

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 level. Specifically, students will apply their skills to advance educational inclusion and facilitate organizational change and reform.

Educational Leadership

The Doctor of Philosophy program in educational policy and leadership studies with an educational leadership subprogram requires a minimum of 90 s.h. of graduate credit. Students must earn a 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 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 work.

Requirements	Hours
Common Courses	12
Cognate Courses	9
Electives	29
Concentration Area Courses	12

Research Courses	18
Dissertation	10

Students also complete the comprehensive examination and a dissertation, described below.

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

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

Research Courses

All educational leadership PhD students must complete EPLS:6206 Research Process and Design during the first year of their PhD program. They also must complete a minimum of 15 s.h. in qualitative and quantitative coursework, with at least 9 s.h. from one area (qualitative or quantitative) and at least 6 s.h. from the other. Students select from courses listed under PhD Research Requirements on the college's Graduate Student Life website.

Comprehensive Examination

Students must satisfactorily complete a written take-home comprehensive examination consisting of three parts. The first part covers a student's major area of study, and the second covers two additional concentration areas. The third is on the student's outside area of study and is prepared by faculty members outside the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies. The written exams are followed by an oral examination.

Dissertation

Students must write a dissertation based on an original research project in an area of educational leadership. Students must earn 10 s.h. of credit for dissertation research. 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 graduate.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College and of the educational leadership program. They also must satisfy the residency requirement of two full-time (at least 9 s.h.) registrations. Required application materials include transcripts, official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores, three letters of recommendation, and a personal statement of career goals. Admission is based on grade-point average and GRE scores (however, the GRE requirement has been suspended for the 2022–23 admissions cycle), promise for scholarly and professional growth, and recommendations. Complete applications are reviewed as they are received.

Applicants whose first language is not English must submit official test scores to verify English proficiency. Applicants can verify English proficiency by submitting official test scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). For specific score requirements, see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

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 90 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 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	18-21
Concentration Area Courses	18
Graduate Electives	24
Dissertation	12

Substantive Core

The substantive core provides 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	Diversity and Equity in Higher Education	3
EPLS:6311	Seminar: Research Topic in Education	3

Research Methods

Research methods courses (at least 18 s.h.) assure 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 (6–7 s.h.) must be taken in this order.

Course #	Title	Hours
This course:		
PSQF:6243	Intermediate Statistical Methods	3
One of these:		
EPLS:6370	Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis	3
PSQF:6244	Correlation and Regression	4

Advanced/Specialized 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:5240	Topics in Education (when topic is introduction to historical methodology or critical qualitative inquiry)	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:5240	Topics in Education (when topic is multilevel modeling)	3
EPLS:6209	Survey Research and Design	3
POLI:7003	Advanced Methodology	4
PSQF:6246	Design of Experiments	3
SOC:7170	Advanced Statistical Modeling of Data	3
SOC:7180	Structural Equation Modeling	3
Another comparable research methods course approved by advisor		

Concentration Area

The concentration area (18 s.h.) gives students the opportunity to develop expertise in one area. Students consult with their advisor to develop the concentration curriculum.

Graduate Electives

Students choose 24 s.h. of elective graduate coursework in consultation with their advisors. A student and their advisor may determine that some of the graduate elective work may be drawn from appropriate previous graduate coursework that complements other aspects of the student's doctoral program.

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 12 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. Transcripts, a résumé or curriculum vita, three letters of recommendation, and a personal statement are required. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test is optional. The statement of purpose (one to three pages) should include professional and/or research interests, whether the applicant plans to enroll full- or part-time, and how the applicant's goals and experiences are consistent with the higher education and student affairs program's mission and values.

Applicants whose first language is not English must submit official test scores to verify English proficiency. Applicants can verify English proficiency by submitting official test scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). For specific score requirements, see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

The early action application deadline is Dec. 1; the regular decision application deadline is April 15 for admission the following fall.

For more information on higher education and student affairs programs, see the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies website.

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, see MyUI.

Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, PhD

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- Higher Education and Student Affairs Subprogram [p. 4]

Educational Leadership Subprogram

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
90 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		
Distribute the following graduate elective hours between years 1-4 with advisor approval: ^b		
Elective course		3
Elective course		3
Elective course		3
Elective course		3
Elective course		3
Elective course		3
Elective course		3

Elective course		3
Elective course		3
Elective course		2
Hours		29
First Year		
Fall		
EPLS:6217	Theory and Practice of Leadership	3
EPLS:6224	Organizational Theory and Administrative Behavior	3
EPLS:6226	Educational Management	3
Hours		9
Spring		
EPLS:6311	Seminar: Research Topic in Education	3
Research course ^c		3
Research course ^c		3
Hours		9
Second Year		
Fall		
Concentration Area course ^d		3
Research course ^c		3
Research course ^c		3
Hours		9
Spring		
Concentration Area course ^d		3
Research course ^c		3
Research course ^c		3
Hours		9
Third Year		
Any Semester		
Comprehensive Exam ^{e, f}		
Hours		0
Fall		
Concentration Area course ^d		3
Cognate course ^g		3
Cognate course ^g		3
Hours		9
Spring		
Concentration Area course ^d		3
Cognate course ^g		3
Hours		6
Fourth Year		
Fall		
EPLS:7493	PhD Thesis ^h	5
Hours		5
Spring		
EPLS:7493	PhD Thesis ^h	5
Final Exam (Dissertation Defense) ^{i, j}		
Hours		5
Total Hours		90

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 a total of 29 s.h. in a related field; work with academic advisor for approval of graduate transfer credit and/or to select electives. Students are encouraged to present their MA degree as the related field, where appropriate.

- c Complete at least 18 s.h. of graduate courses in research design, quantitative, and qualitative required methods appropriate for doctoral-level research in Educational Leadership. Work with academic advisor to select appropriate courses approved by the College of Education.
- d Complete at least 12 s.h. in a concentration area; work with academic advisor to select appropriate graduate level courses. See the General Catalog and the College of Education website for specifics.
- e Required written and oral examination covering three areas: major area of study, other concentration area, and the student's chosen outside area of study.
- f Typically taken after most required coursework is completed; work with academic advisor to complete the exam.
- g Students must complete a 9 s.h. cognate outside of the Educational Policy and Leadership Studies department. Work with academic advisor to determine appropriate graduate courses and sequence.
- h Maximum total of 10 s.h. of thesis credit allowed.
- i An original research project is to be developed, presented and defended in an area of Educational Leadership.
- j Must be completed within five years of Comprehensive Exam.

Graduate Elective ^h	3
Graduate Elective ^h	3
Graduate Elective ^h	3
Graduate Elective ^h	3
Hours	78-81
Third Year	
Any Semester	
Comprehensive Exam ⁱ	
Hours	0
Fourth Year	
Any Semester	
Final Exam (Dissertation Defense) ^j	
Hours	0
Fall	
EPLS:7493	PhD Thesis ^k
	6
Hours	6
Spring	
EPLS:7493	PhD Thesis ^k
	6
Hours	6
Total Hours	90-93

Higher Education and Student Affairs Subprogram

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
90 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		
Distribute between years 1-4 with advisor approval; work with academic advisor to determine sequence.		
EPLS:6216	Finance in Higher Education ^b	3
EPLS:6220	History of Higher Education ^b	3
EPLS:6224	Organizational Theory and Administrative Behavior ^b	3
EPLS:6273	College Students ^b	3
EPLS:6275	Diversity and Equity in Higher Education ^b	3
EPLS:6311	Seminar: Research Topic in Education ^b	3
EPLS:6206	Research Process and Design ^c	3
EPLS:7373	Qualitative Research Design and Methods ^c	3
PSQF:6243	Intermediate Statistical Methods ^d	3
EPLS:6370 or PSQF:6244	Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis ^d or Correlation and Regression	3 - 4
	Advanced/Specialized Research Methods course ^{e, f}	3 - 4
	Advanced/Specialized Research Methods course ^{e, f}	3 - 4
	Concentration Area course ^g	3
	Concentration Area course ^g	3
	Concentration Area course ^g	3
	Concentration Area course ^g	3
	Concentration Area course ^g	3
	Concentration Area course ^g	3
	Graduate Elective ^h	3
	Graduate Elective ^h	3
	Graduate Elective ^h	3
	Graduate Elective ^h	3

- 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 Substantive Core course.
- c Basic Research Methods course.
- d Statistics/Linear Regression course.
- e Work with academic advisor to select either Qualitative or Quantitative Advanced/Specialized Research Methods coursework appropriate to dissertation design.
- f 6 s.h. from Qualitative courses EPLS:5240, EPLS:7392, EDTL:7071, EDTL:7072, EDTL:7073, or 6-8 s.h. from Quantitative courses EPLS:5240, EPLS:6209, POLI:7003, PSQF:6246, SOC:7170, SOC:7180
- g Work with academic advisor to select appropriate graduate level coursework in the specialization area. See the General Catalog and the College of Education website for specifics.
- h Work with academic advisor for approval to select electives in related field, including graduate transfer credits.
- i Typically taken after most required coursework is completed; work with advisor to complete the exam.
- j Must be completed within 5 years of Comprehensive Exam.
- k Maximum total of 12 s.h. of thesis credit allowed.