

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Cohort 11 Handbook

Program Overview

The Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral program brings together education scholars who come with a variety of experiences and expertise from K-12 and higher education. This approach challenges the conventional wisdom that K-12 and postsecondary education are too different to be understood by the same practice, policy, or research. The program promotes and requires rigorous scholarship that spans the educational continuum and is ideal for students seeking to enter careers in research, institutional assessment, policy analysis, educational leadership, or the professoriate. Students of ELPS should anticipate the academic rigor that the university and department embrace as a Carnegie-classified R-1 institution, a research university noted for its “highest research activity,” and its mission to obtain status as a “Tier 1, National Research University” within the state.

Each year, students who wish to contribute to the field of knowledge and scholarship are accepted into the program and admitted into a cohort of students. The program is similar to a traditional PhD program in that it requires the completion of several content and research courses, electives, and the completion of a dissertation.

Plan of Study

During the first five semesters, students take the required coursework as a cohort. This includes 10 core content and research courses. Because most of our students are working professionals, students take six required hours (two courses) per term. Students may also take electives at any point, but most take them after they have completed the required courses. After students complete the required coursework and are in the final semester of their electives, they may begin to take dissertation hours. Students complete a total of 66 hours.

Research Methods (15 hours)

- EDAD 6304 K-16 Quantitative Research Design & Methodology
- EDAD 6308 Qualitative Research Design & Methodology
- EDAD 6310 Statistical Methods
- EDAD 6315 Advanced Statistical Methods
- EDAD 6318 Advanced Qualitative Research

Core Content Courses (15 hours)

- EDAD 6301 Introduction to K-16 Doctoral Studies
- EDAD 6320 K-16 Philosophy & History Policy Research
- EDAD 6327 K-16 Policy & Law Analysis Research
- EDAD 6342 K-16 Organizational and Leadership Theory

EDAD 6343 Social & Cultural Contexts of Education

Elective Courses (18 hours)

EDAD 6392/6390 (Elective)

EDAD 6391 (Independent Research)

One to two department electives should be offered each term in addition to the required courses.

Students may apply up to 3 doctoral-level courses (9 credit hours) outside the department toward the elective requirement. However, these courses must be approved, prior to enrollment, by the student's dissertation advisor, the department chair, and program coordinator. The elective petition form is located at www.uta.edu/coed/educleadership/programs/index.php. This form must be submitted, in advance, for approval prior to enrollment.

Dissertation (18 semester credit hours minimum)

Course Rotation

Students should refer to the course rotation to determine what classes will be offered each semester. Below is a tentative course rotation for students in Cohort 11. It may change based on circumstances at the time. Students will be notified of any changes prior to registration. It is the student's responsibility to register for each course.

Semester 1

EDAD 6301 Introduction to K-16 Doctoral Studies

EDAD 6343 Social & Cultural Contexts of Education

Semester 2

EDAD 6304 K-16 Quantitative Research Design & Methodology

EDAD 6320 K-16 Philosophy & History Policy Research

Semester 3

EDAD 6310 Statistical Methods

EDAD 6342 K-16 Organizational & Leadership Theory

Semester 4

EDAD 6315 Advanced Statistical Methods

EDAD 6308 Qualitative Research Design & Methodology

Semester 5

EDAD 6327 K-16 Policy & Law Analysis Research

EDAD 6318 Advanced Qualitative Research

Following Semesters

Electives and Dissertation Courses (as applicable)

Continuity in the Program

Choosing to enroll in a doctoral program is a lifestyle change and requires careful planning and prioritizing. Attending class and various educational activities, working on assignments, expanding knowledge, and contributing to the field are time- and thought-consuming activities. Doing them well requires commitment. Attendance at every class meeting is extremely important; activities and assignments will take place.

However, we understand that sometimes events occur that affect a student's progress leading them to want to get an Incomplete (I) in a course. The grade of Incomplete (I) is given only when a student has passing grades in 2/3 of assigned work, but, because of extenuating circumstances, cannot complete all of the course work by the end of the semester. Extenuating circumstances include (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes; (2) a death in the immediate family; (3) change in work schedule as required by an employer; or (4) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor. *A grade of Incomplete should not be requested, nor given, for lack of completion of work because of procrastination or dissatisfaction with the grade earned.* Students have one year after the end of the course to submit work and receive a favorable grade change; otherwise the grade will automatically revert to the grade assigned by the professor given the amount of work completed until that time.

Students should select their dissertation chair and committee during their last semester of required coursework (i.e., core content and research courses). This gives them time to meet and work with each graduate faculty member in the department, to some extent, prior to making their committee membership decisions.

Once students complete their required coursework, they are able to enroll in dissertation hours. Their grades in dissertation courses are dependent on making "adequate" progress each term. Adequate progress is determined by the student's dissertation advisor/chairs. Expectations should be openly acknowledged and shared before dissertation hours begin and revisited, as needed, throughout the process. If the student does not make adequate progress, they will be failed from the course. Failure in these courses may result in being withdrawn from the program. To avoid withdrawal, please maintain regular contact with your dissertation advisors/chairs and continue making progress on your dissertations.

Because of the importance of maintaining momentum in the doctoral program and the learning experiences and emotional support that accrue from studying in a cohort, students are expected to enroll each semester in the courses designated for ELPS doctoral students in their cohort. If students choose to stop taking courses, they are removed from the program. If they later wish to regain entry into the program, students

may reapply. Readmission is not guaranteed.¹

Advising—Graduate Advisor, Program Coordinator, Supervising Professor, and Dissertation Committee

Students' admission and progression through the program are guided by several people: The **graduate advisor** will assist in admission and course registration.

The **program coordinator** will address general questions about the program and course content.

The **supervising professor** is appointed at the beginning of the student's program and is responsible for advising the student up to the end of organized coursework. The supervising professor is often randomly selected by the admissions' committee during the admissions' process. If students wish to select another supervising professor, they may do so. The supervising professor is not the dissertation advisor, but can provide guidance and feedback for matters outside of the purview of the advisor and program coordinator. Example topics include identifying research topics, selecting relevant electives, attending and/or presenting at a conference.

The **dissertation advisor** is selected by the student during the final semester of their required coursework (i.e., core content and methods courses). The dissertation advisor will oversee the student's dissertation research and the writing of the dissertation. They can also advise on the selection of electives, which should be selected based on their dissertation needs and future goals. Paperwork, indicating the choice of the dissertation advisor and the dissertation committee, is due before the student can begin dissertation hours and should be submitted to the Department's Graduate Advisor and/or Doctoral Coordinator. The form requires signatures from all committee members. Dissertation committee forms are located at <http://www.uta.edu/coed/educleadership/programs/index.php>.

Advancing to Candidacy

In the ELPS PhD program, students must successfully defend their dissertation proposal to advance to candidacy. After this point, they will be focused on completing their dissertation requirements.

Dissertation Requirements

All doctoral students must be aware of requirements and deadlines associated with the dissertation, final defense, and submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Office of Graduate Studies. The deadline dates for each semester are published in the

¹ Sometimes life events force students to take a leave from the program. In this case, the student should notify the department chair, the graduate advisor, and the graduate coordinator. They will advise you if you decide to return to the program at some later date.

Graduate School Calendar at <http://grad.pci.uta.edu/about/catalog/current/calendar/>. Students should be familiar with the current calendar.

The dissertation represents the culmination of the student's academic efforts and is expected to demonstrate original and independent research activity and be a significant contribution to knowledge. Once the student is enrolled in dissertation courses, continuous enrollment is required. (This includes fall and spring terms only. Dissertation students are not required to enroll in the summer unless they are planning to defend during the summer term.) A student receiving advice and assistance from a faculty member in the preparation of a dissertation must register for the appropriate course even if the student is not on campus.

Steps to Dissertation Completion

Once students have completed their program coursework and advanced to candidacy by successfully defending their dissertation proposals, they must enroll in dissertation hours until the dissertation is completed and approved by their committee and the Office of Graduate Studies or until the student is unable to continue in the program. It is in the best interest of students to finish the dissertation before accumulating 99 credit hours; **upon reaching 99 hours, students will be charged non-resident tuition and may not be eligible for assistantships.**

Working with an Advisor

Students should take care when selecting their dissertation advisor and should cultivate a professional, and positive relationship with that advisor. As such, it is imperative for the student to **maintain regular communication with the advisor**. The dissertation advisor serves as a guide for the student through the process of conducting their dissertation research and writing their dissertation proposal and final document. The dissertation advisor will not approve the student to engage in either the proposal or the dissertation hearing until the advisor believes that both are defensible and of high quality.

To lessen the number of drafts, it is in the students' best interest to ensure that each draft and chapter is proofread before submission to the advisor. Introductory paragraphs and transition sentences must be in place. Students must follow standard grammar and mechanics and the American Psychological Association's (APA) Publication Manual (most current edition). Students are encouraged to buy an English grammar/mechanics handbook, an APA Style Manual, a writing-the-literature-review guide, constructing-data collection-tools books, and a dissertation-how-to book.

The Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee is comprised of three members: the student's dissertation advisor (chair of the committee) and at least one other graduate faculty member from ELPS. Students may choose additional dissertation committee members from graduate

faculty at the Department, College, or the University level². Only faculty from the University will have an official vote on the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation. If an external faculty member is from another campus, they must be approved to serve on the committee and will serve as a non-voting member. The approval form is available at <http://grad.pci.uta.edu/faculty/resources/advisors/membership/>). All members should be selected in consultation with and approval of your dissertation advisor.

Writing Process—Preparing the Dissertation Proposal

Students, in collaboration with their dissertation advisors, should select topics for dissertation research that are clearly within the expressed mission and interests of the departmental faculty and that focus on K-16 educational research or policy. Continuous discussion with the dissertation advisor should take place to arrive at a feasible topic for the dissertation. **Advisors must approve both the proposal and dissertation before the student may distribute copies to committee members.**

The dissertation proposal format is determined in consultation with the dissertation advisor.

The ELPS department requires a formal dissertation proposal hearing. After receiving approval from dissertation advisor for the completed proposal, a student will provide the proposal to the dissertation committee members **at least two weeks** before the date of the proposal hearing. This is a closed meeting, attended by the student and the committee only. At the hearing, students should discuss and defend topic selection, research methodology, theoretical frameworks, the review of pertinent literature, and other procedural details. **The doctoral committee must approve the proposal before IRB application and data collection.** It is very common that the doctoral committee will recommend revisions and changes to the proposal. If the changes are minor, the advisor will make an informal contract between the student and the doctoral committee outlining the required changes; the student will be granted permission to conduct the research on the condition that the required changes will be made by the time of the final defense. If changes are major, the committee may require another full proposal defense or individual approval. In either case, it is the student's responsibility to make the necessary changes and, if required, resubmit the revised proposal to the committee, again allowing two weeks for review.

Students must be enrolled in the term in which they plan to defend their proposal.

Writing Process—Institutional Review Board

While waiting on the proposal defense, students may take and pass the human participant research training and acquire a certification for conducting human research. This is an online process and can be found on the UTA Research Training website. Students should print out and save a copy of their certificate verifying they passed the online training. A copy of this certificate may be requested with the student's completed

² To date, most students have chosen all committee members from the ELPS faculty even though they can choose members from across campus.

IRB application for research approval. As stated, it is common for the committee to request some changes to a student's research design at the proposal stage. Therefore, students should not submit the IRB research application prior to the proposal defense and the proposal is approved by the committee.

After the dissertation committee has approved the dissertation proposal, the student should begin work on completing UTA's Institutional Review Board's (IRB) research application forms. Students may draft all necessary IRB application forms and be ready to submit after the dissertation committee has approved the proposal making any required changes based on the proposal defense. The UTA Research/IRB approval process can take as little as a week, or as long as a month or more, depending on the volume of research approvals the Office has received and the level of revisions required. The student **cannot** begin collecting data until **both** the doctoral committee has approved his or her dissertation proposal and the UTA Research/IRB has approved the student's application to do research with human subjects.

Writing Process—Data Collection

After receiving approval from both the dissertation committee and IRB, students may begin gathering data. Students may experience unexpected challenges during the data collection stage. It is critical that the student share these issues with their dissertation advisor who will help guide the student through the process.

While collecting data, students should continue writing other parts of the dissertation. Often peers form groups to provide feedback on their writing and provide support throughout the process. Ongoing peer feedback on the writing helps students improve their work prior to submitting it to the dissertation advisor. As mentioned above, it is very common to revise dissertation chapters many times before the doctoral advisors certify that students are ready for their final defense.

It is most important that students arrange a timeline with their advisors and be committed to meeting these self- (and sometimes advisor-) imposed deadlines. Finally, it is critical that students at this stage **keep in contact with advisors. Failure to do so may lead to the discontinuation of the dissertation advisor in this role.**

Dissertations

Students may prepare their dissertation in a monograph or article-based format. The **monograph format** is a traditional dissertation. A traditional dissertation includes a minimum of five chapters plus references: An introduction, literature review (which may include the theoretical/conceptual framework), methodology and methods, findings and discussion, conclusion and implications, and references and appendices. In some cases, the theoretical framework and findings and discussion chapters may be separated into different chapters. The proposal may either be a single document or the first three chapters of the proposal. The format and the amount of detail necessary is determined in consultation with the chair.

The **article-based dissertation** includes a minimum of 5 chapters—an introduction that explains the topic, at least three articles that are publication quality and either ready to submit or already accepted, and a conclusion that provides an overview of all the article findings and discusses them as a whole.

The final structure of the dissertation regardless of format is determined by the student in consultation with the dissertation advisor.

General guidelines for the **article-based dissertation** include:

- A proposal is still expected for article-based dissertations, but the form of this proposal may vary somewhat from those for other dissertations. The research proposal submitted by the student should include information on the research issue, problem, or theme on which the various articles will focus. In addition, the proposal should be specific about plans for publishing the articles including the specific journals (or other outlets) that the articles will be submitted to and the nature of the review process used by each. Journals or other outlets may be print or online, but they must employ a standard peer review process in which the identity of the author is unknown to the reviewers (blind review). The dissertation committee may also wish to set expectations about the quality, reputation, or scope of the outlets. In approving the research proposal, dissertation committee members are also approving the publication outlets proposed by the student. If the student wishes to submit an article to a different outlet than those specified in the approved proposal, consent of the entire committee is required.
- Normally an article-based dissertation will contain at least three substantial articles in addition to the opening and concluding chapters. The majority of articles must be accepted for publication, under review for publication, or judged by the committee members as of publishable quality. It is the supervisory committee's responsibility to determine the final numbers of articles that are required.
- Articles or publications produced prior to the beginning of the student's program will not be acceptable for inclusion in the dissertation.
- The student should be the sole author for at least one of the articles. In all cases of coauthored articles, the student must be the first/primary author.
- To avoid misunderstandings about expectations for completion, students and dissertation advisors should ensure that all article-based dissertation decisions and agreements are documented in the student's file and described in the first chapter of the dissertation.

Students and their dissertation advisors should carefully consider the implications for the student's program, research, dissertation preparation, completion, and future employment in adopting this format.

Dissertation Defense

Students must be enrolled in dissertation hours the term in which they plan to defend their dissertation proposal and final document. Students must apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which they plan to schedule their final dissertation defense. The graduation application can be found in MyMav and must be completed near the beginning of the final semester (consult Graduate Calendar for specific deadlines). Students must also enroll in EDAD 7399 or 7699 in their final semester. This provides another cue to administration that this is your final semester. You must have approval from your dissertation advisor that you are ready to take the course, because you cannot take it a second time. We have found that it is advisable that students have completed the first three chapters of a traditional dissertation and are writing up their findings before enrolling in this course.

Similar to the proposal defense experience, the dissertation advisor must approve the dissertation before students may submit it to committee members. Students must send all committee members the final dissertation **no later than two weeks** before the final defense. Students are responsible for contacting committee members. They are also responsible for scheduling the defense time and location with the Graduate Advisor. Most defenses take place in 120 Trimble, if it is available.

The dissertation defense is a public oral examination open to all members (i.e., faculty, students, and invited guests) of the University community. The dissertation committee will direct the questioning of candidates. All committee members must be present at the defense. Although the defense is concerned primarily with the dissertation research and its interpretation, the examining committee may explore the student's knowledge of areas relevant to the core of the dissertation problem.

During the defense, students present an overview of their study and then converse with committee members about their research procedures, findings, and implications.

Dissertation members often require additional changes to the dissertation. All of these changes must be made and verified by the dissertation advisor before students can submit the final dissertation.

Occasionally, dissertation committee members may ask to see the revisions before signing approval. Throughout the entire dissertation process, while the advisor does everything possible to ensure the success of the student, the quality of the dissertation and adherence to all guidelines are the student's responsibility. The student should comply with the dissertation revision and procedures requirements set forth by the advisor and committee for a successful dissertation defense. Committee members indicate their approval by signing the Dissertation Defense Report, and the chair will then submit the Dissertation Defense Report to the Graduate Advisor who will send it to the Office of Graduate Studies.

The dissertation defense may result in a decision that the candidate has

- 1) passed unconditionally;

- 2) passed conditionally with remedial work specified by the committee;
- 3) failed, with permission to be re-examined after a specified period; or
- 4) failed and dismissed from the program.

The dissertation must be approved unanimously by the student's dissertation supervising committee.

Filing the Dissertation

The final step in the dissertation process is submitting the manuscript to the Library. For specific guidelines about dissertation manuscript preparation and requirements, students should refer to Library guidelines (<http://www.uta.edu/library/etd/>). The dissertation must be formatted in APA style guidelines. Once finalized, students must submit the dissertation to Vireo as described at the UT Arlington library website. Students may also choose to file their dissertations with ProQuest, but this is no longer required.

Reasonable Progress toward the Degree

Reasonable progress can be measured by these guidelines (as indicated by the OGS website):

- All coursework (except dissertation course hours) normally should be completed no later than 8 semesters (approximately 3 years) after admission into the doctoral program.
- A dissertation proposal should be submitted to and approved by the student's doctoral committee approximately 12 months after core course, methods, and elective course completion.
- Completion of dissertation should be completed approximately 24 to 36 months (or two to three years) after course completion.

Failure to Make Adequate Progress

If a student fails to make adequate progress toward a degree, the advisor will issue a letter indicating such lack of progress and may select to discontinue in the role as dissertation advisor. Further, if the student does not meet the dissertation contract agreement, the student may be dropped from the program without earning the PhD degree.