Welcome

The Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS) welcomes you. We look forward to working closely with you as you work towards your Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. This handbook provides an orientation to the doctoral program with detailed information on the following:

❖ Program Mission
❖ Overview of Doctoral Program
❖ Admissions Process and Requirements
❖ Applying for Graduate Assistantships and Financial Aid
❖ The Doctoral Process
   ○ Course Requirements
   ○ Qualifying Examination
   ○ The Dissertation
❖ Frequently Asked Questions

Additional information is available on the ELPS website:

http://education.utsa.edu/educational_leadership_and_policy_studies

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Mission Statement

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies prepares educators to become transformational leaders who can work effectively in diverse, ambiguous, and challenging contexts. The goals of this transformational leadership include equity, excellence, social justice, democracy, risk-taking, and responsiveness to community needs. Faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies is strongly committed to developing collaborative and responsive relationships with area schools and communities.

Program Overview

Three Core Elements
The doctoral program is comprised of three core elements -- course work, the qualifying examination and admission to candidacy, the dissertation proposal, and dissertation. The Ed.D. in educational leadership program has two different emphases: (1) the P-12 emphasis and (2) the higher education emphasis. Each of these emphases has the aforementioned three core elements.

The Student Development Specialist
The Student Development Specialist (SDS) is the expert on procedures and timelines. The key communication venue used by the SDS is the Leaders Listserv (for K-12 emphasis) and the HEAD listserv (for community college/university emphasis), which is used to announce key procedures and deadlines throughout the year. Make sure that you sign up for one or both of these listservs. To join the leaders listserv, please email Dr. Alan Shoho at alan.shoho@utsa.edu. To join the HEAD listserv, please email Dr. Gerry Dizinno at gerry.dizinno@utsa.edu. The SDS will be sending out notices to you relevant to the different timelines and processes for the different events of your doctoral process, such as initiating the graduation process, additional financial aid opportunities, academic opportunities, and so on.

Faculty Coordination of Doctoral Emphases
Since the doctoral program in Educational Leadership has two emphases (K-12 and Higher Education), the department has assigned faculty familiar with each of those programs to coordinate the administrative aspects of the program. These duties include: communication with faculty, staff, administration, and students; enrollment management (marketing, enrollment, admissions); student degree plan monitoring; tracking of program graduates; program assessment; serving as an advocate for the program and coordination of curriculum issues. Those faculty members are:

- K-12 Educational Leadership:
  Dr. Mariela Rodriguez
  210-458-7960
  mariela.rodriguez@utsa.edu

- Higher Education:
  Dr. Gerry Dizinno
  210-458-4114
  gerry.dizinno@utsa.edu
Your Program Advisor and Doctoral Committee
When you are admitted to the doctoral program, you are assigned a program advisor based on areas of common interest. Your program advisor will advise you on issues related to developing your academic skills (this advising is in contrast to the SDS, who advises you on procedural matters). During your first two years, you should explore and define your research interests. Prior to your qualifying examination, with the help of your program advisor, you will assemble your pre-dissertation committee (contact the SDS for required form). This pre-dissertation committee will develop and administer your qualifying exam and typically, but not always, serves as your dissertation committee.
You may change advisors for your dissertation work. You are not required to keep your program advisor throughout the program. However, you may only approach tenured and tenure-track faculty to serve as Dissertation chairs. If a faculty member who is not your original program advisor agrees to serve as your Dissertation chair, then you are required to complete a Change of Advisor form (contact SDS for form). It is the student’s responsibility to maintain communication with the Dissertation chair regarding progress through the dissertation process. However, if more than one academic year has passed without the student communicating with the Dissertation chair it is the responsibility of the student to verify if the Dissertation chair is still available and willing to continue serving in this capacity.

Cohort Model
The Educational Leadership Doctoral program uses a cohort model. This means that you will be joining with a group of other students following a pre-planned coursework series. This group of students will be known as your cohort. A class schedule is given to each cohort indicating when classes will be offered for your cohort. Members of a cohort are expected to follow the schedule. The cohort model has been shown to contribute to student success and completion of the program as students become resources for one another.

Information Tools and Resources
Technology has become increasingly important in support of learning, communication, and professional practice. Using appropriate tools of different technologies, and knowing how to support others in the adoption and use of these resources will enhance your leadership ability. As an initial step to developing your skills with technology, you will be expected to join the leaders listserv and to check regularly for emails from this listserv.

Admissions

Application Materials
- Application Form [http://www.utsa.edu/graduate/Admission/onlineApplication.html](http://www.utsa.edu/graduate/Admission/onlineApplication.html)
- Official transcripts of all post-secondary work
- Official GRE score must have been taken within the last 5 years
- TOEFL scores if native language is not English
- Application fee [http://www.utsa.edu/graduate/Admission/index.html](http://www.utsa.edu/graduate/Admission/index.html)
• Three Letters of Recommendation

• Statement of Purpose

• Resume

Admissions Requirements:
• Bachelor’s degree from accredited institution

• Master’s degree in education or other appropriate field with a 3.5 or higher GPA

• Submission of an official score for each of the following:
  – Graduate record examination (GRE) [verbal and quantitative sections required, and analytical sections]
  – For applicants whose native language is not English, a score of at least 550 on the Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL)

• Demonstrated experience in a work environment where education is the primary professional emphasis

• Three letters of recommendation
  – From those who have supervised you in an academic, community service, or employment capacity
  – References should comment on your intellectual ability, discipline, creativity, sensitivity to others, and cite examples of leadership & scholarly potential
  – At least one letter should come from a university professor who is familiar with your academic work

• Statement of purpose which includes:
  1. Reasons for pursuing doctorate in educational leadership
  2. Biographical sketch of experiences related to education
  3. Career plans
  4. Scholarly interests
  5. View on and roles in current and future educational reform efforts
     – Please limit to no more than 5 typed, double-spaced pages

• Resume which includes:
  1. Employment history
  2. Educational background
  3. Courses taught
4. community service
5. honors and awards
6. consultantships
7. memberships in professional organizations
8. leadership experience

–Please limit your resume to no more than 5 typed, double-spaced pages

**Admission Process**

- **Stage 1**—Applicant submits all the required materials as stipulated above by February 1 of the academic year preceding desired year of matriculation. ALL application materials **MUST** be received by this date, otherwise your application will not be considered.

- **Stage 2**—General screening via published criteria.

- **Stage 3**—Interview and/or extemporaneous writing sample of finalists who progress through first stage*

Typically, students apply for Financial Aid and Graduate Assistantship Stipends at the same time they apply for admission.

**Financial Aid & Graduate Assistantships**

Doctoral students may be supported in their studies in a number of ways. The department recommends that you apply for Graduate assistantships as early as possible. Additional funds may become available as the calendar year progresses. (Be sure to contact the Office of Financial Aid for additional information.)

**Financial Aid Websites**

UTSA Scholarship Opportunities: [www.utsa.edu/scholarships/](http://www.utsa.edu/scholarships/)

UTSA Office of Financial Aid: [www.utsa.edu/financialaid/](http://www.utsa.edu/financialaid/)


**Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate Research Assistantships are available for admitted doctoral students within the College of Education and Human Development. Opportunities include working with faculty members on research studies, working in computer labs, or helping with development projects. Graduate Research Assistants typically work for 20 hours per week. Please check with the SDS for current compensation rates for graduate research assistantships.

* The admissions committee retains the prerogative to recommended applicants for admission without having to progress through Stage 3.
Research Assistantships
A number of externally sponsored research and development projects are undertaken by College faculty. Depending on your interests and expertise, you may arrange to work on a special project, assisting in research, development, evaluation, or training activities. Pay will be similar to internally funded assistantships.

Doctoral Fellowships
Pending annual budget approval, Doctoral Fellowship stipends that cover up to 21 semester credit hours of tuition and fees (9 semester credit hours in the fall, 9 semester credit hours in the spring, and 3 semester credit hours in the summer) as well as a stipend for performing research assistant duties for 20 hours per week are available.

Announcements about the application period for Doctoral Fellowships are sent by email to doctoral students during the Spring semester. Preference for Doctoral Fellowships are given to those admitted students who are able to pursue doctoral studies as full-time resident students (i.e., do not work elsewhere), and take at least 9 SCH (semester credit hours) in both the fall and spring semesters and at least 3 SCH during the summer.

First Step
Upon being admitted you will be assigned a program advisor. It is prudent to contact that advisor soon after you are admitted. Your program advisor will help you develop your program of study as well as advise you in other matters. Your program advisor has been selected with your research interest in mind. However, if it proves not to be a good match, you are free to change advisors as long as you find an ELPS graduate faculty member who is willing to be your program advisor. Graduate fellows may not necessarily be appointed to work with their program advisors. The process and forms for changing advisors is available in the student development specialist’s office; please make sure you notify your program advisor of your intent to change advisors.

Program Requirements
Course Requirements
A minimum of 60 semester hours of course work beyond the master’s degree is required. These 60 credit hours include:

- Cultural Core (9 semester hours)
- Leadership Core (12 semester hours)
- Methodology Core (12 semester hours)
- Administrative Leadership (12 semester hours)
- Cognates (6 semester hours)
- Dissertation (9 semester hours)
**Academic Good Standing**
Good standing is the absence of any contingency that would result in the student’s being on academic probation or academic dismissal.

**Academic Probation**
Academic probation describes the standing of a student at the graduate level who is in one of the following categories:

1. Student who fails to achieve a grade point average in any term at UTSA of 3.0 or higher, irrespective of level of courses taken.
2. A student who received a grade of “D” in any course in a term.
3. A student who does not meet all requirements for unconditional admission and who, by special action, is admitted on academic probation.
4. A student who has been reinstated following academic dismissal.
5. To graduate, all graduate students must have a grade point average of at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

**Academic Dismissal**
Academic dismissal occurs:

1. when a student at the graduate level earns a grade point average of less than 2.0 in any term
2. when a student at the graduate level earns a grade of “F” in any course
3. when a student at the graduate level who is on academic probation during a term would again be placed on academic probation under the provisions of academic probation set forth above. If, however, the student's UTSA grade point average for the term is at least 3.0, he or she will continue on academic probation.

**Petition for Reinstatement**
A student who has been dismissed academically may petition for reinstatement. Normally, such reinstatement is requested after a student has remained out of school one long semester; however, under exceptional circumstances, a petition may be considered earlier. A letter containing all explanations, recommendations, or doctors’ statements in support of the student's request for reinstatement should be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School on or before June 15 for Fall Semesters, October 15 for Spring Semesters, or March 15 for Summer Semesters. The appropriate Graduate Program Committee will review the petitioner’s letter and academic record and make a recommendation concerning reinstatement to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the Petition for Reinstatement is disapproved, the student may not file another petition until the following semester.

**Programs of Study:**
Before admission to candidacy, the student’s proposed program of study is under the direction of the Graduate Program Committee in the major program area through an appropriate program advisor, as designated, and the Graduate Advisor of Record. Upon admission to
candidacy and the formation of the student’s dissertation committee, the program of study comes under the purview of the Dissertation Committee, which reviews the proposed program of study and recommends to the Graduate Program Committee any additional course requirements. The final program of study, as approved by the Graduate Program Committee, is then recommended to the Graduate School for approval. Approval of the final program of study by the Graduate School is a degree requirement. All completed coursework included in the final program of study must have been taken within the preceding eight years. No course for which a grade of less than “C” was earned can be applied to the doctoral degree.

The next four pages present the programs of study for the two different emphases of the Educational Leadership Doctorate: The P-12 Leadership emphasis (pages 11-12) and the higher education administration emphasis (pages 13-14).
## Ed.D. in Educational Leadership  
**P-12 Leadership Emphasis**  
Program of Study and Course Outline  
College of Education and Human Development at The University of Texas, San Antonio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Banner ID Number:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>City:</td>
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<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>Phone:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Advisor:</td>
<td>Catalog of Admission:</td>
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### Cultural Core: 9 required semester credit hours from the following courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Substitution</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDU 7213</td>
<td>School Reform</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU 7223</td>
<td>Learning in a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Society: Infancy through Adulthood</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU 7403</td>
<td>Education, Cultural Differences, and Acculturation</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDR 7203</td>
<td>Leadership in Multiple Language Educational Settings</td>
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**Or**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<td>LDR 7203</td>
<td>Leadership in Multiple Language Educational Settings</td>
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### Methodology Core and Support: Please select 12 hours from the following courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Substitution</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDU 7003</td>
<td>Survey of Research Methods (effective fall 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU 7103</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Traditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU 7043</td>
<td>Educational Research Statistics: Descriptive and Comparative</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDU 7063</td>
<td>Inferential Statistics (Prerequisites: EDU 7043 or equivalent)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU 7123</td>
<td>Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis (Prerequisites: EDU 7103 or equivalent)</td>
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**Or**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>EDU 7123</td>
<td>Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
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</table>

### Leadership Core and Support: (all of the following are required courses)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LDR 7003</td>
<td>Proseminar in Educational Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDR 7153</td>
<td>Reflective Leadership: The Personal Dimension</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDR 7303</td>
<td>Organizational Theory</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDR 7343</td>
<td>Principles of Ethical Leadership</td>
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</table>

### P-12 Administrative Leadership Emphasis: Please select 12 hours from the following courses (* denotes required)

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Substitution</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDL 7103*</td>
<td>Administration of Urban/Multicultural Institutions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EDL 7343*</td>
<td>The Politics of Educational Change</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 7133</td>
<td>Topics in Administration</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 7273</td>
<td>Examining School Populations, Structures, and Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDL 7563</td>
<td>Research in Leadership Laboratory: Change Theory, Innovation, &amp; Application</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDL 7663</td>
<td>Technology in Educational Environments</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDR 7133</td>
<td>Majority—Minority Settings: Creating a Community of Leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDR 7183</td>
<td>Emerging Paradigms in Leadership</td>
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*Last Modified August 2012*
LDR 7413  Sponsored Internship in Educational Leadership
EDL 7203  Organizational Analysis and Educational Leadership
EDL 7773  Independent Study
EDL 7783  Special Problems
EDL 7893  Doctoral Research

Electives/Cognate: 6 hours (to be selected in consultation with your program advisor)


Dissertation: 9 hours
LDR 7993 (1-6hrs) Dissertation
LDR 7993 (1-6hrs) Dissertation
LDR 7993 (1-6hrs) Dissertation

Notes:
Link to EDU courses:
http://www.utsa.edu/gcat/chapter7/coehd/EDU.cfm

Link to LDR courses:
https://www.utsa.edu/gcat/chapter7/coehd/LDR.cfm

Link to EDL courses
http://www.utsa.edu/gcat/chapter7/coehd/EDL.cfm

Approvals:
Student
Program Advisor
Committee Member
Committee Member
Committee Member
Graduate Advisor
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies & Research
Dean of Graduate Studies

Date
Date
Date
Date
Date
Date
Date
Date

REVISED 11/6/2008
**Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, Higher Education Leadership Emphasis**

**Program of Study and Course Outline**

College of Education and Human Development at The University of Texas, San Antonio

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<td>Faculty Advisor:</td>
<td>Catalog of Admission:</td>
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**Cultural Core: 9 required semester credit hours from the following courses**

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**Methodology Core and Support: Please select 12 hours from the following courses**

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<th>Substitution</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDU 7123</td>
<td>Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis <em>(Prerequisites: EDU 7103 or equivalent)</em></td>
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**Leadership Core and Support: Please select 12 hours from the following courses**

<table>
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<td>Proseminar in Educational Leadership</td>
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<td>LDR 7303</td>
<td>Organizational Theory</td>
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<td>LDR 7343</td>
<td>Principles of Ethical Leadership</td>
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**Higher Education Administration Emphasis: Please select 12 hours from the following courses** (* denotes required)

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDL 7123</td>
<td>Foundations in Higher Education*</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 7243</td>
<td>Diversity, Equity, and Access in Higher Education</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 7333</td>
<td>Organizations and Systems in Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDL 7413</td>
<td>Policy and Politics in Higher Education</td>
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<td>EDL 7423</td>
<td>Theoretical Frameworks in Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDL 7773</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
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</table>
EDL 7783  Special Problems
EDL 7893  Doctoral Research

\(^4\) Only 1 three-hour independent study or special problems course may count toward fulfilling the requirements for the HEA emphasis. On rare occasions and with approval of the advisor, students may be permitted to take a second such course as part of the higher education emphasis. Courses may be retaken when topics vary.

**Electives (Cognate): 6 hours**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Dissertation: 9 hours**

LDR 7993 (1-6hrs) Dissertation
LDR 7993 (1-6hrs) Dissertation
LDR 7993 (1-6hrs) Dissertation

**Notes:**

Link to EDU courses:
http://www.utsa.edu/gcat/chapter7/coehd/EDU.cfm

Link to LDR courses:
https://www.utsa.edu/gcat/chapter7/coehd/LDR.cfm

Link to EDL courses
http://www.utsa.edu/gcat/chapter7/coehd/EDL.cfm

**Approvals:**

Student ____________________________________________ Date ____________
Program Advisor ____________________________________________ Date ____________
Committee Member ____________________________________________ Date ____________
Committee Member ____________________________________________ Date ____________
Committee Member ____________________________________________ Date ____________
Graduate Advisor ____________________________________________ Date ____________
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies & Research ________________ Date ____________
Dean of Graduate Studies ____________________________________ Date ____________

REVISED 11/6/08
Annual Reviews
Each year your program advisor and dissertation chair will report to the graduate studies on your progress. These annual assessments provide benchmarks and opportunities to give feedback to doctoral students about their progress. You are expected to make demonstrable progress in your annual reviews throughout the program including the dissertation.

Qualifying Examination
- All students seeking a doctoral degree must pass a qualifying examination. This examination consists of questions to test the candidate’s knowledge and command of the major field. An examination covering support work is not a University-wide requirement, but it may be required at the discretion of the Graduate Program Committee or the Dissertation Committee.
- The Qualifying Examination is typically scheduled once you have completed the necessary requirements (see following explanation) and your committee chair believes you are ready to take the exam and you have created your doctoral committee (See the appendix for the form). You may take your qualifying examination after successful completion of all core classes (45 credits that comprise the cultural core, research methods core, leadership core, and emphasis). Cognates (electives) may be taken before, during, or after your comps as advised by your program advisor. You must be in good academic standing when you schedule your qualifying examination. Your qualifying examination typically serves two purposes:
  - Demonstrates that you can apply the knowledge and skills you have gained during your coursework to answer questions crafted by your doctoral committee.
  - Typically, but not always, the questions asked are crafted by your doctoral committee to lay the groundwork for developing your dissertation proposal.*
- The qualifying examination has a written and oral component.
- Notice of all qualifying examinations must be filed with the Dean of the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the oral portion of the examination. Students must be registered when they take the qualifying examination.
- The student's program advisor and doctoral committee will administer the qualifying examination.
- Students generally use one semester to write their qualifying examination.
  - The questions are usually given to the student at the beginning of the semester.
  - The student uses the majority of the semester to independently write the answers to the qualifying examination questions **unassisted by anyone**
  - Near the end of that semester and with the approval of the program advisor, students take the oral part of the qualifying examination. The student is responsible for scheduling the place and date of the exam after consulting with their program advisor and doctoral committee members to determine a date and time that will work for all committee members.

* Whether the written portion of the qualifying examination is used to lay the groundwork for the dissertation proposal will be determined by the dissertation committee.
• A majority vote by the committee is necessary to pass the qualifying examination (see the certifying form in the appendix).

Students who fail the qualifying examination, will be required to retake the entire written and oral portions of the examination. Qualifying examinations cannot be taken more than once in a given semester. After two failures the student’s academic standing will be evaluated by the program advisor, the graduate advisor of record, and doctoral program faculty on a case-by-case basis. In extenuating circumstances the student may apply for an extension to the time period allowed for taking their qualifying examination.

**Admission to Candidacy**

Students seeking a doctoral degree at UTSA must be admitted to candidacy. In order to be admitted to candidacy, the student must comply with the following requirements:

1. Fulfill the requirements for unconditional admission as a graduate degree-seeking student, which entails the removal of any conditions assigned at the time of admission.

2. Satisfy any special admission requirements established for the degree program.

3. Be in good standing.

4. Have passed a qualifying examination (written, oral, or both) prepared by the Graduate Program Committee and have met any other requirements specified by the Graduate Program Committee for the specific degree program.

5. Submit a proposed program of study.

6. Having satisfied the above requirements, be recommended for admission to candidacy by the appropriate Graduate Program Committee, which in the case of interdisciplinary programs is a committee appointed by the Graduate School, consisting of no fewer than four members of the Graduate Faculty, with at least one representative from each of the disciplines included in the program.

7. Having satisfied the above requirements, be approved for admission to candidacy by the Dean of the Graduate School.

**Dissertation**

After you have passed your qualifying examination, you will begin the dissertation process. The description of this process follows:

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**The Dissertation**

A dissertation is required of every candidate and must be an original contribution to scholarship, based on independent investigation in the major area. It must be approved by the Dissertation Committee. Registration for the dissertation must be for a period of more than one semester. During each semester or term that a student receives advice and/or assistance from a faculty member or supervision by the Dissertation Committee or uses University resources, they are required to enroll in the appropriate dissertation course.
**Dissertation Committee & Chair**

Upon admission to candidacy, the student selects their supervising professor with that professor's consent. Upon recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee, the Graduate School appoints the Dissertation Committee. The committee must consist of at least four members, including the supervising professor as dissertation chair, who consults with other members of the committee as work proceeds.

The Dissertation Chair and committee advise the student on the research and writing of the dissertation, conducts the final oral examination, and approves the dissertation. The chair of the Dissertation Committee ordinarily serves as the supervisor of research. Other members of the committee should be consulted as appropriate. Occasionally, a research professor or researcher who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty may be recommended to serve as a member or the supervisor for a specific dissertation because his or her expertise would be valuable to the student. When the research supervisor, or the external committee member is not a member of the Graduate Faculty in the student's area of study, a member of the Graduate Faculty will be appointed as co-chair of the Dissertation Committee. External members must be approved by the department's Executive Doctoral Program Committee and the Graduate Council prior to serving in Doctoral Dissertation Committees.

In addition to recommending the student's final program of study to the Graduate Program Committee and supervising the research and writing of the dissertation, the Dissertation Committee certifies to the Graduate School that all degree requirements have been fulfilled.

The Dissertation Committee consists of your chair and at least three other faculty members. Your Dissertation Committee may have the same or different members from your Doctoral Program Committee. Forming the Dissertation Committee from the same members as the Doctoral Program Committee who developed your qualifying exam questions can help students ensure that their qualifying examination prepares you well for your dissertation. All Dissertation Committee members must have Graduate Faculty status in order to be on dissertation committees. Your advisor can inform you as to whether or not a faculty member has Graduate Faculty Status. All dissertation committee members’ signatures are required on the qualifying examination form and the final dissertation.

You will select a dissertation advisor or chair to supervise and guide the dissertation process. Some, but not all students, select their program advisor as their dissertation advisor. The dissertation advisor must hold graduate faculty status in the College of Education and Human Development. You and your advisor will invite additional committee members as needed to provide the substantive and methodological support to complete the dissertation. The form for dissertations is described in the *Guidelines for Theses and Dissertations*, available from the Graduate School.

The Dissertation Chair's signature is also required on the final dissertation. The Chair serves a critical, long-term role, and selection should be given careful consideration. The Chair usually provides key recommendations and on-going professional support long after graduation.

The Dissertation Chair should have expertise in the dissertation topic and, therefore, depending on your topic choice, s/he might not be the same person as your initial program advisor. You are responsible for obtaining the Dissertation Chair’s agreement to serve as your Chair. It is your prerogative to maintain regular contact with your Dissertation Chair. Failing to contact your dissertation chair for over an academic year, may require you to renegotiate the participation of,
or locate a new chair. If you change Dissertation chairs, you should notify your previous Chair and use the appropriate form to indicate the new chair. The form is available in the student development office.

**Dissertation Proposal**
The Dissertation Committee will guide you through the proposal-writing process. The proposal clearly states the problem and justifies the need for the study in terms of its conceptual and theoretical foundation. It also specifies the research methodology that will be used to conduct the investigation. The proposal must be approved by a majority of committee members, and the “Proposal Approval Form” (see appendix) must be signed and filed with the Associate Dean.

**Human Subjects Review**
You submit and receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) - Human Subject Research as appropriate before dissertation data are collected. A copy of the approved form should be filed with the Dissertation Advisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs before data collection begins. Further information about the IRB can be found at http://vpr.utsa.edu/oric/irb/.

**Completing the Dissertation**
Following successful completion of your doctoral qualifying examination, you must register for at least one dissertation credit each fall and spring semester. You must be registered during the semester in which you defend your dissertation and you must complete your program of study with no fewer than 9 semester credit hours of dissertation credits. Please consult with the Graduate School for details.

A maximum of 9 hours of dissertation credit hours may be taken in any one semester. Prior to completing the comprehensive exam, you may register for 1-9 credits in any given semester. However, the total number of hours before successful completion of the qualifying examination may not exceed 6 hours.

**Final Oral Examination (Defense of Dissertation)**
A satisfactory final oral examination is required for the approval of a dissertation. After the Dissertation Committee makes a decision, which must be unanimous, to accept a dissertation for examination, the supervising professor notifies the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance of the date of the final oral examination.

The examination covers the dissertation and the general field of the dissertation, and other parts of the student’s program as determined by the committee. All members of the Dissertation Committee must be satisfied that the student has:

1. completed the work assigned by the committee;
2. passed all examinations required by the program’s Graduate Program Committee, including the final oral examination;
3. completed a dissertation that is an independent investigation in the major field, and that itself constitutes a contribution to knowledge; and
4. submitted an abstract for publication in Dissertation Abstracts International that meets with the approval of the committee.
Once this is complete, the Dissertation Committee members sign the approval sheets for the doctoral dissertation and make an official recommendation to the Graduate School that the doctoral degree be awarded. Approval must be unanimous.

In ELPS, the Dissertation Defense is the final oral examination that provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate broad understanding of the substantive and methodological issues in the dissertation. The following aspects of your work will be evaluated:

- Independent and originality thought
- Adequacy and appropriateness of citations and references to authors
- Logic and coherence of reasoning and argumentation
- Soundness of your research methodology/Analysis
- Clarity and organization of writing
- Professional presentation of material
- Coherency and accessibility of writing.

In determining whether or not you pass your dissertation defense, faculty members need to be able to clearly see how your dissertation meets the above evaluative criteria.

You should clarify expectations with your chair ahead of time about the scope of questions that will be asked. Passing the final examination does not indicate that the dissertation is complete and has final approval. The evaluation of your dissertation defense usually results in recommended revisions to the dissertation, possibly including reanalysis of data or significant rewriting. You should be prepared to make changes and schedule enough time to do so before you plan to graduate (more than two weeks). In addition, you must take time to follow the UTSA library guidelines for submitting a completed dissertation to the university. Each semester, the university has deadlines that must be followed. It is your responsibility to contact the graduate school to obtain these dates.

**Defense Procedures**

The student’s approved dissertation committee conducts the final oral defense. The student is responsible for scheduling the defense at a time when all dissertation members can meet. The defense is open to the public. Assent of all dissertation committee members is required for the student to pass. The Dissertation Committee should agree on which members will supervise recommended changes in the dissertation, usually the Dissertation Chair assisted by others as appropriate, and who will sign the final dissertation. Final sign off occurs after successful completion of the final examination and final revisions of the dissertation.

You must be enrolled during the semester in which your dissertation defense occurs and when you submit the archive document to the Graduate school.
Frequently Asked Questions

Admissions

Who decides on program admissions?
All members of the ELPS departmental doctoral committee participate in the applicant review process.

Will students be admitted each year?
Doctoral students are admitted once each year. The deadline for applications is **February 1 each year**. The ELPS Doctoral Program Committee sets guidelines for admission based on program requirements and resources. Qualified applicants may be denied admission because of a lack of resources or other special institutional circumstances.

What criteria govern admission?
Admissions standards are consistent with those of the university and are delineated in the Student Handbook. A Master's degree is required. Admission decisions take into consideration evidence of leadership and scholarly potential as reflected in (a) a professional resume, (b) GRE scores, (c) transcripts of all post-secondary academic work, (d) a letter of application, (e) samples of scholarly writing, (f) letters of recommendation, and (g) the statement of purpose.

Are there substitutes for required admission information or requirements?
No.

Program Planning and Course Work

Does the program have school-wide prerequisites?
The program has no school-wide prerequisites other than successful completion of a master's degree. Specific courses, however, may have prerequisites. For example, before enrolling in the doctoral core research methodology courses, specific prerequisites ordinarily are completed in one's Master's degree program.

Who (which ELPS committee or person) has the authority to substitute a core course?
Permission to waive a course can be granted only by the student’s advisor and the concurrence of the Executive Doctoral Program Committee. The decision is made on the basis of the applicant's prior course work.

What are the processes and timelines for substituting or waiving courses?
You must receive written permission to substitute or waive a course. You should begin by talking with your advisor in the semester before the course is offered. It is best to begin this process as soon as possible.
Under what conditions can a requirement be waived?
Under extenuating circumstances students may submit a written petition the doctoral program committee for an exception to be made to the requirements of the program. The petition should be submitted through the program advisor to the executive committee of the doctoral program who will advise the doctoral program committee as to whether it should be accepted or not. The doctoral program committee must accept the petition with a majority vote in order for it to go into effect. Decisions are made in a case-by-case manner.

Do courses that students receive a C grade in count toward a doctoral program?
Students must maintain an overall average 3.00 in all courses applied to the Ed.D. program. Students may be asked to retake a course in which they receive a C grade. In the case of a retake, both the grades for the first and second time the class was taken will count toward the students GPA.

Can students change their advisor and the members of their advisory committee?
Yes. Students are assigned an initial program advisor when they are admitted to the program. Once they become better acquainted with faculty, they may realize that a different person is more suitable to be their advisor, or they may request other changes in the composition of their advisory committee. When a faculty member agrees to serve as the new advisor, the student must inform the previous advisor and the ELPS Doctoral Committee of the change in writing (see the change of advisor form in the appendix).

The Dissertation Defense

What is the relationship between the dissertations and the final oral examination?
The dissertation is the final product that demonstrates a student's expertise in her or his emphasis area. It should show command both of the knowledge base (theory and research) related to the problem being studied and the scholarly methods necessary to conducting the study. The final oral examination provides an opportunity for a student to demonstrate her or his broader understanding of the substantive and methodological issues involved in the study. The dissertation should be substantially completed before the oral is scheduled. Most orals do lead to changes in the dissertation itself.

Are oral defenses only about the dissertation or can they be more general?
The oral defense is a final examination of the dissertation and related topics. Generally, it focuses on the substantive and methodological issues related to the dissertation. Students are advised to clarify expectations with their committees in advance of the oral.

Can dissertation presentation and style vary in any way?
The Graduate School manual, Guidelines for Preparing Masters’ and Doctoral Theses, provides information about form and procedure that should be followed. Whereas variations in dissertation style and presentation are possible, the nature of these variations will depend upon preferences of the dissertation chair and the committee. Alternative formats may be proposed to the dissertation committee for approval by the Graduate School.

What is the relationship between the final oral examination (dissertation defense) and the dissertation committee?
In the College of Education and Human Development, a committee consisting of the student's dissertation advisor (the Committee Chair) and three other members of the Graduate Faculty approve the dissertation proposal and work closely with the student throughout the process.
These same people are responsible for the final approval of the dissertation, including any changes recommended in the oral examination, as established by the Graduate School.

Who decides if a dissertation committee is appropriate?
It is the student's responsibility to assemble the committee in consultation with the dissertation advisor.

What guidelines govern the membership of the dissertation committee?
The Graduate School requires that each member of the committee be a member of the UTSA Graduate Faculty and preferably one member of the Dissertation Committee should be from outside the ELPS department. Faculty from other institutions may be included but they are required to be recommended by the department and approved by the UTSA graduate council. All members should be able to contribute to the study in a productive way.

What are the ELPS and COEHD processes, policies, and procedures that must be checked related to dissertations?
A dissertation advisor must be selected and a committee formed. The faculty must be a member of the Graduate Faculty and should have the substantive and/or methodological expertise to contribute to the quality of the study. If human subjects are involved, permission to conduct the study must be gained from the IRB (Public Schools and other organizations also usually require similar permissions.)

What is a dissertation proposal?
A dissertation proposal is considered to be a working document between the student and the members of the dissertation committee. It provides an assurance to the committee of the quality of conceptualization before the work proceeds, and it provides the student an assurance that the proposed research activities are acceptable in design. The presentation and style of proposals can vary. The student and the committee will determine the particular form utilized. Committee approval of the dissertation proposal is required prior to data collection.

Who can serve as the dissertation committee chair?
The chair should be an expert in some aspect of the substantive focus of the dissertation. Under unusual circumstances, a co-chair of a committee might come from outside of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department. A decision on this rests with the doctoral faculty. Members of the dissertation committee should augment this expertise in useful ways.
ELPS Faculty & Staff Directory (Website: http://education.utsa.edu/educational_leadership_and_policy_studies/welcome/)

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  o Page Smith (Professor)                458-7470 page.smith@utsa.edu
  o David Thompson (Professor)             458-5404 david.thompson@utsa.edu
  o Julian Treviño (Senior Lecturer)       458-7396 julian.trevino@utsa.edu
**Glossary**

*Doctoral Committee.* During the second year, prior to the qualifying examination, each student constructs a Doctoral Committee consisting of an advisor and three other faculty members. The doctoral committee is the committee that develops and administers the qualifying exam. Usually the doctoral committee becomes the dissertation committee.

*Annual Review.* Each student's program committee evaluates the student's portfolio and considers other information about the student's performance in the program. The student receives written feedback from this review and may include a discussion with the program advisor.

*Qualifying Examination.* This examination includes a written and oral component. The qualifying examination requires students to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge, methodological skills, and knowledge application gained during their coursework and relevant to their dissertation.

*Dissertation Advisor/Dissertation Chair.* The student selects the dissertation advisor, who chairs the dissertation committee and acts as the primary guide for the dissertation. The dissertation advisor can be the same individual as the program advisor, but this may not always be the case.

*Dissertation Committee.* The committee members are selected by the student with the assistance of the advisor. The dissertation committee consists of at least four members, preferably one of which will be from another department.

*Doctoral/Graduate Faculty.* All College of Education and Human Development faculty designated as active participants in the ELPS doctoral program. They are responsible for managing the program.

*Program Advisor.* The student's advisor upon admission. Provides guidance through the coursework portion of the doctoral program.