



RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK
Graduate School of Education

Education Doctorate **Handbook**

Cohort 2025-2026

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
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Part I. Introduction

The Rutgers Graduate School of Education (GSE) is New Jersey's premier institution of higher education for doctoral work in education. The GSE has offered the Ed.D. since 1930 and the Ph.D. since 1997. In 2007, the GSE became a charter member of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). Through this affiliation, Rutgers GSE aims to prepare educational leaders who are scholarly practitioners with the skills and expertise to inquire into and resolve problems of practice.

The CPED Professional Doctorate in education:

- Is framed around questions of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice.
- Prepares leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.
- Provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships.
- Provides field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and use multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions.
- Is grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge, which links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry.
- Emphasizes the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge and practice.

The Ed.D. Program is designed to be completed over four years. The coursework, along with any available or recommended writing support, is designed to expand students' understanding of the contexts in which they work, build a knowledge base of the extant research in their concentrations, and develop the research and academic writing skills necessary to complete a dissertation.

Program Goals

The Ed.D. degree helps future and current leaders develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to solve problems of practice and improve instructional quality. Graduates will learn to be change agents who improve the lives of students and their families and communities. The program is specifically designed for working professionals, providing a sequence of coursework and hands-on leadership experiences along with individualized mentoring.

Students will learn how to be change agents in educational settings by:

1. Recognizing and valuing multiple perspectives.
2. Using theory and research to frame, diagnose, and respond to problems of practice.
3. Developing a professional knowledge base that integrates practical and research knowledge.
4. Conducting research to guide improvement and inform policy, programs, and practice.
5. Identifying instances and patterns of discrimination and inequality and advocating for social justice; and
6. Communicating and collaborating to build partnerships within and across communities.

Problems of Practice

The Education Doctorate at Rutgers is designed to develop the skills of scholarly practitioners who are able to positively influence the lives of students, families, and communities. Our program is founded on the belief that inquiry and decision making skills are often most effectively cultivated through investigating problems of practice, and that the student's work place is one of the most effective learning environments to test and develop these skills. Students are strongly encouraged throughout their program to model their research endeavors toward solving problems of practice and to incorporate their professional practice into all scholarly pursuits.

Program Description

The Rutgers Ed.D. Program is intended for working professionals. Students take 6 credits in the summer, fall and spring . Students begin their doctoral education as part of a cohort and are encouraged to follow the curriculum sequence outlined in Part II in order to complete the program with their cohort in approximately four years. Alternative sequences can be followed as needed. However, the cohort is a key element of the learning experience in this program.

Each doctoral student is required to complete a program composed of three interrelated components: 18 credits of core courses, 18 credits of concentration courses, and 24 credits of dissertation experience. The core is a sequence of classes designed to provide students with foundational knowledge and skills relevant to leading in educational contexts. The concentration allows students to acquire specialized knowledge within an area of interest. The Ed.D. program culminates with a 15-18 month-long dissertation experience.

The Core

The core is a group of 6 courses (18 credits) that are required of all students, regardless of their concentration. Students take courses in each of four focus areas: a) Leadership, Organizations and Change b) Social Contexts of Education c) Learners and Learning and d) Inquiry. These broad areas are essential framing lenses for understanding problems of practice in education.

In the core course on Leadership, students learn about facilitating change at an organizational and systems level as well as the individual and classroom level. This class exposes students to a range of cases for considering the complexities of leadership. In the core sequence on Social Contexts, students learn how to critically analyze the factors (historical, economic, political, sociological, historical, and epistemological) that contribute to shifts in educational theory and practice. In the course on Learners and Learning, the purpose is to update students' knowledge about learning theory and its uses in practice so that educational leaders know what good learning looks like. The Inquiry sequence of the core is designed to help students gain an understanding of the design components that go into research including the dissertation project they will complete. Students gain experience using a range of inquiry tools for solving problems of practice and as well as an understanding of program evaluation and/or action research designs that they are likely to use as scholarly practitioners and educational leaders.

The Concentrations

The Ed.D. Program at Rutgers allows students to choose from among one of five areas of specialization. This provides the opportunity for students to acquire context-specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to particular change agent roles. The concentration is composed of 6 courses (18 credits). The concentrations available for study are:

1. Design of Learning Environments

The goal of this concentration is to educate students on the science of designing learning environments/contexts, and on the principles, frameworks, and theories of learning that undergird the design of learning environments. This concentration will prepare students to engage in the various aspects of design and evaluation. The concentration is intended for individuals with who have a particular focus on the design of learning contexts and interventions in a wide range of settings from formal to informal, in-person to online, and who can benefit from the use of tools that include collaboration and technology. This includes individuals who work in museums or libraries, are extension educators (4H), educators in other informal environments, corporate training staff, education software designers, classroom teachers, district curriculum developers, teacher educators, or various higher education professionals.

2. PK-12 Educational Leadership

The PK-12 Educational Leadership option helps educational leaders—including school-level, district-level, and teacher leaders—develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to act as equity-oriented change agents in their schools and communities. Students in this concentration will be challenged to understand and use research effectively to address problems of practice, and to use data to lead and support others in various improvement efforts focused on equitable teaching and learning. Current and aspiring classroom, school, and district PK-12 educators are encouraged to apply for admission into this concentration option.

3. Higher Education Leadership

This option focuses on a study of the complexities of colleges and universities, their missions, contexts, challenges, and successes. This option prepares higher education leaders and practitioners who will take their scholarship and knowledge, and apply it to effecting change and development in a range of higher education settings such as universities and colleges, state or federal governing and coordinating boards.

4. Education, Culture and Society

This concentration is designed to attract a diverse cohort of students who desire systematic and rigorous advanced study of theoretical and practical issues of social and educational equity, change, and reform. The intended audience for this concentration is school and higher education leaders, reformers, policy-makers, and teachers. The goal is to enact improvements to practice and thus to improve the process of education. Students in this concentration will be challenged to understand and use research and data effectively in meeting the problems of practice, particularly those related to equity and social justice.

5. Special Education

This concentration is designed to prepare leadership personnel in special education for the following roles: (a) administrators of special education services in schools; (b) teacher educators at colleges and universities; (c) teacher leaders among school faculty; and (d) leaders in allied service agencies and organizations. The intended audience might include those aspiring to become a special education supervisor, principals, or other educational leaders who want to further develop expertise in special education. Students in this concentration will: (a) develop the capacity to identify, critique, design, implement and test evidence-based practices in special education; (b) study a problem of practice related to their professional identity focused on a challenge in real world educational settings, using their choice of research methodology (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods or single

case design); and (c) become empowered advocates and activists who partner with individuals with disabilities and their families to promote independence and well-being across the life span. This program does not include coursework leading to a New Jersey school personnel license.

The Dissertation

After successful completion of the qualifying exam process (see page 19), students are required to complete a dissertation. The dissertation requires students to identify and investigate a problem of practice systematically using current literature and inquiry methodology. Most students will work in assigned dissertation groups under the supervision of a dissertation chair.

Part II. Program Requirements

The Ed.D. Program consists of three interrelated program components: the core, a concentration, and a dissertation experience. Students are also required to pass a Qualifying Exam immediately prior to engaging in the dissertation experience. The Core is required of all students, regardless of Concentration. It is composed of 6 courses.

The Core (18 credits)

Leadership : Change Process (15:255:612)

Social Contexts 1: Sociocultural Foundations of Education (15:255:615)

Social Contexts 2: History of Educational Reform (15:255:617)

Learners and Learning 1: Key Principles of Learning (15:255:606)

Inquiry 1: Inquiry I (15:255:603)

Inquiry 2: Inquiry II (15:255:602)

The Concentrations

Each student is required to choose one concentration area of study. Suggested timelines for program completion are provided below. Students who need to extend their program timeline should do so with the guidance of their concentration coordinator. Concentration coordinators have the expertise necessary to formulate an appropriate alternative timeline, based on students' needs and course schedules and availability.

Design of Learning Environments (18 Credits)

Design of Learning Environments (DLE) Concentration Learning Goals

Students will learn to:

- Understand the process of design and how it applies specifically to the design of learning environments.
- Know the theoretical foundation and empirical support for common learning environment approaches or features.
- Engage in the process of designing learning environments.
- Understand how to conduct design-based research.

- Design, evaluate, and revise existing learning environment designs enacted in real settings.

This concentration has 3 required courses. Students must also take at least 2 courses out of 4 concentration electives (listed below). There is 1 additional elective for which students can select a course that will enhance content area knowledge or technical/methodological expertise. Students will follow a schedule similar to the one below.

	Course Number	Course Name	Credits	
			Grad	Total
Summer 1	15:255:606	Key Principles of Learning – Learners and Learning	3	6
	15:255:615	Social Contexts I: Sociocultural Foundations of Education	3	
Fall 1	15:255:603	Inquiry I	3	6
	15:262:603	Design of Learning Environments	3	
Spring 1	15:255:602	Inquiry II	3	6
	15:262:625	Design Research Practicum	3	
Summer 2	15:255:612	Leadership II: Change Process	3	6
	15:255:617	Social Contexts II: History of Educational Reform	3	
Fall 2	15:262:610	Design-Based Research	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Spring 2		Concentration Elective	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Summer 3		Dissertation: Proposal	6	6
Fall 3		Dissertation: Data Collection	6	6
Spring 3		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Summer 4		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Total Credits			60	

DLE Required Courses:

- Design of Learning Environments (15:262:603)
- Design Based Research (15:262:610)
- Design research Practicum (15:262:625)

DLE Concentration Electives (students must take at least 2):

- Cognition, Collaboration and Technology (15:262:622)
- Problem-based Learning (15:295:620)
- Cooperative and Collaborative Learning (15:295:510)

- Learning in Informal Contexts (15:262:620)
- Motivation in the Classroom (15:295:518)

Other Elective (in consultation with concentration coordinator):

- Race, Empire, and Education (15:310:512)
- Urban Education (15:310:542)
- Introduction to Teaching with Digital Tools (15:255:503)
- Curriculum and Instruction (15:310:500)
- Developing Digital E-Learning Environments (15:255:506)
- Multimodal and Digital Literacies (15:252:522)
- Psychology of Learning (15:295:580)
- Motivation in the Classroom (15:295:518)
- Educational Psychology II: Theories of Cognition and Instruction (16:300:582)
- Web-Based Multimedia Design for Educators (15:255:504)
- Gender and Education (15:310:540)
- Foundations of Human Resources Development (15:233:560)
- Models of Professional Development and Change (15:267:604)

PK-12 Educational Leadership (18 Credits)

PK-12 Educational Leadership (PK12EL) Concentration Learning Goals

Students will learn to:

- Lead organizational learning and change so that there is a collective sense of ownership and improvements can be sustained over time.
- Serve as learning-focused leaders who create the conditions and engage in the practices necessary for educators to experience effective professional learning.
- Serve as equity-focused leaders who confront and alter institutional biases that contribute to student marginalization, deficit-based schooling and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.

This concentration consists of 3 required concentration courses and 3 electives. Electives must be chosen in consultation with your concentration coordinator. Students have the option of choosing one of the following focus areas: Equity, Learning, or Policy. Students will follow a schedule similar to the one below.

		Course Name	Credits
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	Course Number		Grad	Total
Summer 1	15:255:606	Key Principles of Learning – Learners and Learning	3	6
	15:255:615	Social Contexts I: Sociocultural Foundations of Education	3	
Fall 1	15:255:603	Inquiry I	3	6
	15:230:624	Leading for Instructional Equity	3	
Spring 1	15:255:602	Inquiry II	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Summer 2	15:255:612	Leadership: Change Process	3	6
	15:255:617	Social Contexts II: History of Educational Reform	3	
Fall 2	16:300:509	Qualitative Research Methods I	3	6
	15:267:62	Teacher Leadership: Theory and Practice	3	
Spring 2	16:300:513	Qualitative Research Methods in Education II: Design and Analysis	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Summer 3		Dissertation: Proposal	6	6
Fall 3		Dissertation: Data Collection	6	6
Spring 3		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Summer 4		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Total Credits			60	

Required PK12EL Courses:

Leading for Instructional Equity (15:230:624)

Teacher Leadership: Theory and Practice (15:267:622)

Qualitative Research Methods in Education: Introduction (16:300:509) (There is an option to take alternative methods courses by advisement only.)

Recommended PK12EL Electives (students must take 3) to be chosen in consultation with your concentration coordinator:

- Equity Focus:
 - Leading for Social Justice (15:230:609)
 - Race, Empire, and Education (15:310:512)
 - Urban Education (15:310:542)
 - History of African-American Education (15:310:561)
 - Gender and Education (15:310:540)
 - Queer Issues in Schools (15:310:569)
 - Comparative Education (15:310:503)
- Learning Focus:
 - Teacher Leadership: Theory and Practice (15:267:622)
 - Models of Professional Development and Change (15:267:604)

- Educating Teachers (15:267:610)
- Design of Learning Environments (15:262:603)
- Problem-based Learning (15:295:620)
- Cooperative and Collaborative Learning (15:295:510)
- Policy Focus:
 - Education Policy Development to Advance Equity and Effectiveness (15:230:618)
 - Economics of Education: Equity and Efficiency (16:300:541)
 - Education Policy Implementation: US and International (15:230:508)
 - Fiscal Policy and Management in Education (15:230:622)
 - Assessment, Data, and Problem Solving (15:230:615)

Higher Education Leadership (18 Credits)

Higher Education Leadership (EL-Higher Ed) Concentration Learning Goals

Students will

1. Cultivate the ability to frame meaningful problems of practice in higher education settings and apply appropriate research methodologies—quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods—to address practice-based questions.
2. Integrate scholarly knowledge with professional experience to improve policies, practices, and equity in higher education.
3. Explore and challenge assumptions, values, and structures that contribute to inequity in higher education.
4. Produce original, practice-oriented research that contributes to the knowledge base in higher education leadership.

This concentration consists of 3 required concentration courses and 3 electives. Electives must be chosen in consultation with your concentration coordinator. Students will follow a schedule similar to the one below.

	Course Number	Course Name	Credits	
			Grad	Total
Summer 1	15:255:606	Key Principles of Learning – Learners and Learning	3	6
	15:255:615	Social Contexts I: Sociocultural Foundations of Education	3	
Fall 1	15:255:603	Inquiry I	3	6
	16:507:510	Higher Education Structures and Governance (Higher Ed)	3	
Spring 1	15:255:602	Inquiry II	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
	15:255:612	Leadership: Change Process	3	6

Summer 2	15:255:617	Social Contexts II: History of Educational Reform	3	
Fall 2	16:300:509	Qualitative Research Methods I	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Spring 2	16:300:513	Concentration Elective	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Summer 3		Dissertation: Proposal	6	6
Fall 3		Dissertation: Data Collection	6	6
Spring 3		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Summer 4		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Total Credits			60	

Required EL-Higher Ed Courses:

16:507:510, Higher Education Structures and Governance

16:300:509 Qualitative Research Methods in Education: Introduction (There is an option to take alternative methods courses by advisement only.)

Recommended EL-Higher Ed Electives (students must take 3 from this list or anywhere across the university) to be chosen in consultation with your concentration coordinator:

- 16:507:530, Higher Education Leadership - Theory, Research, Practice
- Diversity and Multiculturalism in Higher Education (16:507:520)
- Higher Education Law (16:507:525)
- Economics and Finance of Higher Education (16:507:530)
- History of Higher Education in the US (16:507:535)
- Race, Empire, and Education (15:310:512)
- History of African-American Education (15:310:561)
- Gender and Education (15:310:540)
- Queer Issues in Schools (15:310:569)
- Comparative Education (15:310:503)
- Design of Learning Environments (15:262:603)
- Problem-based Learning (15:295:620)
- Cooperative and Collaborative Learning (15:295:510)
- Education Policy Development to Advance Equity and Effectiveness (15:230:618)
- Economics of Education: Equity and Efficiency (16:300:541)
- Education Policy Implementation: US and International (15:230:508)
- Fiscal Policy and Management in Education (15:230:622)

Education, Culture and Society (18 Credits)

Education, Culture and Society (ECS) Concentration Learning Goals

Students will learn to:

- Develop theoretical frameworks and perspectives critical to understanding education as a social process situated in political, historical, social, economic and cultural contexts.
- Understand issues of social justice and equity in educational settings, informed by theory and research.
- Employ robust methods of inquiry to investigate their particular area of research interest.

There are 3 required concentration courses for the ECS concentration and 3 elective courses. You should choose electives that are most relevant to your dissertation interests. Electives must be chosen in consultation with your concentration coordinator.

- Education and Society
- Qualitative Research Methods in Education: Introduction (16:300:509)
- Qualitative Research Methods in Education: Design and Analysis (16:300:513)

Students will follow a schedule similar to the one below.

	Course Number	Course Name	Credits	
			Grad	Total
Summer 1	15:255:606	Key Principles of Learning – Learners and Learning	3	6
	15:255:615	Social Contexts I: Sociocultural Foundations of Education	3	
Fall 1	15:255:603	Inquiry I	3	6
	15:310:551	Education and Society	3	
Spring 1	15:255:602	Inquiry II	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Summer 2	15:255:612	Leadership II: Change Process	3	6
	15:255:617	Social Contexts II: History of Educational Reform	3	
Fall 2	16:300:509	Qualitative Research Methods in Education: Introduction	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	
Spring 2	16:300:513	Qualitative Research Methods in Education II: Design and Analysis	3	6
		Concentration Elective	3	

Summer 3		Dissertation: Proposal	6	6
Fall 3		Dissertation: Data Collection	6	6
Spring 3		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Summer 4		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
		Total Credits	60	

Required ECS Concentration Courses:

- Education and Society (15:310:551)
- Qualitative Research Methods in Education: Introduction (16:300:509)
- Qualitative Research Methods in Education: Design and Analysis (16:300:513)

*There is an option to take alternative methods courses by advisement only.

ECS Electives (students must take 3)

Students can choose their electives from among the ECS courses or from across the university.

Electives should be chosen in consultation with the concentration coordinator:

- Race, Empire and Education Focus:
 - History of African American Education (15:310:561)
 - Race, Empire, and Education (15:310:512)
 - Urban Education (15:310:542)
- Global Focus:
 - Comparative Education (15:310:503)
 - Migration, Globalization, and US Education (15:310:568)
- Higher Education Focus:
 - History of Higher Education in the US (16:507:535)
 - Any additional higher education (507) course in the GSE
- Gender and Sexuality Focus:
 - Gender and Education (15:310:540)
 - Leading for Social Justice: Navigating Through Policy, Politics, and the Law (15:230:609)
 - Queer Issues in Schools (15:310:569)

Special Education (18 Credits)

Special Education (SE) Concentration Learning Goals

Students in the Special Education concentration will

- Develop the capacity to identify, critique, design, implement and test evidence-based practices in special education.
- Study a problem of practice related to their professional identity focused on a challenge in real world educational settings, using their choice of research methodology (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods or single case design).
- Become empowered advocates and activists who partner with individuals with disabilities and their families to promote independence and well-being across the life span.

This concentration consists of 4 required courses, 2 electives that must be chosen in consultation with your concentration coordinator. Students will follow a schedule similar to the one below.

	Course Number	Course Name	Credits	
			Grad	Total
Summer 1	15:255:606	Key Principles of Learning – Learners and Learning	3	6
	15:255:615	Social Contexts I: Sociocultural Foundations of Education	3	
Fall 1	15:255:603	Inquiry I	3	6
	15:293:605	Seminar in Special Education	3	
Spring 1	15:255:602	Inquiry II	3	6
	15:293:615	Designing Interventions and Measuring Outcomes in Special Education	3	
Summer 2	15:255:612	Leadership II: Change Process	3	6
	15:255:617	Social Contexts II: History of Educational Reform	3	
Fall 2	15:291:518	Quantitative Educational Research Design	3	6
		Elective	3	
Spring 2	15:293:633	Internship in Special Education	3	6
		Elective	3	
Summer 3		Dissertation: Proposal	6	6
Fall 3		Dissertation: Data Collection	6	6
Spring 3		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Summer 4		Dissertation: Writing and Analysis	6	6
Total Credits			60	

Required SE Concentration Courses:

- Seminar in Special Education (15:293:605)
- Quantitative Educational Research Design (15:291:518)
- Designing Interventions and Measuring Outcomes in Special Education (15:293:615)
- Internship in Special Education (15:293:633)

SE Electives:

- Learning Disabilities (15:293:522)
- Inclusive Teaching in Education (15:293:523)
- School Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents (15:293:514)
- New Jersey Special Education Law (15:293:610)

Part III: Qualifying Exam Process

Purpose

The qualifying exam process is designed to enable students to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have learned through course work as well as their capacity to design a successful dissertation study. The qualifying exams take place over winter break, typically between the second fall and second spring semesters of the program. The qualifying process gives students a chance to engage in summative reflection, demonstrate what they have learned, and begin to finalize their thoughts on a dissertation topic prior to beginning the proposal writing process in the summer. The exam consists of two questions. Each response is approximately 15-20 pages long.

Question # 1 is developed by faculty from each respective concentration and provides students the opportunity to demonstrate learning related to concentration-specific learning goals.

Question #2 is the same for all students across all concentrations and is aimed at helping them look toward their dissertation work. In this paper, students begin to develop aspects of their dissertation proposal based on the problem that they are interested in investigating for their dissertation. Students will 1) introduce and frame the problem, 2) provide a literature review that synthesizes existing empirical and conceptual studies and creates an argument for the proposed study and, 3) outline a research design and methodology.

Eligibility

To sit for the Qualifying Exam students must have completed at least 15 credits of core courses (six of which must be Inquiry I and Inquiry II) as well as 15 credits of their concentration courses. A student may have no more than one outstanding "Incomplete" grade.

Procedures

The qualifying exam is offered once each year.

- Students receive qualifying questions on or before December 1st
- Students submit responses to qualifying questions on the first day of the Spring semester.
- Each response paper will have 2 reviewers; one will be assigned as “lead” reviewer.
- After independently reviewing each question response, reviewers will work together to:
 - come to a consensus on common final scores across each rubric component
 - provide clear and comprehensive feedback/comments on each paper response,
 - submit a combined rubric to the Ed.D. Administrator
- Qualifying papers are graded as “Pass” or “Revise and Resubmit.”

- Students receive a combined rubric with common scores from the 2 reviewers AND tracked changes/comments and feedback on each of the exam papers.
- Students are notified of their results within 6 weeks of submission. Students must pass both papers to complete the qualifying process. In the case of disagreement between reviewers about a paper, the Ed.D. Director will assign a third independent reviewer. The decision of the third reviewer will be accepted as the final decision.
- For papers that have been graded as “Revise and Resubmit”, the “lead” reviewer of each paper will meet with the student within 2 weeks of receiving paper response results to provide written and verbal feedback (using the combined rubric to guide the conversation with the student) and answer any questions the student may have about the initial scores and written feedback the reviewers provided. Feedback sessions should include the following discussion points:
 - Strengths of the paper(s)
 - Areas where the student needs to improve
 - Conceptual and/or nuts-and-bolts feedback (including any writing concerns)
 - Suggestions for moving forward with revisions, and where appropriate, for preparing the future dissertation proposal
- If a student does not pass one or both qualifying papers (i.e., has been graded Revise & Resubmit), the student has exactly one month from the date of the face-to-face meeting with the lead reviewer to revise the paper(s). *After the feedback meeting with the reviewer, students may not solicit their reviewers during this interim 1 month revision period. Reviewers must not offer or provide feedback during this time.* The two original reviewers will review the revised paper(s). Results should be provided within 2 weeks of receipt of the revisions.
- If there is a disagreement between reviewers about the revised paper(s) OR the paper is graded as “Fail”, the Ed.D. Director will assign an independent third reviewer. If the third reader disagrees with the “Fail” grade they must confer with the original two readers to try to reach a consensus. If no agreement can be reached, the matter will be handed over to the EdD Executive Committee whose decision will be final. If either paper is graded as “Fail” by the third reviewer or by decision of the Executive Committee, the student will fail the qualifying process and will be dismissed from the program.

NOTE: The student will have **one** opportunity to revise and resubmit paper(s). If **either** paper does not pass after this second attempt (i.e., the 30-day revision & resubmission), **the student will fail the qualifying process and will be dismissed from the program.**

Next Steps

Following successful completion of the Qualifying Exam, each student will be assigned to a dissertation group and registered for 3 credits with the corresponding dissertation group chair in the summer semester following the Qualifying Exam process.

Part IV: Dissertation Process

The Ed.D. culminates with an approximately 15-18 month dissertation experience. The dissertation requires students to identify and investigate a problem of practice using current literature and inquiry methodology. Students are encouraged from the beginning of the program to identify a problem of practice that will be the focus of their dissertations.

Problem of Practice Dissertation

A problem of practice dissertation describes a challenge in educational practice, seeks empirically to investigate the challenge and/or test solution(s) to address the challenge, generates actionable implications, and appropriately communicates these implications to relevant stakeholders.

Dissertation Design

Design principles. The Ed.D. dissertation should:

- Focus on a problem of practice that is relevant to the student and his/her professional context (when possible)
- Have direct implications for policy and practice
- Uphold common standards of high-quality research (well written, rigorous and coherent approach to methodology, thorough grounding and bounding, etc.)
- Have a final chapter that outlines how this study helps/informs everyday work of practitioners and a section that makes specific suggestions for improved practices based on the findings of the study

Dissertation Formats. Students have the choice to prepare a traditional dissertation or to propose an alternative dissertation format. The choice of format should be discussed with and approved by the Dissertation Chair. Alternative dissertation formats will require that a proposal for the format be approved by the student's dissertation committee and then by the Ed.D. Executive Committee.

A traditional dissertation format consists of 5 or more chapters describing

- the purpose of the study
- relevant literature and how it informs the study
- research design and methods
- findings
- a discussion that explains how the study helps/informs everyday work of practitioners and makes specific suggestions for improved practices based on the findings of the study.

Alternative formats could include components of the traditional dissertation, plus a product that is the outcome of the students works such as:

- Presentation to faculty, school board, conference attendees, community, etc. Evaluation Plan
- Curriculum Design/Curriculum Materials Professional Development Design
- Policy Brief
- Journal article (practitioner or academic) Funding Proposal
- Video documentary

Dissertation Committee

Dissertation Committee

Following successful completion of the Qualifying Examination, students must form a dissertation committee and submit the online **Ed. D. Dissertation Committee** form. This online form will be automatically routed for signature collection and submitted to the Program Coordinator for Doctoral Programs.

- The Ed.D. dissertation committee must consist of a minimum of three members who are approved by the Graduate Director in consultation with the student's advisor.
- The dissertation committee chair must be a member of the Rutgers Graduate School of Education
- Two members (including the dissertation chair) must be members of the Rutgers faculty or staff.
- A third member may be from outside of the university and should be an authority on the topic of the dissertation.
- You must attach the CV/resume of any Non-GSE or outside committee members.

All students are required to submit an **Ed. D. Dissertation Committee** form prior to scheduling their proposal defense.

To ensure that all students have Chairs who can assist them during the entire dissertation process and a committee that can provide subject area and methodological expertise, chairs and committees will be recruited and approved by the Ed.D. Director who will have final authority to approve them. The Ed.D. Director will consult with GSE faculty members and with candidates in selecting chairs and in forming dissertation committees. Every attempt will be made to make subject-related matches between groups and chairs.

Therefore, the Chair's function is to facilitate the dissertation process. The term facilitate denotes that the dissertation chair will guide the group members by supporting design and writing, keeping candidates on track, acting as a resource, helping with group processes, and being a critical reader. If the chair is not a content area specialist for a candidate, the Chair will

work with the candidate to identify and recruit a second reader who can serve as content area expert. Other members of the committee will be expected to actively engage in the process during the academic year, and when possible during the summer. For example, if the chair is not the “subject matter expert,” the committee member who may be asked to read and provide feedback on sections of the proposal or dissertation as they are drafted. Committee members will be consulted by the candidate and the dissertation Chair to ensure that the proposal is grounded in relevant literature and has an appropriate research problem and design. The candidate will be encouraged to seek as much subject area assistance as possible during the academic year through course work, independent study, and individual meetings with committee members.

Where it is possible and advisable to do so, it is suggested that one committee member be a colleague or professional, with the proper credential (a doctorate), from the candidate’s workplace, field of study or study context.

Dissertation Groups and Timeline

Candidates will work in dissertation groups of approximately 6; all members of the same group will have the same chair, unless circumstances preclude placement in a group. Candidates are placed in a dissertation group based on similar research topics and/or methodologies as well as student input. Although each candidate will write a separate dissertation, in keeping with the guiding principles of the Ed.D., grouping should promote a synergy with regard to problem framing, literature review, research design and analysis, and peer feedback and support. The groups will not necessarily be concentration specific. Candidates are free to work on a one-on-one basis with a faculty member if they are able to arrange this with a willing faculty member.

Timeline and Responsibilities:

A recommended timeline for students wishing to complete the degree in 4 years is provided below. However, it should be noted that the timeline is contingent upon the student’s development of quality work. Progress is contingent upon meeting the guidelines established by the Chair and dissertation committee.

Spring 2: The Ed.D. Director solicits student input into dissertation group composition. Groups are finalized and chairs are recruited. Chairs work with candidates to establish a schedule for meeting over the summer.

Summer 3: Candidates complete the dissertation proposal. They will have begun this task through their coursework and completing question #2 of the qualifying process. This past work may be expanded over the summer into a full proposal. The expectation is that Chairs will meet with their respective groups every two weeks and also provide written feedback on proposal drafts between meetings. Meetings may be face-to-face or virtual. The Chair will encourage

peer feedback within the group, and the committee members will be asked to help if they are willing and available.

Fall 3: Proposal defenses will take place as early in the semester as possible. IRB materials should be submitted as early as possible to avoid delays. Whenever possible, candidates are urged to request an exempt IRB review. If the project needs an expedited or full review, IRB materials should be submitted no later than mid-September. Some candidates may be able to submit the IRB materials earlier based on previous coursework.

Spring 3: Chairs will meet on a regular basis with their groups (every 2 to 3 weeks) throughout the academic year to provide support and feedback during data collection, early data analysis and drafting. Candidates and Chairs may call on second and third readers for assistance as needed. Written and oral feedback will occur as needed.

Summer 4: Candidates work on dissertation writing. Chairs will meet every two weeks with groups or with the individual group members and provide oral and written feedback on candidate work between meetings. Meetings and general feedback may be face-to-face or virtual; candidate-specific feedback must be written and may also include one-on-one meetings. The Chair will encourage peer feedback (oral and written) within the group; and committee members will be asked to help if they are willing and available.

Fall 4. Candidates will complete final drafts of their dissertation and will submit to their chair and committee for review. They will work on all the suggested revisions.

Spring 4. Candidates work with their chair and committee members to schedule their defense. Candidates must defend their dissertations by the end of March in order to walk in the May commencement ceremony.

Dissertation Procedures

The Dissertation process involves two distinct stages: Proposal Defense and Dissertation Defense. Each phase entails a series of steps requiring the submission and processing of forms and documents. It is the responsibility of the student/candidate and Chair to ensure that all necessary forms are signed and submitted in a timely manner.

Proposal Defense

Your dissertation proposal defense must be formally announced to the Graduate School of Education (GSE) community two weeks prior to the proposal date. Please fill out the online **Ed.D. Dissertation Proposal Announcement** form. This online form will be automatically routed to the Program Coordinator for Doctoral Programs, for processing.

If you will be presenting your dissertation proposal in person please secure a room with the Administrative Services Center, asc@gse.rutgers.edu, prior to submitting your Dissertation Proposal Announcement form.

Upon completion of your dissertation proposal defense, please fill out the online **Ed.D. Oral Examination Results (Proposal)** form. This online form will be automatically routed for signature collection and submitted to the Program Coordinator for Doctoral Programs, for processing. This form, if applicable, may require the dissertation committee chair's summary of revisions.

NOTE: Students may not defend their dissertation proposals if they have any incomplete (IN) grades.

NOTE: PROPOSAL DEFENSES MAY NOT BE SCHEDULED IN MARCH.

Dissertation Defense

Your dissertation defense must be formally announced to the Graduate School of Education (GSE) community two weeks prior to the defense date. Please fill out the online **Ed.D. Dissertation Defense Announcement** form. This online form will be automatically routed to the Program Coordinator for Doctoral Programs, for processing.

If you will be presenting your dissertation proposal in person please secure a room with the Administrative Services Center, asc@gse.rutgers.edu, prior to submitting your Dissertation Defense Announcement form.

Upon completion of your dissertation defense, please fill out the online **Ed.D. Oral Examination Results (Defense)** form. This online form will be automatically routed for signature collection and submitted to the Program Coordinator for Doctoral Programs, for processing. This form, if applicable, may require the dissertation committee chair's summary of revisions. Upon completion of any applicable revisions, please submit your signed dissertation cover page to Dean Winkler, matt.winkler@gse.edu.

After the successful completion of your final dissertation defense, including any applicable revisions, please begin the **Ed.D. Post-Dissertation Defense Checklist** in preparation for graduation and your conferred degree!

NOTE: Students may not defend their dissertation if they have any incomplete (IN) grades.

NOTE: Students may not defend during the same semester as the proposal defense.

Academic Progress and Program Completion:

The Ed.D. Program is designed to support students' progress to dissertation completion through a cohort model. As such, a satisfactory timeline to completion is approximately 4 - 5 years comprising:

- approximately 6 consecutive semesters of Core and Concentration courses (24 credits each)
- immediately followed by approximately 15-18 months of culminating dissertation work experience (24 credits).

Note: *Dissertation Credits are only allowed for active dissertation work (i.e., data collection, analysis, and document development).*

Progress Rule:

During their time in the Program, students are expected to make substantial and timely progress and remain in good academic standing throughout the two main stages/phases of the program i.e., coursework and dissertation work. While students may fall out of cycle with their respective cohorts due to extenuating circumstances, all students are still be expected to make substantial and timely progress in order to complete the Program within the following timeline:

- Coursework & Qualifying Exam: within 7 years from date of admission to program
- Dissertation Proposal defense: within 1 year after passing the Qualifying Exams
- Dissertation defense: within 2 years after the Dissertation Proposal defense

After 10 years, students must submit a formal, written petition for an extension to the Ed.D. Executive and Chair/advisor. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis upon review of students' progress and in consultation with Dissertation Chairs/advisors. If an extension is granted, the student will be placed on an Academic Progress Plan.

Academic Progress Plan:

The Executive Committee and Dissertation Chairs/advisors will conduct an ongoing review of students' progress. Students who fail to meet these expectations of the Progress Rule, at any point in time during their course of study, will be placed on an Academic Progress Plan.

Extensions:

Within one year prior to the end of the Progress Rule, it is the student's responsibility to formally petition the Ed.D. Executive Committee for an *Academic Progress Plan* extension. The Ed.D. Executive and the candidate's Chair will review the petition. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Successful petitions will result in a 6-12-month extension (decided on a case-by-case basis) with an *Academic Progress Plan* outlining the expectations, timelines, and schedules. Failure to meet any of the stipulated timelines and/or benchmarks will result in termination from the Program.

NOTE: *Students are allowed one extension only.*

Termination from Program:

Failure to complete Program requirements and/or make timely progress toward dissertation completion will result in dismissal from the Program.

Dismissal from the Program may occur if the student:

- Has not satisfied any admission condition
- Receives a minimum of 6 credits graded C, F, or NC
- Fails to adhere to degree time limits imposed in Academic Progress Plan
- Has not petitioned for an Academic Progress Plan AND/OR has not made the required substantial progress within the timelines of the Progress Rule. In such cases, the student will receive a termination-warning letter from the Ed.D. Director and the student's respective academic advisor/Concentration Coordinator or Chair. If the student fails to respond to this warning letter by initiating a Program Completion Plan and/or fails to make substantial progress based on the said plan by a specific deadline, the final termination process will be initiated by the Ed.D. Director and the student will then receive a notification of dismissal letter.
- Receives a "Fail" grade in at least one revised Qualifying Exam paper
- Violation of the university's academic integrity policy is another reason for being terminated from graduate studies, however, the disposition of such violations is covered by the Rutgers University's Academic Integrity Policy.

Dissertation Style Guide and Catalog

The finished product from the dissertation process will be cataloged electronically in RUCore, the Rutgers University Community Repository: <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/etd/>

Electronic dissertations will be accessible for worldwide retrieval. Prior to submission, all dissertations must be prepared in accordance with the formatting procedures outlined in the Rutgers University Style Guide: <https://gse.rutgers.edu/content/edd-dissertation-style-guide>

Some students hire an editor to complete this final production stage.

Part V: Additional Policies and Procedures

Full-time Graduate Status

Full-time graduate status is a minimum of 9 credits for the fall and spring semesters. Full-time graduate status is a minimum of 4.5 credits for the Summer Session. All credit amounts are considered full-time for the Winter Session. Students seeking to take more than 12 credits require the approval of their advisor. The policy of the Graduate School of Education is that credit for a course may not be applied toward both of two degrees pursued simultaneously at Rutgers. The requirements for degrees, examinations, and related program requirements are formulated by the faculty in accordance with its best judgment and are intended to provide the strongest possible professional preparation for students.

Modifications to academic regulations may be necessary from time to time. New regulations supersede old regulations.

Transfer Credits

Credits taken outside of Rutgers Graduate School of Education will not be accepted for transfer. Coursework taken within the Graduate School of Education may be considered on a case-by-case basis for transfer toward program credits up to a maximum of 18 graduate credits.

Registration

Continuous Registration, Restoration and Reinstatement

All students in degree programs must maintain status in the school by registering each fall and spring semester in coursework, dissertation study, or Matriculation Continued. Students who fail to maintain continuous registration in one of these areas must apply for reinstatement if they are to continue in good standing. Such students are charged an amount at least equal to the cost of registering for Matriculation Continued for each semester in which they failed to register.

Matriculation Continued

Matriculation Continued is only available to students in the Pre-Qualifying Examination stage and Post-Qualifying Examination students who have completed 24 credits of dissertation research. Post-Qualifying Examination students must register for a minimum of 1 credit of dissertation research each fall and spring semester until the completion of 24 credits and are not eligible for Matriculation Continued.

Grading Policies

Grades

The following is the basic grading system of the GSE:

<https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/catalogs>

A	4.0	Outstanding
B+	3.5	
B	3.0	Good
C+	2.5	
C	2.0	Satisfactory
F	0.0	Failing
PA/NC	Pass/No Credit	
IN	Incomplete	

- * Ed.D. students have one year to resolve an incomplete grade from the date the IN is posted.
- * Ed.D. students with two or more current IN grades may not move forward with additional coursework
- * ED.D. Dissertation Credits are graded Pass or No Credit (PA or NC)

Incomplete Grade Procedure

All Incomplete Grades will be tracked by the Doctoral Program Coordinator at the conclusion of each semester. After the allowed one year to resolve any outstanding incomplete grade, students will be required to fill out an *Ed.D. Incomplete Grade Action Plan* to be signed by their instructor and program director before being submitted to the Office of Student and Academic Services. The action plan will require a brief description of how the student intends to resolve their incomplete grade along with date for that resolution. Any outstanding incomplete grades that are not resolved within two years will be automatically changed to a No Credit (NC) grade as per the Graduate School of Education [policy](#).

Holds

The privileges of registration, receipt of a diploma, and receipt of transcripts of record are barred to students having outstanding obligations to the university. Obligations may take the form of unpaid monies, unreturned or damaged books and equipment, parking fines, other charges for which a student may become legally indebted to the university, and/or failure to comply with disciplinary sanctions or administrative actions. University departments and offices may place "holds" on registration, diplomas, and transcripts for any students having an outstanding obligation.

Student Academic Appeals

Whenever possible, student academic appeals are handled within the program. With regard to grade appeals, the student should first try to resolve the issue with the instructor directly. If the issue cannot be resolved satisfactorily between the student and instructor, the student may take the issue to the EdD program director for review and mediation. The director will consult with all parties and propose a resolution. If this is unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the appropriate Graduate School of Education Committee on Admissions and Scholastic Standing as designated in Graduate School of Education bylaws. The Committee on Admissions and Scholastic Standing hears appeals that have not been resolved by the program director. The student must make his or her case to the director and the committee in writing. A written response to the student's statement will be solicited from the director. Should the committee deem it necessary, it may call upon the student and/or a faculty member (or members) for written or oral responses to questions raised by the committee.

A student may request an appearance before the committee. If they believe an appearance is warranted by unusual circumstances, the committee members may allow the student to appear before them. They may, however, limit the amount of time granted, which normally will not exceed 30 minutes. The committee reports its recommendations to the Dean of the Graduate School of Education, whose decision is final.

Should the student decide to appeal to the Dean, such a request must be made in writing within 30 days of notification of the decision of the Committee on Admissions and Scholastic Standing. Each case will be reviewed by a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School of Education whose decision is final. Written notification of the action taken by the chair, the Ed.D. program director, or the Dean is sent to the student within six weeks of filing an appeal.