



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

College of Education

Higher Education Ph. D. Student Handbook **August 2026**

Center for the Study of Higher Education,
Department of Educational Policy Studies & Practice

College of Education
The University of Arizona

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<https://education.arizona.edu/center-study-higher-education>

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Center For The Study Of Higher Education

Welcome to the Center for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) Ph.D. Program in the College of Education at the University of Arizona, which was founded in 1977. The University of Arizona sits on the original homelands of Indigenous peoples who have stewarded this land since time immemorial, including the Tohono O'odham, Pasqua Yaqui, and Apache nations. As part of a "land-grant" and Hispanic Serving Institution, the College of Education (COE) is committed to serving Tucson / Southern Arizona's diverse communities.

CSHE is housed within the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Practice (EPSP) and prepares students to critically engage with the systems, structures, and discourses shaping postsecondary education in local, national, and global contexts.

With a commitment to equity, social justice, and student success, CSHE supports the development of researchers, scholar-practitioners and policy leaders who can contribute to institutional transformation and inclusive educational outcomes

CSHE Faculty

- Professor [Nolan Cabrera](#), he/him
- Professor & Dean, [Regina Deil-Amen](#), she/her/hers
- Professor & EPSP Department Head, [Leslie D. Gonzales](#), she/ella
- Associate Professor [Heather Haeger](#), she/they
- Professor [Judy Marquez Kiyama](#), she/hers
- Professor & VP AZ International (not advising students) [Jenny Lee](#), she/her/hers
- Assistant Professor [Jameson D. Lopez](#), he/him/his
- Professor [Z Nicolazzo](#), she/her
- Assistant Professor of Practice & HIED Master's Director, [Whitney Mohr](#), she/her/hers
- Assistant Professor, [Moiria Ozias](#), she/hers
- Professor [Gary Rhoades](#), he/him/his
- Assistant Professor [Karina Salazar](#), she/her/hers

CSHE Affiliate Faculty

- [Sarah Kyte](#), PhD., she/her/hers
- Professor [Matthew Mars](#), he/him/his
- [Marla Franco](#), PhD., she/her/hers
- [Sharon Ann Aiken-Wisniewski](#), PhD., she/her/hers
- [Celeste Atkins](#), PhD., she/her/hers
- [Karla Silva](#), PhD., she/her/ella

Department Administrative Staff

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The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) In Higher Education Degree Program

The Ph.D. program in The Center for the Study of Higher Education is designed to prepare future researchers, practitioners, and leaders who will generate new knowledge, inform policy, and shape practice in higher education. The program emphasizes rigorous training in theory, research, and praxis, with a strong foundation in critical, intersectional, and equity-driven frameworks. The faculty uses interdisciplinary perspectives, drawing from fields such as sociology, policy studies, organizational theory, and critical race theory. The program supports students in producing research that not only interrogates systemic inequities but also contributes to reimagining higher education in more inclusive, responsive, and justice-oriented ways.

The program is designed for both full-time and part-time students and offers individualized academic pathways that align with each student's intellectual interests and professional goals. Students benefit from faculty mentorship and opportunities for collaborative inquiry, contributing to scholarly conversations and community-engaged scholarship. Graduates of the program pursue careers across colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, research institutes, government agencies, and policy centers. They are prepared to apply theoretical knowledge, methodological skills, and a commitment to justice in advancing meaningful change within higher education institutions and systems.

Program Structure

The Higher Education (HED) Ph.D. requires the completion of a minimum of 63 graduate-level units, including 45 units of coursework and 18 dissertation units.

Program Breakdown

CATEGORY	UNIT HOURS	NOTES
HED Coursework, also called Core or Requirements	9 units	Required courses in higher education (HED)
Research Methods	15 units	Required research method course work
HED Elective Coursework	6 units	Additional HED coursework that aligns with student's research focus or professional interests; select with advisor
Electives	6 units	Additional coursework that aligns with student's research focus or professional interests; can include additional HED coursework, but often consists of graduate coursework in other areas; select with advisor
Minor	9 units	Chosen in consultation with advisor. <i>Note: Some minors require 12 units.</i>
Dissertation (HED 920)	18 units	Dissertation units represent time and labor focused on the dissertation, including the proposal, data collection, and writing the final dissertation manuscript

Total	63 units minimum	
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Designing the Plan of Study for the HED Ph.D.

A Plan of Study lists all courses to be applied toward the Ph.D. degree. Students should work closely with their advisor and committee to develop a Plan of Study that reflects their intellectual and professional goals. Typically, the Plan of Study is submitted via GradPath before the end of the third semester. After being filed in GradPath, the Plan of Study is circulated electronically for approval from the departmental graduate advisor, committee Chair/Co-Chairs, committee members, and department head.

When designing the Plan of Study, students should:

- Align electives with their anticipated dissertation topic and long-term academic/professional goals
- Consult with faculty about elective course options within or outside the department
- Balance academic workload with professional and personal responsibilities, including familial care, GA/TA duties, etc.,
- Consider the requirements of their minor
- *For international students:* Ensure each semester's enrollment meets visa minimums (usually 9 units unless on approved reduced course load)

Students are encouraged to immediately update the Plan of Study if academic plans shift. Any changes must go through GradPath and be re-approved.

The following table is intended to guide students as they design their plan of study, keeping in mind various program requirements, etc.,

This planning tool reflects the 26-27 CSHE PhD program of study/handbook & is intended as a tool for CSHE advisees & advisors. Work with your advisor to develop your Program of Study & file in Grad Path ***by the end of year 1.***

Required/Core Higher Education Course Work – 9 units	
Courses and when they will typically be offered	When to enroll:
*HED 601 Higher Education in the U.S., <i>every fall</i>	Fall 1
*HED 609 Organization & Administration in Higher Education, <i>every spring</i>	Spring 1
* <u>One</u> of the following classes: HED 628 Theories of Inequality, <i>every fall</i> OR HED 636 College Access and Success, <i>every spring</i> OR HED 619 International Higher Ed, <i>varies</i>	Will vary
Required/Core Research Methods Course Work, 15 units	
*EDL 622 Understanding Education Research, <i>every fall</i>	Fall 1
*HED 605 Qualitative Methods in HED, offered <i>every spring</i>	Spring 1 or Spring 2
*HED 611 Statistical Analysis in Higher Ed, offered <i>every spring</i>	Spring 1 or Spring 2
*If you are quantitative focused , select up to one advanced course: HED 612 Multivariate (Multiple Regression) Analysis, offered <i>every fall</i> • EDL 612 Structural Equation Modeling, offered <i>every fall</i> • HED 696b Critical Quantitative, <i>every fall</i> • HED 624 Indigenous Statistics, offered <i>every spring</i> • HED 616 Data Manipulation, offered in <i>odd falls</i> • HED 696c Advanced Regression, <i>varies</i> • HED 696d Data Science, <i>varies</i>	Varies
*If you are qualitative focused , select up to one advanced course: HED 606 Qualitative Data Analysis, <i>every fall</i> ; EDL 696b Special Topics Advanced Qual Course, <i>varies</i>	
*HED 602 Dissertation Proposal & Research Design, <i>every fall</i> <i>Note: Students should not enroll in this course until the last semester of course work.</i>	
Select 6 additional units of Higher Education Elective Coursework	
HED 631 MSIs and Funds of Knowledge, <i>every summer</i> • HED 650 Higher Ed Finance, <i>every fall</i> • HED 626 Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, <i>odd falls</i> • HED 633 Critical Race Theory, <i>even falls</i> • HED 642 Gender and Education, <i>even falls</i> • HED 608 The College Student, <i>every spring</i> • HED 613 Survey Research, <i>every spring</i> • HED 628 Geographies of Higher Education, <i>even springs</i> • HED 629 Whiteness in Higher Education, <i>odd springs</i> • HED 630 Values & Consciousness, <i>varies</i> • HED 634 Community Colleges • HED 637 Student Transitions, <i>varies</i> • HED 696 is a special topics course; <i>topics and scheduling vary</i> .	
COURSE	SEMESTER
Select up to 6 units of Elective Coursework	
COURSE	SEMESTER

Select and enroll in a Minor; most require 9 units; others may require 12. Check out UA's minor possibilities here	
Dissertation – 18 units – Enroll and pace with advisor	

Independent Study

Independent study courses may be offered in unique circumstances with direct coordination and prior consent of the student's advisor. Independent study courses should not be used in place of core coursework. Coursework units earned using the independent study option should not exceed 15% of the total academic unit requirement for the student's degree program (no more than 9 hours of the HED PhD's 63 hours).

More information about the guidelines for independent study courses can be found [here](#). A proposal [form](#) must be approved by the Independent Study Advisor and submitted prior to enrolling in any independent study courses.

Transfer Credits

The CSHE allows students to transfer in a total of 9 units from *non-University of Arizona* master's programs. The CSHE allows students to transfer up to 12 units from the University of Arizona HED master's program, with the possibility of transferring in an additional 3 units upon agreement by the student's advisor and the department head. To determine credit transfers, a student should work with their advisor, the HED program coordinator, and department head. *Note: U of A Master's students interested in the U of A HED Ph.D. program must apply through GradApp.*

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 U of A*. If students need assistance with the transfer, they should contact their advisor or the HED graduate program coordinator in Room 321. The transfer procedure must be completed through UAccess in GradPath.

Comprehensive Exams Process (Written & Oral)

Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

After completing coursework or in the semester in which a student will complete course work, students can begin arranging to take their Comprehensive Exams. Before scheduling the Comprehensive Exam, students must secure their exam committee (see more below).

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.

Written Comprehensive Exam Instructions and Format

To register for the comprehensive exam, students will need to reply to an email sent from the HED graduate program coordinator concerning comprehensive exam eligibility. It is the students' responsibility to register for the comprehensive exam. The graduate program coordinator provides fuller instructions, including start and end time, and guidance for submission. The comprehensive exam is a take home exam consisting of two parts.

Part I

Part one is a 5–7-page, double-spaced academic analysis of a peer-reviewed article's methodology/methods. Students should work with their advisor and let them know if they want to critique an article that uses qualitative or quantitative methods. The faculty person will choose the 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 is a double-spaced, APA formatted essay no less than 15 pages and no more than 20, wherein the student responds to a question, which their advisor has framed for them. The question is designed to support the student's research interests and dissertation ideas. In the essay, the student should provide and/or address the following four elements:

1. 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.
2. 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 of your chosen topic area(s).
3. 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.
4. 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.

The student's advisor reviews, assesses, and provides feedback to the student on the written portion of the exam.

Oral Comprehensive Exam and Format

Following the completion and passage of the written comprehensive exam, students are responsible for forming an Oral Exam committee and submitting the Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam form via GradPath. The committee will include four faculty members, preferably three from The Center for the Study of Higher Education, with whom the student has taken classes and who will remain on the student's forthcoming dissertation committee. A fourth member can be a professor with whom the student has taken a class, a minor advisor, or perhaps someone with whom the student has worked on a research project. A HED faculty member should serve as chair. Only with the assent of the collective HED faculty can an exception be made to the committee composition.

To schedule and complete the oral exam, students must:

- Identify the oral exam committee and enter information into GradPath.
- Poll the committee to find a suitable one-hour time block and date.
- Work with the HED Graduate Program Coordinator to schedule a CoE conference room. Note: *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.

- File their Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam before oral comprehensive exams via GradPath.

What to Expect in the Oral Exam

The purpose of the oral exam, which takes approximately one hour from start to finish, is to have an extended conversation about what the student has learned about higher education, their practice as a higher education professional, and/or their research interests throughout their PhD coursework. Some students provide the committee with a short (no more than five pages) written statement ahead of time to give the committee an idea of their research and dissertation interests. This statement is optional, but it can help inform the questions and conversation in the oral exam. However, the oral exam should not be treated as a pre-dissertation proposal exam.

- 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 influential concepts/theories/readings.
- After the student finishes this reflection, 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.

Following the oral exam, the student's advisor files the Results of Comprehensive Exam form in GradPath, which **advances the student to candidacy** (if the meeting was successful) and **allows the student to move forward to the dissertation phase of the program**. *Note: Some students, those who have already worked with their advisors to develop dissertation proposals, choose to schedule the orals on the same day and immediately preceding their dissertation proposal meeting.*

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 information.

Dissertation Process

After successfully completing the written and oral comprehensive exam, one of the first stages of the dissertation process is student's selection of their dissertation committee. The Graduate College requires a minimum of three members, all of whom must be current U of A faculty members that are tenured, tenure-track, or approved as tenure equivalent, although exceptions can be made for CSHE professors of practice and affiliate faculty.

Students identify a Center for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) faculty member to be their dissertation chair and inquires about their availability to serve as Chair.

- It is not necessary that the student's current Ph.D. advisor serve as the dissertation chair.
- Ideally, a student's chair is on the CSHE faculty, but exceptions can be made and a dissertation chair from the Educational Leadership (EDL) program in the EPSP department can be selected. 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 CSHE 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.

Committee changes must be submitted via GradPath's Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form.

Dissertation Proposal

Proposals are typically organized into three chapters and include an introduction, a literature review, and methodology/methods. Within these three chapters, all proposals include 1) a statement of the problem, 2) contribution to the field, 3) literature review, detailing need for research, and 4) a research design discussion that addresses methodology, planned data collection/data sources, and data analysis. Proposal length varies but ranges from 35-50 double-spaced pages. Students will work closely with their advisor in drafting their proposal.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting

Students will present their proposal to their committee to gather feedback and advice before moving into dissertation writing.

- 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 can work with the HED 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 a non-COE room.*
- At the dissertation proposal meeting, the student can expect for the advisor to make basic introductions and describe for the committee the meeting structure.
- It is common for the advisor to ask the student to temporarily leave the room, so that the committee can collectively review and discuss any items of interest or concern. This time also allows the advisor to organize the forthcoming discussion, so that the student might experience a well-organized question and answer period.

- The student typically has between 15-20 minutes to present their proposal. Often, students will prepare a slide deck or hand out for the committee. The presentation should include background information, research question, relevant literature, and research design plans.
- Following the presentation, the committee engages the student in Q&A, facilitated by the advisor. Following some discussion, the student is then asked to leave the room once more, so that the committee can deliberate on the meeting outcome and provide developmental feedback for the student.
- Most students pass with revisions, meaning the committee approves of the student's plan/concept, but offers suggestions for improvements. In this scenario, the advisor works with the student to develop a memo outlining how they will incorporate the feedback into their research and/or otherwise describing how the conversation broadened, changed, or somehow influenced their thinking. With approval from their advisor, the student circulates the memo to the committee before moving into IRB and data collection.

A total of 18 dissertation units (HED 920) are required for completion of the program. Dissertation units are to be completed as students work on their dissertation. Once you have completed your written dissertation and obtained approval from your advisor, you may schedule your final oral defense with your committee. The final dissertation defense follows a similar procedure as the one outlined above.

Human Subjects and IRB Approval

Prior to collecting data, students must submit an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program. Data collected prior to committee approval of your proposal or approval from the University of Arizona Institutional Review Board (IRB) may not be used in your dissertation study. You must obtain IRB approval before collecting any data for your study.

After the dissertation proposal is approved, students should submit an application to be reviewed by U of A'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: <https://research.arizona.edu/compliance-public/human-subjects-protection-program> (Must be completed prior to data collection).

Your advisor plays a critical role in preparation of an accurate and complete IRB application. Your IRB application needs to be approved by 1) a department representative, 2) the department head and 3) the University committee. Expect to make revisions after each reviewer. Allow at least 4–6 weeks for your IRB application to be approved by the university committee. If you conduct research in a school district, you will need to complete the district review process as well. Consult with the district for criteria and guidelines.

Oral/Final Dissertation Defense

During the semester in which you defend your dissertation, if you have already met all other program requirements, including the 18 dissertation units, you must be registered for a minimum of one unit. Students must register The Announcement of Final Oral Defense through GradPath at least 10 business days prior to the scheduled defense date. The oral defense may not exceed three hours.

To prepare for defending your dissertation, you should:

1. Prepare the penultimate copy of your dissertation and obtain your advisor's permission to send it to committee members.
2. Set up an oral examination date that is agreeable to committee members. This meeting may not take place until at least three months after your preliminary oral exam.
3. Following the examination, make corrections in the dissertation as suggested by the committee members, and obtain signatures on all required forms (see Section below on GradPath Forms).
4. Once approved, you will submit your dissertation electronically to the Graduate College. For instructions on submitting your dissertation, visit [this page](#). It is important that you adhere to the submission deadline in the semester in which you wish to graduate on the Graduate College's website [here](#).

Completion of the Graduate College Exit Survey is required for degree certification and must be submitted prior to graduation.

Program Milestones

The HED Ph.D. follows a milestone-based progression model, which offers students flexibility in pacing while offering key progressive milestones for guidance.

Milestone	Description	Suggested Timing
Meet with your Advisor	Email to meet (in person, via zoom, on phone) your assigned advisor prior to first semester and remain in touch.	Before and during your first year, at least once per year thereafter.
Plan of Study (GradPath)	Students submit a formal Plan of Study listing intended coursework.	By third semester <i>Students must complete their credit transfer evaluation process in their first year.</i>
Completion of Coursework	All required core, minor, elective, and methodology courses must be completed prior to comps.	Varies
Written Comprehensive Examination	The comprehensive exam is a two-part exam where students are asked to demonstrate learnings in written form. See Comprehensive Exam section below.	Ideally, after coursework is completed or the semester course work is being completed
Oral Comprehensive Examination	The oral exam is a dialogue about the student's learnings throughout the Ph.D. experience.	Orals are scheduled following a student's successful passage of the written exam — often but not always within the same semester.

Milestone	Description	Suggested Timing
Dissertation Proposal Writing	Students write the first three chapters of their dissertation: 1. Introduction 2. Literature Review & (if applicable) Theoretical Framework 3. Methodology	After passing comprehensive exams.
Dissertation Proposal Defense	Students present and defend the proposal orally to their full dissertation committee. It is typical for a committee to suggest revisions or suggestions. A student will often be asked to complete a memo outlining their plans and decisions with response to those revisions.	After proposal writing
IRB Approval	Students conducting research involving human subjects must obtain IRB approval before data collection.	After proposal defense.
Dissertation Research & Writing	Data collection, analysis, and full dissertation writing under advisor supervision. Students must remain enrolled in dissertation units (HED 920) during this phase.	Post-IRB, ongoing
Final Oral Defense	Formal defense of the completed dissertation in a public or closed session with committee members. Final revisions may be requested.	After dissertation completion
Submission to Graduate College	Submission of the final approved dissertation, completion of the Exit Survey, and application for graduation.	Same semester as defense
Graduation	Students should also confirm all Graduate College and departmental deadlines for degree conferral.	

Students should complete the Ph.D. within 10 years of admission and within 5 years of passing comprehensive exams, in accordance with Graduate College policy.

Enrollment, Leave of Absence & Time to Degree

Registration & Enrollment

Doctoral students are responsible for registering each semester using the UAccess Student Center. The Office of the Registrar provides up-to-date calendars, registration procedures, and deadlines. Students should consult these resources prior to enrollment each term.

Class Registration

Find all the resources needed to self-register for courses, including academic calendars, registration details, and related items, from the Office of the Registrar [here](#). When ready, register for classes (or check on enrollment status and make changes to registration) via UAccess [here](#).

Change of Schedule (Drop/Add)

Course schedule changes must be made through UAccess by published deadlines. Changes requiring instructor or department approval (after the drop/add period) must be submitted through the official Change of Schedule process. Learn more [here](#). For more specific details specific to graduate students, check [here](#).

Enrollment Policies

To maintain good standing, graduate students must meet minimum enrollment requirements:

- Full-time status: 9 graduate-level units per semester
- Part-time status: 1 graduate-level unit (must be coordinated with advisor)
- Graduate Assistants/Associates: Minimum 6 units
- Dissertation only (HED 920): Minimum 3 units
- Advanced status (after candidacy): May enroll in 1 dissertation unit if eligible

Find details about full-time graduate student status requirements [here](#). Specific requirements for international students can be found [on this page](#).

Continuous Enrollment For Graduate Students Policy

A student admitted to a doctoral program must register each fall and spring semester for a minimum of 1 graduate unit, from original matriculation until all course and thesis/dissertation requirements are met. Unless excused by an official graduate Leave of Absence (which may not exceed one year throughout the student's degree program), all graduate students are subject to the Continuous Enrollment Policy. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment must:

- Submit a formal Leave of Absence (LOA) request. Instructions to complete this process are found in the next section.

International Student Considerations

International students are encouraged to:

- Maintain full-time enrollment each semester (minimum 9 units unless approved for a reduced course load; minimum 6 units if they have a TA/GAship)
- Coordinate with ISS for visa renewal timelines and CPT/OPT planning
- Notify ISS before taking a leave of absence

Detailed information can be found on the ISS [Website](#).

Summer Session

Students may take summer courses. Tuition remission for Graduate Assistantships does not apply to summer enrollment. For those who are eligible, the Qualified Tuition Reduction (QTR) benefit may apply. Students should consult the Office of Financial Aid to clarify their coverage and taxable limits. Occasionally, the Department may also have tuition waiver available, but waivers are limited, so inquire early.

Requesting Graduate Leave of Absence

Students may request a Leave of Absence for personal, medical, family, or professional reasons. Approval is required via the GradPath Leave of Absence form and must be coordinated with the student's advisor.

- Domestic students: Submit the form via GradPath
- International students: Must also consult International Student Services (ISS) regarding visa implications and maintain compliance with SEVIS reporting.

Students returning from leave should consult with their advisor to revise their Plan of Study and ensure academic continuity. See [Graduate Leave Policy](#) for forms and petition instructions.

If the student fails to obtain a Leave of Absence or maintain continuous enrollment, they will be required to apply for re-admission and to pay the Graduate College application fee. There is no guarantee of re-admission.

Incomplete Grades Policy

Students who are unable to complete course requirements due to extenuating circumstances may request an “Incomplete” grade. The official university policy can be found here: [Incomplete \(I\) Grade Policy – U of A Registrar](#)

Requests must be:

- Initiated before the end of the term
- Approved by the course instructor
- Documented in writing with a clear plan for completion

University policy on incomplete grades is available through the [U of A Registrar](#). Students should consult with their instructor and advisor before initiating an incomplete request.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Doctoral students in the Center for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) program are expected to maintain consistent academic progress toward the completion of their degree. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) includes maintaining academic standing, completing key milestones in a timely manner, and upholding Graduate College expectations.

Minimum GPA

- Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher in all graduate coursework.
- Falling below a 3.0 GPA may result in academic probation.

Annual Progress Review

- Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor at least once per year to review progress and update their Plan of Study if needed.
- This meeting should include discussion of upcoming milestones such as comprehensive exams, proposal defense, and dissertation progress.
- The advisor may document progress in consultation with the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

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.

Academic Probation and Remediation

- Students who do not meet SAP expectations may be placed on academic probation.
- A remediation plan will be developed in collaboration with the student's advisor and must be completed within a specified time frame.
- Continued failure to meet expectations or make timely progress may result in dismissal from the program, as outlined in Graduate College policy.

Grievance and Appeals

The University of Arizona and the College of Education provide structured processes for resolving academic concerns. Students are encouraged to address concerns in a stepwise manner, beginning with informal approaches and escalating to formal processes if necessary.

Informal Resolution

- Students should first attempt to resolve concerns directly with the relevant faculty member (e.g., course instructor, advisor).
- If the issue remains unresolved, students may consult the Graduate Program Director or Department Head for guidance.

Formal Grievance Process

- If informal steps do not resolve the concern, students may submit a formal grievance or appeal through the Graduate College.
- Detailed procedures and policies are available here: [Graduate College Grievance Policy](#)
- Students are strongly encouraged to:
 - Keep written documentation of all communications related to the issue
 - Consult the Graduate College Ombudsperson if needed for impartial guidance

Grade Appeals

If a student believes a final course grade does not reflect their performance, they should:

1. First consult the course instructor to discuss the concern.
2. If unresolved, consult with their advisor or Graduate Program Director.
3. Review and follow the official Grade Appeals policy in the [University Catalog](#).

Following established procedures ensures that appeals are addressed appropriately and equitably.

GradPath Forms & Timeline

GradPath is the University of Arizona's centralized platform for graduate academic progress forms. You can find GradPath user guides [here](#) and a guide to forms on GradPath [here](#). The following forms and timing apply to EDLP doctoral students:

1. [Responsible Conduct of Research form](#).
2. [Transfer Credit form](#); only if using external transfer courses
3. [Doctoral Plan of Study](#) (this is generally submitted after the second semester in the program. Your plan of study is generally submitted after the second semester in the program. When a Plan of Study is submitted in GradPath, your Advisor must complete the research compliance acknowledgement section on the form.
4. **Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment** form * [see info here](#).

5. **Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam**; submit at least 10 business days prior to comprehensive oral exam.
6. **Results of the Oral Comprehensive Exam for Doctoral Candidacy**; submitted by committee chair. (*Candidacy fees charged to students upon advancement to doctoral candidacy*).
7. **Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment** form
8. **Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation**; this form is submitted by the student and then verified by the Graduate Coordinator (departmental form).
9. **Announcement of Final Defense**; *must be submitted and approved at least ten days before the date of final defense*.
10. **Results of Final Defense**; submitted by committee chair.

Follow all the directions on Dissertation Archiving described here:

<https://grad.arizona.edu/degree-services/dissertations-theses/submitting-your-dissertation>

GradPath Forms and Submission Timeline

GRADPATH FORM	DEADLINE
Plan of Study	Generally, by the 3 rd semester in residence
Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form	As soon as you have determined who will serve on your committee, and before you begin the written comprehensive exams.
Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam	At least 10 business days before your oral exam, once you set the date, time and room with your committee.
Doctoral Dissertation Committee	Before beginning dissertation proposal
Announcement of Final Oral Defense	At least 10 business days prior to the date of the Final Oral Examination.
Complete the Final Oral Examination/Defense	Mid-April* for May graduation Mid-November* for December graduation * Please verify exact date for your semester with the HED Graduate Coordinator

*Check with the CSHE Graduate Program Coordinator for specific semester dates.

Graduate Education at the University of Arizona

Graduate College

The Graduate College provides central support and leadership to serve, oversee, and advance all aspects of the graduate enterprise at the University of Arizona. Learn more about the Graduate College and meet the Dean of the Graduate College, Dr. Kirsten Limesand [here](#).

Key University Platforms & Resources

There are many entry points to engage with colleagues, courses, and scholarship here at the University of Arizona. Here are a few essential tools to get you started:

U of A NetID & CatMail

Create and manage your NetID account [here](#).

Set up and access your CatMail student email account [here](#).

UAccess: Online Student & Administrative Systems

[Use this system](#) to maintain contact information, register for classes, pay tuition, update your GradPath file, manage student records, keep employment records, and much more. Learn more about UAccess and find IT support for use of UAccess [here](#).

GradPath

GradPath is the Graduate College's nearly paperless degree audit process that makes tracking and monitoring student progress much easier. Students are able to fill in and submit forms online through UAccess Student Center. Find a User Guide, FAQs, and more resources [here](#).

Brightspace (D2L)

Brightspace (D2L) is the learning management system students use to access all course content (syllabi, readings, assignments, etc.) for their classes. Students' Brightspace requires the same login information as their UAccess login (NetID). To access the platform go to: <https://d2l.arizona.edu/> and if you need technical assistance, go to: <https://studenthelp.intech.arizona.edu/>.

University App

The U of A has recently developed and launched its own app, where students can view their schedule, use their CatCard, access the campus map, check out study spaces, Cat Tram routes, and other useful resources. See here: <https://trellis.arizona.edu/u-of-a-app>.

Library & Research Tools

The [University of Arizona libraries](#) offer spaces to study, experts to answer your questions, access to a wide range of technologies, and in-depth research collections. Access numerous resources for graduate students [here](#).

Librarian Point of Contact, College of Education

Leslie Sult: lsult@arizona.edu; 520-621-7281, Main Library Rm A403.

Databases, Journals, & Articles

You'll need to find articles for classes and for research you are conducting. Access what you need via the library catalog or through [this page](#) that will take you to the library's databases, journals, and more.

Academic Support

The Graduate Center

The University of Arizona Graduate Center is a resource for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. The Graduate Center offers a calendar of events, including professional development workshops, as well as writing, and career support. Learn more [here](#).

The Think Tank Writing Center

The Think Tank Writing Center offers a variety of services including free and fee-based appointments, workshops, and events. Emphasizing peer collaboration, the Think Tank Writing Center helps each writer grow over the course of their career at the University of Arizona. Learn more [here](#).

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

DRC ensures disability access on campus for students, employees, and visitors. We promote universal design through proactive collaboration with campus partners to cultivate a more inclusive University experience. Learn more [here](#).

Student Support Services

Graduate students have access to a wide range of support resources across the university. These include academic, wellness, identity-based, and professional development services. A few of the most utilized are:

- Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS) – <https://caps.arizona.edu>
- Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) – <https://gpsc.arizona.edu>
- Life & Work Connections – <https://lifework.arizona.edu>

These services are designed to support graduate students' well-being, sense of belonging, and academic success throughout their program.

Childcare Support

The University of Arizona offers several programs to support graduate students with caregiving responsibilities:

- Student Childcare Subsidy
<https://lifework.arizona.edu/childcare-student>
- Childcare Support for Graduate Assistants/Employees
<https://lifework.arizona.edu/childcare-employee>

Students are encouraged to apply early, as funding is limited and not guaranteed.

Campus Pantry

The goal of the U of A Campus Pantry is to reduce food insecurity in our Wildcat Community. At their distribution events, students and staff can grab important food staples at no cost. All you need is your CatCard! Check their website for current hours and location: <https://campuspantry.arizona.edu/>

Safety On Campus & In The Classroom

For a list of emergency procedures for all types of incidents, please visit the website of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT): <https://cirt.arizona.edu/case-emergency/overview>

The university has also launched the SafeCats app with useful safety features, which can be obtained here: <https://safety.arizona.edu/safecats>

Funding Your Academic Degree and Experience

CSHE 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.

Tuition & Fees

Find all details on tuition and fees [on this page](#).

Financial Aid

Students inquiring about financial assistance should access the University of Arizona Scholarships & Financial Aid webpage [here](#). This link includes information about completing the FAFSA and accessing Scholarship Universe. Students should also explore Graduate student funding opportunities [here](#) and also visit the College of Education’s Financial Aid and Scholarship pages [here](#) and [here](#). Students requesting EPSP department funds should contact the department head and program director. Note EPSP funds are limited and not guaranteed.

Financial Aid Payments

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid will automatically disburse aid to student accounts no sooner than 10 days prior to the start of the semester, as long as the student has met all financial aid disbursement requirements. Learn more [here](#).

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

Graduate/Teaching/ Assistant/Associate (GA/TA) Benefits

Learn about all of the benefits of GA or TA appointments [on this page](#). Check in with your advisor regarding details and expectations for your appointment.

Tuition Remission

A graduate or teaching assistant/associate (GA/TA) who is appointed during the fall and/or spring academic semesters will receive tuition remission. Tuition remission is a reduction in the tuition amount that a student will be charged. The tuition remission is an amount dependent on FTE, enrollment, and dates of the appointment contract. The tuition remission benefit is only available for Fall and Spring semesters. Tuition rates for nonresident GAs/TAs will be automatically recalculated at the resident rate.

For example:

- If a GA is appointed at a total FTE less than .50, they will receive tuition remission in the amount of 50%. This is a 50% reduction in the original tuition charges.
- If a GA is appointed at a total of .50 or more, they will receive tuition remission in the amount of 100%. This is a 100% reduction in the original tuition charges.

The tuition remission benefit applies only to base graduate tuition. It does not apply to Arizona Financial Aid Trust (AFAT) Fee, program fees, differential tuition, or any other fees charged by the University for specific programs. The student appointed as a GA/TA is responsible for these charges and fees which must be paid on or before the first day of classes.

Beginning in the academic year of 2024-2025, all mandatory fees, except for the AFAT Fee, will be included for graduate and professional students into graduate tuition. As an F-1 or J-1 student, you will be charged the additional \$200 fee at the beginning of every semester of enrollment. Please be aware that the list of mandatory fees on the Bursar's Office website does not include the International Student Fee because it is charged only to F-1 and J-1 students.

Health Insurance

The University of Arizona will cover the single student Campus Health insurance premium charges for a GA/TA during their appointment. The health insurance and health services are provided through the University of Arizona Campus Health and are not transferable to outside insurance providers. To receive this benefit, a student must enroll in the student health insurance program during the open enrollment period.

Graduate Student (Non-Tuition) Funding Sources

EPSP Graduate Student Travel Awards

EPSP Graduate students enrolled part-time or full-time in the HED Ph.D., EDL Ph.D., and EDL EDD majors are eligible for travel funds to participate in professional conferences during each fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Travel funds are used for travel expenses (airfare, lodging, registration fees, and membership fees only if required for attendance or if being a member results in a lower registration fee.). A maximum of \$300 per student per year is available (Funding is limited), and application materials should be submitted 30 days PRIOR to the conference. For more details access: <https://education.arizona.edu/epsp-graduate-student-travel-awards>

Research and Project (ReaP) Grants

The Graduate Professional Student Council (GPSC) recognizes that student education is advanced through academic research and projects. Therefore, the GPSC offers Research and Project (ReaP) grants of up to \$1,500 to partially or completely fund research and projects for graduate and professional students. Find the application and all details [here](#).

GPSC Travel Grants

The GPSC awards grants for graduate and professional student travel for professional development purposes. Applications for domestic travel may receive up to \$1000. Applications for international travel may receive up to \$1500.

Event types covered by the grant include but are not limited to:

- Travel to attend/present at academic or professional conferences
- Travel to conduct fieldwork or research
- Travel to participate in summer schools or workshops
- Travel to participate in practicums, internships, or other types of experiential learning

- Travel for a job interview or campus visit
- Travel for study abroad or international study

Find the application and additional details [on this page](#).

Professional Opportunities Development Funding

The GPSC recognizes that graduate and professional student education is advanced by events promoting the development of skills necessary to succeed in their fields of study. Therefore, the GPSC strives to support professional development initiatives of graduate and professional students through Professional Opportunity Development (POD) Funding.

Such initiatives and events include, but are not necessarily limited to, academic seminars, conferences, meetings with industry representatives, etc. which are occurring at the University of Arizona. Any group of at least three graduate and/or professional students can apply to the GPSC for funding to support a POD event they are directly involved in planning. The maximum award for POD Funding is \$1,500 per application to be used during the academic year in which they are awarded. Find all details [here](#).

Paul Lindsey Internship, College of Education

This award invites Interns to learn a different side of education than the classroom experience. Funding for graduate student interns is \$2,000 per semester. Graduate students can be recognized as Paul Lindsey Interns for a max of two semesters (\$4,000 total funding).

Lindsey Interns build leadership and management skills through real-world experiences in their work with community outreach programs, museums, and a variety of local education facilities. Learn about all opportunities and find the application [here](#).

Obligation to Pay Tuition & Fees

All payments for tuition must be received in the Bursar's Office by each semester's tuition payment deadline. Payments received after the deadline, regardless of the postmark date, are considered late and are subject to late charges. If a student registers for additional courses after Account Statements have been mailed, a new account statement will not be sent prior to the Tuition Payment Deadline. More details are found [here](#).

Tuition payment plan: Installments

Offered for the Fall and Spring semesters only. All tuition, program fees/differential tuition, fees and course fees are split into three (3) installments. There is a \$75.00 per semester non-refundable enrollment fee for this service. Students must enroll prior to the tuition payment deadline to avoid the late payment charge. Find all details [here](#).

Fees and Costs of Cancelling Your Registration

To be eligible for a refund of tuition, program fees, and fees, students must drop courses or withdraw from the University by the specified refund dates. Tuition and fees will not be recalculated or reversed after the refund deadline. Students are responsible for all tuition and fees remaining on their account. Learn more [here](#).

Late Payment Charges

Payment for tuition must be received by the tuition payment deadline each semester to avoid a \$50 late payment charge. The full tuition amount for anticipated enrollment must be paid by the deadline, even if the student is not completely registered, to avoid this charge. This late charge applies to all accounts with unpaid fees (i.e., registration, increase in units, special course fees).

On the 22nd calendar day following the tuition payment deadline, any student with unpaid tuition, fees, and course fees, or who hasn't paid their first installment of the tuition payment plan, will be charged a \$125 unpaid tuition charge. To avoid the \$125 unpaid tuition charge, tuition and fees must be paid prior to this date. Lack of funds, mailed payment postmark dates, non-receipt of Account Statements, and other personal reasons for delayed payment will not be considered.

Outstanding tuition notifications are sent via email to the student's official university email address. Students should check their account balance on UAccess each time they change their registration.

More details on all of this can be found [here](#).

University of Arizona Academic Policies

Find details on the University of Arizona academic policies [here](#).

Academic Integrity

All members of the University of Arizona community have a responsibility to uphold and maintain an honest academic environment by following the University's Code of Academic Integrity. As a community of scholars, integrity should guide conduct and decisions related to academic work and all credit-bearing classes, including traditional, non-traditional, and online courses. Find details [here](#).

Code of Academic Integrity

Integrity and ethical behavior are expected of every student in all academic work. This Academic Integrity principle stands for honesty in all class work, and ethical conduct in all labs and clinical assignments. Read the full Code [here](#), including a list of prohibited conduct, student and faculty responsibilities, and procedures for violation of the Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic Integrity Sanctions

All students who are reported to the Dean of Students Office for violation of the University's Code of Academic Integrity are required to attend an Academic Integrity Workshop. This 2.5-hour educational workshop reviews the University's Code of Academic Integrity and includes discussion of ethics and integrity. The cost of the workshop is \$70 which is assessed to the student's Bursars account. Additionally, instructors will assign one or more of the sanction(s) [on this list](#) for the violation.

Responding to a Violation / Grievance Procedures

Students have rights and responsibilities, including filing a Request to Appeal. Learn more [here](#).