

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Cohort 13 Handbook

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) Doctoral Program

Program Overview

The Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral program brings together education scholars who come from 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, instructional leadership, student affairs, or the professoriate. Students of ELPS should anticipate the academic rigor that the university and department embrace as a Carnegie classified R-1, a research institution 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 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 two courses (6 required course hours) 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 hours¹. Students complete a total of 66 hours.

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

Research Methods (15 hours)

- EDAD 6304 K-16 Quantitative Research Design & Methodology

¹ They must have a dissertation chair in place prior to taking dissertation hours.

EDAD 6308 Qualitative Research Design & Methodology
EDAD 6310 Statistical Methods
EDAD 6315 Advanced Statistical Methods
EDAD 6318 Advanced Qualitative Research

Elective Courses (18 hours)

EDAD 6392/6390 (Elective)
EDAD 6391 (Independent Research)

Dissertation (18 semester credit hours minimum)

Note: Faculty reserve the right to amend the curriculum at any time, but you will be notified in advance of any changes.

Electives

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

Students are required to complete 6 doctoral-level elective courses (18 credit hours).

Of those nine credits, students **must complete** 3 doctoral-level ELPS elective content courses (e.g., EDAD 6392) to partially fulfill the elective requirement. However, to fulfill the remaining 9 credits, students **may apply** up to 3 doctoral-level courses from the ELPS superintendent certificate program, other doctoral programs outside the department, or independent studies (i.e., EDAD 6391) with ELPS faculty.

For courses the student plans to take that are offered outside the department, the student must get approval from 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 for courses the student plans to take. This form must be submitted, in advance, for approval prior to enrollment.

Students who want to transfer in credits from doctoral coursework that they have already taken must submit the course syllabus to confirm the course is doctoral level and your course transcript to the coordinator of the ELPS doctoral program, your supervising professor, the department chair, and graduate advisor for approval.

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 13. 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 class. If you have any issues with registration, please seek assistance from the graduate advisor (e.g.,

Lauren Vanpool, Courtney Jones, or whoever may be in that role at the time of the issue.)

Semester 1 (Fall 2018)

EDAD 6301 Introduction to K-16 Doctoral Studies

EDAD 6343 Social & Cultural Contexts of Education

Semester 2 (Spring 2019)

EDAD 6304 K-16 Quantitative Research Design & Methodology

EDAD 6320 K-16 Philosophy & History Policy Research

Semester 3 (Summer 2019)

EDAD 6310 Statistical Methods

EDAD 6342 K-16 Organizational & Leadership Theory

Semester 4 (Fall 2019)

EDAD 6315 Advanced Statistical Methods

EDAD 6308 Qualitative Research Design & Methodology

Semester 5 (Spring 2020)

EDAD 6327 K-16 Policy & Law Analysis Research

EDAD 6318 Advanced Qualitative Research

Following Semesters

Electives and Dissertation Courses (as applicable)

Program Demands

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, which contributes to your learning. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the program must become a priority for you to successfully complete it.

Program Continuity

The state of Texas requires all doctoral students to sign off on the **Milestone Agreement**, which includes all the key steps required in their particular doctoral program. The Agreement is discussed and signed in EDAD 6301. It is recommended that the student make a copy for their file, because that document outlines the key milestones through graduation.

For the first five consecutive terms, students will be completing the required course work. Some students may choose to take electives as well. This decision depends on

their particular circumstances and does affect the amount of time it takes to complete the program. In general, it takes students four years to fulfill the requirements, but every student's journey may vary.

Students should select their dissertation chair and committee during their last semester of required coursework (i.e., core content and research courses). Waiting until this point, 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.

Students may begin taking dissertation hours once they have completed the 10 core content and research courses and have a dissertation advisor. Their grades in dissertation courses are dependent on making "adequate" progress each term. Adequate progress is determined by the student's dissertation advisor/chair. Expectations should be openly acknowledged and shared before dissertation hours begin and revisited, as needed, throughout the process. Formally, students and faculty are expected to review these goals annually through DS-Pro (Doctoral Student Progress Report), an online advising system.

If a student fails to make adequate progress toward a degree, the advisor will communicate this information to the student 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. To avoid withdrawal, please maintain regular contact with your dissertation chair and continue making progress on your dissertation.

Because of the importance of maintaining momentum in the doctoral program 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 for 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.**

Students may also choose to leave the program because of extenuating circumstances. If this is the case, it is the student's responsibility to inform the department chair, the program coordinator, and the graduate advisor in advance. If students are out of the program for one year or longer and wish to return, they must reapply for admission. **Readmission is not guaranteed.** The faculty admission's committee will consider the request and determine if the student may return. This decision is based on having earned a cumulative GPA of a B while in the program and the expectation for successful completion of the dissertation. If the student is able to return, they should contact the graduate advisor and program coordinator to determine their revised course rotation. Because several courses are sequenced and must be taken in that order, students may be required to join another cohort to complete the program. Further, any changes in their progression may delay the student's progression. **Whatever your circumstances, it is imperative you continue to communicate your situation to the graduate advisor, your supervising professor or dissertation advisor, and the program coordinator.**

They are there to support you, but need to be aware of your circumstances to be able to provide that assistance.

Incompletes

We understand that sometimes events occur that affect a student's progress. **In some instances, this might lead you 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 the assigned work, but cannot complete all the course work by the end of the term because of extenuating circumstances.** 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.* In general, 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 an F. However, on occasion, the specific faculty member may ask you to complete the work within a certain time period, so communicate with your faculty member to ensure you are aware of their parameters.

Reasonable Progress toward the Degree

Reasonable progress can be measured by these guidelines:

- All coursework 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 no later than 12 months after course completion.
- Completion of dissertation should be completed no later than 24 to 36 months (or two to three years) after course completion.

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 ELPS advising office is located on the 5th floor of Carlisle Hall. If you have any questions regarding registration, enrollment, and other logistical issues contact them by email, face-to-face, or phone.

The faculty are here to assist you as well in their formal or informal advisory roles.

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 Department prior to orientation.

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. If students wish to select another supervising professor, they may do so. However, most students tend to ask their class room teachers any questions that occur, because they see them regularly. These faculty members are happy to assist you. If they are unable to answer your questions, they will recommend that you contact the program coordinator or graduate advisor, depending on the nature of the question.

The **dissertation advisor** is selected by the student during the final semester of their required coursework (i.e., core content and methods courses). Students should take care when selecting their dissertation advisor and should cultivate a professional and positive relationship with that advisor. Customarily, students schedule meetings to talk to the specific faculty they are considering to see if that individual is able to take on this role. Recognize that each faculty member may ask different things from you (e.g., a brief paper on your topic and your research questions) before making the decision. It requires agreement from both parties. Once this decision is made, the student should have the newly selected chair work with them to decide on committee members. The student will then need to approach the potential committee members to get their agreement as well.

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, interests, 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>.

Once the commitments have been made, it is imperative for the student to **maintain regular communication with their dissertation advisor. Failure to do so may result in the faculty member choosing to discontinue in the role as advisor.**

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.

Steps to Dissertation Completion

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.

They will continue enrolling in dissertation hours until the dissertation is completed and approved by their committee 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 Your Dissertation Advisor

The dissertation advisor serves as a guide for the student through the process of conducting the 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 the third dissertation committee member from graduate faculty at the Department, College, or the University level. Only faculty from the University will have an official vote on the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation. If an additional or external faculty member is from another campus, they must be approved to serve on the committee by the Department's Graduate Studies Committee. They will be 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 the 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. Typically, it is the first three chapters of the dissertation, but may also be a single document. The proposal defense can occur any time during a school term as long as the student is enrolled in dissertation hours.

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 a 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 providing two weeks for review.

Writing Process—Institutional Review Board

While waiting on the proposal defense, students are able to 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 a pass on the online examination. A copy of this certificate may be requested with the student's completed IRB application for research approval. Even though students may complete the IRB human participant training before the dissertation committee has approved their proposal, they **should not** submit their study for IRB review before having their proposal approved by their committee.

After the dissertation committee has approved the dissertation proposal, the student should complete and submit UTA's Institutional Review Board's (IRB) research application forms. The UTA Research/IRB approval process can take as little as two weeks, 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 phase. 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 final defense.

It is important that students arrange a timeline with 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.**

Dissertation Formats

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 dissertation advisor.

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.

Final Dissertation Defense

Students must be enrolled in EDAD 7399 the term in which they plan to defend the final dissertation. The unique course number provides a cue to the administration that this is your final semester. You must have approval from our dissertation advisor that you are ready to take the course before enrolling. 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.

All doctoral students must be aware of requirements and deadlines associated with the final defense and submission of the final copy of the dissertation. The deadline dates for each semester are published at the library site (<http://library.uta.edu/etd>). Deadlines for

final dissertation defenses often occur several weeks prior to the last week of the term. Students should be aware of these deadlines when discussing the possibility of defending their dissertation with their advisor prior to the start of the term.

In addition to taking EDAD 7399, 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 <http://www.uta.edu/records/graduation/applying.php> and must be completed near the beginning of the final semester (consult Graduate Calendar for specific deadlines).

Similar to the proposal defense experience, the dissertation advisor must approve the dissertation before students may submit it to their 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 ELPS Administrative Assistant and notifying the graduate advisor of the defense. 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.

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, which the student will supply at the defense. The Dissertation Report Form may be found at <http://grad.pci.uta.edu/resources/pdf/DissertationDefenseReport.pdf>. The student should have the top portion of the form completed and the committee members' names listed prior to the defense. The committee will sign off on the form after a successful defense. The dissertation chair will then submit the form 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 student's dissertation committee must approve unanimously the dissertation for a successful defense.

Filing the Dissertation

The student should address all changes required by their committee before sending it to the dissertation advisor for a final review. Once approved by the student's dissertation advisor, the student will submit the dissertation to Vireo. Students should refer to Library guidelines (<http://www.uta.edu/library/etd/>) regarding submission. Students may also choose to file their dissertations with ProQuest for a fee, but this is no longer required. They should also send a copy of the final draft to their dissertation advisor and the department administrative assistant.

Format Requirements

Even though the University has no required elements besides margins and front and closing matter, it does offer some examples on University websites. One such example is available at

<https://www.uta.edu/gradstudies/documents/General%20Information/Examples%20of%20Elements%20of%20Theses%20and%20Dissertations%20final2.26.16.pdf>

ELPS students should follow APA format regardless of what is illustrated in the examples on the UTA website.

ELPS students' dissertations should include:

Front matter

1. A title page that includes the month and year the student will graduate. This page is not numbered
2. An abstract of no more than 300 words
3. A copyright page (optional)
4. Acknowledgements (optional)
5. Table of Contents (required)
6. List of tables, list of figures, list of abbreviations, if necessary. Each list should be on a separate page.

Body of the dissertation – may be in monograph or article format (See section on Dissertation formats on page 9 for more information.)

Back matter

1. Bibliography
2. Appendix

3. Student's brief biographical information (no more than 150 words)

Page size – Standard paper size of 8 ½ x 11 inches

Line spacing – Double-spaced. Footnotes may be single-spaced. The selection must be consistent throughout the dissertation.

Margins – A minimum of 1 inch

Font – 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font

Smaller font size may be used in footnotes and figure captions, if agreed to by dissertation advisor

Page numbering – Page 1 begins with the first page of the text. Pages prior to this are numbered using Roman numerals (beginning with acknowledgements, if included). The page numbers may be placed in the right upper or lower corner or the center bottom. The placement should be consistent throughout the dissertation.

Headers and references use APA style.

NOTE: The rules and regulations listed here may vary from previous and future cohorts, so please keep this version for your records and refer to it, as needed.