



**OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY**

DARDEN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

IDEA FUSION



# Ph.D. in Education HANDBOOK – 2019

Adopted September 2019

## **The Darden College of Education and Professional Studies (DCEPS)**

The Darden College of Education and Professional Studies prepares distinguished professionals who become leaders in their fields. The College is committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarly activities, and service. Within the context of a diverse student population and faculty, the college strives to achieve its goals of excellence by meeting the needs of Virginia, the nation, and the world. ([www.odu.edu/education](http://www.odu.edu/education))

The purpose of the Ph.D. in Education is to prepare graduates to conduct publishable research and thereby increase generalizable knowledge, as well as to apply their knowledge in current and future educational environments and to emerge as leaders in their chosen fields.

ODU is a doctoral university with a Carnegie classification of higher research activity. DCEPS boasts a strong faculty with a wide array of interests. Doctoral students at ODU have the opportunity to engage with their professors in teaching, research and service.

### **Introduction to the College of Education and Professional Studies**

The Darden College of Education and Professional Studies (DCEPS) is comprised of the departments of Communication Disorders and Special Education (CDSE); Counseling and Human Services (CHS); Human Movement Sciences (HMS); Educational Foundations and Leadership (EFL); Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education and Professional Studies (STEMPS); and Teaching & Learning (TL). Also included in the College are the Office of Clinical Experiences, the Virginia Early Childhood Policy Center, and the Children's Learning and Research Center (CLRC).

The college is headed by Dean Jane S. Bray. There are three associate deans, assigned to Undergraduate, Graduate, and Educator Preparation. Each department is headed by a chair, and each program at the graduate level has a graduate program director. A Graduate Studies Committee sets policies for the graduate programs and includes all of the graduate program directors. Doctoral students will work mainly with their faculty advisor and graduate program director. In addition, other lead faculty may be helpful to their progress. Contact information is located in the directory on each program's web page.

The Doctor of Philosophy in Education (Ph.D.) is comprised of nine concentrations. Each concentration is based in a department, although doctoral students should expect that they have the opportunity to work and learn with faculty from across the college. All doctoral students are accepted into one of these concentrations, and are also part of the community of DCEPS Ph.D. doctoral students. Although students apply directly to the concentration area, accepted students are working towards a Ph.D. in Education degree, not specifically a degree in the concentration or emphasis area.

The concentrations are:

- Special Education
- Counseling
- PK-12 Educational Leadership
- Educational Psychology and Program Evaluation
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Human Movement Sciences
- Occupational and Technical Studies
- Instructional Design and Technology
- Higher Education Leadership

## **Introduction to the Ph.D. in Education Handbook**

The Ph.D. in Education Handbook provides guidance to students as they pursue doctoral studies in the Darden College of Education. Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the policies and procedures in the ODU Graduate Catalog. Additional requirements are provided in each college and this document provides those for the Darden College of Education. Each concentration may have additional requirements and expectations.

### **Admission**

Although admission to the university is standardized, each concentration has specific requirements pertinent to that Ph.D. concentration. Minimal requirements shared by every concentration include submitting an application along with official transcripts from every college or university attended. The specific requirements for other materials, such as letters of recommendation or copies of official test scores, may depend on the concentration. It is expected that applicants to the Ph.D. in Education have a record of superior performance in their previous work at the undergraduate and/or graduate level.

Each concentration is subject to the minimal requirements listed above, but may have unique requirements for admission, for coursework, for examinations, and for the structure of the dissertation. Students should consider carefully the breadth of concentrations available to them under the Ph.D. in Education degree when applying to doctoral level study. Consultation with the graduate program director or program faculty is always beneficial, and may be required before acceptance into the program.

Usually accepted students start in the next academic semester after they are admitted, but occasionally students may wish to defer becoming matriculated students. If life circumstances occur so that a student may want a deferred admission, it is wise to check with the graduate program director at the earliest opportunity.

## Advising

Upon admission to a concentration, it is expected that students will consult with the program director to ensure that any prerequisite admission criteria are met. Before the conclusion of the semester in which a student has earned nine credit hours, the doctoral advisory committee (which may consist of a single advisor) must be named for the purpose of assisting the student in the development of a plan of study (FORM D1). The advisor, along with each member of the advisory committee if one exists, must be certified for graduate instruction by DCEPS at either Level One (to chair an advisory committee or, later, a dissertation) or Level Two to be a committee member. It is expected that the advisor will meet with the student on a regular basis to consult regarding academic progress, to provide a gateway for opportunities for collaborative research with faculty, and to suggest opportunities for research and scholarly activities such as presentations at national and international conferences. The advisor will also assist the student in selecting mentors for projects and experiences.

## Continuance and Progress

A Ph.D. in Education doctoral student is one who is admitted to a concentration. The dean's office will maintain a shared list of all Ph.D. in Education students, along with an indication of their progress. The list of indicators of progress include Forms D1-D5, Form D9, and additional forms for those who are employed as graduate assistants. Individual records of specific doctoral students are housed in the department. Each fall, the Graduate Program Directors will provide access to an updated list of doctoral students with changes in status noted as student's progress toward their degree. It is the responsibility of the student, working in conjunction with the faculty advisor, to ensure that forms are completed in a timely manner. These forms are available on the Graduate School web page.

- **Form D1:** Form D1 establishes the relationship between the student and his or her advisor or advisory committee. This form is not to be confused with Form D2, Appointment of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee. Form D1 is to be completed before the student achieves the completion of 9 credit hours. If the student has a single faculty advisor, the faculty name should be entered as the chair of the Doctoral Advisory Committee on the D1 form. This form should be signed by the student, the faculty advisor, and the Graduate Program Director. It is the GPD's responsibility to ensure that the committee members have appropriate graduate faculty status (level one for the advisor; level one or two for the members, or level three under special approved circumstances). If the faculty advisor changes, a new Form D1 should be filed.
- **Form D2.** Form D2 establishes the committee that will guide a student through the dissertation proposal and defense. The dissertation committee must be established prior to the oral defense of the proposal. It may be established at an earlier point. The dissertation committee may contain all, some, or none of the members of the advisory committee.

The GPD and faculty advisor can be very helpful in assisting a student with deciding which faculty to approach to serve on the student's dissertation committee. Members of the committee including the chair are limited to those faculty who are graduate certified (as above for the advisory committee). This form is completed by the student and signed by each member of the committee. It is then signed by the GPD, the Department Chair, and the Dean. The Dean's office has the responsibility to return the original to the GPD, along with electronic copies sent to the Dissertation Chair and the student. A new form D2 must be filed if any member of the committee changes. *If the proposal defense has already occurred when the committee changes, it must be re-defended in front of the committee that will shepherd its progress.*

- **Form D3.** Form D3 is used to document the transition points as the student progresses toward the degree. At each succeeding transition point, the form is updated and a copy sent to the University Registrar and noted on the student file. The last transition point is the successful completion of the Dissertation Defense. At that time, the dissertation committee chair signs the form indicating successful completion of the dissertation, and the form is also signed by the Committee members. The original form is then sent to the Office of the University Registrar.

Transition points required for all concentrations in the Ph.D. in Education program are the following:

- Research Skills Examination - met by successful completion of research core classes
- Completion of Required Coursework
- Candidacy Exam (both written and oral)
- Oral Defense of Written Dissertation Prospectus
- Oral Defense of Written Dissertation

Note as well that some of the transition points on Form D3 are also duplicated on Form D4 and D5. Although duplicative, each form has its separate purpose and must be used as appropriate.

- **Form D4.** Form D4 confirms that the student understands that as a doctoral candidate he or she must register for at least one credit each semester up to and including the semester in which he or she graduates. The word "full-time" in the sentence "This confirms that the student above has advanced to Doctoral Candidacy Status on \_\_\_\_\_ and is working full-time to complete the dissertation" reflects the fact that only one dissertation credit per semester is required to be considered a full-time student once all other requirements have been completed. This form must be completed each semester if the student is receiving financial aid. Otherwise, it only needs to be completed when the student achieves candidacy.

The original is sent to the Office of the University Registrar, with copies for the GPD, the Office of Financial Aid, and as appropriate for international students, the International Student & Scholar Services office (ISSS).

- **Form D5.** Form D5 indicates that the student has submitted the dissertation document in its final form approved by the dissertation committee. It is not unusual, and in fact is the rule more than the exception, that the dissertation committee will approve the dissertation defense, but will require minor changes in either format, findings, or even in the methodology or literature review within the dissertation document. These changes must be approved by the Dissertation Chair before it goes to the Graduate Program Director. After the Dean's office approves the final dissertation and signs Form D5, the student submits the dissertation electronically and the Dean's office sends Form D5 to the University Registrar, with copies to the GPD. It is crucial that time constraints be observed. The Registrar's office requires that dissertations be fully approved and upload electronically no later than the last exam day (for Fall and Spring semesters); the Dean's office requires that the full dissertation as approved by the Dissertation Chair and GPD be submitted with Form D5 to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies for review at least two weeks prior to the Registrar's deadline to provide sufficient time to make any changes requested by the Associate Dean prior to electronic upload.

**Other Forms.** Every student in the Ph.D. in Education program, regardless of concentration, will use Forms D1 – D5 above and Form D9. Form D6 was previously used to submit the dissertation for binding and has become obsolete, as the university has moved to electronic submission of dissertations. Form D7 is used in cases where unforeseen circumstances or hardships create situations in which students cannot continue a program of study but intend to return (**Form D7**).

- **Form D9.** This form is used to document advancement to candidacy. A student achieves candidacy when he or she has completed all coursework, passed the oral and written candidacy exam, and has had the dissertation committee chair approve the dissertation topic. Approval of a concept for the topic is not approval of the dissertation prospectus; the latter is reported with Form D3.

### **Annual Review**

An annual review of progress is required to be on file for each doctoral student by May 30. The form used for this evaluation is the DCEPS Doctoral Student Annual Academic Performance Review Form (See Appendix). This evaluation remains with the program.

The ODU Graduate Catalog in the Graduate Policies and Procedures section outlines criteria for satisfactory performance as well as probation and dismissal. Each concentration may have additional criteria.

## Minimum Requirements

The ODU graduate catalog lists the minimum requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree established for the university. The catalog also notes that each graduate program is responsible for setting out the requirements and procedures appropriate to its area of study. The minimum requirements for the Ph.D. in Education for all concentrations are listed below. Some concentrations may have additional expectations.

1. Satisfactory completion of 60 credits of coursework.
2. Demonstrated competency in research skills (i.e., completes research core).
3. Candidacy examination with written and oral components.
4. Dissertation representing original empirical research worthy of publication in a scholarly journal.
5. Oral defense and submission of the dissertation.

### *Coursework*

The DCEPS Ph.D. in Education degree is comprised of a minimum of 60 credits of coursework, which includes the dissertation. Each concentration has developed an overall plan of study that includes core courses taken by all students in the program along with opportunities for elective coursework designed to further the knowledge, skills, and experiences. Students should register as soon as the schedule becomes available in order to ensure they are enrolled in their first choices.

Regardless of the concentration, the plan of study will include coursework in the following areas.

1. Research core -- The Ph.D. is a research degree. As such, Ph.D. in Education students take courses in order to develop competencies based on qualitative and quantitative research methods. These courses are taught across disciplines, so it is common for a course fulfilling part of the research core requirement to have students from a variety of concentrations in the class. Although both qualitative and quantitative research methods are covered, the degree to which one or the other has greater emphasis usually depends on the scholarly requirements of the concentration.
2. Content core – Each concentration offers coursework that will enable graduates to gain the in-depth background knowledge to conduct empirical research and emerge as scholars in their chosen fields. Some of this coursework may be in a prescribed order, so that student’s progress through the core in a cohort with other students who started in the same time in that concentration.
3. Elective or emphasis courses – Each concentration offers students the opportunity to work with their faculty advisor to select coursework that broadens and deepens their understanding of their field of study. Courses offered in other departments in the college or from other colleges may be permitted according to the concentration. The faculty

advisor will assist the student in developing a plan of study that will reflect the student's interest and inform his or her research.

4. **Dissertation Credit** – Each concentration also requires dissertation credits. These credit hours are applied as students begin work on the final phase of the doctoral degree and continue until completion. During this intensive period of study and work with the dissertation chair, students register for dissertation credit. These credit hours are not a formal class, but rather maintain the doctoral candidate's student standing and access to university services. The student should consult with his or her faculty advisor and dissertation chair to determine how many credits of dissertation should be registered for each semester. All doctoral students must be registered for at least one credit up to and including the semester in which they graduate, so the final number of dissertation credits on a student's final transcript may exceed the number listed in the plan of study.

### *Candidacy Examination*

University requirements specify that the doctoral level candidacy exam must be included as part of the program of study for each student. Although each concentration has structured the candidacy exam according to the scholarly expectations of the discipline, it must include both a written and an oral component. Student's must request in writing (such as by email) permission to take the candidacy exam at least one month prior to the intended date from the program GPD, who determines if requirements have been met and, if so, provides written approval to proceed.

The structure of the candidacy exam varies according to concentration, but in general, the exam should be taken at the end of the content coursework (typically during the last semester of coursework) and must be completed before starting work on the dissertation. The candidacy exam and the dissertation prospectus defense may be concluded in the same semester, but the prospectus defense and the dissertation defense must be in two separate semesters. Form D3 is used to record the results of the candidacy exam, including both the written and the oral exams.

The approval of the dissertation topic is the last step to achieving candidacy. There should be an on-going discussion of the potential topic between the student and the dissertation committee chair (as well as other committee members). College-wide, there is no formal process by which the student submits the topic and the dissertation chair approves it, though concentration areas may formalize a structure. Once the topic is approved, Form D9 is used to indicate advancement to candidacy. Note that approval of the topic is a preliminary step not to be confused with defense of the dissertation prospectus.

### *Dissertation Prospectus*

The dissertation process begins with development of a written dissertation prospectus with guidance from the dissertation committee chair. This written prospectus is submitted to the full committee prior to scheduling an oral defense of it. Form D3 records the result of the defense.



Once the committee approves the prospectus and, pending Institutional Review Board approval of any proposed human subjects research (or DCEPS Human Subjects Research Committee approval for exempt human subjects research), the research itself is conducted. In some concentrations, students may perform multiple studies comprising the entire dissertation. In such cases, initial studies performed under the auspices of the dissertation chair (with IRB approval) may be performed prior to the successful defense of the proposal. However, at least one study must be undertaken in its entirety, to include data collection, following the prospectus defense.

### *Dissertation*

A dissertation is required for completion of the Ph.D. in Education degree. Students working on their dissertation register for dissertation credits (899). These credits allow the student to be enrolled at the university, to work with the dissertation committee, and to receive the benefit of all university services. The number of credits estimated to finish the dissertation varies by concentration. Since doctoral students must be continuously enrolled, those students not finished by the time they have accrued the number of credits in the plan of study must register for at least one additional dissertation credit every semester, up to and including the semester in which they graduate. Failure to do so will delay the graduation process and will incur the cost of registering for any missing credits.

There is a specific format required for the dissertation so that it can be submitted for electronic indexing. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that this formatting is accurate. Failure to do so may mean that changes have to be made before the last form is signed, which could delay graduation. Students should seek advice and assistance from the dissertation chair and, if needed, the GPD regarding formatting early in the dissertation process.

### *Oral Defense of the Dissertation*

An oral defense of the dissertation is required. Information about the oral defense must be announced publicly and is open to the university community. The announcement must be made two weeks prior to the dissertation oral defense. The format is determined by the dissertation committee with the approval of Graduate Program Director. The defense is moderated by the dissertation committee chair.

Although a successful oral defense of the dissertation could be considered the last hurdle for the Ph.D. degree, there are usually edits, minor changes, and formatting to be accomplished before the student records are submitted for graduation. A copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the department chair's office well before the final deadline in order for the student's name to be submitted for graduation.

No dissertation oral defense may be scheduled within thirty days of the deadline for the dissertation to be submitted to the registrar’s office. Since the committee should have the completed dissertation at least two weeks before the scheduled defense, this means in actuality that the dissertation must be ready six weeks before the end of the semester.

The final completed dissertation along with completed D5 Form with signatures from the entire committee and the Graduate Program Director should be submitted to the Dean’s office no later than two weeks before the Registrar’s deadline.

Six weeks before Registrar’s Deadline	Dissertation is submitted to the committee
Thirty days before Registrar’s Deadline	Committee defense must occur
Two weeks before Registrar’s Deadline	Final Dissertation is submitted to the Dean’s Office
Registrar’s Deadline	Dissertation is submitted to the Registrar’s Office

### **Dissertation Committee**

When doctoral students begin to draw near to the point at which they will be accepted into candidacy, they should start to think about possible members of their dissertation committee. The dissertation committee will be the examining body to determine if the students pass the written and oral defense of the dissertation prospectus, as well as the defense of the final dissertation. Committee members should be chosen carefully, and in consultation with the graduate program director and faculty advisor. If an advisory committee has been established, it is possible that the committees will be the same, but it is not required. Regardless, when the dissertation committee is established, Form D2 must be submitted.

Serving on a dissertation committee requires a significant time commitment from the faculty members. If any change occurs in the committee, a new Form D2 is required. If the change occurs after the prospectus is defended, the prospectus must be re-defended in front of the new committee, and Form D3 updated appropriately.

University requirements allow for dissertation committees to be formed with as few as three ODU faculty members. At least one member must be from outside the department. The student may consider having more than three members as appropriate to the subject of the dissertation. Other DCEPS faculty members who are graduate certified for doctoral committee membership may be chosen. Faculty agreeing to serve on a dissertation committee must serve until the dissertation is completed.

All members of the dissertation committee must be certified for graduate instruction at the level to allow them to serve on dissertation committees (level one or two). The chair of the dissertation committee requires the highest level of graduate certification (level one), and may have other qualifications specific to the concentration. Selecting a chair for the dissertation is a two-stage process. First, the student has the responsibility to consult with the faculty member to ensure that

the faculty member is willing. Second, the appointment of a dissertation chair requires the approval of the graduate program director, department chair, and Dean or designee. This requirement is in addition to that specified in the Graduate Catalog.

New faculty in their first year are not encouraged to serve as chairs or co-chairs unless they have served as dissertation committee members previously.

Faculty may decline to serve as dissertation members or chairs for a variety of reasons. Their time commitments may be such that adding another committee may not be beneficial to the student's success. Faculty members may judge that the topic of a student's dissertation is not in line with their research interests, or that they do not have the expertise to have a helpful perspective. Faculty can be very helpful in suggesting other faculty who may have the time and interests best matched to the student's topic. The directory of faculty expertise can be very helpful in finding dissertation committee members.

### **Financial Resources**

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available each year. These assistantships generally pay a small stipend along with a tuition waiver. The assistantships are in two major categories, teaching and research. Teaching GAs are assigned as the instructor of record for an undergraduate course, although they work with seasoned faculty to assist them in course preparation, and with teaching and evaluating students. Graduate research assistants (GRAs) are assigned to faculty to assist with research projects. The expectation is that the GA (whether GRA or GTA) should be expected to work 20 hours per week.

There are also scholarships available through the university financial aid office, as well as some scholarships or awards available in some departments or concentrations. Funds for graduate student travel may be available from the college and university for students who are presenting at professional conferences.

### **Obstacles to Progress**

Although faculty and staff in the Darden College of Education hope that all students have a smooth and easy path to their degree, that is not always the case. Life circumstances may occur that make it impossible for students to be successful in a particular semester. Students may find that their theoretical model differs from that of an advisor. Occasionally, but rarely, difficulties with faculty or other students may occur. With any difficulties, the student should discuss the issue with the faculty advisor, the GPD, and the department chair.

The process for grade appeal is specified in the graduate catalog. The appeal begins with the instructor and if it is not resolved moves to the department chair and the associate dean for graduate studies.

The academic programs for each concentration list the minimal requirements for a successful doctoral program. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program or the university. Some of these requirements include failure to maintain good academic standing, plagiarism, failure to pass required examinations, or failure to maintain good academic progress in the thesis or dissertation.

## **Graduation**

Application for graduation usually occurs in the semester prior to the dissertation being finished. Failure to apply for graduation in a timely manner has financial implications. All students must be enrolled at the university in the semester in which they graduate, so failure to apply for graduation may mean that students must incur the cost of an additional credit in a subsequent semester in order to graduate.

Graduation and commencement are seen as two separate processes, with separate forms and applications. Although graduation occurs three times during the year (May, August, December), there are only two commencement ceremonies, one in December and one in May. Because of the uncertainty of the length of time for the dissertation process, students are encouraged to participate in the commencement ceremony that occurs after they finish all requirements. This makes the event truly celebratory, without the stress of knowing that there is still work to do. However, policy allows for August graduates to participate in either the May or the December commencement.

## **Continued Relationship with the Academy**

As a Ph.D. in Education student, your relationship with the Darden College of Education and Old Dominion University is lifelong. Your mentors will continue to follow your scholarship with pride and interest. When you complete your dissertation, your committee will greet you with the words “Welcome to the community of scholars.” At ODU, that community will be yours as you leave us to engage in your own university and mentor other emerging scholars.

To get the most out of your time here, we encourage engagement in academic and social activities across the university. From the first day of graduate student orientation, you will be invited to share your research with on-campus symposia, to participate in university lecture series, and to take advantage of formal and informal training in technology and other processes.

You will be given advice, encouragement, and mentoring from a variety of people. As you become advanced scholars and doctoral candidates, a collaborative relationship with faculty and other doctoral candidates will emerge. Always remember that there are many people who are here to both help you surpass needed obstacles and to applaud your successes.

Welcome to the doctoral program at Old Dominion University and the Darden School of Education. We are excited to have you become a part of our learning community.