated with typical classroom work such as examinations, presentations, research papers, and special projects are the building blocks for a counselor serving their clients. The curriculum in the program features a variety of practical, applied requirements. These are typically noted as internship on the student's Program Planning Record.

A. Internship

In accordance with the 2024 CACREP Standards (https://www.cacrep.org/for-programs/2024-cacrep-standards/), doctoral students are required to complete internships that total a minimum of 600 hours. The minimum 600 hours must include supervised experiences in counseling and at least two more of the four remaining doctoral curricular areas (supervision, teaching, research and scholarship, and leadership and advocacy).

Admission to Candidacy Requirements

After successful completion of your comprehensive examinations, as well as all other academic requirements, you are eligible for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. The Application for Admission to Candidacy for Degree must be completed according to the guidelines noted in the Graduate Catalog. You are also required to stay in continuous enrollment for Dissertation Research until the final oral defense of your completed dissertation.

A department-approved Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree is submitted to the Graduate School as soon as possible after passing the comprehensive examination. Students should contact the departmental advisor for submission of the Admission to Candidacy form. Candidacy takes place after passing the Dissertation Proposal.

Graduation School information on Admission to Candidacy.

Continuous Doctoral Research Hours Registration

Graduate School Policy on Continuous Doctoral Research Hours Registration.

Dissertation Requirements

Dissertation Process

The culmination of work in receiving a doctoral degree comes with the successful completion of the doctoral dissertation. Many students find this obstacle to be insurmountable; it is not! Essentially, the dissertation should allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

1. Analyze, interpret, and synthesize information,
2. Express ideas clearly and succinctly,
3. Demonstrate knowledge of literature, research skills, and methodologies relating to the project,
4. Describe and use methods of data collection and analysis appropriate to the project
5. Present results in a clear and logical manner, and
6. Discuss the meaning and implications of the results

The dissertation should be a project that is original, significant, substantial, and independently produced.

a. Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee is formed in the semester during which the student completes their comprehensive examinations.

The committee can be formed prior to taking comprehensive examinations but no later than registration for BCE 699 Dissertation Research. The dissertation committee will be the committee that will assist in work throughout the completion of the dissertation. Selection decisions are critical in terms of selecting a chair with whom the student can be comfortable and committee members in whom the student has faith. In addition, the members of the committee will need to be able to work together. Students also need to have members who will be candid about their work in order to encounter as much scrutiny as possible before the defense.

- **Composition:** The committee typically consists of a minimum of five (5) members. The committee chair will typically come from Counselor

Education, although this is not required. Along with the chair, students will need to choose the other members of their committee, one of whom must be outside the Department of Educational Studies in Psychology, Research Methodology, and Counseling. The selection of members of the committee should be based on their expertise and scholarly interest in the student's dissertation topic.

- **Responsibilities:** The chair of the dissertation committee is responsible for providing intense counsel in selecting the student's dissertation topic and developing their written documents (i.e., Prospectus, Proposal, and Dissertation). Close cooperation and involvement of all committee members is expected at all stages of the dissertation process. However, the student assumes the primary responsibility for pursuing the tasks, completing the documents, and meeting the deadlines associated with the completion of the dissertation.
- **Changes:** The student or any member of the committee may initiate a change of committee chairperson or member of the committee. Changes must be agreeable to the committee member being removed, the new committee member, the student, and the Program Coordinator. In the event agreement is not unanimous, the request shall be submitted to the entire Counselor Education faculty for resolution. Changes in the composition of a Doctoral Dissertation Committee must be recorded on the Doctoral Program Committee Form and approved by the Dean of the College of Education.

b. Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus is an informal initial overview of the student's dissertation idea. The submission and approval of a prospectus is extremely advantageous in that the student can identify areas of concern as well as potential difficulties far in advance of pursuing the actual dissertation proposal. Then, as students proceed through the remainder of the dissertation, they can confidently pursue their ideas knowing they have already secured the support of the committee.

Suggested Format

The suggested format for the prospectus should be a document of 10 - 15 pages that addresses the following elements:

- Introduction/Rationale
- Statement of Problem Purpose
- Research Questions
- Hypotheses
- Brief Overview of Literature Methodology
- Subjects
- Instrumentation
- Research Design
- Analysis of Data
- Results of Pilot or Preliminary Studies
- Possible Results - Implications/Significance of Study References

Some departure from this suggested format may be necessary based upon the student's specific plan. The prospectus must be received by all members of the committee at least ten (10) working days prior to the prospectus proposal meeting. Upon approval of the prospectus, the student may begin working on the formal proposal. Students may want to include a tentative timeline of their research agenda.

Request for Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects

The actual work of data collection for a pilot study and/or a dissertation involving human subjects must be preceded with permission for conducting such inquiries via formal approval by the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects research. The dissertation chair will assist in efforts to secure this initial approval by The University of Alabama.

c. Dissertation Proposal

The second stage of the dissertation process is developing and presenting a formal proposal of the dissertation project for approval by the committee. It is necessary to have acceptance of the complete dissertation proposal before the student receives approval to pursue the dissertation and is admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

The dissertation proposal should include:

- Introduction to the problem Statement of the problem Research questions or hypotheses
- A comprehensive review of the literature and related research
- A description of the methods of inquiry to be employed in the investigation A description of appropriate subjects, if any, and evidence of their availability Plan for data analyses
- Result of pilot studies (where appropriate)

The above information presented in the proposal is expected to be comprehensive and will include a discussion of the areas outlined as they will appear in the final dissertation.

Prior to the formal proposal meeting of the dissertation committee, the student should confer with all committee members as to a convenient day and time for the meeting. (Students are responsible for informing the committee members of the date, time, and location of the proposal meeting.) Whenever possible, public presentation of the proposal before peers and/or faculty is encouraged. The written dissertation proposal must be provided to all committee members at least 10 working days prior to your proposal meeting.

Upon acceptance of the dissertation proposal and completion of necessary changes recommended by the committee, each committee member will sign an acceptance page on the dissertation proposal. One copy of the signed proposal will be filed with the chair of the dissertation committee, and one copy will be forwarded to the Department Head of Educational Studies in Psychology, Research Methodology, and Counseling to be placed in the student's permanent file.

After successful completion of the comprehensive examinations, as well as all other academic requirements, and acceptance of the formal proposal, the student is eligible for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. The Application for Admission to Candidacy for Degree must be completed according to the guidelines noted in the Graduate Catalog. Students are also required to stay in continuous enrollment for Dissertation Research until the final oral defense of your completed dissertation.

d. Oral Defense of the Completed Dissertation

The format for the dissertation must comply with the guidelines noted on the Graduate School website. Deadlines for defending the dissertation and its completed, approved acceptance by the Graduate School become particularly important at this time in order to graduate at the desired time.

After completion of the dissertation project as well as development of the final dissertation document in consultation with the Chair and committee, the student will participate in a formal oral defense of the project and findings. This activity represents the cumulative efforts of the student's work and the conclusions from his/her findings. The oral defense meeting is quite similar to the dissertation proposal meeting. Students are responsible for making all arrangements for the meeting date, site, and time. (See detailed steps below.) Coinciding with the plan for the oral defense meeting, the dissertation candidate is required to

offer a formal announcement to all faculty in the College of Education about the pending defense meeting. This announcement is typically rather brief and is often communicated via e-mail. Again, the candidate is responsible for providing the announcement to all faculty.

The defense will include a presentation of all aspects of the research study. The majority of the defense should focus on the data collection, analysis, results, and implications for both the focus of the student's study and extensions of the study. Many other details regarding the dissertation document and other requirements are available for review in the Graduate Catalog. Strict adherence to these policies, expectations, and deadlines are typically enacted; exceptions are rare.

The dissertation defense is the culminating experience in the doctoral program. The student and committee chair are responsible for setting a defense date that allows all committee members to participate and to have adequate time to read the dissertation, determine its suitability for a defense, and engage in scholarly dialogue about how to best improve the document.

To promote these priorities, the scheduling of the defense follows a series of steps. The first step is to schedule a tentative defense date. Guided by the dissertation chair, students may schedule a defense date before they submit their final document to their dissertation committee. The second step is for students to submit their dissertation to the dissertation committee so that the committee may read the document and determine its readiness for a defense. Students must submit their completed dissertation to the dissertation committee at least 30 days prior to their scheduled defense date. Students may proceed with this second step after they receive expressed written consent from their dissertation chair(s).

The third step is for dissertation committee members to read the completed document. Dissertation committee members have 10 working days from the date of receipt to determine the dissertation's readiness for a defense, with readiness defined as general consensus (i.e., at least 4 of 5 committee members) that the dissertation can be filed with the Graduate School with only minimal revisions (e.g., minor editorial changes, minor substantive enhancements, and formatting). When readiness is agreed upon by the committee (i.e., 4 out of 5 committee members consent to a defense), the fourth step is for the Dissertation Chair to notify the student of the committee's disposition that a defense may occur. Once notified by their Chair(s), students may proceed with filing a public announcement of the defense. This announcement must be filed no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. At this point, the dissertation defense date is formally confirmed.

Committee members who believe that a dissertation is not suitable for a defense should inform the Dissertation Chair within 10 working days of receiving the dissertation. The detail of their concerns should be submitted to the committee chair within the next 5 working days (if not sooner) so that the student is aware of those concerns and can address them before or during the defense. In cases where disagreements persist about student readiness to defend the dissertation, students and their dissertation chairs should consult with the Department Head as soon as possible. The Department Head will then work with the COE Dean's office and the Graduate School to determine an appropriate course of action.

All faculty members in the College of Education are to receive the announcement of the pending dissertation defense and may observe the dissertation defense. Following the student's presentation and committee examination, persons other than the committee members will be asked to leave the room before the committee conducts any discussion and subsequent voting. Positive votes by Committee members indicate that the dissertation can be filed with the Graduate School with minimal or no revisions.

Graduation School information on Dissertation Requirements.

Time Limit for Degree Completion

Graduate School information on Time Limits.

Student Progress Requirements

Each student enrolled in a degree-seeking status in every degree level of study in Counselor Education is involved in a Student Performance Review near the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. The rubric used is the Faculty Review of Student Performance and Review of Student Dispositions. The faculty review professional and personal strengths and concerns, while monitoring progress. This form entails five sections: academic skills, clinical skills, ethical and professional behaviors, personal characteristics, and the four professional dispositions, endorsed by the College of Education are also included.

Within each section, faculty members will discuss their observed student performance or individual characteristics/dispositions over various indicators and rate a student on a four-point scale: advanced, target, developing, and unacceptable. If dispositions do not meet the minimum standard of "Target," a concern for remediation plan is raised. Student data on their dispositions are also aggregated to help faculty members annually evaluate program objectives for the purpose of program improvement.

Based on this evaluation, students will receive one of the following based on rubric scores: (1) A letter stating exemplary progress in the program, (2) Communication that there were no concerns related to progress in the program, (3) Communication to meet advisor because of a provisional recommendation, and (4) An action plan is required (Remediation). Such reviews are regular components of the training program. Student reviews are conducted with the participation of all Program faculty. Results of student evaluations are entered into each student's record and discussed with the student and their advisor.

In instances of concern about a student, pertinent materials and observations about the student are examined and discussed among the faculty and remedial decisions are determined according to the Selection, Review, Retention, and Dismissal Policy noted in the appendices of the Student Handbook. Due process issues affecting student evaluations are followed in accordance with all published guidelines in materials from the Graduate Catalog and University of Alabama Faculty Handbook.

Academic Misconduct Information

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Graduate School information on Withdrawals and Leave of Absence information

Academic Grievances Information

Student Complaint Procedures

Step 1. (optional) Student raises the issue of concern with the faculty member involved and tries to resolve the concern to the satisfaction of both parties. If the student is not comfortable with taking this first step, the student may proceed to Step 2.

Step 2. If the first step is taken, and no resolution is found, the student may file a formal complaint or grievance with the Department Head and offer any documentation in support of the grievance. As indicated above, the student may also start the grievance process with a formal complaint to the Department Head. Once in receipt of the complaint, the Department Head is expected to work with the two parties to find a resolution to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. The Department Head is also expected to keep a documented record of the effort and to forward all documentation, as it pertains to the complaint, to the Senior Associate Dean if the complaint remains unresolved. Step 2 should take no longer than two weeks.

Step 3. Should the problem remain unresolved, the complaint (and all the accumulated documentation) is forwarded to the Senior Associate Dean to come under University grievance policies as outlined in the University's Faculty Handbook. The Senior Associate Dean then investigates the grievance, surveys the documentation pertaining to the case, and provides a summary and a recommendation to the Dean. The Dean then renders a final decision. This final step should not take any longer than two weeks.

Step 4. If the student is not satisfied with the decision offered by the Dean, the student may appeal to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

Grades and Academic Standing

Graduate School information on Grades and Academic Standing.

Graduate School Deadlines

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

Application for Graduation

Information on the Application for Graduation.