Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, PhD

Learning Outcomes

Specialized Content Knowledge

The department expects students to acquire and display mastery of a broad and deep knowledge of disciplines associated with one's specialization (educational leadership; or higher education and student affairs) covering content that contributes to the historical, current, philosophical, and applied dimensions of the field.

Critical Thinking and Analytical Writing

Students will acquire capacities for theoretical and evidentiary-based analysis to critique and synthesize disparate and interdisciplinary perspectives within their specialization.

Empirical Skills

Students will develop skills for conducting assessment, evaluation, and research on phenomena associated with individuals and organizations associated with educational organizations, educationally aligned sectors, and individuals affiliated with or impacted by education.

Impact and Practical Application

Students will acquire skills for engaging in the higher education professional communities by participating in research and/or practitioner organizations focused on translation and application.

Leadership and Collaboration

Students will be able to analyze, articulate, and respond to complex problems using theory, evidence, and cooperation with those affected by the issues.

Ethical, Inclusive, and Equitable Practice

Students will gain skills in identifying and responding to educational inequities at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels. Specifically, students will apply their skills to advance educational inclusion and facilitate organizational change and reform.

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Educational Leadership

The Doctor of Philosophy program in educational policy and leadership studies (EPLS) with an educational leadership subprogram requires a minimum of 75 s.h. of graduate credit. Students must earn a UI cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00 in major coursework.

The program prepares scholarly professionals for leadership positions in a wide range of educational, non-profit and public sector settings. Students acquire strong backgrounds in leadership, policy, and research. They equip themselves to discover, integrate, and apply knowledge as transformational leaders.

The PhD in educational policy and leadership studies with an educational leadership subprogram requires the following coursework.

Requirements	Hours
Leadership Core	12
EPLS Concentration	12
Research Methods	15
Cognate	9
Electives or Transfer Credit	24
Dissertation	3

Students also complete the comprehensive examination and a dissertation, described in the following sections.

Many educational leadership courses are offered by distance education; visit MyUI for information about courses offered during current semesters.

For more detailed coursework information, visit Educational Leadership on the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies website.

Leadership Core

The leadership core provides a foundational understanding of educational leadership that all students must master, regardless of their career goals and interests. All courses in the core (12 s.h.) must be completed at the University of Iowa.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
EPLS:6217	Theory for Scholar Practitioners	3
EPLS:6224	Organizational Theory and Administrative Behavior	3
EPLS:6270	Policy and Politics	3
EPLS:6311	Seminar: Research Topic in Education	3

EPLS Concentration

The EPLS concentration (12 s.h.) provides opportunities to learn more about policy and educational leadership from both building and district-level perspectives. Other EPLS seminars on policy, leadership, and history may be available to substitute for one or more of these courses with advisor approval.

Some courses in the concentration can be counted toward principal or superintendent licensure. If you are interested in licensure, please consult with your advisor as you begin the program.

Course #	Title	Hours
12 s.h. from these:		
EPLS:6222	Introduction to Educational Policy	3
EPLS:6225	Higher Education Policy	3
EPLS:6275	Higher Education and Society	3
EPLS:6285	School and Community Relationships	3
EPLS:6315	Orientation to the Superintendency	2
EPLS:6317	Operational Leadership and Management	2
EPLS:6319	Human Resources Leadership	2
EPLS:6321	Social Advocacy Summit	1
EPLS:6323	School Finance	2
EPLS:6329	Legislative Summit	1-3
EPLS:6383	Supervision and Evaluation	3

Research Methods

Research methods courses (at least 15 s.h.) ensure that students achieve scholarly autonomy and initiative. Students must take at least one qualitative research methods course and one quantitative research methods course.

Course #	Title	Hours
At least one of these qualitative research methods courses:		
EPLS:6266	Program Evaluation	3
EPLS:7373	Qualitative Research Design and Methods	3
CSED:7338	Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry	3
EDTL:7070	Qualitative Research Methods in Teaching and Learning	3
PSQF:7331	Qualitative Educational Research Methods	3
This quantitative research methods course:		
PSQF:6243	Intermediate Statistical Methods	3

To complete the remaining 9 s.h. students select additional courses from the preceding list or any of the following courses.

Course #	Title	Hours
EPLS:6206	Research Process and Design	3
EPLS:6209	Survey Research and Design	3
EPLS:6370	Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis	3
EDTL:6267	Seminar: Current Issues in Art Education	3-4
EDTL:7071	Critical Discourse Analysis in Educational Research	3
EDTL:7072	Advanced Methods of Literacy Research: Qualitative Data Analysis and Reporting	3
EDTL:7073	Ethnographic Methods, Theories, and Texts	3
EDTL:7410	Mixed Methods Research	3
EDTL:7751	Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis	3
EDTL:7953	Seminar: Single Subject Design Research	3
PSQF:6244	Correlation and Regression	3
PSQF:6246	Design of Experiments	3
PSQF:6249	Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Models	3
PSQF:6252	Introduction to Multivariate Statistical Methods	3

Cognate

Students select a cognate of courses (9 s.h.) from another department in the College of Education: teaching and learning, psychological and quantitative foundations, or counselor education. All courses must be taken from the same department.

Teaching and Learning

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
EDTL:6015	PhD Seminar: Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Education	3
EDTL:7004	Schooling in the United States	3
EDTL:7033	Seminar on Teacher Education	3

Psychological and Quantitative Foundations: Measurement Focus

Course #	Title	Hours
9 s.h. from these:		
PSQF:6255	Construction and Use of Evaluation Instruments	3
PSQF:6257	Educational Measurement and Evaluation	3

PSQF:6258	Theory and Technique in Educational Measurement	3
PSQF:6262	Item Response Theory	3
PSQF:7355	Seminar: Educational Measurement and Evaluation	arr.
PSQF:7358	Equating and Scaling of Educational Tests	3

Counselor Education

Course #	Title	Hours
9 s.h. from these:		
CSED:7400	Seminar: Ethics and Issues in Counseling	3
CSED:7457	Professional Orientation to Counselor Education and Supervision	3
CSED:7458	Seminar: Issues and Trends in Counseling Research	4
CSED:7460	Seminar: Research in Counseling	3

Electives

A student and their advisor may determine that some of their prior graduate work may be appropriate and applicable to the student's doctoral program. A student may count up to 24 s.h. of prior coursework toward the doctoral degree as electives. If a student does not have prior graduate work, they must enroll in up to 24 s.h. of electives to fulfill this requirement. Electives are selected from courses numbered 6000 or above from counselor education (prefix CSED), teaching and learning (prefix EDTL), educational policy and leadership studies (prefix EPLS), and psychological and quantitative foundations (prefix PSQF). Courses from other departments may also be counted with advisor approval.

Comprehensive Examination

Students must satisfactorily complete a written take-home comprehensive examination consisting of three parts. The written exam is followed by an oral examination.

Dissertation

The dissertation is a major research study planned in collaboration with the student's advisor. Students must write a formal dissertation proposal and submit it for approval, first to their advisor and then to the members of their doctoral committee. Students and their advisors determine when the proposal is complete. Students must earn 3 s.h. of credit for dissertation research through registration in EPLS:7483 EdD Dissertation in Practice Proposal and/or EPLS:7493 PhD Thesis. The doctoral program culminates with a final oral defense of the dissertation.

Students must be registered at the University of Iowa during the session in which they complete their comprehensive examination through the semester in which they defend their dissertation and graduate.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College and of the educational leadership program. Successful applicants must have an earned a master's degree at the time of the program start and have experience teaching and leading in PK–12 schools or adjacent fields.

Higher Education and Student Affairs

The Doctor of Philosophy program in educational policy and leadership studies with a higher education and student affairs subprogram requires a minimum of 74 s.h. of graduate credit. At least 39 s.h. must be earned while registered in the Graduate College at the University of Iowa, and after formal program admission. Students must earn a UI cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.00 in major coursework.

The doctoral program prepares individuals to be leaders in student affairs and academic administration, graduate faculty at research universities, leaders in conducting research about college students and higher education, policy analysts in postsecondary institutions and public or private agencies, and teachers and academic leaders at two-year and four-year colleges. The higher education and student affairs program integrates academic experience with the cocurricular learning experiences of students and studies the outcomes of both.

The PhD in educational policy and leadership studies with a higher education and student affairs subprogram requires the following coursework.

Requirements	Hours
Substantive Core Courses	18
Research Methods Courses	18
Concentration Area Courses	12
Electives	24
Dissertation	2

Substantive Core

The substantive core provides a foundational understanding of higher education and general knowledge that all students must master, regardless of their career goals and interests. All courses in the core (18 s.h.) must be completed at the University of Iowa.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
EPLS:6216	Finance in Higher Education	3
EPLS:6220	History of Higher Education	3
EPLS:6224	Organizational Theory and Administrative Behavior	3
EPLS:6273	College Students	3
EPLS:6275	Higher Education and Society	3
EPLS:6311	Seminar: Research Topic in Education	3

Research Methods

Research methods courses (at least 18 s.h.) ensure that students achieve scholarly autonomy and initiative.

Basic Research Methods

Course #	Title	Hours
Both of these (6 s.h.):		
EPLS:6206	Research Process and Design	3
EPLS:7373	Qualitative Research Design and Methods (or approved substitute)	3

Statistics/Linear Regression

These courses (6 s.h.) must be taken in this order.

Course #	Title	Hours
This course:		
PSQF:6243	Intermediate Statistical Methods	3
Then this course:		
EPLS:6370	Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis	3

Advanced Research Methods

Students consult with their advisor to choose two courses (at least 6 s.h.) from either list appropriate to their dissertation design and intended learning outcomes.

Qualitative Methods

Course #	Title	Hours
EPLS:5260	Introduction to Institutional Research and Effectiveness	3
EPLS:7392	Mixed Methods Research	3
EDTL:7071	Critical Discourse Analysis in Educational Research	3
EDTL:7072	Advanced Methods of Literacy Research: Qualitative Data Analysis and Reporting	3
EDTL:7073	Ethnographic Methods, Theories, and Texts	3
Another comparable research methods course approved by advisor		

Quantitative Methods

Course #	Title	Hours
EPLS:5260	Introduction to Institutional Research and Effectiveness	3
EPLS:6209	Survey Research and Design	3
POLI:7003	Advanced Methodology	4
PSQF:6246	Design of Experiments	3
Another comparable research methods course approved by advisor		

Concentration Area

The concentration area (12 s.h.) gives students the opportunity to develop expertise in one area. Students consult with their advisor to develop the concentration curriculum. Students select from these options or from a different thematic combination of other graduate coursework numbered 5000 or above approved by their advisor.

Course #	Title	Hours
12 s.h. from these:		
EPLS:5251	College Environments	3
EPLS:5253	Assessment in Higher Education and Student Affairs	3
EPLS:6217	Theory for Scholar Practitioners	2-3
EPLS:6218	The Law and Higher Education	3
EPLS:6225	Higher Education Policy	3
EPLS:6266	Program Evaluation	3
EPLS:6321	Social Advocacy Summit	1
EPLS:6332	College Student Development	3
EPLS:6336	Impact of College on Students	3
EPLS:7385	Teaching and Learning in Higher Education	3
EPLS:7432	Strategies for Inclusive Leadership	3

Electives

Students choose electives numbered 3000 or above as appropriate to their individual goals. These may draw from courses offered by counselor education (prefix CSED), teaching and learning (prefix EDTL), educational policy and leadership studies (prefix EPLS), and psychological and quantitative foundations (prefix PSQF) or by other University of Iowa departments and programs. Electives must be approved by the student's advisor. Some prior graduate coursework may be appropriate and applicable, and can be applied as elective credit with approval by the student's advisor.

Comprehensive Examination

The PhD comprehensive examination consists of a question written by the student in consultation with their advisor, and formally approved by the higher education and student affairs faculty. Students are expected to construct a well-supported argument informed by knowledge of the theory, research, and practice that constitutes the field of higher education based on the substantive core and the student's concentration. The written examination is followed by an oral examination.

Dissertation

The dissertation is a major research study planned in collaboration with the student's advisor. Students must write a formal dissertation proposal and submit it for approval, first to their advisor and then to the members of their doctoral committee. Students and their advisors determine when the proposal is complete. Students must earn 2 s.h. of dissertation research credit. The doctoral program culminates with a final oral defense of the dissertation.

Students must be registered at the University of Iowa each fall and spring semester from the semester in which they complete their comprehensive examination through the semester in which they defend their dissertation and graduate.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, visit MyUI.

Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, PhD

- Educational Leadership Subprogram
- Higher Education and Student Affairs Subprogram

Educational Leadership Subprogram

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
75 s.h. must be graduate level coursework; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. [a]		
	Hours	**0**
First Year		
Fall		
EPLS:6224	Organizational Theory and Administrative Behavior	3
EPLS:6270	Policy and Politics	3
Research Methods course [b]		3
Elective course [c]		3
	Hours	**12**
Spring		
EPLS:6217	Theory for Scholar Practitioners	3
EPLS:6311	Seminar: Research Topic in Education	3
Research Methods course [b]		3
Elective course [c]		3
	Hours	**12**
Second Year		
Fall		
PSQF:6243	Intermediate Statistical Methods [b]	3
EPLS Concentration course [d]		3
Qualitative Research Methods course [b]		3
Elective course [c]		3
	Hours	**12**
Spring		
Cognate course [e]		3
EPLS Concentration course [d]		3
Research Methods course [b]		3
Elective course [c]		3
	Hours	**12**
Third Year		
Any Semester		
Exam: Doctoral Comprehensive Exam [f]		
	Hours	**0**
Fall		
Cognate course [e]		3
EPLS Concentration course [d]		3
Elective course [c]		3
	Hours	**9**
Spring		
Cognate course [e]		3
EPLS Concentration course [d]		3
Elective course [c]		3
	Hours	**9**
Fourth Year		
Fall		
Elective course [c]		3
Elective course [c]		3
	Hours	**6**
Spring		
EPLS:7493	PhD Thesis [g]	3
Exam: Doctoral Final Exam [h]		
	Hours	**3**
	Total Hours	**75**

a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

b Complete at least 15 s.h. in research design, quantitative, and qualitative required methods courses, including PSQF:6243. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses and work with academic advisor to determine appropriate graduate level courses and sequence.

c Students may count up to 24 s.h. of prior coursework toward the doctoral degree as electives. If a student does not have prior graduate work, they must enroll in up to 24 s.h. of electives to fulfill this requirement. Electives are selected from courses numbered 6000 or above from counselor education (prefix CSED), teaching and learning (prefix EDTL), educational policy and leadership studies (prefix EPLS), and psychological and quantitative foundations (prefix PSQF). Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate elective coursework and sequence.

d Complete at least 12 s.h. in EPLS concentration courses. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses and work with academic advisor to determine appropriate graduate level courses and sequence.

e Students select a cognate of courses (9 s.h.) from another department in the College of Education: teaching and learning, psychological and quantitative foundations, or counselor education. All courses must be taken from the same department. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses and work with academic advisor to determine appropriate graduate level courses and sequence.

f Students must satisfactorily complete a written take-home comprehensive examination consisting of three parts. The written exam is followed by an oral examination.

g Maximum total of 3 s.h. of thesis credit allowed.

h An original project is to be developed, presented, and defended in an area of educational leadership; must be completed within five years of comprehensive exam.

Higher Education and Student Affairs Subprogram

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
74 s.h. of graduate level coursework must be completed; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. [a]		
	Hours	**0**
First Year		
Fall		
EPLS:6206	Research Process and Design [b]	3

EPLS:6311	Seminar: Research Topic in Education [c]	3
PSQF:6243	Intermediate Statistical Methods [d]	3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**12**
Spring		
EPLS:6273	College Students [c]	3
EPLS:6370	Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis [d]	3
Concentration Area course [f]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**12**
Second Year		
Fall		
EPLS:6220	History of Higher Education [c]	3
EPLS:7373	Qualitative Research Design and Methods [b]	3
Concentration Area course [f]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**12**
Spring		
EPLS:6216	Finance in Higher Education [c]	3
EPLS:6275	Higher Education and Society [c]	3
Advanced Research Methods course [g]		3 - 4
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**12-13**
Third Year		
Any Semester		
Exam: Doctoral Comprehensive Exam [h]		
	Hours	**0**
Fall		
Advanced Research Methods course [g]		3 - 4
Concentration Area course [f]		3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**12-13**
Spring		
EPLS:6224	Organizational Theory and Administrative Behavior [c]	3
Concentration Area course [f]		3
Elective course [e]		3
Elective course [e]		3
	Hours	**12**
Fourth Year		
Fall		
EPLS:7493	PhD Thesis [i]	1
	Hours	**1**
Spring		
EPLS:7493	PhD Thesis [i]	1
Exam: Doctoral Final Exam [j]		
	Hours	**1**
	Total Hours	**74-76**

a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

b Basic research methods course.

c Substantive core course.

d Statistics/linear regression course.

e Students choose electives numbered 3000 or above as appropriate to their individual goals. Electives must be approved by the student's advisor.

f The concentration area (12 s.h.) gives students the opportunity to develop expertise in one area. Students consult with their advisor to develop the concentration curriculum. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.

g Students consult with their advisor to choose two courses (at least 6 s.h.) in either qualitative or quantitative advanced research methods appropriate to their dissertation design and intended learning outcomes. See the General Catalog for lists of approved courses.

h Typically taken after most required coursework is completed; work with advisor to complete the exam.

i Students must earn 2 s.h. of dissertation research credit.

j Dissertation defense.