



Graduate Handbook 2024-2025

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Introduction

Welcome from the Department Head, Robert Kelchen

Welcome to the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies! For over sixty years, our department has prepared educational leaders and scholars in Tennessee and beyond. Education plays a crucial role in fostering social mobility and reducing longstanding inequities in society, and we are excited to learn together with you during your journey.

The department is divided into graduate programs in Adult and Continuing Education, Educational Administration, Evaluation, Statistics, and Methodology, and in Higher Education Administration. While this handbook provides useful tools and general information to all of our graduate students, the program in which you are enrolled may have a separate handbook, which you are encouraged to review. If you have specific questions or concerns relating to your program, please contact your program coordinator.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any ELPS faculty and staff with any questions as you proceed on your journey. We are thrilled to have you as a student and are excited to see where your education takes you in the future.

Sincerely,

*Robert Kelchen
Department Head & Professor
Educational Leadership & Policy Studies*

Purpose of the Handbook

To serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of graduate programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students.

Based on Best Practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department/program must be disseminated.

The Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies noted in the [Graduate Catalog](#), but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide insight into the department's organization, programs, and policies, as well as those of the university.

Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and studies at the university. In addition to this handbook, graduate students are advised to consult the [Graduate Catalog](#) and [Hilltopics](#), available on the [Graduate School website](#).

Mission of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

The mission of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies is to prepare entry-level and executive-level administrators and faculty for schools and colleges, and to prepare policy scholars to serve in these organizations and in state, regional, and national policy agencies associated with the educational and human service enterprise. The graduate degree programs in the department are designed to enrich the knowledge, skills and values requisite to effective leadership in educational practice settings. The department views leaders as stewards and servants of organizations; designers of the social and cultural climate in which we do our work; teachers who facilitate human growth and development; change agents who continually examine the effectiveness of their organizations; and conceptual provocateurs who challenge ideas and assumptions on which practice and policy are built.

Vision of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

The vision of the Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies is to be nationally recognized for graduating outstanding, innovative, and courageous leaders and for producing significant educational research that influences policy and practice.

Core Values of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

The effectiveness of leaders at any level and in any setting rests on competence and conscience. Technical knowledge and skill are placed in action at the service of core values, which are premier design instruments for organizational cultures and climates. Honoring these core values promotes leadership effectiveness. Neglecting these values takes clients and organizations in

harm's way and diminishes the promise and performance of those who give voice and meaning to educational organizations. The values upon which all programs are built and which guide the teaching and learning in the department include:

Civility: Affirming the power of human dignity and diversity

Candor: Respecting the power of public forum and the role of debate and dissent

Courage: The commitment to act on conviction and link belief to action

Responsibility: Accepting care for one's actions and decisions

Compassion: Caring for person and principle

Community: Respecting and embracing diversity while developing an agenda of common caring

Persistence: Focusing on long-range goals and staying the course in the face of hardship

Service: Placing the welfare and promise of others before self

Excellence: Calling self, others and organizations to high standards of performance

Justice: Ensuring equity in opportunity and recognition

In addition to the department's core values, graduate students are also encouraged to review the university's Principles of Civility & Community. This is accessible via <https://civility.utk.edu/principles/>

Faculty & Administrative Staff of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

ELPS Faculty

Pamela S. Angelle, PhD, Professor of Educational Leadership, Associate Department Head, Coordinator of Higher Education Administration Programs

323 Jane and David Bailey Education Complex, Knoxville, TN 37996-3430

Phone: 865-974-4139; Email: pangelle@utk.edu

Research interests: International contexts of social justice leadership in schools, international comparative studies, and teacher leadership.

J. Patrick Biddix, PhD, Professor of Higher Education

Jane and David Bailey Education Complex, Knoxville, TN 37996-3430

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Research interests: Civic engagement and student involvement, student activism, technology use and implications, career development in student affairs, and research methodology.

Karen D. Boyd, PhD, Professor of Practice and Director of Undergraduate Studies

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Research interests: The organizational dimensions of the student-institutional relations and the impact of those relations on integrative learning.

Leia Cain, PhD, Assistant Professor of Qualitative Methods

316 Jane & David Bailey Education Complex, Knoxville, TN 37996-3430

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Research interests: Researcher identity and decision making, ethics in qualitative and mixed methods research, and LGBTQ+ student and faculty experiences in higher education.

Jimmy G. Cheek, PhD, Distinguished Professor and Chancellor Emeritus

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Research interests: Influence of experiential learning on student achievement, educational accountability, the performance of universities, leadership and leading organizational change.

Mary Lynne Derrington, EdD, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Coordinator of Instructional Leadership Education Doctoral Program

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Research interests: Evaluation of principals, female superintendents, and ethical leadership practices.

Mary Dueñas, PhD, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Coordinator of College Student Personnel Program

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Research interests: College access, Latine student success, Students of Color in higher education, first-generation college students, persistence.

Sonya D. Hayes, PhD, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, Coordinator of Leadership Studies Doctoral Program and Associate Director of the Educational Research and Opportunity Center

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Research interests: Leadership for learning, leadership development, principal efficacy in school improvement, rural educational leadership, qualitative research methodology.

Lauren Irwin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Higher Education

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Research interests: Racialization and whiteness, student affairs contexts, leadership education programs, equity in higher education.

Terry T. Ishitani, PhD, Associate Professor of Higher Education

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Research interests: College success, student retention, institutional research, enrollment management, civic engagement, and student migration.

Robert Kelchen, PhD, Professor and Department Head

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Research interests: Higher education finance, accountability policies and practices, student financial aid.

Brandon Kliwer, PhD, Associate Professor

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Research interests: Civic leadership, organizational leadership, and leadership learning and development.

Jennifer Kobrin, EdD, Assistant Professor of Adult and Continuing Education

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Research interests: Adult digital literacies, community-based digital equity programs, adult foundational education, instructional technology

James Martinez, EdD, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership

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Research interests: Underrepresented students in Science, Technology Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, special education, and the role of the school administrator.

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Research interests: Adult bullying and incivility, intersectionality of race, gender, and sexual orientation, learners in adult, higher, and continuing professional education, positionality in social justice research and practice, and professionalism.

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Coordinator of Evaluation Methodology, and Director of Graduate Studies
530 Jane and David Bailey Education Complex; Knoxville, TN 37996-3430

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Research interests: Higher education program evaluation and assessment, training emerging evaluation and assessment professionals, and college student development.

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Methodology

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Research interests: Program evaluation and assessment in higher education and methodological issues in educational research.

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Opportunity Center

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Research interests: College access and completion, career education and workforce development, community and technical colleges.

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Research interests: Adult learning and online learning, international and comparative education, lifelong learning policy and studies, cultural impact on teaching and learning, Confucianism and Eastern philosophy and workforce development.

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Research interests: Human development, culturally responsive evaluation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), international development, and refugee studies.

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Programs

Programs in Educational Administration

Online Leadership Studies

The Online Leadership Studies Program is an asynchronous, distance education Master's, Education Specialist, and Graduate Certificate program, which prepares candidates for a TN Instructional Leader License. The 30-credit-hour Master's program, 36-credit-hour Education Specialist Program (with a research component), and the 21-credit-hour Graduate Certificate program, involve both coursework and a 335-hour Instructional Leader Internship Clinical Practice. The Online Leadership Studies program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and nationally recognized by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) as a quality educational leadership preparation program.

Instructional Leadership Licensure Option

The option of obtaining a Tennessee Instructional Leadership-Beginning (ILL-B) License requires at least two (2) years of qualifying experience as an educator as defined by the TN Department of Education and a current and valid TN teaching license to be considered a candidate for admission. The MS program requires 30 hours of coursework; the EdS program requires 36 hours. Coursework is combined with on-the-job internship activities organized around real school activities. The school principal (or other administrator at the internship site) and a faculty representative of the Educational Administration program together supervise the internship. Student must pass the SLLA examination prior to the university's submission of the licensure application.

The desired outcome of the program leading to licensure as a school administrator is to produce thoughtful principal and supervisory practitioners with the skills and scholarship to provide quality leadership to the organizations they serve. Graduates are expected to have a vision of quality education combined with good leadership skills to lead schools in the twenty-first century. The program leading to an *Instructional Leadership License-Beginning* (ILL-B) is designed around the standards developed by the Tennessee State Board of Education, the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS), the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and State Literacy Standards.

Non-licensure Option

The non-licensure alternative program for both the MS and EdS degrees is designed to prepare leaders for a variety of settings in other social community service agencies. The non-licensure option is required of all out-of-state students. The non-license option includes the same coursework as the licensure degree programs, other than the 3 hours of internship. Students, in consultation with the advisor, chooses 3 hours of electives in lieu of the internship.

Instructional Leadership Graduate Certificate

An Instructional Leadership Graduate Certificate in Educational Administration is an option for students seeking licensure and who hold a minimum of a master's degree in teaching or a related field with at least three (3) years of qualifying experience as an educator. The certificate consists of a minimum of 21 hours and the courses are taught concurrently with the MS and the EdS degree programs. An on-the-job internship is also required. Student must pass the SLLA examination prior to the university's submission of the licensure application.

Admission Requirements

A completed application must be received by both the Office of Graduate Admissions and the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Applicants must possess teacher or school-related licensure; have three years of teaching experience or experience working in schools; possess leadership potential and preferably demonstrated by previous leadership experience; and have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.70 or higher for undergraduate work and a GPA 3.3 or higher for prior graduate work.

Transfer of Courses

Transfer courses must receive prior approval from both the student's committee/program faculty and the Dean of the Graduate School. To be transferred into a master's or specialist program, a course must be: (1) taken at the graduate level, (2) carry a grade of B or better, and (3) not have been used for a prior degree. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for complete information on transfer courses. Students interested in transferring graduate courses must petition the faculty in writing and provide all necessary documentation (e.g., transcripts showing courses and syllabi for courses being considered). No course may be transferred into the PreK-12 Licensure Certificate Program, in accordance with Graduate School Policy on Certificate Programs.

Master's and Education Specialist Committee

A committee of three faculty members will be assigned to each student. A minimum of two members of this committee must represent the unit or major area. The responsibilities include formulating the student's program of coursework, supervising progress, recommending admissions to candidacy, directing research, and coordinating the final comprehensive examinations.

Admission to Candidacy

In the Master's and Education Specialist programs, the Admission to Candidacy Form and the Graduation Application are submitted the semester prior to graduation. This form must be signed by the student's committee and list all courses in pursuit of the degree, including transfer coursework. The Program Coordinator will initiate and process this form as applicable for each student.

EdS Research Requirement

The EdS does not include a thesis option. In the problems in lieu of thesis option, a three-credit-hour research course must be taken as a prerequisite for EDAM 592. The student must successfully complete the problems in lieu of thesis research course while working on the research project in the semester it is accepted by the Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate

Council, or the student will be required to register for an additional three hours of EDAM 592. This “problems paper” must be prepared according to the regulations in the most recent Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations, and the student’s committee will grant final approval and acceptance of the problems in lieu of thesis.

Time Limit

All course requirements, the comprehensive examination, and the School Leader Licensure Assessment (SLLA) must be passed prior to the university submission of the licensure application. Candidates must apply for licensure with the State of Tennessee within one year of the last day of their last course to receive university endorsement for licensure. Candidates have six calendar years from the time of entry to complete the Master’s or Education Specialist degree. The Graduate Certificate program is typically a one-year program but can be expanded on a case-by-case basis.

Internship Objective for Licensure

The Instructional Leader Internship Clinical Practice is designed to provide a link between theory and practice in Educational Administration through planned fieldwork experiences. The goal of the internship is to provide “on-the-job training.” During an internship, interns are expected to carry real and continuous responsibility under the direct mentorship of an identified organizational leader. Intern activities must be aligned with the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS), the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and the State Literacy Standards.

Examinations

A candidate for the MS or EdS degree (Licensure Option) must pass the School Leader Licensure Assessment (SLLA) the semester prior to taking the comprehensive examination. A candidate cannot take the comprehensive examination until he or she has passed the SLLA. The comprehensive examination (given to non-thesis students) is a demonstration of the candidate’s ability to integrate knowledge across coursework and make connections between theory and the world of practice.

The comprehensive exam is typically completed in the spring semester of the student’s second year in the program.

Students are eligible for comprehensive examinations if:

- No more than 12 hours of coursework is pending;
- The student has taken and scored minimum proficiency by Tennessee standards on the national licensing exam, the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA);
- The student has submitted an Admission to Candidacy form with committee signatures to the Graduate School (the Program Coordinator will assist with this process);
- The EdS student has completed a school level research project (EDAM 592) which will be presented at the comprehensive examination defense.

EdD in Educational Leadership

The online four-year, 60 credit hour scholar-practitioner degree focuses on advanced K-12 school and district level knowledge and leadership skills and needed for the growing variety of school, school district and state department leadership positions.

Admission Requirements

Master's degree (or equivalent) from an institution accredited by another organization recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), or an equivalent degree from a similarly recognized or accredited foreign institution is required for every candidate for admission.

Three years of experience in K-12 school or district leadership. A cumulative GPA of 3.2 on all prior graduate work are also required.

Comprehensive Exam

At the completion of the formal coursework (48 hours), students will be required to pass a Comprehensive Examination administered by the student's chosen committee. The purpose of the examination is to assess each student's mastery of the material and ability to synthesize and apply what was learned to practice-based settings and problems. To sit for the comprehensive examination, students must have at least a 3.0 GPA from course work. Successful passage of the comprehensive examination is requisite to advancing to formal work on the Doctoral Applied Research (DAR). Current rules promulgated by the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences and the University of Tennessee Graduate School will apply to degree requirements and readiness to advance to the applied research portion of the degree.

Doctoral Applied Research

The Doctoral Applied Research for this Ed.D. program will be an applied, culminating study of a practice-related problem that the student completes under the direction of a chair, with the support of a committee of two faculty. The Doctoral Applied Research is an independent research study designed to develop feasible solutions to a problem of practice in contrast to the theoretical contribution to the literature in a field as is the product of a doctoral dissertation for the PhD degree.

The Doctoral Applied Research will require the in-depth investigation of a problem of practice that will culminate in practical recommendations and applications that will have a positive impact on students, their families, schools, the school district or the community. The Ed.D. program of study requires that students register up for a total of 12 doctoral applied research credit hours.

PhD in Education, Concentration in Leadership Studies

The PhD major in Education with a concentration in Leadership Studies program is directed toward developing practitioner-scholars who understand the power of ideas and who place those ideas in service to improve educational practice. The doctoral program seeks to develop in these

scholar-practitioners both the skill and disposition to inquiry, policy analysis, and evaluation. Students admitted into the program are seasoned leaders and possess both the intellectual ability to become scholars and the disposition of mind to become exemplary practitioners.

Further, doctoral study is designed to:

1. Accent the heritage of the educational enterprise and its centrality to the strength of a democratic society,
2. Equip students with the dispositions and skills to challenge the status quo and engage in evaluative policy dialogue and scholarship regarding the role and performance of educational organizations,
3. Link competence and conscience via the study of ethics, and
4. Emphasize the connection between theory and practice.

The Leadership Studies in Education doctorate presents leadership as an artistic endeavor enhanced through self-awareness and validation. The program assists students with opportunities and techniques for enhancing self-understanding in conjunction with acquiring knowledge and skills. The program assumes that 1) leaders lead from their values, and 2) encourages self-exploration and clarification of values as a means for interpreting and responding to learned theory.

Admission Requirements

Students must submit a transcript, departmental application, writing sample, and Graduate Application to the Office of Graduate Admissions, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Three rating forms from those who know of the candidate's professional record and promise are required. An overall GPA of 3.5 in previous graduate study is required for admission to doctoral study and an interview with the faculty may be required. Admission decisions are made on a holistic basis to discern the candidate's promise for doctoral study and to ascertain the match of the candidate's educational goals with the resources and goals of the Department.

Cognate Requirement Guidelines

Leadership Studies in Education's cognate area consists of a minimum of six hours of graduate coursework offered outside the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS). A cognate may be defined in two different ways. First, the Department recognizes the value of developing additional skills related to an individual's future career plans. Cognate courses may, then, be in areas not covered in the required/core curriculum. Second, the cognate courses may be related to students' research interest and serve as part of the foundation for work on the dissertation. Finally, the two cognate courses, selected in consultation with the student's advisor, are related or connected in a logical way to the field of educational administration.

Doctoral Committee

The major professor directs the student's dissertation research and chairs the dissertation committee. The student and the major professor identify a doctoral committee composed of at least four faculty members holding the rank of assistant professor or above. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's major field. This member can also be external to the institution and a subject matter expert in the field. This committee is nominated by the Department Head and officially approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The committee should be formed as the student is completing coursework and is ready to take the comprehensive examination and begin dissertation research. Doctoral committees may be formed earlier if the student has a fairly well formulated topic for the dissertation and has identified a faculty member to serve as chair.

Subject to Graduate Council policies and individual program requirements, the committee must approve all coursework applied toward the degree, certify the student's mastery of the major field and any cognate field, assist the student in conducting research, and recommend the dissertation for approval and acceptance by the Graduate School.

Examinations

Successful completion of a comprehensive examination and a defense of dissertation is required for all doctoral degrees. Registration is required during the term in which the examination is taken.

The written portion of the comprehensive examination consists of written responses to "take home" examination questions framed by the four members of the student's doctoral committee. Student responses to the questions are evaluated by the committee in an oral examination to follow.

Successful completion of a doctoral comprehensive examination is required for all doctoral degrees in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and indicates that, in the judgment of the faculty and/or doctoral committee, the doctoral student can: think analytically and creatively; has a comprehensive knowledge of the field; knows how to use academic resources; and is deemed capable of completing the dissertation. Please refer to the most current Graduate Catalog for more information on the comprehensive examination.

For the Doctorate in Leadership Studies:

- (1) The comprehensive examination is generally taken when the doctoral student has completed all or nearly all prescribed courses (i.e., in the last semester of coursework).
- (2) An overall GPA of 3.5 is required to take the comprehensive examination.
- (3) The nature and number of questions which comprise the examination are determined by the doctoral student's dissertation committee and coordinated by the committee's chair.
- (4) The comprehensive examination will be comprised of both a written component and an oral defense of the written responses.
- (5) The faculty/dissertation committee has three decisions that may be rendered relative to the student's performance: (a) *pass*—with "Admission to Candidacy" paperwork being signed and forwarded to the Graduate School, (b) *conditional pass*—indicating some revision is needed before the faculty will sign and forward "Admission to Candidacy" paperwork, and (c) *fail*—the student has not demonstrated the skills and knowledge needed to proceed to dissertation writing, is not admitted to candidacy, and the fail is officially recorded on the "Admission to Candidacy" form and reported to the Graduate School.
- (6) Students are afforded two opportunities to pass the doctoral comprehensive examination. The two opportunities cannot take place in the same semester.

- (7) Students who receive a “conditional pass” will have to comply with conditions placed on the revision relative to variables like time (a maximum time of three months is allowable). Failure to comply with any and all conditions will result in the “conditional pass” becoming a “fail”.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to candidacy indicates agreement that the student has demonstrated the ability to complete and master graduate work and that satisfactory progress has been made toward a degree. Being “admitted to candidacy” connotes that all coursework has been completed (or that the student is registered for the last semester of courses needed for the degree) and that the comprehensive examination has been passed.

A student may be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree after passing the comprehensive examination and maintaining at least a B average in all graduate coursework. Each student is responsible for filing the admission to candidacy form, which lists all courses to be used for the degree, including courses taken at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, or at another institution prior to admission to the doctoral program. Admission to candidacy must be applied for and approved by the Office of the University Registrar at least one full semester prior to the date the degree is to be conferred.

Dissertation

The dissertation represents the culmination of an original major research project completed by the student. The organization, method of presentation, and subject matter of the dissertation are important in conveying to others the results of such research.

A student should be registered for the number of dissertation hours representing the fraction of effort devoted to this phase of the candidate’s program. An electronic copy of the dissertation (prepared according to the regulations in the most recent Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations) must be submitted to and accepted by the Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate Council.

The dissertation proposal for this program consists of fully-developed Chapters 1, 2 and 3. These chapters are to be developed in consultation with the student’s dissertation chair/major professor. Attention must be given to both content and formatting (APA 7th edition).

Three Article Dissertation

While the format for the three-article dissertation is altered from the traditional, the expectations for a final and approved dissertation remain the same. The objectives for a Three Article Dissertation are to support doctoral students who are interested in publishing their research prior to graduation; to offer the student guidance and mentoring in the publication of their research prior to graduation; to provide the student who is interested in pursuing a career in higher education an opportunity to add to their CV; and to assist the student in immediate application of their programmatic research foundations.

Requirements for Three Article Dissertation include the following: articles should form a cohesive body of work and the selection of journals must be approved by committee. A proposal defense will be held to include Chapter 1, completion of the first article, and an overview of all three articles, emphasizing cohesion of the thematic focus. Articles must be of publishable quality though publication is not required for dissertation approval.

The student maintains the responsibility for obtaining copyright permission for journals for article inclusion in the dissertation, noting that the dissertation will be available online. Overlap of content, particularly in the literature review is acceptable, but only if the student self-cites. Students will be first author on all articles. Dissertation chairs may be second author on the first article at the invitation of the student. The second and third articles must be single authored. Fellow students may not act as co-authors. The final defense will mirror that of the traditional dissertation.

Further information on the preparation of dissertations can be found [here](#).

Residence Requirements

Residence is defined as full-time registration (i.e., nine hours of coursework for two consecutive semesters or six hours of coursework for three consecutive semesters) on the campus where the program is located. During residence, it is expected that the student will be engaged in full-time, on-campus study toward a graduate degree.

A statement as to how and during what period of time the residence requirement has been met will be presented with the Application for Admission to Candidacy along with signatures of approval from the major professor and the Department Head. More information about the rationale for the residence requirement may be obtained from the Graduate Catalog Web site, [Graduate Catalog](#).

Time Limit

Comprehensive examinations must be taken within five years and all requirements must be completed within eight years from the time of a student's first enrollment in a doctoral degree program.

Note on Graduate Student Forms

In addition to course requirements, graduate students are also responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner. Such forms include Admission to Candidacy, Doctoral Committee Appointment, Schedule of Dissertation Defense, and Thesis/Dissertation Approval forms. All forms can be found at [Graduate School Forms](#). Should students have questions regarding these forms, they are advised to confer with their program coordinator or the Graduate School.

Programs in Adult and Continuing Education

MS in Adult and Continuing Education through the EdPsych Online Program

The Adult and Continuing Education Distance Program is designed for professionals working in school settings, colleges and universities, business and government, and those preparing for work in these and related areas.

The master's degree in adult and continuing education helps develop professionals who can work effectively with adult learners in a wide range of settings and under various situations. It offers students learning experiences that prepare them to work with a range of diverse adult learners, equipping them to work and live in globalized societies and environments that are more culturally sensitive.

The program requires 36 hours of non-thesis coursework and a comprehensive examination. Students take 24 hours of core courses and choose from two concentrations for 12 additional hours in either Adult and Continuing Education or Applied Educational Psychology. While all courses are offered online, the majority of courses are offered through synchronous methodology requiring students to sync up with others at the designated evening and time which is currently Eastern Standard Time. Students are advised to take two courses per semester for six consecutive semesters so they can graduate in two years. We do not admit individuals who do not intend to stick to the two courses per semester model.

Program Concentration Options

- (1) Adult and Continuing Education: focuses on the advanced educational needs of professionals who work with adults in a host of settings. The concentration includes coursework in such areas as adult learning and development, program planning, non-Western perspectives on teaching and learning, adult learning in social context, and professional issues in adult education, research, and teaching adults. Emphasis is on the development of reflective practitioners who actively participate in leadership and service to promote adult learning in a global community.
- (2) Applied Educational Psychology: focuses on concepts, principles, techniques, and models of educational psychology as they are used to facilitate teaching, learning, and the creation of effective classroom environments for learners of all ages. The concentration includes traditional themes in educational psychology (e.g., human development, learning principles, assessment, and psychoeducational intervention).

Admission Requirements

Applicants go through a two-step admission process: the Graduate School's admission and then the program's admission. Applicants must submit transcripts, a letter of introduction, statement of goals, resume, writing sample, and three rating forms. Once the program coordinator concludes that an applicant's materials are complete, they will email the applicant and schedule a telephone appointment/interview. The purpose of this appointment is to (1) paint as realistic a picture of the program details and how it unfolds for students as possible and to (2) engage in a discussion about their application materials.

Examinations

The Comprehensive Exam is the final degree requirement in the master's degree program. It consists of two papers - a scholarly manuscript and a personal reflection essay. Typically this requirement is met during your final semester leading up to graduation from the program and serves as a capstone event. You do not register for or receive credit for completion of the comprehensive exam.

Students who do not pass their comprehensive exam on the first attempt will be given one opportunity to repeat the comprehensive exam process in the following semester. If the student fails to successfully complete the comprehensive exam upon second attempt, the student will not graduate from the program.

Your Comprehensive Exam committee will be made up of a Chair and at least two other faculty members. Typically, the Chair is the EdPsych Online faculty member who has been serving as your advisor. The other two committee members are generally drawn from other faculty members with whom you have taken at least one course. The committee chair serves as your main point of contact and as a guide throughout the exam process. All three committee members read your scholarly paper and personal essay and determine whether a "pass" or "fail" grade should be assigned. You must submit your comprehensive exam papers directly to your Chair. Your Chair will then forward your papers to the committee for the review process.

Admission to Candidacy

The Admission to Candidacy application is made after the student has completed prerequisite courses and at least 9 credit hours of graduate coursework with an overall GPA of 3.00 or higher. The application must be signed by the student's master's committee and the Director of Graduate Studies and all courses to be used for the degree must be listed, including transfer coursework. The Program Coordinator and your Faculty Advisor will facilitate this process during your preparation for the Comprehensive Exam.

Time Limit

Candidates have six calendar years from the time of entry to complete the MS degree.

PhD in Education, Concentration in Adult and Continuing Education

The PhD major in Education with a concentration in Adult and Continuing Education program is designed for people interested in working with adult learners in a number of settings, such as higher education, workplace learning, community-based organizations, government, or any other settings where adults can be found learning. The doctoral program seeks to develop in these scholar-practitioners the understanding of research, theory, and reflective practice.

Further, doctoral study is designed with the following learning outcomes:

1. **Academic Knowledge:** Students will demonstrate comprehension of adult and continuing education, along with related fields. They will also demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of diverse approaches to inquiry in educational research and studies.

Additionally, they will display proficiency in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, and the ability to steer their own scholarship successfully.

2. **Practical Competence:** Students will demonstrate an ability to work effectively with adult learners in various settings. They will be able to plan, implement, administer, and evaluate programs for adult learners.
3. **Reflective Inquiry:** Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in critical thinking and reflection, both in terms of scholarship and practice.
4. **Democratic Commitment:** Students will demonstrate a dedication to diversity and an understanding of the intricate process of democracy while prioritizing access to quality education for all learners in their professional work.
5. **Professional Engagement:** Students will become deeply engaged with adult and continuing education as a scholarly field, participating in national and international scholarly associations and demonstrating the benefits of membership.

The Adult and Continuing Education Concentration of PhD in Education Program prepares students for careers as scholars and practitioners who work with adult learners in a wide variety of settings. The program consists of (1) continuous research or inquiry, (2) courses and professional experiences in adult education and other related fields designed to develop a comprehensive academic basis for future work in research and teaching, and (3) other learning and developmental experiences tailored to individual needs and career goals. Each student works closely with an advisor and a faculty committee who help guide students through the entire process of doctoral study.

Admission Requirements

Students must submit a CV or resume, letter of introduction, statement of goals, transcript, departmental application, writing sample, and Graduate Application to the Office of Graduate Admissions, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Three rating forms from those who know of the candidate's professional record and promise are required. An overall GPA of 3.5 in previous graduate study is required for admission to doctoral study and an interview with the faculty may be required. Admission decisions are made on a holistic basis to discern the candidate's promise for doctoral study and to ascertain the match of the candidate's educational goals with the resources and goals of the Department.

Doctoral Committee

All graduate students will form a graduate committee, working in conjunction with the agreed-upon Chair. Formation of the Doctoral Committees may occur before students complete their final semester of coursework. In essence, during the third year, faculty members will assess students' progress and the evolution of their research interests. This evaluation will culminate in discussions with students to determine the most suitable committee, fostering an environment that nurtures both student and faculty success.

Forming your doctoral committee involves natural discussions between you and faculty, shaped by their assessment of your coursework, research interests, and shared ideas of your research direction. This determines the most suitable Chair to lead your committee for success. Your advisor or other faculty member may transition into your Graduate Committee Chair, guiding you in forming your committee, refining research direction, and steering your dissertation process, along with other members.

Taking the initiative supported by your Chair, you can invite potential committee members whose expertise aligns with your research. Don't be disheartened by declines, as their availability or fit might be factors. Upon agreement, members should email your Chair.

Once formed, complete the Graduate School Doctoral Committee Form with the Chair and Committee signature, then the department signature and Graduate School signatures. Arrange your Program of Study meeting with guidance from your Chair. Prepare a brief paper on content and methodology. During the meeting, present your research direction, method plan, and timeline for feedback.

Examinations

The comprehensive examination assesses doctoral students' grasp of adult and continuing education, encompassing research and practice, and their readiness for the dissertation phase. It includes written and oral sections, both of which must be passed for candidacy and then dissertation proposal stages.

In the Adult and Continuing Education PhD Concentration, the written part comprises two segments with four topic areas. The student's advisor seeks questions from the committee members after the student presents the research content areas and proposed methods at the first committee meeting. These queries align with committee members' expertise and are developed collaboratively with the student. Responses, resembling substantial scholarly papers, span 20 to 30 pages in APA 7th edition format (excluding citations and references).

The second written part involves crafting a publishable manuscript, demonstrating deep knowledge in a specific field aspect. The student, in consultation with the Chair, selects a peer-reviewed journal, following its guidelines. The manuscript should match the journal's style and content standards. While submission before the exam date is possible, the student must be the sole author for this portion of the exam.

Upon completing the written examination, students inform their Chair to arrange an oral examination date, which can be set when they begin the exam or after finishing the written part. Oral defenses are scheduled in the following semester in which they took the exam-Spring or Fall. Special accommodations may be arranged for summer on an individual basis after consulting with the Chair and Committee members for availability. Responses to three questions and the manuscript (topic area consulted with and agreed upon with the Chair) must be submitted electronically to committee members at least two weeks before the oral exam; printed versions may be preferred by some.

Oral examinations generally run for about two hours. Committee members inquire about the written work, assessing both scholarly writing and the ability to engage in academic discourse. Students should collaborate with the Chair for preparation, being ready to present their written work and address questions across various areas.

At the exam's conclusion, the committee decides among three options: (1) pass, advancing the student to candidacy for dissertation proposal, (2) conditional pass, requiring specific additional

work, or (3) failure, with potential reexamination. Failing the comprehensive exam twice results in program termination.

Successful completion of a doctoral comprehensive examination is required for all doctoral degrees in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and indicates that, in the judgment of the faculty and/or doctoral committee, the doctoral student can: think analytically and creatively; has a comprehensive knowledge of the field; knows how to use academic resources; and is deemed capable of completing the dissertation. Please refer to the most current Graduate Catalog for more information on the comprehensive examination.

For the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies:

- (1) The comprehensive examination is generally taken when the doctoral student has completed all or nearly all prescribed courses (i.e., in the last semester of coursework).
- (2) An overall GPA of 3.5 is required to take the comprehensive examination.
- (3) The nature and number of questions which comprise the examination are determined by the doctoral student's dissertation committee and coordinated by the committee's chair.
- (4) The comprehensive examination will be comprised of both a written component and an oral defense of the written responses.
- (5) The faculty/dissertation committee has three decisions that may be rendered relative to the student's performance: (a) *pass*—with “Admission to Candidacy” paperwork being signed and forwarded to the Graduate School, (b) *conditional pass*—indicating some revision is needed before the faculty will sign and forward “Admission to Candidacy” paperwork, and (c) *fail*—the student has not demonstrated the skills and knowledge needed to proceed to dissertation writing, is not admitted to candidacy, and the fail is officially recorded on the “Admission to Candidacy” form and reported to the Graduate School.
- (6) Students are afforded two opportunities to pass the doctoral comprehensive examination. The two opportunities cannot take place in the same semester.
- (7) Students who receive a “conditional pass” will have to comply with conditions placed on the revision relative to variables like time (a maximum time of three months is allowable). Failure to comply with any and all conditions will result in the “conditional pass” becoming a “fail”.

Admission to Candidacy

The comprehensive examination includes written and oral sections, both of which must be passed for admission to candidacy and then the dissertation proposal stages. The comprehensive exam assesses doctoral students' grasp of adult and continuing education, encompassing research and practice, and their readiness for the dissertation phase.

Student Annual Progress & Evaluation Report

Student progress is evaluated annually by their advisers/Chairs through the Student Annual Progress and Evaluation Report. Students must prepare and schedule this meeting with advisers/Chairs by first filling out the form for the report and thinking through the conversations they have had during the past year, and also identifying important goals and accomplishments

they would like to achieve in the coming year, then discussing your self-assessment with your academic adviser during the scheduled meeting. Then the Report needs to be signed by you and your adviser.

As a part of the annual evaluation process, students also need to prepare an up-to-date CV and bring it to their advisers/Chairs at the Annual Progress and Evaluation Report meeting in the spring semester. The Student Annual Progress and Evaluation Report, signed by you and your adviser/Chair, together with your up-to-date CV, then need to be submitted to the Program Coordinator by April 1 for your Program Progress Record.

Dissertation

Previous work with your dissertation committee should guide dissertation research. Be sure to follow the guidelines spelled out in your prospectus and IRB proposal. Always keep your committee chair advised of your progress. If you encounter difficulties, unforeseen phenomena (e.g., participant risks, procedures outside of your control that influence data collection, etc.) be sure to report them to your committee chair and, if requested, to the Institutional Review Board.

Allow for adequate time to complete your dissertation research. Please remember that although your committee chair and your committee members want you to complete your work in an efficient and timely manner, the most important criterion for completion is submission of a high-quality dissertation.

Before you can begin your dissertation research, you must present a proposal to your committee and, if you need to collect human subjects data, obtain approval from the university Institutional Review Board. Generally, a dissertation proposal contains advanced drafts of the first three chapters of your doctoral dissertation. These include an introductory chapter that introduces the topic, research questions, and significance of the study (Chapter 1), a literature review (Chapter 2), and a detailed methods chapter (Chapter 3).

Residence Requirements

UTK graduate school policy, students are expected to complete a full-time residency requirement at some point during the program. For our distance program, this requirement consists of enrollment in 6 credit hours of coursework for three consecutive semesters. During residence, it is expected that the student will be engaged in full-time, on-campus study toward a graduate degree.

More information about the rationale for the residence requirement may be obtained from the Graduate Catalog Web site, [Graduate Catalog](#).

Time Limit

Comprehensive examinations must be taken within five years, and all requirements must be completed within eight years, from the time of a student's first enrollment to complete the program of study in a doctoral degree program. If there are extenuating circumstances that warrant a time extension, the student must submit a Request for Time Extension Form.

Note on Graduate Student Forms

In addition to course requirements, graduate students are also responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner. Such forms include Admission to Candidacy, Doctoral Committee Appointment, Schedule of Dissertation Defense, and Thesis/Dissertation Approval forms. All forms can be found at [Graduate School Forms](#). Should students have questions regarding these forms, they are advised to confer with their program coordinator or the Graduate School.

Programs in Higher Education Administration

MS in College Student Personnel Program

The mission of the CSP program is to prepare graduates for leadership and service in higher education. The program provides students with an education grounded in theory, research, and practical experience. The CSP program follows a cohort model to promote an inclusive community, facilitate peer-to-peer learning, and provide opportunities for professional socialization.

The College Student Personnel program is a two-year, practitioner-oriented Master of Science (MS) degree designed to prepare student affairs administrators to serve the student and administrative needs of colleges and universities. Philosophically based in higher education administration and resting on standards articulated by the Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) for Student Services/Student Development programs, the program prepares individuals for the wide and growing variety of student university service positions in post-secondary education, including admissions, advising, alum relations, athletics, career counseling, development, disability services, fraternity/sorority life, financial aid, housing, international education, multicultural student life, orientation, recreation, residential life, recruiting, and student activities.

Admission to Candidacy

In the CSP program, the Admission to Candidacy Form and the Graduation Application Form are submitted the semester prior to graduation. This form must be signed by the student's committee and list all courses to be used for the degree, including transfer coursework.

Time Limit

Candidates have six calendar years from the time of entry to complete the MS degree.

Admission Requirements

Students are admitted to the College Student Personnel program each spring for matriculation in the fall. Prospective students must submit the College Student Personnel Program Application Form by December 15th. A Graduate Application must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions, including three Rating/Reference Forms (one of which must be from a faculty member).

Examinations

CSP degree candidates are required to complete a portfolio showcasing and reflecting on their coursework, experiences, and professional philosophy. The portfolio is submitted during the final semester; students will complete several requirements throughout their time in the CSP program. The portfolio requirement concludes with a final print submission and oral presentation. The CSP portfolio is both a process and a product that serves as the culminating academic work to demonstrate development as a scholar-practitioner.

All students have the option to complete a capstone project and/or a thesis to graduate. For a capstone project, students select a capstone chair (i.e., a faculty advisor) as a guide through the writing process. In addition, two other faculty members serve on the committee. The chair will help begin the research process, which typically does not begin until the summer between the first and second year. The purpose of the capstone project is to serve as a culminating project reflecting on everything learned in the program. A capstone project can serve any purpose as long as it is supported by theory and research, realistic, and something that has not already been done at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The hope is that the project will be implemented before graduation, but it is understood that this is not always possible. The capstone project (maximum 40 pages) is submitted to the committee at the end of the fall semester of the second year. Then, a defense date is scheduled with the defense at the beginning of the spring semester of the second year. The defense usually lasts about 30-45 minutes, with 15 minutes for presentation and 20-30 minutes for questions, followed by a deliberation amongst the committee to determine whether the capstone has been successfully defended.

The thesis is similar to the outline of the capstone project above. However, it is much more in-depth, research-proven, and justifies a response to a problem. With a thesis, the same chair and committee rules apply. Although very similar to the capstone project, the thesis timeline is more intense. A thesis proposal must be defended by October 15 at the absolute latest of the second-year fall semester. The thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School to ensure the student is eligible for graduation.

Students must complete 270 hours of practicum or internship experience. They can choose to complete the 270 hours through three 90-hour practica, or one 180-hour and one 90-hour practicum. Students can choose the functional areas they want to pursue practica or internships; however, students cannot complete the practicum in the functional unit they are employed in as a graduate assistant. The program hosts an annual Practicum Fair in September to assist in identifying practicum opportunities. Following the practicum experiences, students will develop a Pecha Kucha, a presentation of 20 slides with 20 seconds of commentary for each slide. They will share their experience, including what they learned and how they applied their coursework to the practica. The Pecha Kuchas Presentations are presented to current students, alumni, supervisors, and faculty at the end of the fall semester of the second year.

MS in Higher Education Administration

The MS in Educational Administration with a concentration in Higher Education Administration offers advanced graduate study for individuals who aspire to work in higher education settings including postsecondary institutions, policy and research centers, and government agencies. In

addition, professionals currently working in higher education settings will also enhance leadership knowledge and skills for service in current and future positions.

Coursework is delivered online in a personalized, engaging format blending theoretical study with application through case study, reflection, thoughtful debate, and guided review of readings. The program features a core sequence in educational leadership a specialized focus on higher education administration, policy, and legal aspects and a research concentration on evaluation and data use. Students pursuing this degree will enhance their leadership and management ability, develop policy knowledge toward effective practice, and build a practical research and evaluation skillset. The program's online format through distance education allows students to complete coursework in 12-15 months.

Admissions Requirements

Students are admitted to the Higher Education Administration Online MS program in summer (deadline June 15) and fall semester (deadline March 31).. Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year. To apply, students must submit a current resume or CV, a letter of introduction, three letters of recommendation, transcripts, and Graduate Application to the Office of Graduate Admissions, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

PhD in Higher Education Administration

The PhD with a major in higher education administration offers advanced graduate study to those students aspiring to enhance their leadership knowledge and skill for service in their current positions, to establish knowledge and skill bases for a more responsible executive leadership appointment, to build the capacity and inclination for active participation in policy dialogue related to the purpose and performance of higher education, and to prepare scholars for service in faculty and policy scholar roles. Interdisciplinary in design, the program features core course work in higher education foundations, leadership and organizational theory, research foundations, and specialization interests.

Interdisciplinary in design, the program features core coursework in higher education foundations, leadership and organizational theory, research foundations and specialization interests. The program also features forum and seminar experiences for all students in a humanities and research seminar in the first year of the program and an issues and inquiry seminar in the second year of the program.

Admission Requirements

Students must submit a transcript, departmental application, writing sample, and Graduate Application to the Office of Graduate Admissions, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Three rating forms from those who know of the candidate's professional record and promise are required and at least one should be from a faculty member. An overall GPA of 3.5 in previous graduate study is required for admission to doctoral study and an interview with the faculty may be required. Admission decisions are made on a holistic basis to discern the candidate's promise for doctoral study and to ascertain the match of the candidate's educational goals with the resources and goals of the Department.

Doctoral Committee

The major professor directs the student's dissertation research and chairs the dissertation committee. The student and the major professor identify a doctoral committee composed of at least four members. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's department. This member can also be external to the institution and a subject matter expert in the field. This committee is nominated by the Department Head and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The committee should be formed after the first two years of doctoral study. Subject to Graduate Council policies and individual program requirements, the committee must approve all coursework applied toward the degree, certify the student's mastery of the major field and any cognate field, assist the student in conducting research, and recommend the dissertation for approval and acceptance by the Graduate School.

Examinations

Successful completion of a comprehensive examination and a defense of dissertation is required for all doctoral degrees. Registration is required the term in which the examination is taken.

This written portion of the comprehensive examination consists of written responses to "take home" examination questions framed by the four members of the student's doctoral committee. Student responses to the questions are evaluated by the committee in an oral examination to follow. At or toward the end of course work, each student must take and pass a comprehensive examination.

Successful completion of a doctoral comprehensive examination is required for all doctoral degrees in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and indicates that, in the judgment of the faculty and/or doctoral committee, the doctoral student can: think analytically and creatively; has a comprehensive knowledge of the field; knows how to use academic resources; and is deemed capable of completing the dissertation. Please refer to the most current Graduate Catalog for more information on the comprehensive examination.

For the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies:

- (1) The comprehensive examination is generally taken when the doctoral student has completed all or nearly all prescribed courses (i.e., in the last semester of coursework).
- (2) An overall GPA of 3.5 is required to take the comprehensive examination.
- (3) The nature and number of questions which comprise the examination are determined by the doctoral student's dissertation committee and coordinated by the committee's chair.
- (4) The comprehensive examination will be comprised of both a written component and an oral defense of the written responses.
- (5) The faculty/dissertation committee has three decisions that may be rendered relative to the student's performance: (a) *pass*—with "Admission to Candidacy" paperwork being signed and forwarded to the Graduate School, (b) *conditional pass*—indicating some revision is needed before the faculty will sign and forward "Admission to Candidacy" paperwork, and (c) *fail*—the student has not demonstrated the skills and knowledge

needed to proceed to dissertation writing, is not admitted to candidacy, and the fail is officially recorded on the “Admission to Candidacy” form and reported to the Graduate School.

- (6) Students are afforded two opportunities at passing the doctoral comprehensive examination. The second opportunity will take place in the semester following the first attempt.
- (7) Students who receive a “conditional pass” will have to comply with conditions placed on the revision relative to variables like time (a maximum time of three month is allowable). Failure to comply with any and all conditions will result in the “conditional pass” being turned into a “fail”.

Admission to Candidacy

Students successfully completing the comprehensive examination will file the Admission to Candidacy form signed by members of their committee with the Graduate School. Admission to candidacy must be filed at least one semester before the PhD is to be conferred.

Dissertation

The dissertation represents the culmination of an original major research project completed by the student. The organization, method of presentation, and subject matter of the dissertation are important in conveying to others the results of such research. Students may choose a traditional dissertation or may complete a three-article format dissertation, in consultation with their advisor. Further information on the preparation of dissertations can be found [here](#).

A student should be registered for the number of dissertation hours representing the fraction of effort devoted to this phase of the candidate’s program. Paper or electronic submission will be approved by the student’s committee prior to final preparation of the dissertation. An electronic copy of the dissertation (prepared according to the regulations in the most recent Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations) must be submitted to and accepted by the Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate Council.

Residence Requirements

Residence is defined as full-time registration for a given semester on the campus where the program is located. The summer term is included in this period. During residence, it is expected that the student will be engaged in full-time on-campus study toward a graduate degree.

For the doctoral degree, a minimum of two consecutive semesters of nine hours each semester or three consecutive semesters of six hours each semester is required. Individual doctoral programs may have additional residence requirements.

A statement as to how and during what period of time the residence requirement has been met will be presented with the Application for Admission to Candidacy along with signatures of approval from the major professor and the Department Head/Program Coordinator. More information about the rationale for the residence requirement may be obtained from the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Time Limit

Comprehensive examinations must be taken within five years, and all requirements must be completed within eight years from the time of a student's first enrollment in a doctoral degree program.

Note on Graduate Student Forms

In addition to course requirements, graduate students are also responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner. Such forms include Admission to Candidacy, Doctoral Committee, Schedule of Dissertation Defense, and Thesis/Dissertation Approval forms. All forms can be found at [Graduate School Forms](#). Should students have questions regarding these forms, they are advised to confer with their program coordinator or the Graduate School.

Programs in Evaluation, Statistics, and Methodology

MS in Evaluation Methodology

The Evaluation Methodology master's program is designed for the working professional. It is offered fully online and asynchronous, which enables students to complete their weekly assignments at times convenient for them. While courses are asynchronous, program faculty offer optional synchronous help sessions, weekly online student hours, and are available for one-on-one meetings as students progress through the coursework.

Our program prepares professionals who are seeking to enhance their skills and develop new competencies in the rapidly growing field of evaluation methodology. Students in this 30-graduate credit hour program complete core coursework in the latest evaluation principles, practice, and methodology, and engage in relevant field-based evaluation experiences, culminating in a portfolio-based comprehensive examination prior to graduation. The program is designed to be completed in two years; however students may take up to six years to complete their degree.

Admission Requirements

The ESM program takes a holistic view of a candidate's application for admission. Admissions decisions are made on a holistic basis to discern the candidate's promise for doctoral study and to ascertain the match of the candidate's educational goals with the resources and goals of the program/department. A master's degree is not required for students who apply for admission to the major.

Each applicant is reviewed by the ESM faculty who come to a consensus on who to admit to the program based on prior evaluation, statistics, and research methodology experiences; students' goals, and past academic performance. The faculty may also decide to interview a candidate prior to offering admission to the program.

Curriculum Vita

During the first year of your graduate studies, we encourage you to develop and format your curriculum vitae. Then, throughout the remainder of your graduate studies, you will continuously update your curriculum vitae, which will be collected at the end of each year by the EM program coordinator. While it can be very time consuming to update the Vitae throughout the semester, this will be of immense value if applying for jobs during the final year of studies.

Examinations

Students will prepare a digital portfolio containing documents that show they have gained the requisite knowledge and skills to be a competent, successful professional in program evaluation. These documents include detailed self-reflections as well as exemplars of their scholarly work in the EM field. Detailed guidelines for this part of the comprehensive exam can be found on the EM shared drive. Students will obtain guidance and mentorship on how to complete their portfolio in the required practicum courses. In these courses students will receive training on how to develop their portfolio, given dedicated time to engage in practical experiences in our field, work on completing their exemplars to be included in their portfolio, and guidance on finalizing their reflections for their portfolio. Students must submit their completed portfolio 45 days before the last day of classes in the semester when they are completing their last required course(s).

Two Evaluation Methodology faculty will evaluate the comprehensive exam. The faculty will review and score the portfolio independently and then meet to discuss final scoring. The committee will vote on the performance of the student based on their submitted portfolio. The possible options are: (1) pass, which means that the student has successfully met the comprehensive exam requirement; (2) conditional pass, which means that the student must undertake some specific additional work before a pass can be recommended; (3) failure, either with the option of reexamination, or without (in the latter case, the student will be terminated from the program). Failure to pass the comprehensive exam after two tries will result in termination from the program.

Time Limit

Candidates have six calendar years from the time of entry to complete the MS degree.

Note on Graduate Student Forms

In addition to course requirements, graduate students are also responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner. Such forms include Admission to Candidacy, Doctoral Committee, Schedule of Dissertation Defense, and Thesis/Dissertation Approval forms. All forms can be found at [Graduate School Forms](#). Should students have questions regarding these forms, they are advised to confer with their program coordinator or the Graduate School.

PhD in Evaluation, Statistics, and Methodology

The Ph.D. program in Evaluation, Statistics, and Methodology (ESM) has been strategically and designed to provide students with an integrated, sequenced, and experientially based doctoral program leading to a meaningful professional career. Typical professional careers of our graduates include roles as: 1) evaluation, applied statistics, and assessment/measurement faculty members in various higher education settings; 2) external evaluator employed by an evaluation group or organization providing evaluation services; or 3) internal evaluator/in-house ESM consultant serving the needs of the organizations in which they are employed. The ESM program integrates evaluation, statistics, and methodology theory, content knowledge, technical skill, and highly relevant and meaningful field experiences to enable graduates to function as esteemed professionals, productive scholars, and leaders in their particular sub-fields of interest.

Admission Requirements

The ESM program takes a holistic view of a candidate's application for admission. Admissions decisions are made on a holistic basis to discern the candidate's promise for doctoral study and to ascertain the match of the candidate's educational goals with the resources and goals of the program/department. A master's degree is not required for students who apply for admission to the major.

Each applicant is reviewed by the ESM faculty who come to a consensus on who to admit to the program based on prior evaluation, statistics, and research methodology experiences, students' goals, and past academic performance. The faculty may also decide to interview a candidate prior to offering admission to the program.

Doctoral Committee

The advisor directs the student's dissertation research and chairs the dissertation committee. Together, they will identify a doctoral committee composed of at least four faculty members holding the rank of assistant professor or above, three of whom, including the chair, must be approved by the Graduate Council to direct doctoral research. You must include two ESM faculty members (one as chair, one as a member) on the doctoral committee. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's department. The selection of the doctoral committee occurs around the end of the third year of doctoral study prior to defending the comprehensive examination.

Examinations

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to evaluate the student's knowledge of the field of specialization, to assess familiarity with the published literature, and to determine whether the student possesses the skills necessary to be advanced to doctoral candidacy and to succeed in an ESM related career.

In the Evaluation, Statistics, and Methodology program, the written product that constitutes the basis for the qualifying exam is comprised of two required products:

- (1) **Comprehensive Portfolio:** Students will prepare an electronic portfolio containing documents that show they have gained the requisite knowledge and skills to be a

competent, successful professional in evaluation, applied statistics, and methodology. These documents include detailed self-reflections as well as exemplars of their scholarly work in the ESM field. Detailed guidelines for this part of the comprehensive exam can be found on the ESM shared google drive.

- (2) **Scholarly Writing Sample:** For this requirement students have two options: a) a publishable journal article (student as first-author) or b) a completed Chapter 1 and 2 of dissertation. Students who choose to submit a publishable journal article must follow the specific journal guidelines and requirements for the intended journal to which they will be submitting their article. Students who choose to submit their completed Chapter 1 and 2 of the dissertation must include all required elements and follow all UT dissertation guidelines for formatting. Detailed guidelines for this part of the comprehensive exam can be found on the ESM shared drive.

Students must submit their completed portfolio 60 days (75 days if part-time student) after the last day of classes in the semester where they finish their coursework (not including dissertation credits). Students will submit all materials online. Students are also required to create a brief presentation (20-25 minutes) that summarizes their portfolio/scholarly writing sample. Oral defenses for the comprehensive exam will be scheduled by your committee chair in the semester after completing all required coursework (not including dissertation hours).

Successful completion of a doctoral comprehensive examination is required for all doctoral degrees in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and indicates that, in the judgment of the doctoral committee, the doctoral student can: think analytically and creatively; has a comprehensive knowledge of the field; knows how to use academic resources; and is deemed capable of completing the dissertation. Please refer to the most current Graduate Catalog for more information on the comprehensive examination.

For the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies:

- (1) The comprehensive examination is generally taken when the doctoral student has completed all or nearly all prescribed courses (i.e., in the last semester of coursework).
- (2) An overall GPA of 3.5 is required to take the comprehensive examination.
- (3) The comprehensive examination will be comprised of both a written component and an oral defense of the written responses.
- (4) The faculty/dissertation committee has three decisions that may be rendered relative to the student's performance: (a) *pass*—with “Admission to Candidacy” paperwork being signed and forwarded to the Graduate School, (b) *conditional pass*—indicating some revision is needed before the faculty will sign and forward “Admission to Candidacy” paperwork, and (c) *fail*—the student has not demonstrated the skills and knowledge needed to proceed to dissertation writing, is not admitted to candidacy, and the fail is officially recorded on the “Admission to Candidacy” form and reported to the Graduate School.
- (5) Students are afforded two opportunities at passing the doctoral comprehensive examination.
- (6) Students who receive a “conditional pass” will have to comply with conditions placed on the revision relative to variables like time (a maximum time of three month is allowable).

Failure to comply with any and all conditions will result in the “conditional pass” being turned into a “fail”.

Admission to Candidacy

The student’s Doctoral Committee will evaluate the comprehensive exam. The qualifying examination itself will consist of a written component, which includes a portfolio of competencies and scholarly writing sample, plus an oral examination on the written component. At the end of the qualifying examination meeting, the committee will vote on the performance of the candidate. The possible options are: (1) pass, which means that the student is advanced to doctoral candidacy and allowed to prepare a dissertation proposal; (2) conditional pass, which means that the student must undertake some specific additional work before a pass can be recommended; (3) failure, either with the option of reexamination, or without (in the latter case, the student will be terminated from the program).

Failure to pass the qualifying examination after two tries will result in termination from the program.

Once the comprehensive examination has been successfully defended, the student must submit the Admission to Candidacy form to the Graduate School.

Dissertation

The dissertation represents the culmination of a major research project completed by the student. The organization, method of presentation, and subject matter of the dissertation are important in demonstrating the results of such research. A student should be registered for the number of dissertation hours according to the candidate’s program. Students must submit their dissertation to the Graduate School (electronically) by the specified due date for the semester they intend to graduate. Each dissertation must be accompanied by one approval sheet, signed by all members of the doctoral committee. The approval sheet reflects the final format for submission. The approval sheet certifies to The Graduate School that the committee members have examined the final copy and found that its form and content demonstrate scholarly excellence. The Doctoral Dissertation Agreement Form, Survey of Earned Doctorates, and Abstract form are also submitted at this time. Bound copies of the dissertation can be ordered at this time as well. Students should consult with their advisor regarding the number of bound copies to order.

Internship Requirement

The ESM program requires students to complete six credit hours of internship credit. Students typically complete 3 credits hours in one semester and 3 credit hours in another semester, occasionally students will choose to do fewer credits (1-2) across many semesters. Many students choose to complete additional internships. For each 100 hours of site work, students receive 3 credit hours (33 hours for 1 credit, 66 hours for 2 credits). Students may register for 1 to 6 credit hours depending on the number of hours the student is planning on working that semester. For instance, if a student plans to work 33 hours during the semester, he or she should register for 1 credit hour. If a student plans to work 200 hours, he or she should register for 6 credit hours. Students may choose to do their internships for an educational or a community

setting that is local or outside of the Knoxville area. Since students are earning credits for their internship, students should not be getting paid for their hours.

Time Limit

Comprehensive examinations must be taken within five years and all requirements must be completed within eight years from the time of a student's first enrollment in a doctoral degree program.

Note on Graduate Student Forms

In addition to course requirements, graduate students are also responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner. Such forms include Admission to Candidacy, Doctoral Committee, Schedule of Dissertation Defense, and Thesis/Dissertation Approval forms. All forms can be found at [Graduate School Forms](#). Should students have questions regarding these forms, they are advised to confer with their program coordinator or the Graduate School.