



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

College of Education

Ph.D. Student Handbook

Higher Education (HED)

Center for the Study of Higher Education

in the

Department of Educational Policy Studies & Practice
(EPSP)

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<https://www.coe.arizona.edu/epsp/hed>

The Department of Educational Policy Studies and Practice (EPSP) in the College of Education includes the **Educational Leadership (EDL) Program** and the **Center for the Study of Higher Education (HED)**

Center for the Study of Higher Education Contacts

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Our core faculty

- Professor [Nolan Cabrera](#), he/him
- Professor and Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs [Regina Deil-Amen](#), she/her/hers
- Professor and EPSP Department Head & Center Director [Leslie Gonzales](#), she/ella
- Assistant Professor [Heather Haeger](#), she/they
- Professor [Judy Marquez Kiyama](#), she/hers
- Associate Professor of Practice [Amanda Kraus](#), she/her
- Professor & VP AZ International (not advising students) [Jenny Lee](#), she/her/hers
- Assistant Professor [Jameson D. Lopez](#), he/him/his
- Associate Professor [Z. Nicolazzo](#), she/her
- Assistant Professor of Practice, [Whitney Mohr](#), she/her/hers
- Assistant Professor, [Moira Ozias](#), she/hers
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Our affiliate faculty

- Senior Research Scientist [Sarah Kyte](#), she/her/hers
- Associate Professor [Matthew Mars](#), he/him/his
- Assistant Vice Provost [Marla Franco](#), she/her/hers
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- Assistant Professor of Practice [Celeste Atkins](#), she/her/hers
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Program Overview

The course requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Higher Education include a limited number of required core courses. The program of study is relatively flexible to allow students to select classes from within or outside the program, department, and college that best fit their interests. This flexible format allows students to explore a wider range of interests than is normally allowed in such programs so they can apply their distinct expertise to their understanding of Higher Education. The minimum credit requirement to complete the Ph.D. is 63 units, of which 45 units must be courses and 18 must dissertation units.

PRIMARY AREA OF STUDY (27 units)

Students must take 27 units towards the primary area of study. Of those 27 units, the following courses are required:

HED 601 Higher Education in the U.S.

HED 609 Organization and Administration in Higher Education

And one from the following list of classes:

HED 636 College Access and Success

HED 637 College Student Transition

HED 642 Gender and Education

HED 628 Theories of Inequality

HED 619 Introduction to International Higher Education

HED 605 Qualitative Methods (or 606)

HED 611 Quantitative Methods

HED 602 Research Design (taken when ready to draft a dissertation proposal)

MINOR (9-12 units)

Doctoral students pursue a minor. The minor may be in higher education, or in some other field (e.g., the student's area of master's work, in another department in the College of Education, or in another College at UA). Most HED minors consist of 9 units, and some minors outside of HED consist of 12 units. The minor may be *formal* or *informal*. A *formal* minor appears on the final transcript and diploma. An *informal* minor fulfills the Higher Education program requirements for the degree but does NOT appear on the diploma. If pursuing a formal minor, the student should consult with the department offering that minor to make sure the student fulfills all minor requirements for that minor. If pursuing an informal minor, the student and advisor must outline and agree on classes that will fulfill said minor.

ELECTIVES (9 units)

Students must complete a minimum of 9 elective units.

DISSERTATION UNITS (18 units)

It is recommended that all work related to the degree be completed within 10 years, with some latitude possible by petition to the Graduate College. Dissertation units must be completed within 5 years of taking the oral comprehensive exam.

Transfer Credits

UA MASTERS: 12 units can be transferred in for students who have completed an M.A. in Higher Education with UA, with the possibility for transferring in 3 additional units upon agreement by the student's advisor and the department head. UA Masters student planning to continue to a UA Ph.D. program must apply through GradApp.

NON-UA MASTERS: For students with an M.A. from other programs and universities, a total of 9 credits can be transferred in.

Credit Transfer Procedure

Students planning to transfer credits into their Ph.D. program must complete the transfer before the end of their first year at UA. If students need assistance with the transfer, they should contact their advisor or the administrative associate in 321. The transfer procedure must be completed through UAccess in GradPath.

TRANSFERRING UNITS

Allowable transfer units are as follows:

UA HED MASTERS units - 12 max*

NON-DEGREE - 9 max*

TRANSFER - 9 max

*There is a possibility to petition transfer of 3 additional credits with the approval of advisors and the department head.

*Classes taken as a non-degree seeking student at the UA. Non-degree seeking students can take up to 12 units. All will count for the program and will not reduce the number of units the

Grade Appeals

If a student feels that they have received a grade that does not accurately reflect the work they did in a specific course, it is advised that the student first address the matter with the professor that taught the class. If the student feels action needs to be taken beyond discussing the matter with the professor, consult an advisor and read over the [Grade Appeals page](#) in the Catalog. Follow the steps and procedures to properly appeal your grade.

Comprehensive Exams Process (Written & Oral)

Written Comprehensive Exam

Through this written examination, the student is expected to demonstrate a deep understanding of foundational and contemporary higher education literature, models, and theories. The graduate coordinator sends out an announcement each semester asking who plans to take the written comprehensive exam. Students can contact the graduate coordinator to register or simply respond to the email.

Written Comprehensive Exam Format

The Comprehensive Exam format changed in 2017. The following section provides a detailed description of the guidelines and expectations for the exams. The comprehensive exam is a take home exam consisting of two parts.

Part I

Methods analysis of an article (5-7 pages double spaced). The focus of the methods analysis of an article is on the research methods used in the article. Students choose whether they want to critique an article that uses qualitative or quantitative methods. The faculty will choose the particular article. The student's analysis should concentrate on the methods used. An analysis does not mean simply criticizing the weakness of the methods, it should also speak to the strengths of the methods employed in the research.

Part II

Part two of the comprehensive exam asks students to frame a problem that they selected in consultation with their advisor. In a double-spaced, APA formatted essay that is no less than 15 pages and no more than 20, the student should provide the following four elements:

- a) An integrative literature review concerning the problem of focus. The review should identify the key schools/traditions in the literature, key authors within those schools/traditions, and gaps in the literature (what we don't know), specifying the contribution you are going to make.
- b) A conceptual framework, coming out of the theories addressed in the integrative literature review. Having identified the gap, synthesize literature you have reviewed to challenge, confirm, disrupt, or extend the theories and concepts in that literature. So, the conceptual framework should be aligned with the lit review, noting the contribution you intend to make to the literature and the theories your chosen topic area(s).
- c) Some research questions, along with working propositions or hypotheses around that utilize concepts from the conceptual framework. Make sure there is correspondence between the integrative lit review, the conceptual framework, and the research questions.
- d) A discussion of methods that could be used to address and answer these questions.
Again, be sure to think about alignment of each part of this paper.

Oral Comprehensive Exam and Format

A. In scheduling orals comps there are two options.

1. Some students, those who have already worked with their advisors to develop dissertation proposals, choose to schedule the orals on the same day and back-to-back with their dissertation proposal meeting.
2. Most students schedule the orals first, and then later develop their dissertation proposals and organize that proposal meeting. Members of this oral doctoral exam committee preferably consist of Higher Education faculty with whom the student has taken classes. Ideally, three members of a student's eventual dissertation committee will be included. The oral comps exam committee should (a) be chaired by a HED faculty member, and (b) have at least two HED faculty members. Only with the assent of the collective HED faculty can an exception be made.
3. Students are responsible for identifying and requesting that faculty sit on their oral exam committee.

B. Orals take approximately one hour. The exam is a general exam about what the student has learned in the classes in their higher education program, although some students provide the committee with a short, written statement ahead of time (sometimes five pages or so) giving the committee an idea of what they are thinking about in terms of their dissertation work. That can help inform the questions and conversation in the exam, but the orals are a general exam, not a pre-proposal exam. The general format is the same regardless of the doctoral exam committee members, but the makeup of the committee shapes how the exam plays out in that different faculty bring diverse areas of expertise, so the content of every unique student exam will be different based on which faculty they include on the committee.

The student has approximately 10 minutes at the beginning of the oral to discuss (without notes) concepts, theories, readings that have shaped how they think about higher education. Different students handle this differently. Some discuss this in the context of their growth in the program. Some go straight to the concepts/theories/readings.

In either case, after the student finishes this discussion, the committee members weigh in with various questions. Each committee member gets the opportunity to ask questions. The questions can be follow-ups to what the student has discussed, but they can also be more general questions not related to what the student has discussed.

After an hour, the student is asked to leave, and the committee deliberates, inviting the student back in to hear the results of the exam.

B.1. It is up to the student to select the date and time, polling their doctoral exam committee to come up with a time that works.

B.2. Students should ensure that they have filed their doctoral exam committee (See

Dissertation section below for further info on the dissertation committee) in GradPath, AND that they have filed a separate step on GradPath indicating the date and time of the exam.

B.3. Students need to work with the Graduate Program Coordinator to schedule a room for the exam. Students can select a room outside the CoE that has meaning for and/or is comfortable for them, but then the student must take responsibility for scheduling that room.

C. When the results of the student's oral exam are filed by their advisor (when the student schedules the date and time of the exam in GradPath, it generates an email to the advisor with a link to filing the results of the exam in GradPath), the next step you take is to develop your dissertation proposal and select the *dissertation committee*, which can be different from the oral exam committee. (See *Dissertation Process* section below for further info on the dissertation committee).

C.1. As indicated above, some students do their proposal meeting (which generally takes about 1 1/2 to 2 hours) "back-to-back" on the same day as and right after their orals. Some students do their proposal meeting on a different date in the future.

C.2. In either case, when the student's proposal has been accepted by the committee (most proposal meetings lead to some revisions, which are provided by the student to the dissertation chair), the Grad Program Coordinator will go into GradPath and indicate that an accepted proposal is on file. That then leads the student to be formally advanced to candidacy.

Fees

When a student passes the oral comprehensive examination and all coursework on their Plan of Study is complete, they advance to doctoral candidacy. At that time, their bursar's account will be billed the candidacy fees of \$35.00. This is a one-time fee, and the student will not be billed again if they change their anticipated graduation date. Consult the [candidacy fees](#) page for more informat

Dissertation Process

One of the first stages of the dissertation is student's selection of their dissertation committee. The Graduate College requires a minimum of three members, all of whom must be current UA faculty members that are tenured, tenure-track, or approved as tenure equivalent.

Students identify a Higher Education (HED) faculty member to be their dissertation chair and ask them if they would be willing to serve in this capacity.

- It is not necessary that the student's current Ph.D. advisor serve as the dissertation chair.
- Exceptions can be made to select a dissertation chair from the Educational Leadership (EDL) program in the EPSP department.
- Students should consult with their dissertation chair and identify two other dissertation committee members from within or outside the EPSP department.
- The student then asks if those faculty would be willing to serve on the committee as well. Although the norm is for students to choose committee members from within HED or within EPSP, we are an interdisciplinary program that encourages students to take classes outside the program and department. Therefore, it makes sense to have students, in consultation with their advisor, decide if there might be faculty from outside the program, department, or college whose expertise is more closely aligned with the dissertation topic and/or methods.

Students can add a fourth member (or more) if they wish, but they must be tenured, tenure-track, or approved special members. (Special members must be pre-approved by the Dean of the Graduate College).

- All dissertation committee members are expected to attend the proposal meeting/defense and the entire final dissertation defense. The student is responsible for securing a meeting date, time, and location.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting

Students need to turn in their proposal at least 3 weeks before the agreed upon defense date. Proposal length should be roughly 35-45 pages double spaced. However, the form and length of proposals varies considerably, depending on the chair and on the student and on the type of dissertation being proposed. All proposals though will include some section on 1) statement of the problem/significance and 2) contribution to the field, 3) integrative literature review from which come key theories and concepts being utilized, 4) discussion of methods that addresses research design, data gathering, and data analysis. Students should consult with their chairs for greater detail.

- The student must file in GradPath announcing their committee (minimum 3 members).
- The student must schedule the dissertation proposal meeting with their committee members.
- Students need to work with the Graduate Program Coordinator to schedule a room for the proposal defense. Students can select a room outside the COE that has meaning for and/or is comfortable for them, but then the student must take responsibility for scheduling that room.
- Generally, there are revisions required to the proposal. The form of those are decided upon by the dissertation committee. Most commonly, the student is required to file a several page memo to the dissertation chair indicating the changes that will be made to the proposal (rather than rewriting the entire proposal), but that is up to the discretion of the committee.
- When the proposal has been accepted, the Graduate Program Coordinator must go into GradPath and indicate that an accepted proposal is on file. That then leads the student to be formally advanced to candidacy, which means they can begin their dissertation process.

IRB Approval of the Dissertation

After the dissertation proposal is approved, students should submit an application to be reviewed by UA's Human Subjects program for approval. A student needs to first take the CITI Human Subjects Certification and write the date that it was completed on the Research Personnel form, which is submitted along with the Human Subjects Protection Program application form and necessary attachments. Links to the application process and forms can be found [here](#) (*Must be completed prior to data collection*).

Final Dissertation Defense

A total of 18 dissertation units are required for completion of the program. Students should plan to defend their dissertation proposal after comprehensive exams have been taken and prior to enrolling in their dissertation units. Dissertation units are to be completed as students work on their dissertation.

Ph.D. in Higher Education Program of Study

Primary Area of Study (27 units)

	COURSE	SEMESTER	PROFESSOR
01	HED 601 Higher Education in the U.S.		
02	HED 609 Organization & Administration in Higher Education		
03	<u>One</u> of the following classes: HED 636 College Access and Success HED 637 College Student Transitions HED 628 Theories of Inequality HED 619 Intro to International Higher Ed HED 642 Gender and Education		
04	**HED 605/606 Qualitative Methods		
05	**HED 611 Quantitative Methods		
06	**HED 602 Research Design		

***Note: Students are strongly advised to take Quantitative and Qualitative Methods and Research Design from Higher Education faculty at UA, however, substitutions may be discussed and approved by advisors.*

Minor (9-12 units)

	COURSE	SEMESTER	PROFESSOR
01			
02			
03			

Electives (9 units)

	COURSE	SEMESTER	PROFESSOR
01			
02			
03			

Dissertation (18 units)

	COURSE	SEMESTER	DISS CHAIR
01	HED 920		
02	HED 920		
03	HED 920		
04	HED 920		
05	HED 920		
06	HED 920		

Enrollment Policies

During the fall and spring semesters, for students with Graduate Assistant/Associate appointments, full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 6 units of graduate credit. A graduate student working on a thesis or dissertation who is only enrolled in 900-level units and not employed as a Graduate Assistant/Associate must be enrolled in 3 units. A student who has completed all coursework, the thesis/dissertation unit requirements, has advanced to candidacy, is working on the thesis/dissertation, and is not employed as a Graduate Assistant/Associate may apply for advanced status, which allows 1 unit of 900-level credit for full-time status. In all other cases, including those employed by UA and receiving QTR benefits, full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 9 units of graduate credit.

Summer Session

Students are welcome to take summer courses at any time. Summer session courses are not covered under the tuition remission package associated with a GA position. QTR is applicable to use with summer courses and does count toward the taxable exemption amount allowed. Students will need to consult the Office of Financial Aid to verify what their financial resources will cover.

Internships

The department does not directly offer internships, though it does have resources for students to find internships and fully supports students in acquiring internships. Advisors and professors can serve as a reference and provide letters of recommendation upon request.

Leave of Absence & Continued Enrollment Policies

If a leave of absence is necessary, for any reason, the proper steps must be taken to avoid being dropped from the program and having to reapply. If a student needs to take a leave of absence, they should first take a look at the [Graduate College Leave of Absence page](#). For further questions, students should consult the Graduate College in person, as well as their department head and advisor. Students will also need to consult Financial Aid to understand how their leave may affect any financial aid they have or are going to receive. For further policies, students should consult their department for details and also consult the [Enrollment Policies page](#).

Minimum Academic Requirements

The Graduate College requires graduate students to maintain a 3.0 GPA. If a student does not maintain a 3.0 GPA for more than two consecutive semesters, they will be put on [academic probation](#).

Navigating the University and Your Degree

UAccess

UAccess is the system students use for selecting and enrolling in courses, checking any holds they may have, viewing their charges, paying charges, viewing financial aid, etc. It is crucial to frequently monitor your account to keep up with tuition payments and miscellaneous fees (CatCard, printing, etc.) you charge to your account <https://uaccess.arizona.edu/>

Desire 2 Learn (D2L)

D2L is the system students use to access all course content (syllabi, readings, assignments, etc.) for their classes. Students' D2L login is the same as their UAccess.

[D2L Help Page](#)

GradPath

GradPath is the paperless degree audit process the Graduate College uses for students to help navigate the forms and procedures necessary to move forward within one's chosen program on the way to degree attainment. GradPath should be filled out during your third semester in the program. GradPath is located within UAccess, Student Center, in the dropdown menu under the Academics section. Or you can follow the [Grad Path Link](#) for specific information. Instructional videos are also available.

CatCard

The CatCard is students' form of identification. Students can use their CatCard for meal plans, campus purchases, printing charges, admission to some university events, building accesses, and more. It is important to get your CatCard as soon as possible. The cost is \$25 for the first card (employees receive their first card free). The CatCard office can be found in the lower level of the Student Union across from Wells Fargo. Please note that students can have the name they want listed on their CatCard, even if it is not their legal name. Should you run into problems with this, please contact the faculty in the department or the Office of LGBTQ Affairs for help navigating this. <https://catcard.arizona.edu/>

Student and Campus Community Resources

Our top priority is ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment. Please review the following resources and policies intended to help us create such an environment.

Discrimination & Sexual Harassment

It is the Center's goal to create an inclusive and safe environment for all of our students. If a student believes they have been discriminated against or sexually harassed, it is important to report it. They should contact the [Office of Institutional Equity](#) to be paired with an expert who can assist the student with advice on the situation or in filing a complaint.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The [Disability Resource Center](#) leads the campus in the creation of inclusive learning and working environments, facilitating access through innovative services, programs, and partnerships. Disability is an aspect of diversity that is integral to our society and the campus community. The DRC collaborates with students, faculty, and staff to create a campus environment that is usable, equitable, sustainable and inclusive of all members of the university community. Graduate students may explore or request disability-related accommodations by affiliating with DRC at any time. If you do not have medical or disability documentation or your documentation is not current, please do not let that be a barrier. DRC may not require documentation to put accommodations in place and can always explore accommodations on a conditional basis pending additional information.

The UA offers many opportunities for new and continuing students to integrate themselves into the community. Diverse opportunities offer multiple micro-communities on campus for students to connect with their peers in areas that interest them. For example, check out the campus' [LGBTQ Center](#). Consider learning more about UA's [Graduate and Professional Student Council \(GPSC\)](#), which advocates for graduate students on campus and supports community building. The Center has an active public Facebook page. Please join us at Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona to learn more about students, faculty, alumni, and events. [Facebook- Center for the Study of Higher Ed](#)

Health and Wellness

It is important for students to maintain good physical and mental health. Managing personal life issues and school can be challenging. The university offers many great programs to assist students and promote their health and wellness. The [Health and Wellness page](#) has a list of offered programs that students can take advantage of on campus.

Funding Your Academic Degree and Experience

The program does not provide guaranteed funding. If students are the recipient of departmental funding, they will receive an award letter with or shortly following their acceptance letter. The Graduate College allocates a nominal amount of fellowship money and tuition waiver to every department. The department sends out an “application for support” in early spring to guide the allocation of this support to students. The number of students that request/apply for fellowship and/or waiver awards far exceeds the allocations, so please plan accordingly.

It is highly recommended to apply for the Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> and check out the [UA Scholarship Universe portal](#). The [New and Current Student page](#) from the Graduate College is another great resource as well. If you are a Native student here at the University of Arizona and have a question about your Tribal Aid, please use this link <https://financialaid.arizona.edu/contact> and select the **Tribal Aid** category.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantship (GA) positions are neither required nor guaranteed by the Higher Education department but are encouraged for those students who are not already working and need funding resources. Students can apply to any department with open assistantship positions. It is recommended to search [Handshake](#) or speak to the department directly to see what openings are available and ask about their application processes.

GA assignments offer an in-state tuition benefit rate as well as professional experience. Please consult the department for which you are applying to for their pay rate.

Qualified Tuition Reduction (QTR)

Employees of the University receive tuition reduction (QTR). Please visit the [Employee Educational Benefits page](#) or the [Bursar webpage](#) to get more information about QTR and its benefits.

Note: Class enrollments that exceed **\$5250** in an academic year will be taxed. For example, if a student takes 4 courses (2 Spring/2 Fall) in an academic year, then they will be taxed on the 2 classes because they exceed \$5250. In this example, the taxes are charged out of six paychecks from October-December. It is helpful to financially plan for the QTR tax.

Travel Awards

The department provides support for doctoral students traveling to present their research at a professional and/or scholarly conference. To be eligible for this award, students must be presenting research and must submit an application here: <https://coe.arizona.edu/epsp-graduate-student-travel-award>.