

DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

College of Education

Eastern Kentucky University



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This doctoral student handbook¹ serves as a supplement to the [EKU Graduate Catalog](#) for students seeking a doctor of education degree in educational leadership and policy studies from Eastern Kentucky University. It is intended to answer questions about enrollment in the doctoral program and to clarify the requirements and procedures that must be followed to earn the degree. The student should become familiar with the contents prior to meeting with an advisor.

For further information, students are invited to consult with [Dr. James S. Rinehart](#), Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies [(859) 622-8634 (office) or (859) 622-1126 (fax) or james.rinehart@eku.edu].

The Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Doctoral Program

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies is a terminal degree offered by Eastern Kentucky University for persons seeking to provide leadership for positively impacting schools and communities. Participation in this doctoral program will lead to enhanced understanding and practical capacity with regard to human learning, educational institutions, and the interaction of the larger society with educational, financial, and governmental entities and processes. Likewise, program participation will allow for the acquisition of skills to think critically and creatively, to communicate effectively, and to conduct and apply research. Course work will be built on a knowledge base that reflects current research, theory, and practice, and doctoral faculty will serve as ongoing mentor resources – answering questions, helping to resolve problems and issues in educational settings, collaborating on research projects, referring individuals to job openings, etc.

The Application and Admissions Process

The decision to admit a student to doctoral work constitutes a major commitment from the faculty in the form of advising, teaching, chairing and serving on the committee, preparing and evaluating examinations, and guiding the dissertation to successful completion. To be considered for admission to the Ed.D. program at Eastern Kentucky University, the applicant must meet the minimal criteria identified below. The final decision to admit students to the doctoral program is a collective judgment of the faculty, however, and represents their determination of the likelihood of the candidate's success in all major phases of the degree program.

¹ This Handbook is for informational purposes only; it is not a legally binding document. The language in the Handbook does not supersede, supplement, or alter the language of official University documents such as the Board of Regents Minutes, the Faculty handbook, the Policies and Procedures manual, the Eastern Kentucky University Graduate Catalog or other relevant documents. While efforts will be made to update the Handbook, it should be remembered that changes in policies, procedures and other information are effective as of the date of action or issuance by the appropriate University body even though such changes may not be reflected in the Handbook.

These judgments will take into account the candidate's professional experiences, communication and thinking skills, and other relevant capabilities. Thus, a candidate is not automatically admitted on the basis of meeting the minimal criteria.

In order to be considered for admission to the program, an applicant must have completed a master's degree in education or a related field with a minimum graduate GPA of 3.5, with a review of admission status triggered by any grade of C or below. Applicants must have completed three years of professional experience (preference will be given to those with leadership experience) and must demonstrate competency in educational research (see *additional requirements regarding competency in educational research* below).

A completed application packet will include:

- Completed graduate school application for admission
- Transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work
- Resume of professional experience
- Score reports from the Graduate Record Examination or Miller Analogies Test
- Short autobiographical essay (500-700 words) describing the relationship between the applicant's background, professional goals, and the Ed.D. program
- At least three positive letters of recommendation – preferably one each from a peer, a supervisor, and a college/university faculty member

After a holistic review of the application packets, the Doctoral Program Committee² will select those applicants to be interviewed. The one-day interview may include:

- A review of the candidate's professional portfolio, using a rubric to be established by the Doctoral Program Committee
- A problem-solving exercise to be completed by the candidate and evaluated using a rubric established by the Doctoral Program Committee
- A demonstration of the candidate's technology skills, to be evaluated using a rubric established by the Doctoral Program Committee
- A demonstration of the candidate's written and oral communication skills, to be assessed using a rubric established by the Doctoral Program Committee
- A dispositions evaluation of the candidate to be conducted by one or more members of the Doctoral Program Committee using an established format/protocol

² To be comprised of the Director of Graduate Studies, Graduate Faculty from the Department of Educational Leadership, a Graduate Faculty Member from outside the Department of Educational Leadership, and a current leadership practitioner. Note: the role of the current leadership practitioner on the committee will be especially important in evaluating the potential of candidates with regard to applied leadership.

- An interview with Doctoral Program Committee members
- An interview with the College of Education Dean or Associate Dean

Before making a final decision about acceptance, the committee will review all available data to assess the overall potential of the candidate for (1) success in the program and (2) providing leadership that will improve educational outcomes.

Additional requirements regarding competency in educational research:

To be approved for full admission into the doctoral program, students must meet the following requirement:

The student must have successfully completed (with a grade of B or higher) a graduate level course in educational research and statistics and/or successfully completed and defended a thesis or other comparable project demonstrating research proficiency within the last four years, counting from the semester of admission.

Students who do not meet the requirement may be admitted provisionally and required to complete successfully one or more introductory graduate level educational research courses, and/or may be required to complete the Specialist in Education (Ed.S.) degree program before re-applying to the Ed.D. degree program.

The Program Delivery Model

The ECU doctoral program in educational leadership and policy studies will employ a modified cohort model. Students will enter, continue, and finish the program with a group of colleagues. Some advantages of this model are these:

- Cohorts allow students to know the design and program of from the outset.
- Cohorts enable students to support each other as a group while accomplishing the major milestones of the program including the qualifying examination and the dissertation.
- Cohorts allow high levels of ongoing support for individual student work and research development.
- Cohorts serve as a basis for continued collegial support after graduation.

The cohort model is modified in that it allows some coursework to be individually chosen, thus permitting students to individualize their programs of study to a degree, and allowing flexibility for students who wish to pursue the degree on a full-time basis.

To accommodate students' professional responsibilities, cohort classes will be scheduled for evenings and weekends during the summer, fall, and spring semesters. In the first two years, students will generally complete twelve courses: two each in the summer, fall, and spring sessions. The third year will typically consist of two additional courses and two field-based experiences, followed by the qualifying examination and the dissertation.

Program Planning and Advising

Each student should have a program advisor (Major Professor) by the end of the second semester in the program (the Director of Graduate Studies will serve as temporary advisor for all doctoral students during their first semester in the program). Designation of a program advisor will be determined through joint discussions among the Director of Graduate Studies, the Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, the student, the proposed advisor, and other graduate faculty members to identify the most appropriate mentor based upon mutual research interests and the student's professional goals. The Advisor will serve as chair of the Program Advisory Committee, which will also include at least two additional graduate faculty members from the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, at least one additional member from outside the department, and an education practitioner when appropriate.

Steps to Selecting an Advisory Committee.

1. Get to know the scholarly backgrounds of the faculty in the department and across the university. Take their courses. Talk to them. Look up their vita on the web. Look up their work. Read their publications.
2. Work with the Director of Graduate Studies to select a Program Advisor (Committee Chair).
3. Meet with the Program Advisor to clarify your research interests and identify possible committee members.
4. Contact prospective committee members to explain your dissertation/research interests and gather their opinions.
5. Continue selection efforts until three graduate faculty members (besides the Chair) and a practitioner (when appropriate) have agreed to serve on an Advisory Committee.
6. Inform the Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies of the proposed Advisory Committee membership.
7. Fill out a Request for Doctoral Advisory Committee Form and forward to the Director of Graduate Studies for signature and submission to the Graduate School.

Changes to the program advisory committee require the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, the Department Chair, and the Graduate School Dean.

Each student is responsible for developing a planned program of study in consultation with the program advisory committee. Students should have their planned program of study approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the Graduate School prior to completing 18 credit hours in the program.

Steps to Completing an EdD Program of Study Plan

1. Enter on the Program of Study form the courses already completed. *Note: you should list relevant course work completed regardless of whether it is to be transferred into the current program, because it documents areas of expertise and knowledge.*
2. Work with your Program Advisor (Advisory Committee Chair) to determine the remaining courses needed to create an integrated and logical course of study that meets the program requirements.
3. Submit a typed copy of the completed Program of Study form to the Committee Chair for review.
4. Upon receiving approval of the plan from the Committee Chair, arrange for an Advisory Committee meeting to discuss, possibly revise, and eventually approve the plan.
5. Copies of the proposed Program of Study Plan should be delivered to all Advisory Committee members at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
6. Once the Committee approves the Program of Study Plan, the student is responsible for providing the Program Advisor (Advisory Committee Chair) with a clear and accurate copy. The Program Advisor then forwards a signed copy to each Committee member and the Director of Graduate Studies.

The planned program of study will be designed to ensure breadth of professional knowledge and an appropriate specialization area. The plan identifies course work (including leadership specialization and cognate area courses) and a projected timeline for meeting all program requirements. The doctoral program committee will review each student's progress after the student has completed 18 credit hours of course work and again after the student has completed 36 credit hours of course work.

General Course Requirements

Graduation from the program is determined not only by completion of specific courses but also by demonstration of established competencies. Each student's planned program of study will include seven components: a research core, an academic core, a rural studies core, a leadership specialization area, a cognate area, a field experience, and the dissertation.

Research Core9 credit hours

- Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods (EDL 810)
- Intermediate Quantitative Research Methods (EDL 812)
- Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (EDL 811)
- Seminar in Advanced Research Methodology and Design (EDL 910)

(Note: additional coursework in these areas may be required if the student has not completed coursework in statistics and research methodology or successfully completed and defended an appropriate thesis or specialist project.)

Academic Core 9 hours

- Cultural and Contextual Foundations of Leadership (EDL 820)
- Moral and Ethical Dimensions of Leadership (EDL 821)
- Social and Political Dimensions of Leadership (EDL 822)
- Assessment for Educational Leaders (EDL 823)
- Public Policy Development and Assessment (EDL 824)
- Organizational Justice in Educational Settings (EDL 825)
- Leadership for Change in Organizations (EDL 826)

Leadership Specialization12 hours

Selected from advanced graduate course offerings and aligned with the student's program of study to create an individualized track that is both cognizant of background experiences and prior knowledge and relevant to professional objectives.

Cognate Area.....6 hours

Two advanced graduate courses chosen from a department or program outside the leadership specialization area.

Rural Studies Core..... 6 hours

- Seminar on Rural Schools and Communities (EDL 930)
- Leadership in Rural Settings (EDL 931)

Field Experience6 hours

Completion of a structured set of field experiences relevant to the student's planned program of study, supported by skill development through symposia, tutorials, lectures, and assessments. The field experience should result in a product with the potential to make a substantive contribution to improving P-12 education.

Dissertation12 hours (1 hour/semester—see *Continuous Enrollment*)

Minimum Program Total 60 hours

Continuous Enrollment

When students pass the comprehensive examination, they will enroll for dissertation credit and continuous enrollment must be maintained with a minimum of one semester hour of dissertation credit during each regular semester, including at least one summer term each year, until the dissertation has been accepted by the Graduate Dean.

The Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the qualifying examination is to assess the candidate's knowledge in the field, critical and creative thinking skills, capacity for problem solving, ability to

organize material, and effectiveness of written expression. Students should complete the comprehensive examination following the last semester in which s/he is enrolled in course work and before submission of the dissertation proposal.

Preparing for the Qualifying examination

Upon deciding when to take the Qualifying Examination, each student contacts her/his Program Advisor and the other members of the Advisory Committee to receive guidance in preparing for the written component and to discuss possible areas/questions the written segments may cover. At the conclusion of these individual meetings with each faculty member serving on the Advisory Committee, a student should have a good grasp of what academic content each written response will encompass.

The qualifying examination will be designed as follows:

- Content for the examinations will be *program-oriented* rather than course driven.
- The student will be responsible for the content in the total program of study.
- The student's Program Advisory Committee will be responsible for designing, preparing, and scoring the examination. Faculty members from cognate fields related to the program of study may be consulted as needed.

The Program Advisory Committee will develop four questions, one from each of the following program areas: research, academic core, leadership, and rural education. To the extent feasible, questions will be aligned with potential elements of the dissertation proposal (e.g., the academic core question may call upon the student to demonstrate expertise in the literature that will likely be deployed as the theoretical framework in the dissertation).

The written component of the qualifying examination will be conducted in four sessions of three hours each (one session for each of the four questions), and will take place over two consecutive days (two sessions each day). The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies will provide students with an appropriate workspace and a computer for each session.

Written responses will be evaluated³ by the Advisory Committee members, who will submit their evaluations to the student's advisor within ten working days following

³ Using the following rubric: 5 - Extremely strong response, considerably above average, likely to be attained by only a small minority of examinees; 4 - Above average, somewhat above what one would expect of an examinee; 3 - Adequate and reflects an average level of performance commensurate with the expectations of the Committee (minimum pass); 2 - Below the quality expected but with some positive indicators; 1 - Substandard and totally fails to reflect the quality one expects of an applicant for the doctoral degree.

the examination. An oral defense will be scheduled for a date no later than twenty working days following the examination.

Any failed portion must be rewritten as an independent research project under the direction of the Program Advisory Committee. The Program Advisory Committee will then evaluate the quality of the independent research project and determine whether additional coursework is needed before the student can proceed in the program.

The Dissertation

The purposes of the doctoral dissertation are as follows:

- To demonstrate technical mastery of the student's field
- To originate new knowledge or to advance or modify the present knowledge base in educational leadership and policy studies
- To demonstrate the ability to conceptualize and complete a project of focused inquiry

Additionally, it is an expectation of this program that students completing dissertations will produce research findings that will inform educational policy and practice to improve educational outcomes. Toward that end, each dissertation committee shall include a current leadership practitioner whose primary role on the committee will be to ensure that the research topic is relevant and responsive to educational practice, and that the findings reported in the dissertation itself have utility for practitioners and the potential for enhancing educational outcomes through improved policy and/or practice.

The dissertation typically follows a five-chapter format. The most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* will serve as the official style guide. The Dissertation Committee may approve another style should that format better suit the needs of organizing and presenting the research. In either case, the dissertation is evidence that the student is an expert in the chosen topic area. Students must work closely with their adviser in determining the topic and in formulating the research design.

In order to insure a high-quality product, a proposal consisting of the first three chapters of the dissertation is developed and presented to the Dissertation Committee for approval. Once accepted, the student will begin the actual research. Students are encouraged to work closely with the advisers while writing the dissertation.

Dissertation Committee: The Dissertation Committee and the Program Advisory Committee are not necessarily comprised of the same people. The doctoral student selects the dissertation chairperson from the Graduate Faculty according to faculty

expertise and research interest and submits a request to the departmental chairperson. Once approved by the departmental chairperson, the dissertation chairperson consults with the student in recommending committee appointments to be approved by the Program Director, the Dean of the College of Education, and the Dean of Graduate School. The Dissertation Committee consists of four members:

- Dissertation chairperson
- Two (2) Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Faculty Members
- A College of Education Dean's Representative (outside COE)
- Graduate School Dean's Representative (outside COE).

Dissertation Proposal: Specifically, the proposal is a detailed plan for conducting the investigation and should communicate to the Dissertation Committee precisely what the student plans to do, as well as why, how, when, and where the student plans to do it.

The proposal is significant. It becomes a contract between the student and committee. Any significant changes or deviation in the proposal will require committee approval.

The more accurate, complete, and detailed the proposal, the more efficient the process of completion. The format typically followed for an empirical research problem includes five parts:

Chapter I contains a clear and concise statement of the problem (*what* is to be studied), justification for the study (*why* it is important to investigate this particular problem), the conceptual or theoretical perspective from which the problem will be investigated, the objectives and hypotheses to be tested or the questions to be pursued, operational definition of terms, and delimitations and limitations of the proposed study.

Chapter II focuses on a critical review of the literature related to the problem statement and conceptual framework.

Chapter III describes *how* the study is to be produced (i.e., procedures). Included in this section are a detailed description of *how* the hypotheses will be tested or questions answered, a description of the population and sample, the instrument(s) used to gather data, and the treatment or analysis of the data. If the study involves human subjects, requirements for human subjects review must be satisfied.

The Appendix contains questionnaires or other instruments used to gather data for the purpose of carrying out the research.

The section entitled References includes all sources cited in the proposal.

The use of non-quantitative methodologies (e.g., historical, philosophical, theoretical, ethnographic) typically leads to a proposal somewhat different in

structure from the example provided above. In such a situation, the student is expected to confer with the adviser and the Dissertation Committee to establish understandings about format.

Human Subjects Research - Review Guidelines: In accordance with federal and institutional regulations, any undertaking in which a member of the University faculty, staff, or student body investigates and/or collects data on human subjects for research purposes must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Each investigator has the responsibility to seek review of any study involving human subjects before initiation of the project. See http://www.sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/IRB_SITE/

The Dissertation Proposal Defense: Defense of the proposal has the format of a seminar open to faculty and graduate students. The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies will schedule the required defense. The Dissertation Committee must receive the proposal at least two weeks in advance of the defense. Two copies of the proposal and a signed signature page of approval must be on file in the Center office; in addition one copy should be submitted to the Graduate School prior to beginning the dissertation. One copy and the signature page will be placed in the student's file. A second copy is for a library of sample proposals. Data collection may proceed only with unanimous approval of the five-member dissertation committee.

The candidate will be notified in writing of the Committee's decision regarding the proposal. The Committee may accept the proposal in its current form, require changes to be incorporated into the dissertation itself, or require that the proposal be revised and resubmitted for approval. After the candidate has successfully defended the dissertation proposal, he/she may develop, with the supervision of the Committee, a completed dissertation.

The Dissertation: Once approved by the committee, the proposal becomes the framework for the first three chapters of the dissertation. The student proceeds to gather data and reports the results in Chapter IV, with the summary, discussion, and recommendations composing Chapter V.

The Dissertation Defense: The final dissertation defense focuses on the dissertation study. The candidate and the Chair of the dissertation committee schedule the defense meeting. The dissertation must be submitted to the Dissertation Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled Final Dissertation Defense meeting.

Copies of the dissertation will be available to all faculty members within the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies for review and comment; however, only Dissertation Committee members will have the opportunity to participate in the final decision.

At the dissertation defense, the candidate should be prepared to provide an overview of the study and findings, and answer any questions related to the study. The committee can decide to (a) pass, (b) fail, or (c) defer a decision pending the completion of additional revisions to the dissertation.

Application for Graduation

The candidate must file an [application](#) and pay the necessary fees for graduation with the Graduate School at the appropriate time before or during the final semester in which the dissertation defense is to be completed. Candidates should refer to the [Graduate School Calendar](#) for deadline dates regarding filing the doctoral dissertation with the Graduate School and scheduling the dissertation defense.

Time to Degree

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within a period of four years from the semester in which the student passes the qualifying examination. Students exceeding the time limit may be required to repeat the qualifying examination, replace out-of-date credits with up-to-date work, and/or show other evidence of being current with regard to their program of study.

Students who have not completed the dissertation within four years from the semester in which they passed the qualifying examination have two options to extend the time:

- Those who have completed a dissertation proposal that has been accepted by the Committee before the expiration date will be granted a one-year extension upon Committee approval.
- For those who have not had a proposal approved by their Committee, a two-year extension may be granted contingent upon Committee approval with the completion of additional prescribed course work and a retake of the written qualifying examination.