



**College of Education**  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO

# Master of Science in Human Development and Family Studies

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND HANDBOOK



College of Education  
Mailstop 0281  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Reno, NV 89557

Revised:  
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## ABOUT US



### The Reno Area

Channeling the crystal waters of Lake Tahoe, the Truckee River runs leisurely through downtown Reno. Numerous mountain ranges rise ruggedly from the desert basin, providing stunning views and unmatched sunsets.

### The University

- Boasts a fitness facility of more than 108,000 square feet
- Offers affordable, top-tier education
- Houses one of nation's most technologically advanced libraries
- Provides students the opportunity to work closely with research faculty and professionals

As Nevada's flagship land-grant institution, the University has been instrumental in the history of the nation's fastest-growing state. One of the top 150 research universities in the country, the University of Nevada, Reno is fully accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, the official accrediting agency of most Western states.

The University of Nevada, Reno was founded in 1874 as the State University of Nevada in Elko, Nevada, about 300 miles northeast of its present-day campus in Reno. The site for the university preparatory school in eastern Nevada (where no state institutions had previously been located) proved to be impractical, as nearly half of the state's residents lived in the Reno-Carson City area. In 1885, the legislature approved the move of the University from Elko to Reno.

In the last 35 years, the University has met the challenges of leadership in what is now the fastest-growing state in the country, with student enrollment rising to more than 21,000 in fall 2016. Most recently, the university replaced the Jot Travis Student Union with the Joe Crowley Student Union, one of the most transformational buildings ever built on campus. This 167,000-square-foot, "green" environmentally friendly facility signals a shift in campus expansion, offering the campus and community a new

centrally located "front door" to the University from Virginia Street. In 2008, one of the nation's most technologically advanced libraries, the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center, opened next to the Crowley Student Union, further signaling the campus' move north. In 2016, the new 78,000 square foot William N. Pennington Student Achievement Center opened to provide a central building for all student services and in 2017 the university broke ground for a new arts center. The university's most recent building addition is the E. L. Wiegand Fitness Center. The new fitness facility is more than 108,000 square feet with three basketball gymnasiums, areas for weightlifting, cardio training, mind-body training, a fitness staircase, 1/8th mile running track and a multitude of new fitness classes and activities.

The University of Nevada, Reno is an affordable Tier One university. Our students pay 80 percent less than the average Tier One institution, making UNR a best buy amongst Tier One universities. Unlike many public research universities, the University of Nevada, Reno offers its students the chance to get up close and personal with highly credentialed faculty, researchers and professionals. Ph.D. professors regularly teach undergraduate students and invite them to research labs or internships. Graduate students work closely with professors on major research projects while developing their own research skills and projects. UNR Faculty are world renown, respected members of their fields and often bring home research and career achievement awards.

Along with its academic benefits, the University of Nevada, Reno is a beautiful campus located in one of the most picturesque areas of the country. From the 100-year-old, elm tree-lined Jeffersonian quad to the state-of-the-art Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center, the campus possesses historic beauty and digital convenience alike. Nestled at the base of the Sierra Nevada, the city of Reno is closer to cities such as Sacramento and San Francisco than Las Vegas. In contrast to Las Vegas, Reno offers its residents an invigorating taste of all four seasons.

Channeling the crystal waters of Lake Tahoe, the Truckee River runs leisurely through downtown Reno. Numerous mountain ranges rise ruggedly from the desert basin, providing stunning views and unmatched sunsets. Located on the border between the Great Basin and the Sierra Nevada, Reno has been dubbed "America's Adventure Place" for its impressive and diverse geographic offerings. With crystal clear Lake Tahoe 30 minutes to the west, the barren Black Rock Desert to the northeast, and Yosemite a short road trip to the southwest, Reno is a great destination for nature lovers and adrenaline junkies alike.

Reno offers a favorable quality of life that has been recognized by numerous national sources, including *Forbes* magazine. Reno's population enjoys an array of cultural activities, including museums, numerous theatre companies, a symphony, ballet and opera. There are several major venues for concerts, sporting events and other live performances, including the Lawlor Events Center on campus and the Reno Events Center, located less than a 10-minute walk from campus. In recent years, Reno has experienced a Bohemian cultural renaissance, with a growing arts community, increasing international flavor and the annual counterculture festival, Burning Man.

## INTRODUCTION & BASIC INFORMATION



Welcome to the Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) graduate program. The HDFS graduate program at the University of Nevada, Reno offers Master's level training for students interested in studying individuals and families. This handbook will provide an overview of the Master of Science degree program and should assist both students and faculty advisors in understanding the program requirements.

### **Director of Graduate Studies:**

Lydia DeFlorio, Ph.D.,

775-682-5503

[ldeflorio@unr.edu](mailto:ldeflorio@unr.edu)

Office: William Raggio Building Room 3077

### **Program Office Location:**

The office of the Human Development & Family Studies program is located in the William Raggio Building, Room 3014/3015 (across from WRB 3006 classroom).

### **Program Address (for official correspondence):**

HDFS Program

Mail Stop 0281

University of Nevada, Reno

Reno, NV 89557

### **Program Phone & Fax Numbers:**

(775) 784-6490

(775) 784-1990 (fax)

### **Graduate Student Office:**

The graduate student office is available for all graduate students within HDFS who hold a Teaching or Research Assistantship, and is located in the William Raggio Building, Room 3017.

## HDFS GRADUATE PROGRAM MISSION & PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

The mission of the Master of Science graduate program in HDFS is to produce knowledgeable, well-qualified graduates who are prepared to enter the professional workforce as informed, well-rounded specialists in at least one area of the lifespan and in the study of families, and who are prepared to undertake further graduate level education if desired. The graduate program aims to generate graduates who are well versed in relevant theories, research methods, and the conduct and dissemination of quality research so that they are able to understand the current body of literature in HDFS and are prepared to expand this knowledge base through research of their own.

Our goal is to provide graduates who are prepared for roles in professions requiring:

- Knowledge of biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional characteristics of humans across the lifespan;
- Knowledge of family systems and family interactions;
- Knowledge of effective communication for working with individuals and families;
- Assessment and improvement of resources needed by individuals, families, and their communities;
- The ability to provide education about individual development and family life;
- The ability to combine elements of education, prevention, and early intervention; and
- The ability to work in an intergenerational context and with diverse families.

A Master's degree in HDFS also is excellent preparation for further graduate work in HDFS or related fields such as marriage and family therapy, counseling, psychology, sociology, business, education, or public health.

The HDFS graduate program is founded on several core philosophical values. First, we encourage students to develop skills in identifying families' strengths and to develop an appreciation of diversity in age, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, learning styles, and abilities.

Second, we emphasize the importance of education and prevention in addition to intervention, with the recognition that stress, loss and change are normal aspects of life experiences. Thus, we provide students with accurate information on developmental characteristics and interpersonal interactions so that they can most effectively work with individuals and families to lessen problems that arise because of misinformation

about what is considered “normal”. The program recognizes that the distinction between prevention and intervention is not always clear, and encourages students to develop skills that can bridge these areas.

Third, to better appreciate the complexity of individuals, the HDFS graduate program strives to foster in students an understanding of cognitive, biological, and socio-emotional development and the interactions of these components across each stage of the lifespan. To better appreciate the complexity of families, the program strives to foster in students an awareness of the development of family systems, roles, and reciprocal interactions. We encourage students to look at families as more than just interpersonal interactions, and to address family resources that can contribute to stress or resilience during times of crisis or change.

Fourth, consistent with an ecological perspective, the HDFS graduate program emphasizes the contexts within which individuals and families develop and function. As such, we believe that an understanding of these multiple contexts, including cultural and societal influences, is essential in any attempt to understand individuals and families.

## ADVISING

Upon admission to the graduate program in HDFS students are assigned an initial faculty advisor who has expertise in the student's area of interest. Students may choose to change advisors if desired, or continue with the advisor assigned to them throughout the program. Particularly at the graduate level it is important to work closely with one's faculty advisor. As students begin their program of study the faculty advisor assists with selecting courses and answering other questions that may arise. Later on, the faculty advisor also chairs the student's thesis committee or supervises the professional paper.

In the graduate program, students specialize in an area of academic interest through the selection of electives and either a thesis or professional paper topic. The faculty advisor provides guidance in these matters.

Upon selection of a thesis or professional paper topic, an Advisory-Examining Committee is formed, consisting of 3 members with expertise relating to the topic: the student's faculty advisor, a member of the HDFS graduate faculty, and a “graduate school representative” (a faculty member who holds graduate faculty status in a different program or unit on campus). The Advisory-Examining Committee will assist the student in development of a topic proposal and will evaluate the final product (thesis or professional paper). Students will meet with this committee at least twice during their program: once to present their proposal, and once to defend the final product.

## Required Coursework

### Prerequisite Courses

Before beginning the Masters program in HDFS, students are expected to have completed at least 18 credits in HDFS or related disciplines, including an introductory level course on lifespan development (similar to HDFS 201), an introductory course on families (similar to HDFS 202), and an undergraduate course in research methods or statistics.

Students who are accepted into the program without these prerequisites will be required to complete coursework in the deficit area(s) prior to beginning official graduate coursework. A plan for making up the deficit areas will be developed with the Director of Graduate Studies and the student's initial advisor upon student admission to the program. Prerequisite course credits do not count toward completion of the M.S. degree.

## HDFS Course Requirements (For Students in All Areas of Specialization)

Course Name	Course Code	Number of Credits
<b>FOUNDATION COURSES</b>		<b>15 credits</b>
<b>HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>		<b>6 credits</b>
Human Development	HDFS 720*	3 credits
Human Development	HDFS 631A or 631B or 631C or CAS 637 or CAS 660	3 credits
<b>FAMILY STUDIES</b>		<b>6 credits</b>
Family Studies	HDFS 730*	3 credits
Family Studies	HDFS 636 or HDFS 638 or HDFS 658	3 credits
<b>INTERNSHIP</b>	<b>HDFS 791*</b>	<b>3 credits</b>
<b>RESEARCH COURSES</b>		<b>6 credits</b>
Research Methods	EDRS 700	3 credits
Statistics	EDRS 640	3 credits
<b>PROFESSIONAL PAPER or THESIS</b>		<b>3-6 credits</b>
Professional Paper** OR	HDFS 796	3 credits

Course Name	Course Code	Number of Credits
Thesis	HDFS 797	3 credits

\*Students must include HDFS 720, HDFS 730, and HDFS 791 in their Foundation credits

\*\*The *Professional Paper* calls for a student to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and demonstrate in-depth knowledge of eight of the ten family life education content areas. In addition, the CFLE exam will be completed. Your advisor will talk with you about this capstone learning experience option.

### AREA OF SPECIALIZATION

**6-9 credits**

All students take a series of foundation courses in human development, family studies, research, and theory. Students take additional courses in an area of specialization based on a topic of interest in conjunction with their faculty advisor. Examples include topics related to early childhood education, child and adolescent development, family studies, or addiction treatment services. The specialization in Addiction Treatment Services has specific courses that students must take (see below) and requires an additional internship as well as a professional paper or thesis. All other areas of specialization require at least 6-9 credits of elective coursework chosen by the student and his/her faculty advisor.

#### Course Requirements for the Area of Specialization in Addiction Treatment Services

The area of specialization in Addiction Treatment Services has a series of courses that students must take in order to fulfill degree requirements. In addition to the Foundation which includes an Internship there is an additional Internship requirement of HDFS 792. The research courses of EDRS 700 and EDRS 640 are also required. The Professional Paper or Thesis are also required. Students choosing to specialize in Addiction Treatment Services also take the following:

Course Name	Course Code	Number of Credits
<b>AREA OF SPECIALIZATION:</b>	<b>ADDICTION TREATMENT SERVICES</b>	<b>12 credits</b>
<b>REQUIRED COURSES*</b>		<b>9 credits</b>
Assessment	CAS 759 or CEP 642B:	3 credits
Treatment	CAS 760 or CAS 761**	3 credits
<b>ELECTIVES</b>		<b>3 credits</b>
CAS 637		3 credits
CAS 639		3 credits
CAS 639		3 credits



Course Name	Course Code	Number of Credits
HCS 712		3 credits
CAS 659	<p><b>Special Topics in Addiction</b></p> <p>Examples of courses available:</p> <p><b>Special Populations:</b> Women, Adolescents, Elderly, GLBT</p> <p><b>Clinical Issues:</b> Supervision, Treatment of Gambling Disorders, Other Addictions, Peri-natal Substance Abuse</p> <p><b>Special Factors:</b> HIV/AIDS, Criminal Justice, Disabilities</p> <p><b>Administration:</b> Grant Writing, Program Development &amp; Evaluation, Confidentiality, Working with Managed Care</p>	3 credits

## Program of Study

During the first year of study (or no later than the completion of 9-12 credits), students are required to file a Program of Study plan with the Graduate School. The form is available on the [Graduate School website](#). Students complete this form in consultation with their faculty advisor. The form lists the courses taken or to be taken to complete the degree, as well as the composition of the student's Advisory-Examining Committee.

For a Program of Study plan to be approved, the following Program and University criteria must be met:

- A minimum of 33 graduate level credits (courses at the 600-700 level) must be taken. A 400/600-level course that was taken at the 400-level as an undergraduate may not be repeated at the 600-level.
- At least 21 of the 38 credits must be in HDFS.
- At least 12 of the 33 credits must be at the 700-level. [Note: HDFS 752 and 755 are typically reserved for doctoral students in the Interdisciplinary PhD program in Social Psychology.]
- 6 credits of thesis (HDFS 797) or 3 credits of professional paper (HDFS 796) must be taken. These (6) credits do not count toward the (12) 700-level credit requirement discussed above.

Students may enroll for more than 6 credits of thesis, but only 6 credits may count toward the graduate degree.

- See the current catalog for information on maximum number of credits of HDFS 600 and 601 for which a student can enroll.
- A maximum of 3 credits of S/U, including transfer credits, may be applied toward the master's degree.
- All graduate courses must be completed with a grade of “C” or better in order to satisfy graduate program requirements. Grades of a C- or below are considered failing grades in graduate school and will not count in a student’s program of study.

## Changes in the Program of Study

As students progress through the program they may find their interest areas have changed, or that another faculty member better fits the research topic they wish to develop for their thesis or professional paper. Students wishing to change the composition of their Advisory-Examining Committee should do so as early as possible, and the change must be recorded on a “Change in Program of Study” form. Similarly, if changes or substitutions in coursework to fulfill program requirements are necessary, these changes also must be recorded on a “Change in Program of Study” form. This form is available at through the [Graduate School website](#).

## Transfer Coursework

Students may request a transfer of up to 9 credits to apply toward the M.S. degree. These credits must be included in the Program of Study and be agreed upon by the student's advisor, Director of the HDFS Graduate Program, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

## DEADLINES FOR COMPLETION OF THESIS AND GRADUATION

Students admitted to a Master’s degree program at UNR have 6 years to complete the degree beginning from the time the first coursework that will apply to the degree was taken. This is typically the time of admission to the program, but also includes any transfer units that are used toward the degree. Deadlines for the filing of applications for graduation, notice of thesis completion and for submitting the actual thesis to the Graduate School can be found on their [web site](#): These dates are different from the undergraduate deadlines that are advertised in the class schedule each semester. Thesis preparation guidelines can be found on the [Graduate School website](#).

## Other Important Information

(More details are available on the [Graduate School website](#))

- Students must be continuously enrolled in at least 3 graduate credits during the fall and spring semesters in order to maintain graduate standing. Graduate assistants (TAs and RAs) must be enrolled in at least 6 credits in order to maintain their assistantship. For more information on assistantships within the COE, please visit: [www.unr.edu/education](http://www.unr.edu/education)
- Students must apply for a Leave of Absence if they cannot enroll in at least 3 credits per semester. The student's Advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Dean of the Graduate School must sign the Leave of Absence application and it must be submitted to the Graduate School. Students who fail to complete a Leave of Absence form and/or do not enroll in 3 credits per semester will be dropped from graduate standing, and will need to reapply if they wish to continue taking courses at a later date.
- Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in order to maintain graduate standing, and must have a 3.0 in order to graduate.

## Graduate Faculty Members in HDFS & Their Research Interests

[Burnham, Melissa](#)

**University of California, Davis: Ph.D.**

Sleep development in different contexts; the effects of the quality of child care on children's biological development; using developmental & ecological systems theories to understand development in context  
[mburnham@unr.edu](mailto:mburnham@unr.edu)

[DeFlorio, Lydia](#)

**University of California, Berkeley: Ph.D.**

Cognitive and socioemotional development from infancy through adolescence, early mathematical development, parenting and families, and curriculum design, implementation, and efficacy in culturally and socioeconomically diverse early childhood settings.

[ldeflorio@unr.edu](mailto:ldeflorio@unr.edu)

Ehrenreich, Sam

**The University of Texas at Dallas: Ph.D.**

The role of digital communication in adolescent development.

[sam@unr.edu](mailto:sam@unr.edu)

Evans, Bill

**University of California, Los Angeles: Ph.D.**

Prevention of adolescent suicide and violence; resiliency processes associated with adolescent development; school-based family counseling; community-based program evaluation.

[wevans@unr.edu](mailto:wevans@unr.edu)

Jeon, Hyun-Joo

**Iowa State University: Ph.D.**

Influences of quality of peer interaction, teacher-child interaction, parent-teacher relationship, teacher education and qualification, and quality of early care and education settings on children's developmental outcomes.

[hyunjooj@unr.edu](mailto:hyunjooj@unr.edu)

Mortensen, Jennifer

**University of Arizona: Ph.D.**

Proximal and distal risk/protective factors for families with infants and toddlers, including the nature of parent-child interactions as they relate to family dynamics and infants' socioemotional development.

[mortensen@unr.edu](mailto:mortensen@unr.edu)

Murray, Colleen (Adjunct Faculty)

**Ohio State University: Ph.D.**

Grief and loss, adolescent risk behaviors and sexualities, with attention to cultural and family contexts. Cross cultural examination of media's role in "virtual grief" and family grief after mass tragedies involving youth. Adolescent women's life experiences and behaviors; grief and coping of bereaved parents and siblings; interrelationship of family paradigms, illness and health, post-traumatic growth and "complicated" grief across cultures; end of life issues.

[cimurray@unr.edu](mailto:cimurray@unr.edu)

Payne, Pam

**University of Arizona: Ph.D.**

Various aspects of romantic relationships (e.g., sexuality, communication, relationship formation and maintenance), parenting (e.g., social support, parenting behaviors), youth (e.g., school achievement & success) and areas of community engagement and extension.

[ppayne@unr.edu](mailto:ppayne@unr.edu)

Shadley, Meri (Adjunct Faculty)

**Saybrook Institute: Ph.D.**

Family therapy, domestic violence and trauma survival, clinical skills for the addiction treatment provider, prevention sciences for high risk individuals and families, women's issues, families with adolescents, competent couple interactions, and other addiction treatments

[mshadley@unr.edu](mailto:mshadley@unr.edu)

Walsh, Bridget

**Texas Woman's University: Ph.D.**

Early literacy; parent involvement; content analysis

[bridgetw@unr.edu](mailto:bridgetw@unr.edu)

Weigel, Dan (Adjunct Faculty)

**University of Nevada, Reno: Ph.D.**

Early literacy development, school readiness, childcare, parent education and couple relationships

[weigeld@unce.unr.edu](mailto:weigeld@unce.unr.edu)

## Message to our Students

We are pleased that you have selected the M.S. program in Human Development and Family Studies to begin your graduate education. The faculty look forward to working with you. It is in your best interest to take the initiative to seek out faculty with whom you share common interests. Graduate education is greatest when students are actively involved in the program. We encourage you to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible to become involved.

**Please Note deadlines for applications are:**

March 1<sup>st</sup> for Fall admissions

October 1<sup>st</sup> for Spring admissions