DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A PhD in the field of counseling is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

The doctor of philosophy (PhD) in education degree program is designed to create opportunities for cross-disciplinary education research by concentrating on critical national and global problems in which education and human development play a significant role. To adequately address issues, scholars require both a strong foundation in education as well as theoretical and disciplinary grounding in multiple disciplines. The PhD program is distinguished by four characteristics: candidates apply to a cross-disciplinary research team that is focused on a critical problem related to education; approaches to the research problems require a cross-disciplinary lens; students engage in research throughout their program; and candidates aspire to careers in which the production of research is paramount.

Admission Requirements

A master’s degree from a regionally accredited institution is required. Materials to be submitted include: official transcripts, GRE scores, TOEFL scores (for international applicants), three letters of recommendation, and a statement of purpose. Each program has more specific details about these materials and additional requirements. Selection is competitive and is based on the applicant’s past achievements, perceived potential, and fit to the goals and mission of the program.

The Degree of Doctor of Education

The Graduate School of Education and Human Development offers programs of advanced study leading to the degree of Doctor of Education (EdD). These programs provide major fields of study in curriculum and instruction, special education, education policy, educational administration, human and organizational learning, and higher education administration. Supporting fields are available in educational administration, higher education administration, counseling, curriculum and instruction, education policy, elementary education, human development, human and organizational learning, international education, program evaluation, secondary education, special education, supervision, and teacher education. With the approval of a student’s program planning committee, coursework may be taken in or from other departments of the University and through the Consortium. All programs require a doctoral dissertation in the major field of study.

All doctoral programs are designed to accommodate the needs of full-time students as well as working professionals who must pursue their studies on a part-time basis. Required graduate courses, with few exceptions, are offered in the late afternoon and evening. In some programs, courses are offered at off-campus locations and on weekends.

Admission Requirements

The applicant must have adequate preparation for advanced study, including the undergraduate degree and graduate work from a regionally accredited institution in the content area that supports his or her objective. This graduate work must be comparable to that required for the degree of Master of Arts in Education and Human Development at this University. Students with a master’s degree in a field other than education may be considered for doctoral study provided that the degree and previous experience are judged relevant by the major field program faculty.

For an application to be considered by the major field program faculty, an applicant must have a minimum graduate scholastic average of 3.3 on a scale of 4.0 and an acceptable score on the Miller Analogies Test or Graduate Record Examination. In the field of human organizational learning, the Graduate Management Admissions Test is acceptable as well. Programs often set higher admissions standards, and the number of new doctoral students in each program is limited. All applicants must have an interview with faculty members in the major field. Students receiving favorable recommendations from the major field faculty are admitted to precandidacy for the degree.

Precandidacy and Candidacy

The Doctor of Education program is divided into two stages: precandidacy and candidacy. In general, the degree program requires three or more years of full-time study beyond the master’s degree or the equivalent in part-time study. Coursework and the comprehensive examination must be completed within five years, and the entire program must be completed within eight years. The minimum residency requirement in degree status for the EdD is 36 credits of coursework in the precandidacy stage and 12 to 24 credits of dissertation research in the candidacy stage. In most cases, coursework beyond the minimum is required.

In the precandidacy stage, all coursework in the program must be completed and the comprehensive examination passed. Coursework toward the doctorate is established on the basis of a framework of seven domains: knowledge of foundations; critical literature review; research methods; clarity of thought, as expressed both in speech and in writing; professional development; technological skills; and depth of knowledge of the specialty area. A program plan of study is developed between the doctoral student and a doctoral study advising team, generally consisting of two members of the program faculty.

The comprehensive examination is generally a two-day examination held each semester and taken upon completion of all precandidacy coursework. Students taking the examination must be registered for at least 1 credit in the semester it is to be taken, and must file an online application in the Office of Student Life of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development by the published deadline.
The candidacy stage of doctoral study begins after successful completion of the content coursework and the comprehensive examination. A doctoral research dissertation committee is established and the candidate develops a dissertation proposal (this may be while registered in Pre-Dissertation Seminar). Upon successful completion of coursework listed on the approved program plan of study, students must register for dissertation research at the rate of 3 or 6 credits each fall and spring semester. A minimum of 12 dissertation research credits are required for graduation. Students who have not defended their dissertation after 12 credits continue to register at the rate of 3 or 6 credits until they have reached 24 credits of dissertation research. Once they have reached their 24 credit maximum, they must register each subsequent fall and spring semester for 1 credit of Continuing Research until completion of their degree program with the successful defense of the dissertation to the Dissertation Oral Examination Committee. The accepted dissertation is submitted electronically, with a processing fee paid directly to Proquest/UMI.

Detailed information on the EdD program and its administration is available in the GSEHD Doctoral Student Handbook [https://gsehd.gwu.edu/students](https://gsehd.gwu.edu/students). Students completing their degree program should refer to the section on Graduation Requirements, Participating in the Commencement Ceremony, under University Regulations.

**Doctoral programs**

- Doctor of Education in the field of educational leadership and administration [http://bulletin.gwu.edu/education-human-development/doctoral-programs/educational-leadership-administration](http://bulletin.gwu.edu/education-human-development/doctoral-programs/educational-leadership-administration)
- Doctor of Education in the field of higher education administration [http://bulletin.gwu.edu/education-human-development/doctoral-programs/education-higher-education-administration](http://bulletin.gwu.edu/education-human-development/doctoral-programs/education-higher-education-administration)