



The Department
of
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education
Advancing Equity Through Excellence in Education

PhD Handbook
2023-2024

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Welcome from the TPTE Department Head

Welcome to doctoral study at The University of Tennessee! The faculty in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education (TPTE) and I welcome you to our TPTE community and are committed to ensuring a challenging and rewarding experience for you. Within the department we offer three doctoral concentrations and a number of specializations under those concentrations. Doctoral study gives you a unique opportunity to challenge yourself in ways that should ultimately give you new perspectives toward education and your particular areas of interest within the field. I encourage you to take the opportunity to study and work with a variety of faculty within the department and college, not just those in your own area of interest. Our faculty includes experts in quantitative, qualitative, and single-subject research design, assessment, policy issues, teacher change, urban multicultural education, and educational technology. Particular expertise is available to support doctoral study for persons interested in Literacy Studies (children's and young adult literature; English as a second language, literacy/reading); Special Education, Deaf Education, and Interpreter Education; and Teacher Education (cultural studies, elementary education, English education, mathematics education, science education, and social sciences education). Collectively, we encourage you to take a global perspective while getting involved locally. We are dedicated to scholarship and instructional practices and policies that promote social equity for all children and families, including those who live in economically distressed areas of this country and the world. We look forward to having the opportunity to share with you in the learning process. This handbook contains many useful pieces of information; I hope that your transition to and progression through doctoral study will be made a bit easier as a result. Please check our [website](#) routinely, watch your email, and follow us on social media (see below) for opportunities to be connected and engaged during this year.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UTKTPTE/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UTKTeacherEd>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/utk_tpte/

Again, welcome, and best wishes!



Lynn Liao Hodge, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Head

The University of Tennessee

Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education

PhD Handbook

Introduction

The Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education (TPTE) offers programs leading to the PhD degree in Education with concentrations in Literacy Studies, Special Education/Deaf Education/Interpreter Education, and Teacher Education. Specializations for these concentrations are listed below:

List of PhD Concentrations and Specializations

- [Literacy Studies](#)
 - Children's and Young Adult Literature
 - ESL Education
 - Literacy Education
- [Special Education, Deaf Education, and Interpreter Education](#)
- [Teacher Education](#)
 - Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations
 - Elementary Education
 - English Education
 - Mathematics Education
 - Science Education
 - Social Science Education
- [Learning, Design, and Technology](#)

The departmental guidelines in this handbook are in addition to the policies of the UT Graduate School. Graduate students must assume full responsibility for knowledge of rules and regulations of the [Graduate School](#) and departmental requirements for the chosen degree program, see the [Graduate Catalog](#) for the year you were admitted. Any exceptions to the policies stated in the Graduate Catalog must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admissions without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.

Eligibility and other terms and conditions of employment benefits at The University of Tennessee are governed by laws and regulations of the State of Tennessee, and this non-discrimination statement is intended to be consistent with those laws and regulations.

In accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, The University of Tennessee affirmatively states that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or disability in its education programs and activities, and this policy extends to employment by the University.

Inquiries and charges of violation of Title VI (race, color, national origin), Title IX (sex), Section 504 (disability), ADA (disability), Age Discrimination in Employment Act (age), sexual orientation, or veteran status should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED), 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996-3560, telephone (865) 974-2498 (V/TTY available) or 974-2440. Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the Office of Equity and Diversity.

Doctoral Committee

Chair/Advisor

A student will be assigned an advisor upon being admitted to the doctoral program. If course work toward the doctorate is taken prior to admission, the advisor will most often be the professor that they have been working with up to that point. However, the continuance of that arrangement is based on mutual agreement. Early in the program, a doctoral student should determine who will be their permanent advisor and work with that advisor in forming the doctoral committee. That advisor should be the chair of the student's doctoral committee.

Committee Composition

The doctoral committee is composed of at least four people. At least two committee members must be tenured or tenure track UT faculty. The chair of the committee is typically from the student's department/intercollegiate program. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's department; in interdisciplinary programs, one member shall be from outside that program. Committee members outside the student's home department/program may be from outside of The University of Tennessee but must be approved by the Graduate School.

The [PhD committee](#) should be formed by the middle of the student's second year (i.e., end of the third semester) 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 Graduate Student Services.

Program Planning

Program planning is done with the advisor and committee. A graduate program is not the mere accumulation of miscellaneous credit hours but rather the result of careful planning of courses and other experiences directed toward clearly defined goals accepted by the student and the committee. The program must meet the minimum requirements of the Graduate School and of the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education.

Concentrations and Specializations

The selection of the major area of study is made from among the concentrations and specializations offered (page 3). Courses required will vary based on the student's background and interests. The final decision about course requirements is negotiated with the chairperson and the doctoral committee. The PhD Program of Study (page 5) and the sequence for coursework (PhD Program Flow Chart, page 6) can be found in this handbook.

Cognate: (At least 6 semester hours)

Cognate areas are defined as related areas to the major which are congruent to the goals and objectives of the individual student's program. As such, cognate areas should be complementary to the major and need not be expected to produce a specialist capable of doing research or teaching as a specialist in that field. Because we are a diverse department, the cognate may be in a field in TPTE or outside of the TPTE department. TPTE graduate course prefixes include Art Ed (ARED),

Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations (CSE), Ed/Deaf & Hard of Hearing (EDDE), Educational Technology (ETEC), Elem Ed (ELED), English Ed (ENED), Math Ed (MEDU), Literacy Ed (REED), Science Ed (SCED), Social Science Ed (SSCE), Special Ed (SPED), World Languages/ESL (WLEL), and TPTE.

PhD Program of Study

Doctoral Core

*Research Area	15
**Core Requirements.....	12
Concentration/Specialization	15
Cognate	6
Dissertation	24

*Must include Theory and Practice in Teacher Education 640 (3 hours). Plus, at least one quantitative focused (3 hours) and at least one qualitative focused (3 hours) research course.

** Seminar in each of the three department primary concentrations (TPTE 617, REED 602, SPED/EDDE 601, or other course from each of the three departmental PhD concentrations as approved by doctoral committee; 9 hours); TPTE 604 (1 hour), TPTE 605 (1 hour), and TPTE 612 (1 hour)

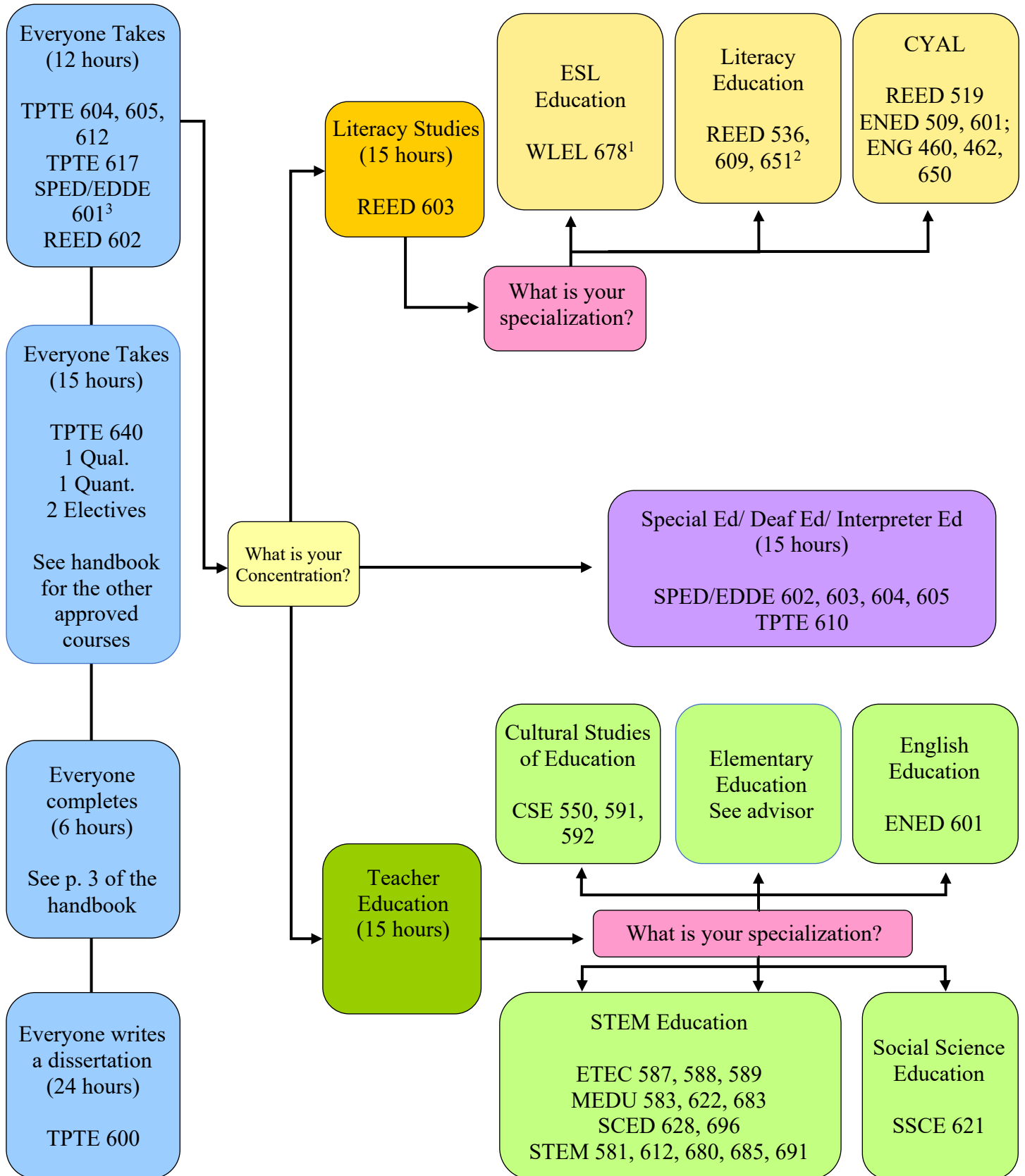
Note: Please contact the academic program area for additional information on course requirements in each of these areas.

Research Competency Requirement (15 hours minimum)

The program for the TPTE PhD degree requires exposure to at least two (2) types of research techniques (i.e., quantitative and qualitative); however, the primary function of the research competency requirement is to prepare doctoral students to conduct dissertation research with skill and care. Thus, while 15 hours is the minimum number of hours needed to meet the competency requirement, it may be the case that students need to take more than 15 hours in order to be adequately prepared. The individual student’s doctoral committee shall determine the research techniques to be included in his or her program.

Courses chosen from the list shown on page 7 of this handbook may be used to satisfy the research requirement. *In some cases, there may be logical course substitutions, specific requirements for particular concentrations or special topics courses not listed. Approval of these is at the discretion of the individual student's doctoral committee.*

TPTE PhD Program Flow Chart



¹ If the following or equivalent course are not already completed, ESL students should also take WLEL 466, 489, & 586.

² If the following or equivalent course are not already completed, students in the Literacy Education specialization should also take courses in the Literacy Specialist program: REED 529, 537, 540, & 605; SPED 516.

³If the advisor and committee agree, SPED 601/EDDE 601 may be replaced with another course focused on education with marginalized populations (e.g., CSE 592; another SPED course; STEM 581; TPTE 542).

Suggested Sequence of “Required for All” TPTE PhD Students

Year 1: Fall: TPTE 604, TPTE 617, & Qual. or Quat. Research Course

Year 1: Spring: TPTE 612, TPTE 640, & Qual. or Quat. Research Course.

Year 3 (last year of classes): Spring 605

Students can take SPED 601 (fall) and REED 602 (spring) first or second year with the knowledge that they are offered every year, students and advisors (and program area faculty) can plan ahead.

Approved Research Courses

Anthropology (ANTH)

- 504 Anthropological Statistics I
- 510 Methods and Theory in Cultural Anthropology
- 531 Ethnographic Research Methods
- 604 Anthropological Statistics II
- 613 Research Design and Proposal Writing

Child and Family Studies (CFS)

- 570 Research Methods in Child and Family Studies
- 606 Advanced Methods
- 650 Adv Qual Research in Human Sciences
- 660 Adv Observation Research Design and Methods
- 661 Adv Longitudinal Research Methods

Communication & Information (CCI)

- 631 Quantitative Comm & Info Research I
- 635 Qualitative Comm & Info Research I
- 643 Qualitative Comm & Info Research II
- 644 Quantitative Comm & Info Research II

Cultural Studies in Education (CSE)

- 526 Philosophy of Education: Theory Writing
- 607 Advanced Seminar in Educational Studies
- 609 Feminist Theory and Education

Educational Administration (EDAM)

- 530 Research Methods

Educational Psychology (EDPY)

- 505 Quasi-Experimental and Single-Subject Design Research
- 550 Applied Statistical Concepts
- 632 Research Proposal Writing

Ed Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS)

- 615 Research Design
- 616 Mixed Methods Research
- 617 Case Study Methods in Ed Research
- 618 Advanced Qualitative Research

Evaluation, Stats, and Methodology (ESM)

- 533 Program Evaluation I
- 534 Program Evaluation II
- 559 Intro to Qualitative Research in Education
- 577 Statistics in Applied Fields I
- 581 Educational Assessment
- 583 Survey Research
- 659 Advanced Qualitative Research in Educ
- 667 Advanced Topics
- 668 Ethnographic Methods
- 669 Narrative Methods
- 677 Statistics in Applied Fields II
- 678 Statistics in Applied Fields III
- 680 Adv Ed Measurement and Psychometrics
- 682 Educational Research Methods

Higher Education Administration (HEAM)

- 620 Use of Large Data Sets in Educational Research

Math

- 423 Probability I
- 425 Statistics

Psychology (PSYC)

- 515 Colloquium in Experimental Psychology
- 580 Research Design
- 607 Seminar in Applied Psychometrics
- 613 Seminar in Existential-Phenomenological Psychology
- PSYC 622: Structural Equation Modeling for the Social Sciences

Social Work (SOWK)

- 605 Analysis of Social Work Data I
- 606 Analysis of Social Work Data II
- 608 Qualitative Research Methods
- 626 Critical Reasoning for Science and Research
- 628 Critical Review of Research Literature
- 665 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods (HLM)

Sociology (SOCI)

- 531 Research Methods in Sociology
- 631 Advanced Quantitative Methods
- 633 Survey Design and Analysis
- 640 Discourse Analysis
- 641 Adv Research Methods

Statistics (STAT)

- 531 Survey of Statistical Methods I
- 537 Statistics for Research I
- 538 Statistics for Research II
- 563 Probability and Mathematical Statistics
- 564 Probability and Mathematical Statistics II
- 567 Survival Analysis
- 573 Design of Experiments
- 575 Applied Time Series
- 577 Data Mining Methods and Applications
- 578 Categorical Data Analysis
- 579 Applied Multivariate Methods
- 581 Current Topics in Data Science

STEM Education (STEM)

- 680 Foundations of Ed Data Sci I
- 685 Foundations of Ed Data Sci II
- 691 Visualizing Data Using R

Theory and Practice in Teacher Education

- 640 Theoretical Analysis and Theory
Construction

**DEPARTMENT OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION
PHD IN EDUCATION: CORE COURSE OFFERINGS**

Core Course Offerings <i>(admission to TPTE doctoral program constitutes consent of instructor)</i>	Offering Schedule* <i>*subject to change; please check online timetable</i>
	semester
TPTE 604- Trans Departmental Seminar I (1) – “Introduction to doctoral programs in education: Research requirements, academic integrity, the meaning of scholarship in academe and issues/problems in education” Letter grade	Every Fall
TPTE 605 - Trans Departmental Seminar I (1) - “Seminar to prepare doctoral students for the final steps in completing a terminal degree including preparing for and completing qualifying exams, preparing a prospectus, and completing a dissertation.” Letter grade	Every Spring
TPTE 612 – Internship in Educational Research. (1) Data analyses, collection, and interpretation. This course is available to students who want experience as part of a research team. It cannot be substituted for one of the “approved research courses.”	Every Spring
REED 602 Seminar in Reading Education (3)	Every Spring
SPED 601/EDDE 601: Seminar in Education of Exceptional, Diverse and At-risk Learners. “ <i>The purpose of this course is becoming an informed researcher, teacher educator, and/or leader in the field of education. The goals of this course are: (1) to ensure students’ awareness and understanding of content that is grounded in the literature of special education (including deaf education and interpreter education); b) develop awareness of the historical, legal, and philosophical underpinnings of special education and its current status within the United States and internationally; c) develop awareness of the intersection of special education with poverty, race, culture, and language; and d) become cognizant of foundational and current research and evidence-based instructional and assessment practices that characterize special education.</i> ”	Fall Odd
TPTE 617 (3)	Every Fall
TPTE 640 - Theoretical Analysis and Theory Construction (3) - “Critical analysis of paradigms and theories relevant to educational research. Principles of theory construction with grounded, inductive and deductive modes. Construction of mid-range theories.”	Every Spring

Residence

Two (2) *consecutive* semesters of full-time enrollment on the Knoxville campus are required (summer may be included). Full time enrollment is defined as being registered for a minimum of 9 hours of graduate credit. Part time enrollment does *not* count toward this requirement.

600-Level Courses

A minimum of six (6) semester hours of coursework must be taken in UT courses at the 600 level, exclusive of dissertation and TPTE doctoral seminar. In addition, 24 hours of TPTE 600 are required. Students may not take more than 99 hours of TPTE 600.

Time Limits

Comprehensive examinations must be taken *within five (5) years*, and all requirements must be completed *within eight (8) years*, from the time of a student's first enrollment in a doctoral degree program.

Comprehensive Examinations

At a point when most course work is mostly completed the doctoral student should plan with their advisor and committee to take written and oral comprehensive examinations. In order to be prepared for the comprehensive examination, it is recommended that a student consult with each of their committee members several months in advance. This will allow sufficient time for preparation. Committee members may vary a great deal in the suggestions and help for preparation that they offer the student.

After the committee members have had sufficient time to read the answers, usually 7 to 14 business days after the last written examination question is completed, the committee and student meet for an oral examination. The oral portion of the comprehensive examination may, at the individual discretion of each committee member, be limited to following up the student's written answers or branch into any area related to the student's program. (Please refer to the *TPTE Graduate Student Handbook* for policies in the event a student fails to perform satisfactorily on the comprehensive exam.)

At or just after Comprehensive Final defense, each committee member (including the chair) should evaluate the student's work on the comprehensive exam using the *TPTE PhD Comps SACS Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric* (see pages 20 and 21).

Admission to Candidacy

Doctoral students should have obtained an [Admission to Candidacy](#) form *prior to the oral comprehensive examination*. Click the hyperlink to access a printable and editable PDF. It should be completed, listing all courses which are to count as part of the program, and brought to the oral examination itself. The form can be complete and signed electronically as well. When the committee is satisfied with the progress of the student, a pass is indicated on the form and committee members sign off indicating their approval. The form is then turned in to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will sign the form and submit it to the Graduate School.

Dissertation Prospectus

A dissertation is a major research study undertaken by a student as the capstone experience in the doctoral program. Before a student begins work on a dissertation, they must write a detailed description of what will be done. A prospectus meeting is then held in which the student's committee makes suggestions and gives approval to the prospectus. Upon approval, each committee member should submit a response to the [Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form](#) via a Google Form. This is a departmental form and not a Graduate School requirement.

Human Subjects Approval

If the dissertation involves any human subjects, approval must be obtained in advance from the [Institutional Review Board](#) of the University of Tennessee. Two to three months should be allowed for this approval after submitting the form.

Dissertation (A *minimum* of 24 semester hours, *maximum* of 99 hours)

The Graduate School requires that the student must enroll continuously for dissertation hours once the student enrolls for dissertation credit until the dissertation is completed and accepted by the Graduate School. A student may register for dissertation hours after successfully defending their comprehensive examination and obtaining candidacy with the submission of their Admission to Candidacy form. In exceptional circumstances and when agreed upon by the student and the advisor, students may register for dissertation hours in the same semester as their comprehensive exams ***Students are advised to be particularly conscientious about this, as failure to register continuously (including at least 3 hours every summer but not mini-terms) will result in needing to begin again with 0 hours.***

A defense of the dissertation which is open to the public must be scheduled two (2) weeks in advance, and the [Schedule of Dissertation/Capstone Defense](#) form must be filed with the Graduate School at least one (1) week in advance. Though anyone may attend the defense, it is up to the doctoral candidate's chair to determine if and how audience members other than the committee may participate.

Graduate Certificate Programs

In addition to its graduate degrees, the Department offers 19 graduate certificate programs, which are showcased in the graduate catalog. All certificates are both Stand Alone and Add-On unless stated otherwise.

1. American Sign Language Education (On-Campus & Online)
2. Art Education (On-Campus & Online)
3. Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (On-Campus & Online)
4. Education Data Science (On-Campus & Online)
5. Educational Technology (On-Campus & Online)
6. Elementary Education (On-Campus & Online)
7. English as a Second Language (On-Campus & Online)
8. Literacy Specialist (On-Campus & Online)
9. Online Teaching and Learning (On-Campus & Online)
10. Secondary English Education (On-Campus & Online)
11. Secondary Mathematics Education (On-Campus & Online)
12. Secondary Science Education (On-Campus & Online)
13. Secondary Social Science Education (On-Campus & Online)
14. Social Justice Education (On-Campus)
15. Special Education Comprehensive K-12 (On-Campus & Online)
16. Special Education Interventionist K-8 & 6-12 (On-Campus & Online)
17. STEM Leadership (On-Campus & Online)
18. World Languages PK-12 (On-Campus & Online)
19. Writing for Children and Teens (On-Campus & Online)

TPTE CODE OF ETHICS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education (TPTE) strives to be an education community where faculty and doctoral students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning through research and service. As such, all must act with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards. The TPTE doctoral student adheres to all *TPTE Teacher Professional Dispositions and the University of Tennessee's Code of Conduct.

PRINCIPLE: ETHICAL CONDUCT TOWARD STUDENTS AND INTERNS

As a TPTE doctoral student and potential member of the professoriate, the TPTE doctoral student accepts personal responsibility for teaching and modeling character qualities that evaluate the consequences of and accept the responsibility for actions and choices. The TPTE doctoral student:

1. is aware of and respects cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.
2. deals considerately and justly with students and peers.
3. does not intentionally expose anyone to disparagement.
4. does not reveal confidential information concerning students, unless required by law.
5. endeavors to present information with fairness and that honors multiple perspectives.
6. commits to developing the highest educational opportunities for students.
7. seeks to safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally and other affected persons.
8. is alert to and on guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of influence.
9. consults with, refers to, and/or cooperates with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of students and others.

PRINCIPLE: ETHICAL CONDUCT TOWARD PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE

The TPTE doctoral student assumes responsibility and accountability for his or her performance and continually strives to demonstrate competence. The TPTE doctoral student endeavors to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, and by demonstrating personal integrity. The TPTE doctoral student:

1. promotes and maintains a high level of competence and integrity in practicing the profession.
2. applies for, accepts, or assigns a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications, and adheres to the terms of a contract or appointment.
3. takes responsibility for knowing the requirements for the degree, the relevant deadlines, and for making adequate progress.
4. strives to be aware of personal assumptions and be open to examining those critically.
5. continues personal growth through reflection, seeking and accepting constructive feedback, and pursuing beyond-course experiences.
6. follows all institutional, professional and legal requirements for research and maintains a full commitment to academic honesty.
7. does not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

8. is aware of and respects the rules and norms of individual schools and communities.

PRINCIPLE: ETHICAL CONDUCT TOWARD PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES

The TPTE doctoral student, in exemplifying ethical relations with peers and faculty, accords just and equitable treatment to everyone. The TPTE doctoral student:

1. understands and accepts the role of their advisor and committee members and maintains appropriate contact.
2. does not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues unless required by law.
3. does not willfully make false statements about a colleague or the university.
4. does not interfere with a colleague's freedom of choice and works to eliminate coercion that forces educators to support actions and ideologies that violate individual professional integrity.
(continued)
5. is willing to change their mind based on argument or evidence.
6. demonstrates intellectual honesty and integrity respecting setting, colleagues, and faculty.
7. attempts to resolve conflicts in a responsible fashion.

**Note:*

The following sources were considered in developing this code: Carnegie Foundation's *The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the Twenty-First Century*, *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* by Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, The American Historical Association's *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*; *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* by Boyer, *Principles to Guide the Design and Implementation of Doctoral Programs in Mathematics Education* by the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators; *What Every Special Educator Should Know: Ethics, Standards, and Guidelines for Special Educators* by the Council for Exceptional Children; *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* by The American Psychological Association; *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing Stewards of the Discipline* edited by Golde and Walker, and The American Association of Educators' *Code of Ethics for Educators*.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE PROSPECTUS

Requirements for writing the prospectus will vary, and doctoral students will need to follow whatever guidelines their advisors require. However, these overall guidelines should be helpful in getting started.

A. What is a Research Prospectus?

A prospectus is a plan for writing your dissertation. It is the document which you present to your doctoral committee when you seek their approval to prepare a dissertation. *In some cases, the committee may want the prospectus to be an early draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation itself.* Both the prospectus and the dissertation go through many drafts before a final version is reached. Approval of the prospectus is like a contract. What the contract says is that if you complete all that you say you are going to do in the prospectus and write it up well, you will then have an acceptable dissertation. In the case of any dissertation, the more specific and complete the prospectus, the less likely it is that your committee will later on tell you that you need to do additional things.

It works to your advantage to spell out an exact and full plan in the prospectus. You may think that it restricts your flexibility, and in a way it does. However, if your proposed procedure is loosely defined in the prospectus, the committee might assume that you are going to do things that you had not planned to do. In fact, each committee member may have a different view. This may mean that the committee will send you back to do things over and over after you think that you have completed your study, even up to and through the defense. Thus, it is well worth being precise and detailed in the prospectus, even if you have to go through several prospectus revisions.

B. What to Look for in a Research Prospectus

1. Does the proposed study address an issue or question that can and should be dealt with through research?
2. Is the research worth doing? Is it something that needs to be done?
3. Does the study deal with a topic that is of sufficient interest to the community of scholars in the field?
4. Is the proposed research
 - Something that can be done?
 - Something that can be done in a reasonable amount of time?
 - Something that can be done with obtainable resources?
 - Something that the schools and school personnel will allow done?
 - Something that will be acceptable to the human subjects committee of the university?
5. Does the proposed study have sufficient focus and is its focus well defined?
6. Does the study attempt to answer a significant question?
7. Could this study have impact upon the field?
8. In what way, if at all, does the study break new ground?
9. Is the study well designed?
 - Has a clear research procedure been planned?
 - Are specific, well-defined steps identified?
 - Have measurement questions been considered and thoroughly dealt with?
 - Have quality instruments been chosen or has a careful design plan been delineated?
10. Does the researcher have sufficient background, expertise, and ability to carry out the study?
11. Is the proposal written in clear, precise language?

C. Organizing a Research Prospectus: Common Headings

(Headings, sequence, and length will differ depending on the advisor and the type of research)

1. **INTRODUCTION** – In the introduction present general background information first so that the reader can understand the broad dimensions of the study and your point of view. This should show that there is literature related to your study and a trend of concern. In some cases, this will be all the review of literature that exists in the prospectus, so between this section and the statement of the problem section that comes next, you have your main opportunity to show the committee that there is a community of scholars who do research related to this area of concern. You must establish this briefly. This section should move to a point where it allows a natural transition to the statement of the problem.
2. **ISSUES/ PROBLEM STATEMENT** - After introducing the topic and providing related background, you need to narrow your focus, and present the circumstances which bring you to this investigation. What is the situation on which you want to focus? What concerns do you have? What do you want to evaluate or assess? For example, your introduction may begin by describing the general breakdown of society, the growing violence by school age children, the

growing problems of positive character development in our society. The issues/problem then may move to the issue of character education in schools and the various programs which purport to develop character. Both of these descriptions will contain a number of references, providing both research and theoretical information related to character education. A focused description of the issue, at this point, should lead you directly to the most specific statement of all, the purpose statement.

3. **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY** - You should now be no more than five or six pages into the prospectus. This brings us to a concise, precise, focused statement of the specific intent of this particular study. This statement speaks to the “so what?” question of what will you know that you did not know before the study is completed. It points out what you specifically want to find out. Often, the clearest way to do this is to begin by saying, “The purpose of this study is...” This is followed by a brief specific description of what you want to do. Your purpose statement may include one or more research questions. Simply stated, a research question is a clear and significant inquiry for which you can design a way of gathering evidence in order to find an answer. Quantitative studies sometimes include research hypotheses. Research hypotheses are based on logical reasoning from previous research, and/or experience, and/or some theoretical construct. A statistical hypothesis is always stated in a “null” or negative form as the reverse of what is actually expected. The reason is that we cannot statistically prove that something is true, only that something is untrue. If, statisticians argue, we can eliminate what is untrue, what remains then is true.
4. **NEED FOR THE STUDY** - Next you need to explain why this study might be important or useful and to whom. Here you have to establish that your study is a contribution to the field and that it is dealing with important issues and ideas. How you are dealing with the all powerful “So what?” question in detail. What will your study show? How will it influence educational practice? Why do you think that you ought to do this study and why and how will education, and especially your own effectiveness as an educator be helped? Your arguments must be presented convincingly.
5. **LIMITATIONS** - What conditions exist within the study which may influence its outcome and its generalizability but over which you have no control? These may have to do with the grouping procedures of the school, its curriculum, the backgrounds of the students, the preparation of teachers involved in your study. It may also have to do with time restrictions related to school calendar, events that come up in the school day over which you have no control, and any other factors. To identify limitations ask yourself if there are factors which may influence the outcomes and results of the study other than the ones examined and are these identified factors ones over which I, the researcher, have no control.
6. **DELIMITATIONS** - What conditions are you imposing for logical or practical reasons that may influence the outcome of the study? You may be, by your choice, doing some things in your study that may relate to the outcomes. These will be different for different types of research. Your choice of schools or school systems may be one such factor as may your sampling procedure, the time you spend doing the study itself, the time of day in which you do the study or a host of other factors. Delimitations are important considerations when thinking about the application of your findings.

7. **ASSUMPTIONS** - What beliefs are you taking into the study? Are there ideas on which you base your observations or the questions you ask? Is part or all of your study based on your own experiences, common knowledge, or prevailing opinions rather than research evidence? These assumptions need to be carefully spelled out.
8. **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS** - The definition of terms are one of the most important parts of your prospectus. In it you ascribe particular meanings to words and phrases that you are using in unique and particular ways. These may be uncommon words or terms that your readers will need to know in order to follow your write up. They may be fairly common words that you are using with narrow specific meanings in this study. All words, terms, etc. that might not be commonly understood and/or perceived in the same way by all readers need to be here. This saves you from having to explain or clarify the meanings of these words every time you use them. It also helps all readers understand the study in about the same way.
9. **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK** - A description of the theory or theories on which the researcher is basing the study is part of dissertation proposals. Usually this section includes referenced citations and descriptions of one or more major theorists' ideas upon which the study is based. Your theoretical framework reinforces the section on the need for the study. It also shows that your study relates to a school of thought or a body of research-based knowledge in the literature.
10. **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE** - Some advisors ask for a complete review of the literature. This becomes a draft of chapter two of the dissertation itself. Though such a draft will require expansion and revision as the study progresses, it does show that you have an organized description of what the educational research community has published on your topic. It lessens the likelihood of your doing unplanned replication of research that has already been done. Whether you do a complete review or a relatively short one, the review shows that you know what literature is germane to this study. This part of the prospectus requires that you identify the significant headings you will need to include in your review of the literature and how you will organize the headings.
11. **PROCEDURE** - The procedure is another critical part of the prospectus. In this section you describe exactly what you are going to do in the study, how you are going to do it, and in what order and when. This needs to be a step by step description. It has to be done with painstaking care, so specific and detailed that your study could be replicated exactly by someone other than yourself.
12. **ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY** - In this section of the prospectus, which will become the last paragraph of chapter one of the dissertations, you need to identify the overall plan for the study itself, literally chapter by chapter.

WRITING THE DISSERTATION

Requirements for preparing the dissertation will vary, and doctoral students will need to follow whatever guidelines their advisors require. Many dissertations will have five chapters; others (particularly those supported by qualitative research) may have more. However, the UT Graduate School has specific formatting requirements that must be followed.

Many valuable online resources are available for doctoral students and include the [Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertation](#) which specifically details required formatting and organization information must be followed by all UT graduate students when preparing their theses and dissertations. Doctoral students are urged to visit the above link early on the PhD journey but at least by the time they complete their comprehensive examinations.

SUGGESTED SEQUENCE OF STEPS IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM FOR TPTE DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

Note: Though these steps are listed in their approximate sequential order, variations in sequence may occur.

- Admission into the Graduate School
- Application to the program (This is usually concurrent with admission but is a separate process.)
- Acceptance into the program
- Assignment of a temporary advisor
- Completion of the first year of the doctoral
- Selection of a permanent doctoral advisor
- Selection of doctoral committee and the filing of the PhD committee form with the Graduate School
- Completion and approval of a preliminary course of study by the doctoral committee
- Completion of course work
- Successful completion of comprehensive written examinations
- Successful completion of comprehensive oral examinations
- Filing of TPTE PhD Comps SACS Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric (see page 20 & 21)
- Completion of residence requirements
- Filing of signed Admission to Candidacy form with the Graduate School
- Approval of dissertation prospectus by the committee
- Filing of signed Completion of Approved Prospectus form with TPTE Director of Graduate Studies
- Completion of the dissertation
- Registration for graduation online (and December or Spring Graduation Hooding Ceremony if desired)
- Checking with the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Consultant
- Scheduling of dissertation defense with the Graduate School
- Successful dissertation defense

- Acceptance of the completed dissertation by the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Consultant
- Filing of pass-fail form with the Graduate School and submission of dissertation

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION
PH D IN EDUCATION
With concentrations in

Literacy Studies

Children's and Young Adult Literature, ESL Education, Literacy Education

Special Education, Deaf Education and Interpreter Education

Teacher Education

Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations, Elementary Education, English Education, Mathematics Education, Science Education, Social Science Education

Program of Study for:

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Course #</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>hours</i>	<i>grade</i>
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Research Area (15 hours <i>minimum</i>)				
	TPTE 640	Theoretical Analysis and Theory Construction	3	

Core Requirements (12 hours)				
	TPTE 617	Advanced Studies in Education	3	
	TPTE 604	Trans-Departmental Seminar I	1	
	TPTE 605	Trans-Departmental Seminar II	1	
	REED 602*	Seminar in Reading Education	3	
	SPED/EDDE 601*	Seminar in Special Education	3	
	TPTE 612**	Internship in Educational Research	1	
*or other courses from this concentration approved by the student's advisor/committee				
**should be taken the same term as TPTE 640				

Concentration/Specialization (15 hours <i>minimum</i>)				

Cognate (6 hours minimum)				

Date:	Comprehensive Examination Passed
Date:	Prospectus Defense Passed

Dissertation (24 hours <i>minimum</i>) (TPTE 600 hours must be taken continuously)				

[TPTE PhD Comps SACS Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric](#)

Dear PhD Committee Chair, please ensure that the following steps are completed:

- At or just after Comprehensive Final defense, each committee member (including the chair) should evaluate the student's work on the comprehensive exam using the rubric provided.
- Print/distribute a score sheet (below) to each committee member.
- Please show the student the rubric well in advance (i.e., before the comprehensive final)
- Collect all completed score sheets.
- Share committee scores with the student.
- Submit all completed score sheets to the Director of Graduate Studies at the same time the signed Admission to Candidacy Form is submitted to the Director.

Information on intent and how to use this assessment are provided on each copy of the score sheet below.

TPTE PhD Comps SACS Student Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric

Please click the hyperlink above to complete the form via a Google Form

Dear Committee Member, please evaluate the TPTE PhD student’s performance on the comprehensive exam. Your evaluation should be on the questions or problems you administered. Print and complete this score sheet and submit it to the committee chair at or just after the comprehensive final defense.

This assessment is for TPTE to evaluate our PhD programs, in general, and to help us assess our programs over time per SACS accreditation. Similar to other accreditation assessments we conduct in our department, scores on this rubric may not necessarily and directly align with the committee’s determination if the student passed or failed the comprehensive final. We expect that not all students will receive all 3s. The goal is to track mean ratings by our targeted learner outcomes (i.e., Demonstrates Breadth of Knowledge, Demonstrates Depth of Knowledge, and Presents Information in an Organized Manner) over time. Students will not be identified in our summary reports.

PhD Student Name: _____ Date Comprehensive Final Defended: _____

Committee Member Name: _____ Chair: ___ Yes ___ No

Category	Instructions: Circle or mark column to score student’s work for each category below.		
	3	2	1
1. Demonstrates Breadth of Knowledge	Demonstrates a broad-based understanding of all key topics immediately relevant to the question(s) Incorporates other supporting concepts to illustrate understanding of integrated nature of disciplinary knowledge.	Demonstrates a broad-based understanding of all key topics immediately relevant to the question(s)	Fails to adequately demonstrate a broad-based understanding of all key topics immediately relevant to the key topics related to the question(s)
2. Demonstrates Depth of Knowledge	Demonstrates detailed knowledge of disciplinary concepts central to the question(s).	Demonstrates adequate knowledge of disciplinary concepts central to the question(s).	Fails to demonstrate adequately detailed knowledge of disciplinary concepts central to the question(s).
3. Presents information in an organized manner.	Presents information in an organized fashion that effectively illustrates an understanding of the integrated nature of key topics. Writing adheres to disciplinary conventions for spelling, grammar, and style. Very few errors of spelling and grammar. For computations: Presents information in ways that adhere to the highest disciplinary standards for clarity and completeness.	Presents information in an organized fashion. Writing adheres to accepted conventions for spelling and grammar. Errors of spelling and grammar do not undermine effective communication. For computations: Presents information according to minimum disciplinary standards for clarity and completeness.	Information is not adequately organized. Writing does not adhere to accepted conventions for spelling and grammar. Extensive spelling and grammar errors. For computations: Does not present information clearly or completely.