

Student Handbook
Doctoral Program in Education
Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and
Human Development

Southern Methodist University

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1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to the doctoral program in education at SMU. Our program offers a strong foundation in empirical research, pedagogy, and educational leadership, particularly in literacy-related fields. We believe that your experience in our program will be a positive one, and that it will lay the groundwork for professional success in your career of choice.

Sincerely,

The Doctoral Committee
School of Education and Human Development

Dr. J. Kyle Roberts, Associate Professor, Doctoral Program Director and Committee Chair
Dr. Jill Allor, Department Chair, Associate Professor
Dr. Leanne Ketterlin-Geller, Associate Professor
Dr. Patricia Mathes, Texas Instruments Professor
Dr. Ken Springer, Associate Professor
Dr. Paige Ware, Assistant Professor
Dr. Peter Weyand, Associate Professor

1.2 About this Handbook

This handbook is a comprehensive guide to the policies, procedures, and requirements for obtaining a Ph.D. in the Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development (ACSSEHD) at SMU. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the handbook, as it contains information that will be of importance to you throughout your doctoral program. At the end of the handbook you will find a form to sign indicating that you have read the information provided here.

The information in this handbook is current as of February, 2010. We will make every effort to provide you further details about program requirements; in addition, updates to our requirements will be posted on the ACSSEHD website.

Although this handbook provides a complete guide to our program, as a graduate student at SMU you must comply with the general policies and procedures of the university, as well as with those of the ACSSEHD. Essential information about program deadlines, graduate student policies, and procedures are available online at <http://smu.edu/education/teachereducation/graduate/phd.asp>. It is your responsibility to review this information.

1.3 Program Vision

The programs distinctive vision is to develop research leaders who can provide data-based recommendations to guide policy and practice for education and human development. The

doctoral program in education prepares students to evaluate and conduct research in education that will contribute to the improvement of student learning, teaching practices, services to special populations, and, ultimately to the improvement of all levels of education.

1.4 Admission

Students often inquire about the program in advance of application. Inquiries should be submitted by email to the Director of the Doctoral Program. Applicants should also consult the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document accessible at the ACSSEHD web pages within the SMU website.

Admission into the program is based on a consideration of all the materials listed above, and does not hinge on any of individual item. Entry into the program is competitive and meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee admission into the program. An applicant who does not meet one of the admissions requirements may submit a letter of explanation with his or her application, but there is no guarantee that any admissions requirement will be relaxed or waived. Applicants should submit all materials by February 15th to receive priority screening and admissions decisions will usually be communicated by April 15. Due to delays in grant-funding announcements, some applications may be considered as late as May 1st. Please note that the first two years of the program require full-time work, including a research internship and course work at SMU. Students may transfer up to 24 hours of coursework from an accredited graduate (Masters-level) program. Decisions about transfer credit involve a process of review and are made on a case-by-case basis. Additional information, application instructions, and necessary forms can be found on the ACSSEHD website at: <http://smu.edu/education/teachereducation/graduate/phd.asp>.

2 Administration and Advising

2.1 Administration

The PhD Program in Education at ACSSEHD is degree under which all PhD programs in the ACSSEHD belong. Although a student may conduct his/her study in various departments within the school, all of the requirements for the PhD outlined in this handbook apply. Should there be any aspect of mediation the student requires, he or she should report to the Doctoral Program Director to seek a resolution.

2.2 Advising

Students must have an ACSSEHD faculty advisor at all times. Students will be assigned a preliminary advisor upon admission into the program. Each student must then identify a major advisor who will mentor the student throughout his/her doctoral program. All tenured or tenure-track faculty are eligible to serve as the student's advisor or dissertation chair. Other full-time faculty members are eligible to serve as dissertation committee members. In the final two years of the program, the dissertation chair is the students advisor. Each student must confer with his/her advisor at least once per semester for the duration of the

program. The major advisor must be identified by March 15th of the spring semester of the first year. However, students retain the right to switch advisors given written permission from the new advisor and the department chair. Note that new advisors may or may not require an amended set of courses or activities within the Program of Studies.

With the assistance of their advisors (and dissertation committees, as discussed under the dissertation requirement), students develop programs of study tailored to their particular needs. However, all students share the same set of requirements. Requirements for the doctoral degree encompass coursework, qualifying exams, advancement to dissertation, major area defense, evidence of teaching competency, dissemination of research, a professional portfolio, a dissertation, and an oral dissertation defense. Each of these requirements is described in detail below. Decisions pertaining to student progress are made by the advisor/dissertation-chair and committee (see the Degree Requirements and Milestones sections for details).

Students should also feel free to raise questions and concerns with their advisor/chair or dissertation committee members. An appeal concerning any decision made by the advisor and/or dissertation committee may be brought to the chair of the doctoral program who will render a final decision upon consultation with the ACSSEHD doctoral committee. Please note that the ACSSEHD doctoral committee consists of the faculty listed on page 1 of this document, and is not the same as the students dissertation committee, although individual faculty members may participate in both committees. Concerns related to a specific course (e.g., assignments or grades) should be brought to the appropriate department chair after first consulting with the instructor of that course.

2.3 Program of Studies Form

Each student will complete a Program of Studies Form by the end of the first semester. This form can be found on the PhD in Education Homepage at <http://smu.edu/education/teachereducation/graduate/phd.asp>. Each student works with his or her advisor to draft and complete the Program of Studies Form. An example of course sequences for each program may be obtained in the Appendices at the end of this document.

2.4 Transfer Credits

Transfer credits are usually given to 3-semester-hour graduate courses (or equivalents). Requests for transfer credits will be reviewed and verified, and may require the student to provide a written description, syllabus, or other documentation of the course content and credit hours. Exceptions to the usual guidelines on transfer credits should be submitted in writing to the Doctoral Program Chair who will obtain the advice and consent of the Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee will make the final decision and submit a recommended action to the Dean, as well as to the SMU registrars office. A total of up to 24 hours may be transferred, however each student is not guaranteed that all 24 hours will be transferred.

3 Degree Requirements

Following is a complete list of requirements for obtaining the Ph.D. in education at SMU.

3.1 Coursework

Doctoral students must complete a minimum of 60 credit hours of coursework. A grade of B- or better is required for each class. If a grade lower than B- is obtained in a particular class, the student's advisor will develop, in conjunction with the doctoral committee, a remediation plan that may include retaking the class or taking a different class. Required coursework is to be determined at the discretion of the student advisor.

Ordinarily, students must enroll in 9 hours of coursework (i.e., three courses) per semester for the first two years of the program. The course load in subsequent years must be approved by the advisor. The amount of time required for the dissertation is flexible, but typically 1-2 years from beginning to completion, determined by the pace of the student's work, the number of specialty and elective courses, grant research duties, and revision requirements of the dissertation committee. Course load beyond the first two years may also be influenced by the number of transfer-credit hours, if any.

3.2 Qualifying Exams

The content of the qualifying examinations are determined by each department and may be viewed in the respective Appendix.

3.3 Major Area Exam

Students will successfully complete a major area examination prior to advancement to the dissertation phase. The content of the major area examination is determined per departmental policies and may be viewed in the appropriate Appendix.

3.4 Advancement to Dissertation

The phrase "advancement to dissertation" (sometimes called "admission to candidacy") describes students who have successfully completed minimum core requirements and are eligible to begin dissertation-related work and other advanced requirements. Advancement takes place if the student has successfully completed the qualifying exams, the major area exam and maintained a minimum GPA of 3.0. Once these prerequisites have been met, the student qualifies for advancement to the dissertation phase and must complete the necessary forms and approvals.

Please note that advancement is not guaranteed. Students who do not successfully complete all coursework, qualifying exams, and the major area exam will not be admitted to candidacy, and will consequently not be able to continue in the program. At the discretion of the doctoral committee, an alternative degree may be considered (see Educational Specialist Degree). Also, note that advancement does not guarantee the awarding of a doctorate.

The student who has been advanced to the dissertation phase must successfully complete all remaining requirements.

3.5 Teaching Competency

Each student must serve as a teaching assistant (T.A.) for at least one course offered by the ACSSEHD. Students cannot serve as T.As for courses offered by other Schools or Colleges within SMU without prior permission from the Advisor and Doctoral Program Chair. Evidence of teaching competency is provided by the instructor of the course for which the student serves as a T.A., who will indicate in writing to the students advisor whether the student fulfilled his or her duties in a timely and responsible manner. More specific information about the teaching competency of each program is given in the respective Appendices.

3.6 Dissemination of Research

Students will be active in research throughout the program, beginning with their work on research projects (see Financial Aid section below) and culminating in their dissertation research. Each student must complete three types of dissemination: (a) make a colloquium presentation of their major area paper (with oral defense, as noted above), (b) submit a minimum of one proposal to a professional conference, and (c) submit one manuscript to an academic journal (usually in the final year; submitted but not necessarily accepted for publication). The particular conference and journal that are chosen, as well as all documents submitted, must be approved by the students doctoral chair (advisor) in advance of submission.

3.7 Dissertation

Each student must complete four dissertation-related requirements. These are, in chronological order, as follows

1. Formation of a dissertation committee,
2. Written and oral presentation of a dissertation prospectus approved by the dissertation committee, including passing the preliminary oral defense (oral defense of the prospectus, see 1),
3. Submission of an acceptable written dissertation,
4. A successful final oral defense of the dissertation.

Each of these requirements is discussed in detail below.

1. Committee. By the middle of the Spring semester (March 31) of Year 2, if not sooner, students must identify their dissertation committee. The committee consists of the students chair/advisor and three other full-time faculty members, at least one of whom must be outside of the department in which the student resides. The chair must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in ACSSEHD. Plans for a dissertation topic

should be approved by the dissertation chair by June of Year 2. Upon approval, the student may begin the prospectus.

2. Prospectus. After completion of coursework, each student must submit a dissertation prospectus to his/her chair. After the chair approves and any revisions completed, the student submits the prospectus to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled oral defense. The dissertation prospectus should consist of a substantive literature review, a description of methods for the dissertation research, and a timeline for completing the research. After the oral defense, the committee will provide written approval of the prospectus after conferring with the student and evaluating any revisions that were requested.
3. Dissertation. The ACSSEHD Doctoral Program policy for dissertation style is a modified APA (American Psychological Association) style, as specified in the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The exception is that the dissertation conforms to the traditional dissertation format in education and psychology tables and figures embedded in text rather than separated. Also, dissertations must conform to the format and content requirements of the ACSSEHD Dissertation Guide, available online at http://smu.edu/education/teachereducation/graduate/phd_forms.asp.
4. Final Oral Defense. The dissertation committee must give written approval to schedule an oral defense. Students are encouraged to discuss strategies for preparation with their committees prior to the dissertation defense. Each student must submit the final dissertation to his/her committee at least two weeks before the scheduled oral defense date. In addition to the written dissertation, the student is required to make a professional presentation of the findings to the committee as part of the final oral defense. The committee may meet separately at the beginning of the oral defense to exchange comments or expectations before including the student in the oral defense. The committee will judge the acceptability of the written dissertation and typically require revisions of portions of the dissertation. If the revisions are extensive, the dissertation chair may be required to sign approval of changes before the dissertation is finally approved. The committee will complete a written Dissertation Approval Form.

Please note that your dissertation will need to be submitted to the Departmental Faculty through a formal, time-constrained process. You should familiarize yourself with this process, and with the steps required for graduation. It is the students responsibility to be aware of the SMU deadlines for graduation.

3.8 Submission of Manuscript for Possible Publication

A research-oriented manuscript must be prepared and submitted for possible publication in a peer-reviewed journal, after discussion of journal options with the dissertation chair. The format and style of the manuscript may have to be adjusted to the requirements of the journal, and cannot typically be copied strictly from the (unique) dissertation format.

Copies of the submitted paper, cover letter, and confirmation of receipt by the journal must be filed with the program (e.g., Program Chair or Department Chair) for credit to be given. Because of the unpredictable nature of journal-article reviewing, acceptance of the manuscript for publication is not required (but is obviously desirable). Refer to the APA manual for information regarding authorship guidelines

4 Timeline

Students are required to complete their course of study in seven years from the date of first beginning the program. Students are then allowed to petition for an additional three years to complete coursework and the dissertation. At the end of the seventh year, students who wish to continue in the program must obtain permission from the ACSSHED doctoral committee on a semester-by-semester basis in order to continue. Students are required to show evidence that they are making adequate progress by consulting with their advisor on each milestone step, and, in most cases, obtaining the signature of the dissertation chair/advisor. If milestones are delayed for any reason, the student must submit a written statement of explanation and description of progress during the period of delay.

Students are required as part of their coursework to take the following core courses:

- EDU 7302 - Advanced Quantitative Research Methods
- EDU 7311 - Quantitative Statistics for Educational Research
- EDU 7312 - Intermediate Quantitative Statistics

With the exception of the three required courses, all coursework needs to first be approved by the student's committee chair. Dissertation may only begin once all coursework has been completed and all competencies have been reached.

5 Financial Aid

Funding for doctoral students is provided through research grants or other fellowships and is dependent on current funding through federal and other agencies. During the 10 month academic year, each student is required to work an average of 20 hours per week as a graduate research assistant. Students must log the number of hours worked per day and the nature of the work, and have their logs signed on a weekly basis by the supervisor (project coordinator) who oversees the grant. As compensation for this work, no tuition is charged, and students earn monthly income.

Each incoming student will be assigned to a particular research grant, however this is not guaranteed. Every effort will be made to assign students to grants related to their own interests. In general, students should be available to work on grant-related activities every day of the week during school hours when they are not in class. A student's exact schedule will be determined by the supervisor who oversees the grant. Students and grant supervisors need to be flexible about scheduling. Students should ask to work less than 20 hours during weeks in which coursework and other doctoral requirements are especially pressing. Students

should also anticipate working more than 20 hours per week during particularly busy periods of data collection. Please note that some data collection will be required during SMU holidays when local schools are still in session.

Generally, grant-related research begins mid-August and continues through May 31st of each year. Travel time counts toward the 20 hour per week research requirement, and students are compensated for mileage at a standard rate determined by the university.

6 Signature Form

I have read this handbook carefully and understand the requirements for a doctorate in education at SMU. I understand my rights and responsibilities as a doctoral student, and will seek additional information if I have questions or concerns.

Name (printed) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Please return this sheet to:
Dr. J. Kyle Roberts
Doctoral Program Chair
P.O. Box 750381
Dallas, TX 75275-0381.

7 Appendix A: Teaching and Learning

7.1 Admission Requirements

The following materials are required when applying for admission to the doctoral program:

1. Transcripts of Baccalaureate and Master's degrees (or extended graduate course work) indicating GPAs of at least 3.3 for undergraduate and graduate programs.
2. A minimum GRE score of 1100, obtained within the past five years. A score of at least 1200 is recommended
3. Records demonstrating at least three years of full-time teaching or school-related professional experience
4. A statement of purpose (3-4 pages including description of your background, interests, graduate work, experience in education, and goals for the future)
5. Three letters of recommendation
6. TOEFL scores (if the students native language is not English)
7. An interview with an ACSSEHD faculty member conducted after applications are completed (if needed)

Table 1: Timeline and Milestones in the Doctoral Program

Milestone Activity or Submission	Date Submitted	Advisor Signature
Transfer Credits Approved	December 1, YR 1	Yes
Program of Studies Form Approved	December 1, YR 1	Yes
Choose Permanent Advisor	March 15, YR 1	Yes
Qualifying Exam Question 1 assigned	May 1, YR 1	Yes
Submit Qualifying Exam Answer 1	August 15, YR 2	Consult
Qualifying Exam Question 2 assigned	October 1, YR 2	Consult
Submit Qualifying Exam Answer 2	January 7, YR 2	Consult
Proctored Qualifying Exam Question 3(Research Methods)	February 15, YR 2	Consult
Official Advancement to Dissertation Phase	March 15, YR 2	Yes
Begin Major Area Paper	March 15, YR 2	Yes
Form Dissertation Committee	March 31, YR 2	Yes
Submit Major Area Paper to PhD Committee	June 1, YR 2	Yes
Begin Dissertation Prospectus	June 15, YR 2	Yes
Submit Dissertation Prospectus to Committee (two weeks prior to oral defense)	November 15, YR 3	Yes, and committee
Approval of Prospectus (preliminary oral defense) and beginning of dissertation		
Submit Dissertation to Committee	(two weeks prior to final oral defense)	Consult
Final Oral Defense of Dissertation	May 1, YR 4	Yes, and committee
Demonstrate Competency 1Teaching	Prior to graduation	Yes
Demonstrate Competency 2Presentation	Prior to graduation	Yes
Demonstrate Competency 3Manuscript	Prior to graduation	Yes

7.2 Proposed Timeline

- 7301 Professional Seminar: Types and methods of educational research and ability to read and critique published educational research articles and reports; Orientation to the PhD program; Visiting lectures by doctoral faculty.
- 7302 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods: Research designs used for experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, and single-subject studies in the Specialty Areas of the doctoral program; Connection of research design to the typical statistics used for each (e.g., use of statistical packages such as SPSS).
- 7303 Mixed Methods: Research designs and statistical methods for studies that combine quantitative analysis with qualitative inquiry; Review of literature employing

Table 2: Example Schedule of Courses for PhD Students

	Fall	Spring	Summer
Year 1	-EDU 7301- Professional Seminar I -EDU 7311 - Quantitative Statistics for Educational Research -Elective	-EDU 7302 - Advanced Quantitative Research Methods -EDU 7312 - Intermediate Quantitative Statistics -Elective	-Elective
Year 2	-EDU 7313 - Advanced Assessment Methods -EDU 7314 - Advanced Multivariate Statistics -Elective	-EDU 7303 - Mixed Methods -EDU 7309 - Multilevel Modeling -Elective	-Elective -Dissertation
Year 3	-Dissertation	-Dissertation	

mixed methods; Computer methods of analysis.

- 7311 Quantitative Statistics: Review and expansion of descriptive statistics and significance tests (distributions, means, standard deviations, t-tests, and statistics up to the one-way analysis of variance and one-predictor regression); Exposure to computer calculations.
- 7312 Intermediate Quantitative Statistics: Continuation of 7311 to include such methods as two-way and general linear models; Several regression methods; Continuation of familiarity with computer analysis of data.
- 7313 Advanced Assessment: Theories and methods of evaluating and designing assessments (tests, scales, questionnaires, surveys, observations, etc.) for a broad range of uses in educational research and for clinical evaluations in special education and psychology; Psychometric methods; Classical and item-response theory; Statistics used in reliability and validity of tests; Reviewing published tests.
- 7314 Advanced Multivariate Statistics: Continuation of 7312 including multiple regression, discriminant function, canonical correlation, basic structural equation modeling, factor analysis, and hierarchical linear models; Other methods used in research and assessment by visiting lecturers or guest speakers; Computer applications.
- 7309 Multilevel Analysis: Advanced theory of nested structures. Applications of multilevel analysis to linear and non-linear models, growth curve modeling, and item response theory.

7.3 Qualifying Exams

Students must successfully complete three written qualifying exams. The qualifying exams are based on doctoral course content and will usually include one research-methods question (Question 3 completed during a proctored session at ACSSEHD), and two take-home questions one in the students specialization and the other chosen by the student with advisor approval. The student will submit ideas for content of questions to the advisor and, then, the actual exam questions will be determined by each students advisor with the approval of the ACSSEHD doctoral committee. The ACSSEHD doctoral committee will provide students with information about format and content requirements and faculty will evaluate students responses to each exam, using a Qualifying Examination Grade Report form.

Within two weeks of submitting a qualifying exam response, students may be required by their advisor and ACSSEHD doctoral committee to revise their exam response, or to take a new exam question. In such cases, students will have only one opportunity to successfully resubmit a revised or new exam response. Students who do not turn in an acceptable resubmission within three weeks (two weeks for Question 3) after it is requested will not be able to continue in the program.

7.4 Major Area Exam

Students will successfully complete a major area paper consisting of an extensive literature review and synthesis, which will usually serve as the literature review for the dissertation. Typically, this paper will be started by March 15 of the second year after the Qualifying Exams have been completed. The major paper is often directly related to the dissertation topic, however advancement to dissertation does not occur until this exam is completed. Any exceptions to the timeline and decisions about the scope of the paper will be determined by the students advisor/dissertation chair.

The final, written paper must be orally defended. The students advisor and dissertation committee will determine the acceptability of the major area paper as well as the oral defense. If needed, revisions to the paper will be requested in writing by the advisor within two weeks of receipt, and an acceptable resubmission must be received within four weeks after the initial request. APA format, as specified in the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, is required for the major area paper. Other format and content requirements will be indicated in writing by the advisor and dissertation committee.

7.5 Education Specialist Degree

The Ed.S. degree is not a guaranteed option but rather one that is offered at the discretion of the advisor and doctoral committee. The Ed.S. requires the following: (a) passing qualifying exams, (b) completing 60 semester hours, (c) successful completion of the major area exam, (d) a conference presentation, and (e) submitting an acceptable professional portfolio.