

Rutgers University

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

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RUTGERS SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES MISSION

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) provides masters and doctoral studies and advocates for graduate education and graduate students on the New Brunswick Campus. Graduate education provides students with advanced training for their chosen fields, developing leaders who will contribute to knowledge through original research, teaching future generations, and solving significant problems for society.

The School of Graduate Studies' mission is to pursue excellence in graduate education and the welfare of its students. The school accomplishes its mission in three ways:

1. The School of Graduate Studies promotes **high quality in graduate education** and works to improve **the effectiveness of graduate education**. It maintains rules governing requirements for the degree, oversight of admissions standards, and reviewing and approving curricular initiatives and changes. To assess the effectiveness of graduate education, it collects data on current graduate student support, external awards of current students, student success within programs, and placement and career advancement of its graduates. It provides topical and timely support to assist students in progressing and succeeding, through flexibility in applying standard rules and various forms of financial assistance and through competitive support of outstanding students and support for training grants and other funding initiatives. Through GradFund, it assists students to succeed in pursuing external fellowships and grants. The School of Graduate Studies keeps abreast of trends, best practices, and comparative data on graduate education through multiple memberships and various forms of participation in national organizations devoted to aspects of graduate education. It promotes and oversees involvement in local and international consortia and exchanges. By disseminating best practices and results of assessments of activities in graduate education, the School of Graduate Studies works with individual degree programs to improve the effectiveness of graduate education to enhance mentorship, reduce degree completion time, and increase completion rates. The School of Graduate Studies is an ongoing source of advice and assistance for graduate program directors, faculty members, and staff on the full range of issues they confront in conducting the everyday work of graduate education.
2. The School of Graduate Studies seeks to enhance **the quality of student life for graduate students** by serving as an advocate for their needs in such matters as the development of policy and planning pertaining to housing, dining, facilities, recreation, health and psychological services, and other aspects of student life and procedures governing issues of graduate student conduct and status. The School of Graduate Studies also seeks to enhance student welfare by directly providing ombudsperson and conflict resolution services, the Teaching Assistant Project, general guidance and assistance with registration, degree attainment, financial support, and insurance, other matters pertaining to persistence to degree.
3. The School of Graduate Studies actively supports **efforts to diversify the student community in graduate education**. It does so through its summer program for undergraduate students from diverse academic backgrounds, through recruitment efforts, through the financial support of students that supplements the funding available from other sources, through advocacy for international scholars, and through measures that underpin a supportive environment for students from all walks of life.

PH.D. IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM MISSION

The Ph.D. in Higher Education at Rutgers University offers a focused study of the complexities of colleges and universities, their missions, contexts, challenges, and successes. This interdisciplinary degree program brings together distinguished higher education scholars representing the Graduate School of Education (GSE), the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy (BSPPP), the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), the School of Communication and Information (SCI), the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS), and the School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR). Affiliated faculty members are higher education experts in the fields of, for example, education, law, communication, organizational studies, public policy, and economics.

The Ph.D. in Higher Education program prepares higher education researchers who will take their scholarship, knowledge, and research skills into a range of higher education settings such as universities and colleges, state or federal governing and coordinating boards, independent research and policy organizations, and foundations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Principles of academic integrity require that every Rutgers University student will:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others,
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work,
- make sure that all work submitted is their own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration,
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with their interpretation or conclusions,
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress, and
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which they are preparing.

Adherence to these principles is necessary to ensure that:

- everyone is given proper credit for their ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments,
- all student work is fairly evaluated, and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others,
- the academic and ethical development of all students is fostered, and
- the reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced.

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academ8ic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT (PREAMBLE)

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is dedicated to teaching the highest standards of excellence, conducting research that breaks new ground; and turning knowledge into solutions for local, national, and global communities. As it was at our founding in 1766, the heart of our mission is preparing students to become productive members of society and good citizens of the world.

When students accept admission to Rutgers University, they accept the rights and responsibilities of membership in the University's academic and social community. As members of the University community, students are expected to uphold our stated values by maintaining a high standard of conduct. Because the University establishes high standards for membership, its standards of conduct may exceed federal, state, or local requirements.

The primary purpose of the student conduct process should be to foster students' personal, educational, and social development. The process should also serve as deterrence to misconduct to enhance the safety and security of the community. Students are expected to take responsibility for their conduct. Disciplinary consequences, therefore, serve both educational and deterrence objectives.

Those working within the conduct system balance students' individual needs with the expectations set by the University to provide a safe community. Through the authority given to it by its Board of Governors, the University is responsible for communicating behavioral expectations to students and the consequences for violating standards. This Code of Student Conduct describes the behaviors inconsistent with University values, outlines procedures to respond to such behaviors, and suggests possible sanctions and interventions intended to educate and safeguard members of the University community. For the complete language of the Rutgers Code of Conduct, visit <https://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/processes/university-code-student-conduct>

ACADEMIC PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction: All efforts are made to keep this Handbook up to date. In the case of discrepancies, please contact the GPD of the Ph.D. in Higher Education program. The following are the Ph.D. in Higher Education program academic policies and procedures. In the case of conflict with the School of Graduate Studies policies and procedures, the School of Graduate Studies policies and procedures prevail. NOTE: Individual academic programs may have more restrictive policies (e.g., satisfactory academic progress) but may not have more liberal policies than SGS.

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS

The following learning outcomes inform the Ph.D. in Higher Education curriculum. Graduates of the Ph.D. in Higher Education program will:

- Conduct original, rigorous research and interpret and evaluate findings from other research studies.
- Be knowledgeable about higher education organizations; systems; governance; leadership; analysis and planning; research, assessment, and evaluation; and communication.

- Understand current and developing trends and issues facing colleges and universities.
- Understand and effectively negotiate the complexities of higher education in terms of institutional type, control, contexts, stakeholders, and constituencies.
- Provide leadership, insight, and expertise at the institutional or related higher education settings in which they work.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW: PH.D. IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Degree Requirements

Seventy-two credit hours include higher education core courses, electives, research methods core courses, and dissertation research, as noted in the following sections.

Higher Education Core *

16:507:510	Higher Education Structures and Governance	3 credits
16:507:515	Diversity and Multiculturalism in Higher Education	3 credits
16:507:520	Higher Education Law	3 credits
16:507:525	Economics and Finance of Higher Education	3 credits
16:507:530	Higher Education Leadership	3 credits
16:507:535	History of Higher Education in the United States	3 credits
		18 credits total

** At the faculty advisor's discretion, up to two Higher Education core courses may be replaced by six credit hours of targeted, substantive, doctoral-level coursework tailored to the student's research interests and/or career goals. Any deviations from the Higher Education Core must be stipulated on the student's Plan of Study form, with the faculty advisor's approval noted.*

Additional Graduate Coursework/Electives

Selected courses in consultation with advisor	15 credits total
Pre-dissertation research courses that may be used for elective credit:	
16:507:600 Independent Study in Higher Education	1-6 credits
16:507:550 Field Experience in Higher Education#	1-3 credits

Up to 3 credits may be used to complete an approved field experience (16:507:550 Field Experience in Higher Education) under the supervision of a program-affiliated faculty member. The completed, approved Field Experience in Higher Education Contract must be submitted to Ph.D. Administrative Assistant before registering for 16:507:550 credits.

Rutgers Graduate Writing Courses (0 credits required)

Program faculty strongly recommend that all students enroll in graduate writing courses during (at least) the first two semesters of program coursework.

Research Core**

Introductory Statistics (doctoral level)	3 credits
Introductory Qualitative Methods (doctoral level)	3 credits
Advanced Statistics <i>OR</i> Advanced Qualitative Methods (doctoral level)	3 credits
One additional research methods or methodology course (doctoral level)	3 credits
16:507:695 Research and Dissertation Seminar	3 credits
	15 credits total

*** At the faculty advisor's discretion, up to six credits of the 15-credit minimum Research Core may be replaced with six credit hours of targeted, substantive, doctoral-level coursework tailored to the student's research interests and/or career goals. In addition, the student's dissertation committee may require the completion of additional methodology or research methods coursework to ensure adequate preparation for the qualifying examination and/or the dissertation. Any deviations from the Research Core (above) must be listed on the student's **Plan of Study**, with the faculty advisor's approval noted.*

Independent Dissertation Research

16:507:701, 702 **Research in Higher Education** 24 credits total

After advancement to candidacy (passing the qualifying examination), students will enroll in **Research in Higher Education** every semester they work on their dissertation. Students may enroll in a maximum of six (6) total credits of **Research in Higher Education** prior to advancement to candidacy with permission of their faculty advisor, such as the semester they schedule to take their qualifying exam. This maximum is neither negotiable nor flexible.

How to register: Each section of **Research in Higher Education** during fall, spring, and summer terms is assigned to a (full) Member of the Higher Education program faculty. Students should register **ONLY** in their faculty advisor's section. To register for Dissertation Research credits, students must obtain the faculty advisor's permission to enroll for that academic term and forward that permission to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant to obtain the requisite special permission number (SPN).

Program-level Notes: No more than 24 credits of coursework outside the Rutgers School of Graduate Studies (i.e., School 16) may be applied toward the minimum 72 credits required for the Ph.D. in Higher Education.

Earning the M.A. in Higher Education

If, due to unforeseen circumstances, Ph.D. in Higher Education students may decide not to pursue the Ph.D. or not continue in the program, the Master's Degree in Higher Education will be awarded if all *associated credits* have been completed and the *comprehensive examination or equivalent* has been completed successfully. *Associated credits* include 18 credits of Higher Education core courses, six credits of Additional Graduate Coursework, and six credits of the Research Core. In addition, the *comprehensive exam or equivalent* may include successfully passing qualifying exams or completion of a thesis project.

This master's degree option is available ONLY to enrolled Ph.D. in Higher Education students. Applications for admission to (only) the M.A. in Higher Education will not be reviewed.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION CORE COURSES

Students enrolled in other graduate programs, non-matriculated students, and non-degree students may enroll in a maximum of nine (9) credits of Higher Education Core coursework.

PH.D. IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM "ROADMAP"

Year 1 (or equivalent: 0-18 credits)

Coursework

- Complete majority of HE Core courses
- Complete (ideally) at least six credits of research methods coursework
- Enroll in one graduate writing course each term

Advising

- Meet with faculty advisor at least once per semester
- Complete the **HE First-Semester Student Progress Report** with advisor
- Discuss pre-dissertation research opportunities, potential independent studies, and prospective transfer credits with advisor
- Complete the first draft of the **HE Plan of Study** and the first **HE End-of-Year (EOY) Student Progress Report**. Meet with advisor by the end of March to finalize and submit both

Administrative Tasks

- Complete appropriate CITI training modules if not already certified by Rutgers
- Complete end-of-semester SIRS assessment(s)
- If applicable, submit the **SGS Application for Transfer of Credits** with attachments for advisor and GPD approval.

Program Enhancement Activities

- Attend Higher Education Seminar Series presentations and other scholarly events
- Consider joining program- or school-level committee(s)
- Consider submitting a scholarly proposal or attending a conference (e.g., ASHE, AERA, ACPA, NASPA, etc.) at the end of the first spring semester
- Become familiar with sources of student travel support
- Consider a summer Independent Study or Field Experience

Year 2 (or equivalent: 19-36 credits)

Coursework

- Complete remaining core HE courses, plus the majority of research methods and additional graduate coursework
- Independent Study strongly recommended if not already completed
- Consider enrolling in graduate writing courses each term

Advising

- Meet with faculty advisor at least once per semester
- Revisit initial **HE Plan of Study** with advisor, make necessary updates, and forward revisions to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant
- Discuss qualifying examination requirements with advisor
 - Consider options for qualifying examination committee members
 - As applicable, work with advisor to schedule qualifying examination (see “The Qualifying Examination” handbook section for more details)

Administrative Tasks

- If attending and/or presenting at a conference, identify travel support sources and apply
- Complete **HE EOY Student Progress Report** and submit it to GPD before the end of the spring semester

Program Enhancement Activities

- Attend seminars and other HE and campus-wide lectures and events
- Submit manuscripts and/or conference proposals to present research

Year 3 (or equivalent: 37-54 credits)

Coursework and Requirements

- If the qualifying examination is not yet completed:
 - Schedule and complete examination
 - Forward required materials to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant (see “The Qualifying Examination” handbook section)
- Enroll in **Research and Dissertation Seminar** the semester following successful completion of the qualifying exam
- Complete dissertation proposal
 - Form dissertation committee and complete **GSE HE PhD Dissertation Committee Form** and submit to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant
 - Schedule dissertation proposal defense meeting
 - Submit **GSE HE PhD Oral Examination Results Form (Dissertation Proposal)** to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant
- Enroll in **Research in Higher Education** credits while working on the dissertation proposal and during dissertation research
- Revisit **HE Plan of Study** with advisor, make necessary changes, and forward revised POS to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant
- Consider enrolling in a writing course(s)

Administrative Tasks

- Meet with faculty advisor at least once per semester
- Complete **HE EOY Student Progress Report** and submit it to GPD before the end of the spring semester

Program Enhancement Activities:

- Attend seminars and other HE and campus-wide lectures and events
- Submit manuscripts and/or conference proposals to present research

Year 4+ (or equivalent: 55-72 credits minimum)

Coursework and Requirements:

- Continue dissertation work
- Consider enrolling in graduate writing course(s)
- Submit dissertation to advisor and, upon advisor's approval, to dissertation committee members for review
- Schedule dissertation defense. Submit requisite information to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant at least three weeks before the defense date (see "The Dissertation Process" handbook section)

Advising:

- Revisit **HE Plan of Study** with advisor and make final changes. Submit to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant
- Seek advice on post-defense revisions to the dissertation

Administrative Tasks:

- File SGS Title Page and final approved dissertation
- Complete SGS Post-dissertation processes
- Complete HE EOY Student Progress Report
- Submit Diploma Application: <https://grad.admissions.rutgers.edu/Diploma/Login.aspx>

Program Enhancement Activities:

- Submit manuscripts and/or conference proposal(s) to present research

The First Year

Upon acceptance into the Ph.D. in Higher Education Program, students are assigned an initial faculty advisor before beginning coursework. Ordinarily, this advisor will work with the student up to and through the qualifying examination process. However, students may change faculty advisor upon consultation with both the current and the prospective advisor. Complete the GSE **Change of Advisor** form and submit it to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant within two weeks of the advisor change.

In late August, before the start of the academic year, an orientation session will be offered for new first-year students. The orientation will include introductions to faculty and their interests, an overview of the program and curriculum, meeting with advisors, and interactions with current students. The orientation will be scheduled to complement the timing of the Graduate School of Education orientation and the School of Graduate Studies orientation so that students may also attend those orientations.

During the first semester, students should be registered for core courses and, ideally, an initial research methods course. Additionally, students are encouraged to engage in the higher education scholarly community by attending Ph.D. in Higher Education seminars and other events, allowing students to hear colleagues speak on a variety of relevant subjects in a more personalized forum. These seminars (no cost to attendees) also provide informal networking opportunities.

Approximately halfway through the first semester, first-year students will meet with their advisors for a first semester check-up, and complete/submit the **HE First Semester Student Progress Report**. In addition, students should share their initial **HE Plan of Study**—including estimated dates—with their advisors.

During the second semester of the first year, students should continue to enroll in core courses and perhaps another research methods course, with the additional possibility of enrolling in some elective courses (must be approved by advisor). Additionally, students should explore pre-dissertation research or field experience opportunities. Students should reach out faculty/staff involved in research that may be conducive to an independent study experience. Once an independent study or field experience is arranged, submit the completed and approved **Independent Study in Higher Education Contract** or the **Field Experience in Higher Education Contract** to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant.

By the beginning of April, all Ph.D. in Higher Education students meet with their advisors to review and amend—as needed—the student's **HE Plan of Study**. Students also complete the **HE EOY Student Progress Report** and send it to the advisor before the meeting. Students and their advisors discuss how and when the student will fulfill coursework requirements and discuss—where applicable—potential pre-dissertation research opportunities. This process allows students to reflect on their academic accomplishments and determine goals for the upcoming summer and academic year with faculty advisors.

FACULTY ADVISOR AND ADVISEE EXPECTATIONS

In general, *advisors* are the first line of assistance with advisees' problems or concerns and the principal degree program resource for their advisees. In virtually all circumstances, advisees are expected to initiate contact with the advisor as needed or as required by the Ph.D. in Higher Education program (student progress meetings, etc.)

Advisees should keep lines of communication open with their advisors and keep them updated on accomplishments, opportunities, and potential concerns. In addition, advisees should take the lead in cultivating and maintaining a productive working relationship with their advisors.

When students first meet with their assigned faculty advisor--and at ANY time when they are considering changing advisors--they are **STRONGLY** encouraged to have candid discussions with the current faculty advisor and prospective faculty advisor(s) to maximize the likelihood of a productive advisor/advisee fit. Advisees may find the following questions and topics (plus others) helpful to discuss with current as well as prospective faculty advisors:

1. Generally speaking, what are your expectations of your Ph.D. advisees? (Students should be prepared to discuss their general expectations of a faculty advisor.)
2. In what ways do our topical and/or methodological interests and expertise align, diverge, and/or complement each other? How might these convergences or divergences affect your advising? Are there current or future opportunities to work with you on research or other scholarly projects?
3. Generally speaking, how/where do you prefer meeting with your advisees--in your campus office, elsewhere on campus, over a meal, over coffee, other?
4. Do you prefer to meet with advisees during weekday business hours, evenings, or weekends?
5. How far in advance should I ordinarily plan to schedule a meeting with you? Is there another person I should contact to schedule a meeting with you?

6. Do you have any planned, upcoming sabbatical leaves or other absences? If so, how do you anticipate working with your advisees during those times? What other responsibilities do you have (e.g., administrative appointment, consulting work) that may curtail your availability as an advisor?
7. What is the best way to contact you when I have quick questions--email, office phone, home phone, cell phone, text, stopping by your office, meeting you before or after a class you're teaching? How should I NOT plan to contact you (e.g., text, cell phone)?
8. After reaching out to you requesting a response, how long does it usually take to hear from you? What's the best way for your advisees to follow up on such requests appropriately?

Change of Faculty Advisor

Students must report changes of faculty advisor via the **GSE Change of Advisor** form within two weeks of the change. At three points during the Ph.D. in Higher Education program, students will select or affirm their faculty advisor:

During coursework prior to admission to candidacy. Students may change faculty advisors following conversations with the current and prospective faculty advisors.

When constituting a qualifying examination committee. Students select a committee chair/advisor for this process. The Chair should be the student's current faculty advisor, and this committee dissolves following the successful completion of the qualifying examination process.

Prior to commencing the dissertation proposal. Students select a faculty advisor to chair the dissertation committee and oversee dissertation proposal writing, dissertation completion, and dissertation defense processes.

REGISTERING FOR CLASSES

After accepting admission, new students receive a "New Student Guide" from Rutgers. This guide explains parking, obtaining ID cards, creating a NetID, and other useful information and how to register. Students can register for classes following their official acceptance of admission. New students are strongly encouraged to visit their faculty advisor before registering for classes.

Students will use their Rutgers NetID to register each semester on the Rutgers WebReg [website](#). Some classes require instructor permission to enroll. In these cases, students must first obtain the instructor's written permission (ordinarily, via email) to register and forward the permission to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant along with a request for the applicable SPN. Contact the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant if questions about class registration processes remain.

GRADING OF COURSEWORK

Rutgers University's graduate-level grading system follows. For more details, click [here](#).

A	Outstanding	4.0
B+		3.5
B	Good	3.0
C+		2.5
C	Satisfactory	2.0
F	Failing	0.0

All coursework meant to apply to the Ph.D. in Higher Education, except **Research in Higher Education** and **Independent Study in Higher Education** credits, must be graded on an A-F scale (above).

Other grades include:

IN (Incomplete): May be assigned at the discretion of an instructor who believes that an extension of time is warranted for a student whose work is incomplete at the end of the semester. The instructor may authorize a grade change for up to two years after the IN grade was assigned. After two years, a grade of IN is automatically changed to No Credit. Students must ordinarily initiate the request for an Incomplete grade with the instructor(s) of the course(s).

All Incomplete grades must be resolved prior to scheduling the Qualifying Examination. Students requesting an exception to this policy must submit relevant rationale(s) in writing to the GPD and documentation of support for the requested exception from all members of the Qualifying Examination committee.

S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory): Satisfactory is equivalent to an A, B+, B, C+, or C. Unsatisfactory is equivalent to an F. **Independent Study in Higher Education** and **Field Experience in Higher Education** are graded S/U.

P/NC (Pass/No Credit): Pass is equivalent to an A, B+, B, C+, or C; No Credit is equivalent to an F. **Research in Higher Education** credits are graded P/NC.

TZ (Temporarily Not Graded): The TZ grade is assigned to students who never attended classes, stopped attending but did not officially withdraw, or were not graded by instructor(s).

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY

Cumulative GPA

To maintain satisfactory academic progress, the cumulative GPA at any point during program enrollment must meet or exceed 3.25/4.00. Cumulative GPA for students holding Rutgers fellowships or assistantships must meet or exceed 3.50/4.00 during all terms of enrollment.

Students admitted into the degree program conditionally must first satisfactorily meet all enrollment and/or GPA conditions specified; subsequently, a 3.25/4.00 cumulative GPA is required during all terms of enrollment. Students' satisfactory progress will be formally assessed and documented at least once/year in collaboration with the student, the faculty advisor, and the GPD.

Posting a cumulative GPA below 3.25/4.00 shall result in academic probation and a written warning. In consultation with the student and the GPD, the faculty advisor will formulate an individual improvement plan that includes actions and the deadline by which the student must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress. Student appeals or requests for an exception to the minimum cumulative GPA requirement may be initiated in consultation with the faculty advisor and must include supporting rationale(s). The appeal should be submitted to the Graduate Program Director. Please review the Appeals Process section for more information regarding the process.

Grades of “C” or lower

Earning one grade of C or lower in any course counted toward Ph.D. in Higher Education credits will result in a written warning and academic probation. Earning two grades of C or lower in any courses counted toward Ph.D. in Higher Education credits will ordinarily result in a second academic warning and recommendation for academic dismissal. Student appeals or requests for an exception to the policy on grades of C or lower may be initiated in consultation with the faculty advisor(s) and must include supporting rationale(s). The appeal should be first submitted to the Graduate Program Director. Please review the Appeals Process section for more information regarding the process.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT STATUS

Full-time and Part-time Status

To be considered full-time, students must be enrolled for nine credits per semester. Students enrolled in fewer than nine credits in a semester are considered part-time.

Note: All Ph.D. in Higher Education students who have passed the qualifying examination and are engaged in dissertation research must register for at least one credit of **Research in Higher Education** per semester until they have completed the degree, even if this results in accumulated research credits beyond the minimum required for the degree.

Enrollment Verification

Students at the dissertation stage of the program do NOT need to register for at least six credits of dissertation research to meet the student loan requirement of at least half-time status. Students at the dissertation stage who are enrolled in at least one dissertation research credit may maintain eligibility for student loans. Students must complete the Enrollment Certification of Doctoral Students and submit it to the Registrar’s Office to verify official status.

Time Limitation

Ordinarily, students have a maximum of seven calendar years to complete the Ph.D. in Higher Education Program. Students who have reached seven years in the program and have not earned the degree must submit a completed **SGS Application for Extension of Time** to the GPD.

Students who have not completed requirements for graduation after being enrolled in the degree program for ten calendar years may request another extension. However, SGS approval may be more difficult to obtain.

Withdrawal or Leave of Absence

Students in good academic standing (see Satisfactory Academic Progress policy) who wish to withdraw or take a leave of absence from the program must contact the GPD and send the completed **GSE Program Withdrawal – Permanent or Temporary Leave** form to Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant. Students who have not passed the qualifying examination may register as “matriculation continued” during the leave. However, students who have been admitted to candidacy (i.e., passed the qualifying examination) may no longer register as “matriculation continued.” Instead, they must register for at least one credit of Dissertation Research per academic term. Students may contact SGS about possible exceptions in cases with extraordinary circumstances.

Students who leave the degree program without officially withdrawing from their courses will receive failing grades in each course. The date on which the Registrar’s Office receives the written notice governs the academic and financial consequences of withdrawal. Ordinarily, students who leave the degree program after the 12th week of classes (fall or spring semester) are considered officially enrolled and will receive final grades for the semester.

Readmission or Restoration of Active Status

If the student misses one or more semesters of registration and wishes to resume matriculation in the Ph.D. Higher Education program, they will need to complete the **SGS Application for Readmission** form. The student must complete the form and forward it to the GPD for review and approval. Upon the director’s approval, the form is then sent to the Office of the School of Graduate Studies Dean.

Readmission into the degree program is not automatic. For example, faculty will consider the student’s prior performance in deciding whether to recommend readmission and the extent to which the student has articulated a plan of action to continue the program successfully.

For doctoral students who have passed the qualifying examinations (post-qualifying), the **Application for Restoration of Active Status** form must also be completed and submitted to the SGS Deans Office. This form will be reviewed, and the student will receive further instructions on the required tuition payment, which may be a minimum of 1 credit of in-state tuition at the current rate per semester missed, up to a maximum of five semesters.

APPEALS PROCESS

Students who believe their work (i.e., final grade, evaluation of their qualifying exam) has been evaluated unfairly or incorrectly should

1. discuss the matter with the faculty member(s) in question, and then, if the matter cannot be resolved to the student’s satisfaction,
2. appeal in writing to the Graduate Program Director.

If the GPD does not resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the student and/or the faculty member(s) in question, the matter shall be referred to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee can either address the issue or ask the GPD to constitute an ad hoc Committee of Review to resolve the issue. If the matter remains unresolved to the satisfaction of the student and/or faculty member(s) involved, it must be referred to the Dean of the SGS for final determination.

According to the School of Graduate Studies (<https://grad.rutgers.edu/current-students/policies-procedures-students>), the appeals process is described in the following:

In the case of a recommendation to dismiss a student or any other academic disagreement that cannot be resolved within the appeals process established by the program, students may appeal to the School of Graduate Studies. Appeals will be sent to the SGS Dean who may delegate a process of initial review to one or more senior academic deans within SGS. If initial review is not undertaken or fails to resolve the dispute, the student may file a formal appeal with SGS, which will be considered by the SGS Appeals committee according to the procedures specified in the SGS bylaws. Appeals must be filed no later than one semester following the occurrence of the issue that prompted the appeal.

In the matter of appealing the final evaluation of the qualifying exam, there are specific steps regarding the process and timeline. Please refer to “Appealing the Committee’s Decision” for more information.

ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT LEARNING AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Assessments are conducted at various points throughout the academic year to document student and degree program success.

During the first semester of their first year, students will complete a **HE First-Semester Student Progress Report** with their advisor and submit it to the GPD. Failure to submit this report may result in a hold being placed on registration for future academic term(s).

Rutgers course evaluations will be administered online toward the end of each semester. In addition to the standard questions, program-specific questions may also appear on the course evaluation. Therefore, students are strongly encouraged to complete detailed course evaluations at the end of each semester.

HE EOY Student Progress Reports are due each year by mid-spring semester. After completing a draft of the report, students must meet with their advisors to discuss coursework, accomplishments, goals, plans, and available resources. After the report is completed and signed by the student and the advisor, it should be submitted to the GPD. Failure to submit the annual report may result in a hold being placed on registration for future academic term(s).

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL AND HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION CERTIFICATION

Any research (including dissertation research) that involves data collection from individuals—students, teachers, members of the public, etc.—requires approval from Rutgers University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before *any* “human subjects” data are collected that will be

used in *any* way. The Rutgers IRB is charged with protecting the rights and welfare of human research subjects while facilitating ethical research. The IRB is part of the Office of Research and Regulatory Affairs (ORRA). ORRA provides subject matter expertise and administrative support to the IRB committee itself, which is comprised mainly of Rutgers faculty who are active researchers. In addition, the IRB committee includes individuals with expertise who are not part of the Rutgers community, as required by the federal regulations governing research with humans. Review by the IRB committee is required for research involving human subjects regardless of the funding source and applies to human subjects research without a dedicated funding stream. Because students should be engaged in research throughout their graduate careers, they must understand Protection of Human Subjects policies and practices that guide IRB committees' decisions. Click [here](#) to find information on different types of approval, criteria for approval, and forms to be completed.

All Rutgers University faculty, students, and other individuals involved in human subjects research must complete the applicable Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Basic Course and complete the CITI Refresher Course every three (3) years thereafter. IRB officials will not issue final approval of certain IRB submissions (New / CR / Key Personnel Amends) until it is verified that listed study personnel have completed the current human subjects research education requirements. Email IRBOffice@research.rutgers.edu for assistance.

TRANSFERRING PRIOR GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Eligible Courses for Transfer

Graduate courses completed prior to beginning the Ph.D. Higher Education as a matriculated student to the program *may* be accepted for credit toward a doctorate at Rutgers University if they meet the following three conditions:

1. The courses typically form part of the student's concentration or area of study.
2. The courses must have been completed within the preceding six years.
3. Students must have earned a grade of B or better in the courses.

Eligible courses for transfer include courses used to complete a graduate degree and/or courses taken prior to formal matriculation into the Ph.D. Higher Education program as a non-matriculated student.

The maximum number of transfer credits is 50% of the total required course credits for their program. For students in the Ph.D. in Higher Education Program, the maximum number of credits is 24.

Graduate credits that cannot be transferred include:

- Credits earned in thesis-related work;
- Independent study coursework; and
- Courses with grades lower than B.
- Courses taken over six years prior to the application for transfer credit without an approved appeal to the GPD.

SGS will accept up to six credits of graduate work taken as a Rutgers undergraduate toward the requirements for a graduate degree. These credits must be in excess of 120 credits submitted for the bachelor's degree. If a Rutgers school requires more than 120 credits for the bachelor's degree, six credits above 120 may be double-counted toward the two degrees. Each degree

program shall have *full discretion* in deciding whether to accept credits earned while an undergraduate toward a graduate degree. The SGS Dean or the Dean's designee shall use discretion to allow double-counting of an additional three credits in exceptional circumstances. An exception to the requirement that the credits being accepted be graduate credits may be made if the undergraduate course(s) in question would typically be part of the curriculum of the graduate degree program.

Applying for Transfer of Credit

Students should discuss the courses they are interested in transferring with their faculty advisor. After completing nine credits earned with a B or better as a matriculated student in the Ph.D. Higher Education program, students should prepare the following:

- **Copies of all course syllabi** for courses they wish to transfer taken outside of Rutgers
- **Official transcripts** for transfer courses completed outside of Rutgers
- **HE Plan of Study** that includes where transfer courses will be applied to complete program requirements. This POS must be approved by the student's faculty advisor.
- **SGS Application for Transfer of Credit.**
- **Appeal Statement** (if applicable) for courses that have been completed more than six years from the date of application.

Submit these documents as one packet to the GPD for their approval and signature or to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant if the GPD is unavailable. They will subsequently deliver the documents to the School of Graduate Studies.

INDEPENDENT STUDY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Independent studies are highly recommended elective options through which students obtain research experience prior to conducting the dissertation. Students identify a faculty member to undertake the independent study and then submit the completed, approved **Independent Study in Higher Education Contract** to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant prior to enrolling in the independent study credits. They will then supply the requisite SPN.

An independent study may be taken during the fall, spring, or summer semester. No more than six credits of Independent Study in Higher Education may be taken as elective coursework. Grade options are Satisfactory (S), Unsatisfactory (U), and Incomplete (IN). In addition, each Independent Study in Higher Education Contract must specify the number of credits appropriate to the contracted project(s): 1 credit = 40 project hours, 2 credits = 80 project hours, 3 credits = 120 project hours.

THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Purposes of the Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they have attained a broad base of knowledge and research expertise in an area of inquiry within the field of higher education and to confirm that students are appropriately prepared to undertake and successfully complete the dissertation. Specifically, students should demonstrate:

1. Command of broad higher education literature and particularly literature of their area of focus (e.g., governance; finance; diversity, equity, and inclusion; history; leadership; academic affairs; student affairs; the student experience, etc.)
2. Concentrated understanding of the research area (or specific topic) they intend to pursue in the dissertation.
3. Concentrated understanding of discursive norms, theories, methods, and methodological considerations relevant to their research area or topic (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, design-based research, ethnography, phenomenology, critical theory, historical analysis, discourse analysis, etc.).

All Incomplete grades must be resolved prior to scheduling the Qualifying Examination. Students requesting an exception to this policy must submit relevant rationale(s) in writing to the GPD along with documentation of support for the requested exception from all members of the Qualifying Examination committee.

Structure of the Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination has both a written and an oral component. The written examination must precede the oral examination. To achieve qualifying status, students must pass all portions of the qualifying examination.

Scheduling of the Qualifying Examination

Because multiple faculty members chair and/or serve on multiple qualifying examination committees, qualifying examinations will ordinarily be scheduled once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester:

Questions Received	Answers Due	Review Period*	Oral Exam (QE)*
9 am on the 4 th Monday in September	5 pm 21 days later (4 th Monday following receipt of questions)	5 pm 21 days later (ordinarily, 4 th Monday after the due date for Answers)	To be held no later than 21 days after the end of Review Period
9 am on the 4 th Monday in February	5 pm 21 days later (4 th Monday following receipt of questions)	5 pm 21 days later (ordinarily, 4 th Monday after the due date for Answers)	To be held no later than 21 days after the end of Review Period

**University breaks (e.g., Thanksgiving, Spring Break) may lengthen the Review Period and/or extend the oral examination deadline.*

Students may schedule their qualifying examination at a time other than the proscribed dates ONLY if the faculty advisor and ALL members of the qualifying examination committee approve, and ONLY with advance notice to the GPD with cc to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant.

To allow for adequate preparation time, the student should consult with the faculty advisor (i.e., the qualifying examination committee chair) at least two semesters in advance of the planned qualifying examination.

Before taking the qualifying examination, students must complete Part I of the SGS Application for Admission to Candidacy form. The student should then present this form to the Chair of the committee at the time of the *oral* qualifying examination. After all student committee members have signed the form, deliver the entire four-page form to the GPD or the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant if the GPD is unavailable. They will subsequently deliver the completed form to the School of Graduate Studies.

The Qualifying Examination Process

The following steps are intended to ensure a level of rigor appropriate to the purposes outlined above and ensure an appropriate level of consistency among all students taking qualifying exams within the program.

1. **Develop a Statement of Interest.** The student will write a brief (2–3 pages) description of their area of research interest and outline the general direction anticipated for the dissertation. The statement of interest must be reviewed and approved by the faculty advisor prior to the committee's formation.
2. **Develop a Reading List.** With the advisor's guidance, the student will develop a comprehensive reading list that provides a foundation for the qualifying examination's dissertation-related portion(s). These readings may include readings from coursework but should consist of in-depth readings that, in combination, serve to advance Purposes 1-3 listed above. The proposed reading list will be shared with the prospective committee members, and appointed committee members may provide feedback and suggestions for additional or alternate readings. This tailoring of the Reading List can be, but need not be, addressed via a committee meeting with the student. The Reading List should include approximately 40 works, including readings from prior coursework. The qualifying examination committee must approve the final Reading List.
3. **Assemble a Qualifying Examination Committee.** The qualifying examination committee consists of a minimum of three Ph.D. in Higher Education program faculty members. An additional external committee member (external to the Higher Education program faculty) is recommended but not required. Additional committee members may join the qualifying examination committee at the discretion of the Chair and the student. All qualifying examination committee members must meet SGS eligibility requirements for committee service. The faculty advisor (as committee chair), in consultation with the student, will identify rationales for the selection of each committee member (e.g., relevant content expertise, methodological expertise, etc.). Prospective committee members will be invited to serve by the advisor, who will forward the student's Statement of Interest to these individuals. Committee members should respond to committee invitations within one week.

The qualifying examination committee members may also serve on the student's dissertation committee, but it is not required. Once a student is admitted to candidacy, the qualifying examination committee dissolves.

4. **Prepare your paperwork.** Once committee membership is finalized, the student completes Part I of the School of Graduate Studies' **Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**. The student will bring this form to the oral defense to obtain signatures from the committee. The student will also need to have the **GSE HE Oral Examination Results (Qualifying Exam)** form ready.

Developing the Written Examination Questions

Under the advisor's leadership, the committee will develop and approve questions for the student. The student's advisor determines the number of questions in consultation with committee members. Ordinarily, the student will respond to three questions, each of which entails a response of 10–15 double-spaced pages, excluding reference lists. Committees may exercise discretion in designing questions such that one question may require more writing than another, and the student must be informed well in advance of differential expectations for response length. In all cases, responses to the written examination questions should total no more than 45 double-spaced pages, excluding reference lists. Responses must cite relevant literature sources, and all references to those sources must be formatted using APA style. Ordinarily but not necessarily, one qualifying examination question will consist of a complex higher education case study requiring the student's analyses and action plans with supporting references from core higher education courses.

Completing the Written Examination - Timeline

Students have 21 calendar days to complete the examination. Students submit copies of their written responses to each committee member by the end of that period, in the form requested by each committee member (e.g., electronic files, paper copies, etc.). If the advisor determines that extenuating circumstances warrant an extension of the original time period (e.g., medical or family emergencies), the advisor should send to the GPD a brief petition for extending the deadline with supporting rationale(s) and a proposed new deadline date. The GPD will approve or deny the petition within two business days; a denial must include supporting rationale(s). The advisor must not use an extension to increase the written examination's scope and/or demands. Similarly, the student may not request an extension simply to gain additional time to complete the written examination.

Evaluation of the Written Examination Responses

The committee members will review the student's responses and share their initial assessments of the student's responses with the student's advisor. This review process ordinarily concludes no more than 21 days (excluding university holidays) after the written examination submission deadline. Through the use of programs or software such as Turnitin, students' written examination responses may be analyzed for originality during this evaluation period.

The Oral Examination

The oral examination is an opportunity for committee members to question the student about the written examination responses, ask additional questions relevant to the student's selected

area of study, and confirm the student's command of applicable research methodologies and methods. Upon consultation with the advisor, the student will schedule a committee meeting for the oral examination no later than 21 days (excluding university holiday(s)) after the evaluation process above.

During the oral examination, students will:

1. Demonstrate command of broad higher education literature and particularly literature relevant to their area of focus (e.g., governance; finance; diversity, equity, and inclusion; history; leadership; academic affairs; student affairs; the student experience, etc.)
2. Demonstrate a concentrated understanding of the research area (or specific topic) they intend to pursue in the dissertation.
3. Demonstrate concentrated understanding of discursive norms, theories, methods, and methodological issues relevant to their research area or topic (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, design-based research, ethnography, phenomenology, critical theory, historical analysis, discourse analysis, etc.).
4. Demonstrate requisite knowledge and methodological expertise to undertake dissertation research.
5. Successfully clarify or elaborate on responses to the written examination questions.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of topics relevant to the area of study that may not have been addressed in the written examination.
7. Engage in academic discourse--effectively responding to committee members' questions and comments.

Students must complete the **Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy** form. Students must also have the **GSE Oral Examination Results Form (Qualifying Examination)** ready for committee signatures.

NOTE: Students are strongly discouraged from bringing refreshments or gifts of any kind to committee meetings.

Decision Process and Available Outcomes

The qualifying examination committee will ordinarily reach their decision immediately following the oral examination. Toward the end of the oral examination, the committee - under the committee chair's leadership--will evaluate the student's performance on the entire qualifying examination (the student will have been excused from the room prior to these deliberations). The decision represents the committee's holistic judgment. The student will be invited back into the room to receive the committee's decision and input or feedback from committee members.

Pass

A *Pass* decision signifies that the student has performed satisfactorily on the qualifying examination and will be advanced to doctoral candidacy.

Non-Pass with Revisions

If the committee determines that performance on either the written examination or the oral examination--or both--is unsatisfactory, the student will not have demonstrated readiness for doctoral candidacy, and the committee decision will be *Non-Pass with Revisions*. This signifies that revisions and/or a repeat of some aspect(s) of the qualifying examination are warranted.

With input from committee members, the committee chair provides clear directions for revision and provides the student and the GPD a summary rationale for the *Non-Pass with Revisions* decision plus recommendations for revision. Students will have 14 calendar days to complete all revisions. If the committee decides that a second oral examination is required, this meeting must be held no later than 14 days following the student's submission of the revisions.

Students who receive a *Non-Pass with Revisions* will also receive a written warning from the Graduate Program director. In addition to summarizing the qualifying exam's committee's recommendations for revisions, the warning letter will include additional recommendations to support their academic progress and an overview of the appeals processes for both the Ph.D. Higher Education program and the School of Graduate Studies.

Non-Pass

If student performance on the second round of the qualifying examination is unsatisfactory, the committee decision will be *Non-Pass*. As a result, the student will not be advanced to doctoral candidacy. A decision of *Non-Pass with Revisions* is unavailable to the committee as an option in the second round of the qualifying examination.

Students who receive a *Non-Pass* will receive a second written warning and recommendation for dismissal from the Graduate Program director. The second warning letter will include an overview of the appeals processes for both the Ph.D. Higher Education program and the School of Graduate Studies.

If the student wishes to earn a terminal M.A. in Higher Education after receiving a *Non-Pass*, a thesis-style project must be completed under the supervision of their faculty advisor. Please refer to "Earning the M.A. in Higher Education" section of the Handbook for more information.

Appealing the Committee's Decision/Recommendation

A student may appeal a *Non-Pass* (but not a *Non-Pass with Revisions*) decision in writing to the GPD no later than 14 calendar days following the committee's *Non-Pass* decision. Appeals must be limited to process issues, not the committee's decision of *Non-Pass*. If the appeal is denied, students may appeal to the School of Graduate Studies. Please refer to the "Appeals Process" section in the Handbook for more information.

Submission of Qualifying Examination Paperwork

After the conclusion of the initial oral examination, the following paperwork needs to be completed and submitted:

To the GSE Office of Student and Academic Services, cc to the GPD:

- GSE Ph.D. HE Oral Examination Results Form.** The Chair will indicate the committee's decision (Pass, Non-Pass with Revisions, or Non-Pass) and write up a summary that explains the committee's decision. This form must be submitted to the Office of Student and Academic Services *within two business days after the oral defense*.
- A single .pdf file consisting of the following:
 - Statement of Interest
 - Reading List
 - The written oral examination questions
 - The student's written oral examination responses

To the SGS Deans Office:

- (If the student earns a Pass) The student will submit the completed **Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy** form with signatures from the qualifying exam committee and GPD in the appropriate designation.

After the conclusion of revisions (and second oral defense if applicable), the following paperwork needs to be completed and submitted:

To the GSE Office of Student and Academic Services:

- GSE Ph.D. HE Oral Examination Results Form.** The Chair will indicate the committee's decision (Pass or Non-Pass) and write up a summary that explains the committee's decision. This form must be submitted to the Office of Student and Academic Services *within two business days after the oral defense*.
- A single .pdf file consisting of the following:
 - Statement of Interest
 - Reading List
 - The written oral examination questions
 - The student's written oral examination initial responses and revisions

To the SGS Deans Office:

- The student will submit the completed **Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy** form with signatures from the qualifying exam committee and GPD in the appropriate designation.

THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

Forming the Dissertation Committee

After successfully completing the qualifying examination, candidates will form their dissertation committees, consisting of:

- **A chair**, who is a full member of the Higher Education program faculty, OR two co-chairs, where an associate member and a full member of the Higher Education program faculty may co-chair with the full member serving as the administrative point of contact.
- At least **two additional committee members** who are full or associate members of the Higher Education program faculty, and

- At least **one committee member external to the Higher Education program faculty**. All prospective external committee members should be full members of the graduate faculty at Rutgers University or their home institutions. The candidate may petition the committee chair and GPD for an exception if a proposed external committee member does not meet the above requirement.

All prospective committee members must meet SGS eligibility requirements for committee service.

Immediately following the formation of the dissertation committee, the candidate must submit the **Dissertation Committee Form - Ph.D. in Higher Education Program** form to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant.

Developing the Dissertation Proposal

Ordinarily, candidates should enroll in the **Research and Dissertation Seminar** after successfully completing the qualifying examination process. In close collaboration with their respective faculty advisors, candidates will ordinarily write a full draft of their dissertation proposals OR contract with the seminar instructor to submit alternate written work appropriate to the candidate's stage in the dissertation process.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Schedule the Proposal Defense

Once the committee chair determines that the dissertation proposal is in final draft form, the candidate consults with the Chair to schedule a proposal defense meeting at which all members of the committee are present. No later than three weeks prior to the dissertation proposal defense meeting, the candidate must:

- Send written notification with day, time, and location to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant. They will respond with a request for additional information and then announce the dissertation proposal defense meeting to the larger academic community. The announcement must be made no later than two weeks prior to the dissertation proposal defense meeting.
- Provide each committee member a copy of the dissertation proposal.

Proposal Defense Meeting(s)

During the proposal defense meeting, candidates are expected to discuss their dissertation proposal and respond to committee members' questions and critiques. Committee members' input is offered to strengthen the proposal, and ordinarily, the Chair will take the lead in working with the candidate to make appropriate revisions. Toward the end of the proposal defense meeting, the candidate and any guests will be excused from the room, and committee members will vote to:

- Accept the proposal,
- Accept the proposal with minor revisions, OR
- Recommend major revisions followed by a second proposal defense meeting.

The candidate will submit the **Ph.D. HE Oral Examination Results Form (Dissertation Proposal)** within two business days from dissertation proposal defense to the Office of Student and Academic Services.

A candidate may have a maximum of two proposal defense committee meetings. The second dissertation proposal defense meeting, if warranted, should be scheduled within one academic term of the first dissertation proposal defense meeting. No later than three weeks prior to the second proposal defense meeting, the candidate must notify the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant (see above) and distribute the revised proposal to committee members. The candidate, no later than two business days after the the second defense, will submit a second **Ph.D. HE Oral Examination Results Form (Dissertation Proposal)** to the Office of Student and Academic Services.

Dissertation Development – Write-up and Coursework

As candidates write the dissertation and, in advance of the dissertation defense meeting, they should share draft chapters with members of the dissertation committee that the committee chair has approved for distribution. Candidates will work with their committee chair to address committee members' feedback and input on the dissertation before the dissertation defense meeting.

Candidates must complete a minimum of 24 credit hours of Dissertation Research. During the completion of these 24 credits, candidates should meet regularly with the committee chair (faculty advisor) to ensure timely and appropriate progress. In addition, the candidate will continue to complete and submit the HE EOY Student Progress Report each spring and meet with the advisor at least twice per academic year to document progress to date, goals, and resources.

Dissertation Defense

Scheduling the Defense

Once the committee chair judges the entire dissertation to be in final draft form, the candidate will schedule a dissertation defense meeting at which all members of the committee are present. Academic community members and guests may also attend the presentation portion of the dissertation defense.

No later than three weeks prior to the dissertation defense, the candidate must:

- Send written notification with day, time, location, and dissertation title and abstract to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant, who will send an announcement to the larger academic community. The announcement must be made no later than two weeks prior to the dissertation defense meeting.
- Provide each committee member a copy of the complete dissertation.

During the three weeks before the dissertation defense, if a committee member identifies minor concerns or problems, the committee member may contact the candidate and/or Chair prior to the scheduled dissertation defense meeting *or* raise the concerns at the dissertation defense. If a committee member identifies substantive, fundamental problems, the committee member

should first contact the committee chair, who will, in consultation with committee members, determine any necessary strategies to address major concerns or problems. At the Chair's discretion, the candidate may be required to postpone the dissertation defense, revise the dissertation, and reschedule the dissertation defense once major concerns and problems have been addressed. No later than three weeks prior to the rescheduled dissertation defense, the candidate must:

- Send written notification with day, time, location, and dissertation title and abstract to the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant, who will send an announcement to the larger academic community. The announcement must be made no later than two weeks prior to the dissertation defense meeting.
- Provide each committee member a copy of the full, revised dissertation.

The Dissertation Defense Meeting

During the dissertation defense meeting, the candidate should present a relatively brief overview of their research to the committee, other academic community members, and guests. The candidate will first respond to any questions and comments from visiting academic community members. After the candidate has addressed those questions, all visitors will be asked to leave the room while the committee examines the candidate. Once all questions have been addressed, the candidate will leave the room while the committee deliberates. When a decision is made, the candidate is invited into the room to receive the outcome of their defense.

At this point, if the decision is

PASS: No Revisions

Each committee member signs the *Title Page* prepared by the candidate. Within two business days of the dissertation defense, the **GSE Oral Examination Results Form (Dissertation)** and the **SGS Application for Admission to Candidacy form** must be submitted to the GPD or the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant if the GPD is unavailable. They will subsequently deliver the completed **SGS Application for Admission to Candidacy form** to the SGS Dean's Office.

PASS: Minor Revisions or PASS: Major Revisions

Within two business days of the dissertation defense, the **GSE Oral Examination Results Form (Dissertation)** must be submitted to the GPD or the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant if the GPD is unavailable.

The student will work with their dissertation chair to clarify the required revisions and the process and timeline for submitting the revisions for final review. The dissertation chair may hold on to the Title Page and not sign until their final approval of revisions.

Once the revisions are approved, the student will subsequently deliver the completed **SGS Application for Admission to Candidacy form** to the GPD or the Ph.D. Higher Education Administrative Assistant if the GPD is unavailable. They will subsequently deliver the completed **SGS Application for Admission to Candidacy form** to the SGS Dean's Office.

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Division of Student Affairs

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Ph.D. in Higher Education Program's Seminar Series

Approximately twice per semester during the academic year, the Ph.D. in Higher Education Program hosts a speaker or panel to address a topic relevant to higher education. Refreshments are provided, and RSVPs are ordinarily required. Students and faculty are encouraged to attend these events.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND SCHOLARLY OPPORTUNITIES

Many regional, national, and international conferences featuring higher education research and scholarship are held throughout the year. Students are strongly encouraged to attend and present at these conferences. While there are dozens of scholarly and professional organizations and conferences, below are examples of major conferences and the months in which they ordinarily occur:

- Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) - Annual Meeting in November
- American Educational Research Association (AERA) - Annual Meeting in April
- College Student Educators International (ACPA) - Annual Meeting in March
- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) - Annual Meeting in March

Students should monitor the appropriate websites to learn of submission requirements and deadlines. Conference calls for proposals are ordinarily released, and submission deadlines are set several months before the actual conference.

Various scholarly opportunities (e.g., calls for proposals, calls for chapters, grant programs, scholarly leadership) are distributed to program faculty and students as they are received. Some of these opportunities may be conducive to an Independent Study in Higher Education or other pre-dissertation research projects.

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Graduate Fellowships

All applicants for full-time study in the Ph.D. in Higher Education program are automatically considered for available three-year graduate fellowship awards. The number of available fellowships is limited. Graduate Fellows receive a stipend, tuition scholarship, and health insurance for three years OR for a total of 78 credit hours (inclusive of transfer credits), whichever comes first. Ordinarily, Rutgers graduate fellowships do not cover student fees.

Graduate Assistantships

All applicants for full-time study in the Ph.D. in Higher Education program are automatically considered for available graduate assistantships. The AAUP-AFT collective bargaining agreement covering Rutgers faculty members determines graduate assistantship parameters and benefits.

Scholarships, fellowships, and grants are also available from a number of internal and external sources (e.g., the federal government, foundations). Students are strongly encouraged to apply for funding to support all phases of their doctoral study.

School of Graduate Studies

The School of Graduate Studies assists students with identifying and applying for merit-based financial assistance, research grants, and other opportunities through GradFund. In addition, SGS sponsors a conference travel funding program for students. Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis, and available award funding is capped for each SGS graduate program.

Graduate School of Education Scholarships

The GSE awards partial scholarship funding via a competitive annual process ([click here](#)). Depending on available funding, the GSE Student Affairs Committee (GSAC) provides monetary reimbursement to graduate students participating in and presenting at international, national, regional, state scholarly, and professional conferences. GSAC funds can be used to defer the costs of conference registration, travel, and lodging. Ordinarily, graduate students are eligible to receive up to \$1200.00 per year, not to exceed \$400.00 for a single event at which they present and \$200.00 for a single event they attend.

Tuition Bill Payment

Prior to the start of each semester, tuition bills are available online by accessing this [link](#) and entering NetID and password. The GSE Business Office (first floor in the GSE) processes fellowship, scholarship, and tuition remission awards. Students will then submit paperwork to the Office of Student Accounting (located in Records Hall). For more information regarding tuition and fees, click [here](#). Be sure to complete the online “R U Here?” form each academic term.

Student Health Insurance

Full-time students will automatically pay a fee for Rutgers University Health Services and BASIC insurance. Part-time students may elect to pay for student health insurance. Regardless of the number of credits enrolled, all international students automatically have BASIC and MAJOR health insurance added to their term bills. For more information about student health insurance, please visit the [website](#).

STUDENT FAQs

How do I find research opportunities?

Program-level emails to students and faculty may include research opportunities. It is up to the student to speak with their advisor, make their interests known, and search for opportunities. Meeting with HE program faculty members is a good starting point. Review the program faculty members' online profiles and CVs and set up a meeting to discuss potential research opportunities. Faculty without current opportunities may refer students to other faculty members for further exploration. You may review profiles of faculty members in other Rutgers departments or programs and reach out individually if you identify shared research interests or areas of expertise. Other HE students may refer newer students to promising opportunities or possibilities. Finally, consult networks to identify research opportunities. Conferences are excellent sources of information about current research and to connect with others who may be seeking research partnerships.

How do I find teaching opportunities?

Interested students may reach out to faculty members who teach courses of interest. The Ph.D. in Higher Education program does not offer teaching assistantships, but some students may teach as a PTL (part-time lecturer). Some standing opportunities to teach Rutgers undergraduates, such as the Students in Transition Seminar, are also available.

If I want to switch advisors, when is an appropriate time, and how do I do this?

Students may change faculty advisors at any time following conversations and mutual agreement among the student, the current advisor, and the prospective advisor. No later than two weeks following any change of advisor, students must report the change to the GPD and the Ph.D. Higher Education administrative assistant using the GSE Change of Advisor form. Additionally, at two specific points during the Ph.D. in Higher Education program, students either change their faculty advisor or affirm their interest in continuing work with the current advisor:

when constituting the qualifying examination committee and before commencing work on the dissertation proposal.

How do I find out which classes are being offered and when I should take them?

Consult the Rutgers online schedule of classes to discover courses offered for the upcoming semester(s). Ordinarily, the schedule is released around the halfway point of the current semester. The online schedule of classes also archives a list of courses offered during previous academic terms, which can help determine the frequency and availability of specific courses. The faculty advisor must approve all coursework intended to count toward the Ph.D. in Higher Education.

Like most doctoral programs, the Ph.D. in Higher Education is a highly individualized and tailored experience. No two students will likely take the same courses at the same time or begin (or complete) dissertation work at the same time. This is especially the case for students enrolled part-time in the degree program. Students should meet with their advisors at least once per academic term to discuss course planning, qualifying examination preparation and scheduling, and dissertation timelines.

Why are other students receiving different information and recommendations from their advisors regarding transfer coursework, course selection, etc.?

As mentioned above, doctoral programs are highly tailored to each student, so students should not necessarily expect the advice and direction they receive from their advisors to be the same as that received by other students with different advisors. In accordance with each student's background, skills, interests, goals, and needs, advisors may approve or deny or recommend different courses to different advisees.

How do I provide feedback and voice concerns regarding the program or my experiences?

Students should first discuss such items with the faculty advisor. The student or advisor may then reach out to the GPD. If students have concerns regarding specific courses, they should visit directly with the instructor. Course instructors receive course evaluations after the semester is over, so students are encouraged to thoughtfully complete the evaluation for each course, providing feedback, input, and suggestions to the course instructor(s).

What should I expect to happen after my feedback has been provided?

It depends on the situation. For example, if a student voices concerns about a peer, the student should not expect to receive follow-up information. Student, faculty, and staff feedback and input all assist in maintaining a strong and healthy degree program. The GPD, Executive Committee members, and the program faculty are all charged with making changes to advance the program and student success. Student concerns, feedback, and input are ultimately valuable contributions to these deliberations.

How do I manage my expectations of fellow students regarding cohesiveness, social engagement, support, or bonding?

Each entering group of students is comprised of part-time and full-time students with varying commitments and lives. While the program hosts some events such as the Seminar Series to promote interaction, it is up to students to cultivate meaningful relationships with fellow students. The expectations and desires for student-student relationships differ but could manifest as, for example, study groups, writing groups, research partnerships, sources of mutual support, or happy hour companions. Ideally, students will be supportive and receive support from their fellow students; Close friendships may or may not develop. If students are struggling with issues or conflicts with one or more fellow students, the individuals involved should first attempt to address and discuss the concerns. The faculty advisor may provide information and suggestions to their advisees about negotiating challenging peer conversations.