

Regent University School of Education

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Student Handbook

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Welcome

The Ed.D. is designed to facilitate the learning styles of adults and provide a collaborative community for higher-level thinking and problem solving. The problem-oriented curriculum and cognate specialties allow for individualization of programs. Undergirding the entire program is critical thinking, scholarly research that informs practice, writing and learning from a Christian worldview. The capstone project, as with any doctoral program, is the submission and defense of a doctoral dissertation.

Programs of Study

The students, in conjunction with their faculty advisor, are expected to develop a written Approved Degree Plans, which includes the required core and cognate course requirements and dissertation credits. The first year of the doctoral program will consist of core courses required for all students, regardless of cognate. The second year consists of specialty courses designed to cover content specific to each cognate area. The School of Education offers eight cognate areas: (a) [Adult Education](#), (b) [Character Education](#), (c) [Christian Education Leadership](#), (d) [Distance Education](#), (e) [Higher Education](#), (f) [K-12 School Leadership](#), and (g) [Special Education/Educational Psychology](#).

Program Policies

Academic Integrity

The School of Education adheres to the University's [Academic Honor Code & Disciplinary Policy](#). The Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path and we are to confirm it by keeping His righteous ordinances (Psalms 119:105-106). It is assumed that academic honesty will prevail. Problems in this area will be handled with an equal concern for love and justice.

Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and what constitutes dishonesty. Students are also responsible for understanding that if they allow a fellow student to cheat or plagiarize, or if they complete an assignment for a fellow student, they are accomplices to academic dishonesty and are subject to the same penalty.

Change of Cognate Area

A student may change cognate area by (a) informing the current cognate advisor as to the desired change, (b) obtaining approval from the new cognate faculty advisor as reflected by signature on the [Change of Program form](#), and (c) submitting the signed form to the director of the Ed.D. program to be forwarded to the Dean's office.

Change of Dissertation Committee

The student may request a change in an established dissertation committee by (a) informing the committee chair of the desired change, (b) verbally consulting and obtaining approval from the proposed new committee member as reflected by signature on the [Request for Change of Dissertation Committee](#) form, and (c) submitting this form to the director of the Ed.D. program, which will be forwarded to the Dean's office. Final approval of all committee changes rests with the Dean and will only be granted in unusual circumstances.

Courses

Blackboard

All Blackboard sites will open for students three days prior to the start of the scheduled course.

Auditing

A student may request to audit a course by (a) securing permission from the current advisor, (b) obtaining approval of the faculty member teaching the course, and (c) submitting the signed [Academic Petition](#) to the director of the Ed.D. program to be forwarded to the Dean's office.

Repeating

A student may request to repeat a course by (a) securing permission from the current advisor, (b) obtaining approval of the faculty member teaching the course, and (c) submitting the signed [Academic Petition](#) to the director of the Ed.D. program to be forwarded to the Dean's office.

Grading System

To remain in good academic standing, a student must maintain a 3.00 GPA. The following grading system is used:

A	4.00	Superior
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	Good
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	Poor
F	0.00	Failing
W	Withdrew	
P	Pass	(Used for pass/fail courses only)
NP	No Pass	(Used for pass/fail courses only)
I	Incomplete	
IP	In Progress	
AU	Audit (No Credit)	(Used for audit courses only)
WF	Withdrew Failing	
FX	Failure to make up an Incomplete	

Leave of Absence

Students are expected to stay continuously enrolled in the program. In the event a student has a personal or professional need that requires a leave of absence from the program, permission must be obtained from the department chair. A [Leave of Absence form](#) must be submitted indicating the nature and duration of the leave. If the leave of absence is not approved or the absence will be longer than one year, the student will be required to reapply for admission. Please note that a violation of this policy includes missing comprehensive exams.

Residency Requirement

Students are required to attend all residency sessions defined for their respective cohort.

Transfer of Credits

Before or during the first term of enrollment, students may [request a transfer](#) of up to nine credit hours of post-master's work from other institutions if the work is not over five years old and, in the opinion of the faculty, it fulfills a core or cognate requirement.

Transfer to the Ph.D. Program

Students should apply to the Ph.D. program before beginning doctoral work; that is, the expected path is immediate entrance into the Ph.D. program rather than transferring from the Ed.D. program. However, Ed.D. students may apply for transfer into the Ph.D. program but a separate admissions decision will occur and no guarantee of admission should be presumed.

Comprehensive Examination

During the last semester of program coursework, all students will take a written comprehensive examination intended for two purposes: (a) to ascertain mastery of the

Ed.D. curriculum and (b) to ascertain writing and analytical skills in a timed environment.

Process

Comprehensive exams are administered on campus three times a year: Saturday prior to the first day of residency in July, the first Saturday of December and the first Saturday of April. Students are expected to take the comprehensive examination during the semester of final coursework. Upon successful completion of all three sections of the comprehensive exam, the student will be [admitted to candidacy](#) and will enroll in the first six hours of EFND 906 *Dissertation*.

If for some reason the student fails to successfully negotiate any portion of the exam, he or she will enroll in EFND 898 *Comprehensive Examination Continuation* for a three-credit hour fee. This one additional term facilitates the time needed for those who require further preparation. At the conclusion of the additional preparatory term, the student will be afforded the opportunity to retake the appropriate portions of their exam before proceeding to *Dissertation*. If a student is absent from his or her scheduled examination without an approved deferment, the student will receive an automatic failure.

If a student believes that taking the comprehensive examination during the final coursework semester will create an untenable situation, a deferment must be requested in writing to the respective advisor and include the specific reasons supporting the request. The advisor will consider the request, which may include a discussion with the student, and determine whether or not to grant a one semester deferment. The advisor will submit,

in writing, to the student, Dean, and director of the Ed.D. program the deferment decision.

Requests for deferments beyond a single semester must be made to the Dean and will only be granted for calamitous reasons (e.g., catastrophic illness or death of an immediate family member). The Dean will convene a committee of three doctoral faculty for a deferment decision. The committee will submit, in writing, to the student, Dean, and director of the Ed.D. program the deferment decision. First or subsequent deferment decisions are not subject to an appeal.

Students granted a deferment will be charged a continuation fee equal to one credit in EFND 898 *Comprehensive Exam Continuation* during the period of the deferment. Deferment credit will not count toward the total credits required for the doctoral degree.

Format

Three two-hour sections constitute the comprehensive exam: foundations core, research and statistics (R/S) core, and cognate. Students do not choose their R/S or cognate questions; however, before the examination, students will choose the foundations core course to be covered by the foundations core question (note there are four foundations core courses; therefore, each student will choose one course from these four). All sections must be passed before the student is admitted to candidacy, which is required to register for dissertation credit hours. Any section of the exam not passed may be retaken only once and usually at the next administration date; note that the foundations core course chosen for the initial examination will be the foundations core course used for the retake.

Foundations Core

The following courses represent the pool from which the student will select a single question prior to the examination: (a) EADM 703 *Advanced Theory & Practice of Leadership, Organizational Development & Educational Administration*, (b) EADM 705 *Effective Communication & Conflict*, (c) EFND 701 *Advanced Human Learning and Motivational Development*, and (d) EFND 707 *Advanced Study of Worldview*.

Research and Statistics Core

The research and statistics section of the Ed.D. comprehensive exam will test the student's ability to use information from two courses, EFND 702 *Research Design and Analysis* and EFND 722 *Educational Statistics*, to (a) evaluate a research situation, (b) analyze and interpret data, and (c) discuss research results in light of extant literature.

Students should pay particular attention in fostering an ability to identify the appropriate statistical test for a given research purpose and/or question and the ability to perform the test (i.e., use SPSS to analyze data) and interpret the results (use SPSS). Students will be expected to discuss the implications of their analyses in conjunction with literature read from other areas in the preparation of a logical response to posed questions.

Cognate

Students will respond to questions from the cognate to which they are enrolled. The following information pertains to each respective cognate.

Adult Education. The comprehensive examination for the Adult Education cognate will assess the knowledge, understanding, analysis, and application of adult learning theories in the context of institutional and organizational environments (e.g. higher education, K-12 public and private education, business, government, and corporate settings) with current research, trends, and practice.

The design, implementation, and evaluation of programs for professional development, staff development, training, and human resource development embedded with principles of supervision and adult learning theory are core objectives. Students are expected to evaluate philosophical and theoretical perspectives including motivation, self-efficacy, adult learning theory, alternative educational designs, and related methodologies to program planning, design, and evaluation for adults. Students should be able to provide a response that is well-developed, organized, analytical, and a synthesis of the literature and research.

Character Education. The comprehensive examination for Character Education will consist of a problem scenario tailored to the student's level of interest either K-12 or post secondary. Students should be prepared to use the literature in the field to provide an analysis of a problem area and be prepared to demonstrate a broad and in depth understanding of the best practices in Character Ed and to apply them to the development of programs and curriculum. Particular attention will be given to the student's ability to thoroughly analyze and interpret evidence from different points of view and to develop and support logically sound reasons for their arguments in a competently written response to the question presented.

Christian Education Leadership. The comprehensive exam for the CEL cognate assesses the student's professionally relevant synthesizing ability. The exam addresses issues primarily covered in CEL cognate courses but may also tangentially incorporate core course content. The exam will, at any given administration, address a variety of issues and call for varying response formats. Example requirements include: (a) applying theory and philosophy to practical situations; (b) critiquing various perspectives in

Christian education; (c) comparing and contrasting aspects of Christian and other types of education; (d) documenting biblical perspectives on issues and practices; and (e) stating pros and cons of relevant issues. In all cases students are expected to demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the literature; biblical applicability; to write in a clear, grammatically correct manner; and to demonstrate logical reasoning.

Distance Education. The distance education cognate question will be in the form of a scenario in which students will be expected to integrate and apply main theories, current practices, and literature findings. Students should be fluent in a systems approach to distance education, instructional systems design models, asynchronous and synchronous approaches to online learning, varied approaches to online assessment, rich media tools and applications, foundational theories and literature, and recent trends and activities in the field. The scenario-based question will challenge students to synthesize the cognate content and demonstrate the ability to make effective recommendations accordingly. Answers will be evaluated on depth of analysis and relevant application of cognate content, use of substantive material to support the analysis and recommendations, writing quality, and appropriate citation of sources.

Higher Education. The higher education comprehensive question centers on the student's ability to take a particular case study or situation and generalize it to the fields of higher educational history, governance, planning, law, curriculum and assessment and pedagogy. The basic foundations of each course in the higher education track are assessed through the use of a question that is broadly based and will test the student's ability to draw on multiple references and disciplines in the course work.

K-12 School Leadership. The comprehensive examination for the K-12 School Leadership cognate will consist of a problem scenario encompassing multiple issues associated with leading an effective data-driven school focused on student achievement. Students should pay particular attention to the extant literature in the following areas: leadership, curriculum and instruction, student achievement, data analysis, personnel management, school-community relations, school finance, facility use, effective communication and conflict resolution, strategic planning, organizational development and change, strategic priorities, policy, legal, and ethical issues, philosophy of education, and Christian worldview. Evidence of critical thinking that includes problem-solving and analytical writing skills is critical.

Special Education/Educational Psychology. Due to the varied degree in which either special education or educational psychology may be represented by the student's program, either area can be chosen for the cognate question.

For special education, the candidate should be prepared to provide a broad analysis of the field of special education which considers (a) the history of special education in the United States (key researchers, theories, issues related to practice); (b) empirical evidence-based practices for effective and individualized instruction of students with mild disabilities (characteristics of children with high-incidence disabilities, empirical establishment of best practice, metadata analysis), and (c) current issues influencing the field (early interventions to leaving school, research-to-practice, policy and legal issues).

For educational psychology, the comprehensive examination question will require the examinee to analyze a problem, select one or more research based theories and

approaches to address the problem, and formulate methods of assessment to determine the efficacy of the recommended solutions. The output may be in the form of a detailed response to a case study or a research proposal outline. The student should be familiar with the theories and research presented in educational psychology courses, as well as fluent in designing a research paradigm in order to answer questions or test recommended solutions. Faith and learning integration from a biblical world view using the School of Education conceptual framework may also be a component of the comprehensive exam question.

Dissertation

The dissertation is the final element in demonstrating distinctive achievement in a specific academic field and the candidate's familiarity with the literature in conjunction with the proper selection and execution of research methodology. As the final assessment in the doctoral program, the dissertation process is designed to evaluate the capabilities of the candidate under the general guidance and mentorship of the committee. *Note that the candidate has the responsibility for designing, conducting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting the research; the primary responsibility of the committee is to scrutinize the candidate's competency in these areas.* This work should represent original or independent research and reflect either a genuine contribution to the knowledge base or an organization under study.

The assumption of the committee is that candidates are scholars in the making, with clear goals, adequate investigative tools, a solid research agenda, and the self-directedness to achieve their goals and complete their dissertations largely on their own. Although it is appropriate for the committee to provide some scaffolding by giving

general direction and feedback, the idea is that by this point in the doctoral program the provision of faculty providing detailed support and answers to all questions should fade from the process. The candidates, as a minimum, should find answers to their questions and propose solutions themselves without relying on their committee to answer all questions.

Process

The student will progress through a series of steps including the following:

- Step 1. Meet with cognate advisor to discuss potential dissertation topics appropriate to the cognate.
- Step 2. Begin working with dissertation chair to formulate a dissertation proposal.
- Step 3. Student and chair will work together to identify and secure committee members and to determine the line of communication. Potential committee members should outline to the chair their respective roles before agreeing to serve. The dissertation committee must include the following:
 - 1. A School of Education chair;
 - 2. A second Regent faculty member with a doctoral degree;
 - 3. One qualified committee member with a doctoral degree.

The committee may exceed the three members outlined above; however, the expertise and committee voting status of an additional member who does not possess a doctoral degree will be determined by the chair.

- Step 4. Submit [Doctoral Dissertation Committee form](#) identifying secured committee.

Step 5. Submit [completed proposal](#) to the dissertation chair. When the chair is satisfied with the proposal, an oral defense will be scheduled by the chair. At the oral defense, the committee will determine one of the following by unanimous vote:

1. Unconditional Approval of the oral defense and proposal;
2. Conditional Approval of the oral defense and/or the proposal with minor revisions (to be approved by the chair);
3. Provisional Approval of the oral defense and/or the proposal with major revisions (to be approved by the committee);
4. Rejection of the oral defense. If, based on the committee's decision, the oral defense is rejected, a second defense will be required. (A maximum of two oral defenses are permitted for any proposal; two rejected oral defenses will equate to a rejection of the proposal.) Note that a rejection of the oral defense may still require minor or major revisions to the proposal.
5. Rejection of the proposal. If, based on the committee's decision, the proposal is rejected, a new proposal must be developed. (A maximum of two proposals may be defended.)

Step 6. Execute the research study.

Step 7. Submit completed dissertation to chair. When the chair is satisfied with the dissertation, an oral defense will be scheduled by the chair. Students planning to graduate in May must be ready for [dissertation defense](#) by February 15. At the oral defense, the committee will determine one of the following by unanimous vote:

1. Unconditional Approval of the oral defense and dissertation;

2. Conditional Approval of the oral defense and/or the dissertation with minor revisions (to be approved by the chair);
3. Provisional Approval of the oral defense and/or the dissertation with major revisions (to be approved by the committee);
4. Rejection of the oral defense. If, based upon the committee's decision, the oral defense is rejected, a second defense will be required. (A maximum of two oral defenses are permitted for any dissertation; two rejected oral defenses will equate to a rejection of the dissertation.) Note that a rejection of the oral defense may still require minor or major revisions to the dissertation.
5. Rejection of the dissertation. If, based on the committee's decision, the dissertation is rejected, a new dissertation must be developed. (A maximum of two dissertations may be defended.)

Step 8. The revised dissertation must be submitted to the chair within 30 days of the dissertation defense. If the revised dissertation is not returned to the chair within 30 days, the chair may require the candidate to register for additional dissertation hours.

Step 9. The student is responsible for the final preparation of the dissertation and should consult the School of Education [Dissertation Processing Information packet](#) for information and additional forms. Final approval of all dissertations rests with the Dean of the School of Education.

Style

The most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) should be followed but may vary with chair approval. The preferred

font is 12-point Times New Roman. Use standard double spacing throughout the manuscript. Each page must have a left margin of 1.5" and a 1.0" margin on the other sides.

Standard Format
(*May Vary With Chair Approval*)

The dissertation is divided into four parts: preliminaries, front matter, text, and reference material with each part having several sections.

Preliminaries

Page numbers do not appear on the Title or the Signature pages, although these pages are counted in the document.

Title Page. The title of the manuscript, which should appear in all capital letters, should be as concise as possible and must occur consistently in every respect, including punctuation, hyphenation, and capitalization, on the subsequent abstract and signature pages.

Signature Page.

Front Matter

Page numbers will begin in this section. Use lower case Roman numerals centered at the bottom of the page.

Abstract. The abstract should not exceed 350 words.

Copyright Page—optional. Include this page if you want to explicitly indicate that you maintain copyright to the document.

Dedication—optional.

Acknowledgments—optional.

Table of Contents. The Table of Contents (TOC) is a single-spaced listing of all items beginning with the front matter but excluding the TOC itself. All first-, second-, and third-level headings should be appear exactly as they do in the text; however, second and third level headings should be indented. Numerals indicating page numbers must be aligned at the right-hand margin and connected to the appropriate entry by a line of evenly spaced dots (periods).

List of Tables.

List of Figures.

List of Abbreviations.

Text

Arabic page numbers will begin in this section and be placed in the top right hand corner of page 1.

Chapter 1. Introduction. Provides a rationale for conducting study. Provides literature review to support significance of the study as well as describing the research problem. Outlines research design and provides definition of terms. Outlines organization of the study.

Chapter 2. Review of the Literature. Provides a review of the literature as it directly pertains to the focus of the study.

Chapter 3. Methodology. Provides a detailed description of the research design, methods of measurement, threats to validity, and anticipated data analysis.

Chapter 4. Results. Addresses the research questions or hypotheses by providing the results from the study. Tables and graphs should be included to aid interpretability.

Chapter 5. Discussion. Provides interpretation of findings. Compares and contrasts findings with previous studies. Describes how findings advance knowledge. Discusses limitations of study and implications for future research.

Reference Material

References. This list should include only citations contained in the document.

Appendices.

Human Subject Review

If your research involves the use of human subjects (either directly or through records or other data), your research requires review by the SOE Review Board (SRB). If applicable, complete the [Human Subjects Review application](#) and submit it to the SRB Chair. The SRB will review your request and you will either receive a letter of approval or a request for additional information/revisions. The SRB reviews the proposed purpose, procedures, and subjects and determines to what degree the benefits outweigh the risks. Issues considered may include whether or not the risks to the subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, the selection of subjects is reasonable, informed consent is adequately addressed, the privacy of subjects is protected, and the welfare of subjects is monitored. The timeline for review is two weeks for an exempt review and four weeks for a full board review.

SRB approval is required before research can commence and this approval is good for one year. If you are still collecting data after one year, you will be required to submit a renewal application and status report to the SRB. This process may be repeated for as many years as necessary to complete the originally proposed research. However, you must notify the SRB if you wish to change your research. You can make minor and

administrative changes by submitting a written summary to the SRB Chair describing such changes, but substantial changes in the focus, procedures, or subjects may require a submission of a new or revised application. Consult your dissertation chair regarding what constitutes a minor change. Additional information regarding the protection of human subjects in research is available in the [Faculty and Academic Policy Handbook](#).