



# Ed.D. in Education Handbook

## **Graduate School of Education**

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## **Part I. Introduction**

Since the 19th Century, American Higher Education has confused the doctoral preparation of educational researchers with that of educational leaders. This confusion is exemplified by the existence of two doctoral degrees in education--the Ph.D. and the Ed.D.--and questions about the appropriate audience for each. Since 2007, the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) has been pioneering the development of a rigorous program for the doctoral preparation of educational leaders and practitioners in a variety of fields.

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 CPED. Through this affiliation, the Ed.D. program was redesigned to prepare educational leaders who are scholarly practitioners with the skills and expertise to inquire into and resolve problems of practice.

The Ed.D. program is delivered in an executive approach over three years and one summer. The coursework 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 skills necessary to complete a dissertation.

### **Ed.D. 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. Recognize and valuing multiple perspectives;
2. Use theory and research to frame, diagnose, and respond to problems of practice;
3. Develop a professional knowledge base that integrates practical and research knowledge;
4. Conduct research to guide improvement and inform policy, programs, and practice;
5. Identify instances and patterns of discrimination and inequality and advocating for social justice; and
6. Communicate 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 and is designed to be summer intensive (9 credits per summer) and fall/spring light (6 credits per semester). Students begin their doctoral education as part of a cohort and are encouraged to follow the curriculum sequence outlined below in order to complete the program with their cohort in a little more than three 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 of 24 credits each: core courses, concentration courses, and the 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. then culminates with a 15-18 month-long dissertation experience.

### The Core:

The core is a group of 8 courses (24 credits) that are required of all students, regardless of their concentration. Students take 2 courses in each of the 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 sequence on **Leadership**, students learn about facilitating change at an organizational and systems level as well as the individual and classroom level. Both classes expose 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 **Learners and Learning** sequence the purpose of the first class is to update student's knowledge about learning theory and its uses in practice so that educational leaders know what good learning looks like. The second class builds on these principles as they specifically relate to adult learning. 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 among one of four 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 8 courses (24 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 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 that may 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. Educational Leadership

This concentration is designed to provide further education for *certified individuals* although it is not assumed that applicants are already serving as administrators. The intended audience for this concentration is future school and district P-12 administrators. Anyone accepted into the educational leadership concentration is expected to have a masters in educational administration and to have achieved appropriate certification to serve as at least a building administrator.

### 3. 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 problems of practice related to equity and social justice.

### 4. Teacher Leadership

This concentration enables students to learn how to design research-informed professional development and teacher learning opportunities in their focus area, whether that is science, literacy, early childhood/elementary education, language education, social studies education, mathematics education, special education, etc. The intended audience for this concentration is people who are, or will be, working as a teacher educator in a college or university setting or who are responsible for professional development of educators in some kind of educational setting, such as a curriculum coach, a coordinator of curriculum and instruction or a subject area coordinator, as well as principals or other educational leaders who want to know more about professional learning and educational opportunities that lead to practitioner improvement.

### The Dissertation:

After successful completion of a qualifying exam process (see page 13), 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 dissertation groups (described below).

## **Part II. Program Requirements**

The Ed.D. program is comprised of three interrelated program components- the core, a concentration and a dissertation experience. Students are also required to pass a qualifying exam prior to engaging in the dissertation experience. The core is required of all students, regardless of concentration. It is composed of 8 courses, which are broken into four sub-categories.

### **The Core (24 credits)**

Leadership, Organizations and Change (6 credits)

Leadership 1: Leadership in Schools and Communities (15:255:611)

Leadership 2: Improving the Capacity of Individuals in Organizations (15:255:612)

Social Contexts (6 credits):

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

Social Context 2: History of School Reform in America (15:255:617)

Learners and Learning (6 credits):

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

Learners and Learning 2: Adult Learning and Training (15:255:607)

Inquiry (6 credits):

Inquiry 1: Introduction to Methods and Uses of Inquiry (15:255:603)

Inquiry 2: Intermediate Methods and Uses of Inquiry (15:255:602)

### **The Concentrations**

Each student is required to choose one concentration area of study. Suggested timelines for program completion are provided below. Five-year timelines are also available and students who need to slow down their course completion can be accommodated.

#### **A. Design of Learning Environments (24 credits)**

##### **Design of Learning Environments (DLE) Concentration Learning Goals**

Students will learn to:

1. Understand the process of design and how it applies specifically to the design of learning environments.
2. Know the theoretical foundation and empirical support for common learning environment approaches or features.
3. Engage in the process of designing learning environments.
4. Understand how to conduct design-based research.
5. 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 are 3 additional electives for which students can select courses that will enhance content area knowledge or technical/methodological expertise.

Summer 1	Fall 1		Spring 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership I (3): (15:255:611)</li> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning I (3): (15:255:606)</li> <li>• Social Contexts I (3): (15:255:615)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry I (3): (15:255:603)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Design of Learning Environments (15:262:603) OR Design Based Research (15:262:610)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry 2 (3): (15:255:602)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Elective OR Design Research Practicum (15:262:625)</li> </ul>
Summer 2	Fall 2	Winter 2	Spring 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Leadership 2 (3): (15:255:612)</li> <li>• Social Contexts 2 (3): (15:255:617)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning 2 (3): (15:255:607)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Design of Learning Environments (15:262:603) OR Design Based Research (15:262:610)</li> </ul>	Qualifying Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3): Elective OR Design Research Practicum (15:262:625)</li> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> </ul>
Summer 3	Fall 3		Spring 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Dissertation (3): Proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Data Collection</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Writing and Analysis</li> </ul>
Summer 4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (9): Writing and Analysis</li> </ul>			

**Design of Learning Environment Recommended Electives (students must take at least 2):**

Cognition, Collaboration and Technology (15:262:622)

Problem-based Learning (15:295:620)

Cooperative & Collaborative Learning (15:295:510)

Learning in Informal Contexts (15:262:620)

*Recommended Other Electives (in consultation with concentration coordinator):*

Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality in Education (15:310:512)

Urban Education (15:310:542)

Introduction to Teaching with Digital Tools (15:255:503)

Curriculum & Instruction (15:310:500)

Developing Digital E-Learning Environments (15:255:506)

Digital Literacies (15:252:522)

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)

## B. Education, Culture and Society (24 credits)

### Education, Culture and Society (ECS) Concentration Learning Goals

Students will learn to:

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

There are 5 required concentration courses for the ECS concentration: 1) Education and Society; 2) 2 methods courses: Qualitative/Quantitative Research Methods I and II; 3) 2 additional ECS content courses to be selected with the guidance and permission of the ECS concentration coordinator. Students have the option of choosing a focus (Race/ethnicity, Global, Higher Ed, Gender/Sexuality).

Summer 1	Fall 1		Spring 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership I (3): (15:255:611)</li> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning I (3): (15:255:606)</li> <li>• Social Contexts I (3): (15:255:615)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry I (3): (15:255:603)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Education &amp; Society (15:310:551)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry 2 (3): (15:255:602)</li> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> </ul>
Summer 2	Fall 2	Winter 2	Spring 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Leadership 2 (3): (15:255:612)</li> <li>• Social Contexts 2 (3): (15:255:617)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning 2 (3): (15:255:607)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Qualitative Research Methods I (16:300:509)</li> </ul>	Qualifying Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Qualitative Research Methods 2 (16:300:513)</li> </ul>
Summer 3	Fall 3		Spring 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Dissertation (3): Proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Data Collection</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Writing and Analysis</li> </ul>
Summer 4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (9): Writing and Analysis</li> </ul>			



### **Required Concentration Courses**

1. Education and Society

2. Two Methods courses:

Qualitative Research Methods I and Qualitative Research Methods II

OR, by advisement, quantitative research methods

3. Two ECS Content Courses:

*Race and ethnicity focus:*

History of African American Education (15:310:561)

Race, Ethnicity and Inequality in Education (15:310:561)

Urban Education (15:310:542)

*Global focus:*

Comparative Education (15:310:503)

Globalization, Migration and Education

*Higher Ed focus:*

History of Higher Education (16:507:535) and other higher education courses in the GSE.

*Gender and sexuality focus:*

Gender and Education (15:310:540)

Leading for Social Justice (15:230:609)

Queer Issues & Schools (15:310:569)

### **C. Educational Leadership (24 credits)**

#### **Educational Leadership (EL) Concentration Learning Goals**

Students will learn to:

1. Lead organizational learning and change so that there is a collective sense of ownership and improvements can be sustained over time.
2. Serve as learning-focused leaders who create the conditions and engage in the practices necessary for educators to experience effective professional learning.
3. Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.
4. Promote the appropriate use of valid assessments for monitoring teaching and learning and improving educational outcomes.

This concentration has 4 required courses and 3 electives. Students also take 1 research methods course.

Summer 1	Fall 1		Spring 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership I (3): (15:255:611)</li> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning I (3): (15:255:606)</li> <li>• Social Contexts I (3): (15:255:615)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry I (3): (15:255:603)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Assessment/Data/ Problem Solving: (15:230:615) OR Leading Curriculum &amp; Instruction (15:230:624)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry 2 (3): (15:255:602)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Leading for Social Justice (15:230:609) OR Organizational Theory in Education (15:230:604)</li> </ul>
Summer 2	Fall 2	Winter 2	Spring 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Leadership 2 (3): (15:255:612)</li> <li>• Social Contexts 2 (3): (15:255:617)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning 2 (3): (15:255:607)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Assessment/Data/ Problem Solving: (15:230:615) OR Leading Curriculum &amp; Instruction (15:230:624)</li> </ul>	Qualifying Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration Elective (3)</li> <li>• Concentration Elective (3): Leading for Social Justice (15:230:609) OR Organizational Theory in Education (15:230:604)</li> </ul>
Summer 3	Fall 3		Spring 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Concentration (3):</li> <li>• Dissertation (3): Proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Data Collection</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Writing and Analysis</li> </ul>
Summer 4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (9): Writing and Analysis</li> </ul>			

## Educational Leadership Concentration Recommended Electives

Students must take 4 electives including one in the area of methodology.

CONCENTRATION	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
PHD and ED PSYCH STATISTICS COURSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative Methods I 16:300:509</li> <li>Quantitative Methods I 16:300:511</li> <li>Statistics 1 15:291:531</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative Methods 2 16:300:513</li> <li>ANOVA 16:300:515</li> <li>Regression 16:300:519</li> <li>Statistics 2 15:291:532</li> </ul>	
ED LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiscal Policy &amp; Management in Education: 15:230:622</li> </ul>	•	
EDUCATION CULTURE & SOCIETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of American Education 15:310:502</li> <li>Urban Education 15:310:542</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparative Education 15:310:503</li> <li>Race, Ethnicity, &amp; Inequality in Education (15:310:561)</li> <li>Gender &amp; Ed 15:310:540</li> <li>History of African-American Education 15:310:561</li> </ul>	
TEACHER LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Models of Professional Development 15:267:604</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educating Teachers 15:267:610</li> </ul>	
DESIGN OF LEARNING ENV.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design of Learning Environments 15:262:603</li> </ul>		
OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Planning &amp; Public Policy 34:833:550</li> <li>Methods in Research Design 34:833:530</li> <li>Negotiation 38:578:326</li> <li>Emotional Intelligence in the Work Place 38:578:511</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational Planning &amp; Public Policy 34:833:550</li> <li>Survey Research 34:833:635</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labor &amp; Employment Relations 38:578:506</li> <li>Public Policy Formation 34:833:510</li> </ul>

## D. Teacher Leadership (24 credits)

### Teacher Leadership (TL) Concentration Learning Goals

Students will learn to:

1. Utilize research on teaching, learning, and leadership to support effective instructional practices
2. Identify problems of practice to facilitate instructional change efforts guided by appropriate theoretical lenses
3. Know how to advocate for, design, implement, and evaluate sustainable learning environments for pre- and in-service teachers
4. Understand and be able to navigate the complexity of acting as a teacher leader, in order to effectively fulfill roles such as mentor, co-teacher, coach, be a team leader, chair committees, facilitate PLCs

This concentration is composed of 8 different courses; three are required and five are electives.<sup>1</sup>

Summer 1	Fall 1		Spring 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership I (3): (15:255:611)</li> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning I (3): (15:255:606)</li> <li>• Social Contexts I (3): (15:255:615)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry I (3): (15:255:603)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Teacher Leadership: Theory &amp; Practice (15:267:622)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry 2 (3): (15:255:602)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Models of Professional Development (15:267:604)</li> </ul>
Summer 2	Fall 2	Winter 2	Spring 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (1.5): Teacher Leadership Inquiry: 15:267:618</li> <li>• Leadership 2 (3): (15:255:612)</li> <li>• Social Contexts 2 (3): (15:255:617)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners &amp; Learning 2 (3): (15:255:607)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Elective</li> </ul>	Qualifying Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (1.5): Teacher Leadership Inquiry (15:267:618)</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Elective Educating Teachers: (15:267:610) OR elective</li> </ul>
Summer 3	Fall 3		Spring 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration (3): Elective</li> <li>• Concentration (3): Elective</li> <li>• Dissertation (3): Proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Data Collection</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (6): Writing and Analysis</li> </ul>
Summer 4			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation (9): Writing &amp; Analysis</li> </ul>			

### Required Concentration Courses

1. Teacher Leadership: Theory & Practice
2. Models of Professional Development
3. Teacher Leadership Inquiry

### Focus Areas

Students should consult with their advisor to identify a coherent set of electives in a focus area. A focus area should help students deepen their content knowledge or their knowledge and skills in a relevant area of educational study. Some possible focus areas are listed below along with some suggested courses. Other focus areas can also be developed with advisement from Teacher Leadership concentration faculty.

<sup>1</sup> This schedule does not show a required 3 credit elective. Students may apply a transfer credit to the final elective or take an additional course in any semester or during Winter term.

***Literacy Focus (and suggested courses):*** Students will take 2-3 starred courses and an independent Study in Reading OR serve as a Teaching Assistant or Part Time Lecturer for a literacy course.

Literacy Development in the Early Years (15:299:514)

Literacy Development in the Elementary and Middle School (15:299:516)

Theoretical Foundations of Literacy Research, Policy, and Practice (15:299:561)

Diagnosis and Correction of Reading Difficulties (15:299:564)

Independent Study in Reading (15: 299: 601)

***Mathematics Focus (and suggested courses):***

Introduction to Mathematics Education 15:254:540

Mathematics Education Practicum 15:254:644

Seminar in Mathematic Education 16:300:661

Topics in Math Education: Critical Thinking and Reasoning 15:254:551

***Other Content Knowledge Foci (with advisement):***

Science, Early childhood/Elementary, Social Studies, Language, Gifted Education

***Equity Focus (and suggested courses):***

History of African-American Education (15:310:561)

Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality in Education (15:310: 512)

Gender & Education (15:310:540)

Queer Issues in Schools (15:310:569)

Comparative Education (15:310:503)

## **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. Students are required to respond to two qualifying questions over the winter break, typically, between the second fall and second spring semesters of the program. Students on an extended timeline may sit for the qualifying exam between the third fall and third spring semester. Completing the qualifying process at this time 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 15-23 pages long.

*Question # 1* is developed by faculty from each respective concentration and focuses on addressing a problem of practice that will help students look across and synthesize their learning in the program. Some part of this paper could reflect how students' understanding has changed as a result of their learning, but the paper is primarily meant to demonstrate students' ability to analyze and address problems using appropriate theoretical and empirical lenses.

*Question #2* is the same for all students 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 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. In other words, the paper is structured as a brief purpose statement, literature review, and research design. The literature review makes up the majority of the paper (approximately 20% purpose statement, 60 % literature review, 20% study design)

### **Eligibility**

To sit for the qualifying exam students must have completed at least 21 credits of core courses (six of which must be Inquiry I and Inquiry II) as well as 12 credits of their concentration courses. A student may have no more than one outstanding IN grade.

### **Procedures**

The qualifying exam is offered once each year.

- Students receive qualifying questions by December 1st of their second or third fall.
- 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.
- Papers will have "blind" review.
- Qualifying papers are graded as "Pass" or "Revise and Resubmit." Students are notified of their results within one month of receipt. Students must pass both papers to complete the qualifying process. In case of disagreement between faculty about a paper, the Ed.D. director will assign a third reviewer.

The "lead" reviewer of each paper will meet with the student to provide written and verbal

feedback (using the rubric to guide the conversation with students). Feedback sessions should include the following discussion points:

- the strengths of both papers
- areas where student needs to improve
- conceptual and/or nuts-and-bolts feedback (including writing concerns)
- suggestions for moving forward on dissertation proposal

If a student does not pass one or both of the qualifying papers the student has one month from the date of the face-to-face meeting to revise paper(s). *Students may not solicit their reviewers during this interim period of revision after they have received the initial feedback and reviewers should not offer feedback during this time.* The revised paper(s) are reviewed by the original reviewers. The student will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit papers. If either paper does not pass after the second attempt, the student will fail the qualifying process and will be dismissed from the program.

## 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.

Dissertations that investigate an educational challenge or test solutions to a challenge typically formulate research questions that in some way ask, *What's going on here?* Or, *What happens when...?* For a student to appropriately communicate the study implications they might write a policy brief, journal article, curriculum, evaluation report, or other product. The mode of communication should be matched to the audience. In addition to the dissertation committee, stakeholders could include colleagues, supervisors, administrators, parents, community members, policy makers, etc.

### 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 (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 Types.* The purpose/goal of the dissertation will drive the type of dissertation you conduct. Regardless of the type, all dissertations involve the systematic collection and analysis of data or primary source material. Some examples include:

1. **Problem identification** and implications for intervention dissertation (asks “What’s going on here” and “what should we do about it?”), or
2. Design of instructional, organizational, or systemic **change initiative** or intervention dissertation (Proposes specific and detailed solution to problem of practice. The emphasis is on design based on problem identification and review of relevant research, but would include an evaluation design and some evaluation data and implications), or
3. **Evaluation of intervention** or initiative dissertation (comparison study of two or more



interventions or control compared to intervention(s) that asks “What happens when we...?”), or

4. **History/Phenomenology** of an educational problem or issue dissertation (Uses historical or phenomenological data to inform thinking about problems of practice)

*Dissertation Audience.* Dissertations may be written for a variety of audiences (single or multiple) from those most directly involved at a local level to a more public group of readers. The audience can be described as:

1. **Proximal** (self, teachers of same grade level or department, school leaders, other colleagues, and GSE faculty), and/or
2. **Semi Proximal/Semi Distal** (School district, school board, practitioners in outside of building but in same district, colleagues working in other close by or similar sites, parents, community members, and GSE faculty), and/or
3. **Distal** (field, client, policy makers, GSE faculty)

## **Dissertation Formats**

Students have the choice to prepare a dissertation using any of the formats described below. The choice of format should be discussed with and approved by the Dissertation Chair.

### **Traditional**

The traditional dissertation format should consist of 5 or more chapters describing 1) the purpose of the study, 2) relevant literature and how it informs the study, 3) Research design and methods, 4) findings, and 5) 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.

### **Semi-traditional**

This dissertation consists of 4 chapters (Purpose, Literature Review, Design/Methods, Findings), plus a product that is the outcome of your work. This could include, but is not limited to:

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

### **Portfolio (Alternative Format)**

The portfolio dissertation contains at least 3 distinct products from the list above (or similar products), including at least one that reviews relevant literature, describes the research design and verifiable methods, and demonstrates an explicit link between data collected, analysis, and interpretation of the data (i.e., a more traditionally scholarly product) plus an introduction explaining the contents of the portfolio, a design description (if appropriate) and a conclusion

that describes what actions have or will be taken as a result of the study and what the overall learnings have been from completing the project.

### *Portfolio Dissertation Format Approval Process*

Because the alternative format dissertation is a less standardized product, a proposal to do portfolio dissertation format must be approved by the student's dissertation committee and then by the Ed.D. Curriculum Committee. It should be submitted to the dissertation committee during the proposal defense or at least 4 months before defending the dissertation. In the proposal be sure to make clear:

- What products are being chosen and a rationale for each;
- Intended audience(s) and the specific contribution of each product;
- How the 3 products are distinct from each other;
- How the products connect to the goals of the Ed.D. program.

After the dissertation committee approves the proposal, it must be submitted to the Ed.D. Committee for review. The purpose of the review is to assure quality and coherence of alternative formats across the program. Unsuccessful proposals will receive feedback and can be resubmitted for another review.

### **Dissertation Committee**

The Ed.D. dissertation committee consists of a minimum of three individuals, at least two of whom are Rutgers faculty members. Any full-time faculty or staff member at Rutgers with an earned doctorate and appropriate expertise is eligible to serve as a committee member if recommended by the chair of a dissertation committee. A person with appropriate expertise outside Rutgers may become a member of a specific dissertation committee if recommended in writing by a committee chair and approved by the Ed.D. Director. A vita for an outside committee member must be provided. The chair should be a current member of the Graduate School of Education faculty. All students are required to submit a [Dissertation Committee Form](#) prior to scheduling your proposal.

To ensure that all students have chairs whom 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. However, given that the majority of candidates want to graduate in the 3.5-year timeframe and intensive summer work is required to do so, sometimes a perfect match between expert and topic will not be possible, as many faculty are not available to supervise when it is most needed.

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, s/he will

work with the candidate to identify and recruit a second reader who is. 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 is 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 work or study context.

### **Dissertation Groups and Timeline**

Candidates will work in dissertation groups of approximately 4-6; 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.

A recommended timeline for students wishing to complete the degree in 3.5 years follows. 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 timeline 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 will be expanded over the summer into a full proposal. The expectation is that Chairs will meet with their groups every two weeks and provide feedback on drafts between meetings. Meetings and feedback may be face-to-face or virtual. The chair will encourage peer feedback within the group and 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 September 12<sup>th</sup>. Some candidates may be able to submit the IRB materials earlier based on previous coursework. NOTE: THE IRB COMMITTEE DOES NOT MEET IN AUGUST.

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

Summer 4: Candidates complete dissertation. Until that time, chairs will meet every two weeks with groups and provide feedback on candidate work between meetings. Meetings and feedback may be face-to-face or virtual. The chair will encourage peer feedback within the group and committee members will be asked to help if they are willing and available. Candidates will defend their dissertations as early in September as possible, and subsequently complete any necessary revisions.

### **Dissertation Proposal Defense**

*Students may not defend their dissertation proposals if they have any incompletes*

### **Final Dissertation Defenses**

*Students may not defend their final dissertations during the same semester of the proposal defense.*

### **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.

**Rutgers University  
Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University  
Doctorate in Education**

**Dissertation Committee Composition**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Program: \_\_\_\_\_

RUID: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Term/Year of Dissertation Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

**If a committee member is not a member of the GSE faculty, please attach his/her CV to this form.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Ed.D. Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Part V: Additional Policies and Procedures**

### **Transfer Credits**

Up to 18 credits can be transferred in; no more than 9 credits can be applied to the GSE core and no more than 3 credits can be applied to any one core area. Students can not use transfer credits in place of Inquiry I and Inquiry II. Approval for transfer is to be determined by the Ed.D. Director in consultation with the concentration coordinators and concentration faculty.

### **Academic Integrity**

The University policy on academic integrity covers cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, denying others access to materials they need for research or course work, and facilitating others' violations of the academic integrity policy. While there are four levels of violation of the academic integrity policy, all violations of this policy by graduate students are considered "potentially separable," that is, grounds for dismissal from the university. Most issues of academic integrity in the Graduate School of Education have had to do with plagiarism and the inappropriate citation (or non citation) of the work of others. These can usually be addressed through proper citation. Further information about the academic integrity policy can be found at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

### **Termination and Appeals**

Students may be required to terminate their graduate studies and withdraw from The Graduate School-New Brunswick if they fail to maintain satisfactory academic or professional standards in any phase of their graduate programs. Conditions imposed at the time of admission must be satisfied by each student. Nonadherence to the schedule of Time Limits for Degrees may constitute a basis for termination (See the Graduate School Catalog for more details). When such problems occur, the program notifies the student in writing of its concern about the student's performance. Such a warning specifies the source of the concern, the applicable program or graduate school rules, and the proposed action. Warnings specify when and on what basis a recommendation for academic dismissal will be considered by the faculty. A probationary period of one semester may be applied (In cases of extremely poor performance, the program faculty may determine that a probationary period is not justified and may move directly to a recommendation for dismissal).

Following the probationary period, a student who fails to meet the provisions of the warning is considered for dismissal by the faculty. A faculty vote is recorded on any motion to recommend dismissal, and a letter is written to the student stating the faculty action and its rationale. When termination is recommended, the graduate program director communicates to the dean of the Graduate School-New Brunswick in writing the specific reasons involved, all warnings communicated to the student, the faculty procedures and actions leading to the recommendation, the recorded faculty vote for dismissal, and the mailing address of the student. The dean of the Graduate School-New Brunswick will write the actual letter of termination to the student. Subsequently, the student's transcript will bear the notation, "Academic Dismissal." International students are required to make normal progress toward their degree in order to maintain their legal status. International students facing serious academic problems that could lead to probation and/or termination are urged to consult with the [Center for International Faculty and Student Services](#).

Whenever possible, student academic appeals are handled within the Education Program. The student should take the issue to the Director of the Education Program for review and mediation. The Director consults with all parties and proposes a resolution. If this is unsuccessful, the matter is referred to the Admissions and Scholastic Standing committee, as designated in the bylaws of the program. The committee may consult with anyone it chooses in arriving at a recommendation in the matter. In extraordinary cases, it may ask third parties in the faculty to review the decision that was appealed.

While action within the faculty normally is final, a student may appeal to the Graduate School-New Brunswick if he or she feels the decision was unfair. Each case will be reviewed by a representative of the dean of the Graduate School-New Brunswick, who attempts to informally resolve the dispute. Should the issue remain unresolved, the student is notified in writing that he or she may request that the dispute be brought to the Appeals Committee. Such a request must be made within 30 days of notification.

The Appeals Committee hears appeals that have not been resolved by the Office of the Graduate School. The student must make his or her case in writing. A written response to the student's statement will be solicited from the director of the degree program whose action is being appealed. The committee normally bases its judgment on written submissions only. 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-New Brunswick, whose decision is final [Taken from the Graduate School Catalog].