STUDENT and ADVISING GUIDELINES FOR THE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)

INTRODUCTION

This document provides you, as a doctoral student, with helpful information about policies and procedures in the doctoral degree process. It is designed to enhance the quality and consistency of advising, ensure equity and integrity in the degree process, and promote continuous progress toward completion of the degree.

The College of Education offers a variety of academic concentrations leading to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Education. Please note that the School Psychology Program leads to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in School Psychology. A goal of these concentrations is to contribute to the preparation of education leaders and scholars in all educational settings.

The six major steps to the doctoral degree are shown below. In the course of completing these steps, you are required to fill out a series of forms that will mark the completion of a milestone (see Doctoral Forms – Milestones) towards your doctoral degree.

1. Admission and Assignment of Initial Advisor
2. Formation of Guidance Committee and Development of a Proposed Program of Study
3. Formation of Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination Committee
4. Preparation for and the Completion of Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination
5. Formation of Dissertation Committee
6. Completion of Dissertation Proposal
7. Preparation for and Completion of the Dissertation and Oral Examination

Graduate School regulations, requirements, and administrative processes which affect your progress toward receipt of the degree are found in the Graduate School Bulletin at http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/policies-forms/graduate-school-bulletins and the Graduate School Handbook at http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/policies-forms/graduate-student-handbook.

Refer to those documents for additional information, regulations, and procedures concerning enrollment status, statute of limitations, grading policy, academic average for graduate degrees,
satisfactory or reasonable progress, maximum credit loads, course withdrawal, incomplete grades, academic dismissal, transfer of credits, leave of absence, program fee, off-campus fee, and readmission.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION POLICIES

FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The guidelines that follow provide information which reflects elements unique to the College of Education (www.umass.edu/education) or items which have proven especially helpful to College of Education graduate students. Within the framework of the University Graduate School regulations and with the advice and approval of a guidance committee, students plan academic programs of study which include two consecutive semesters of full-time residency (see Residency Requirement).

For further clarification of graduate procedures and processes, please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs in the College of Education at 413-545-6984.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

A doctoral concentration leads to the highest degree awarded in the profession. You should carefully plan your academic program of study during the early part of your second semester with the help of your faculty guidance committee. Previous academic work and professional experience should be considered in planning academic goals and scholarship.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The PhD in the College of Education requires a Program of Study that meets the following criteria:

- It must contain a minimum of 54 credits beyond the Master’s degree. Note: Concentrations determine how the required 54 credits are allocated. Each concentration’s Graduate Program Curriculum Outlines are posted on their web page.

  - A minimum of 36 credits of non-dissertation work must be taken. Credit requirements vary across concentrations. Applicants and students should check on the College’s website concentration page for the curriculum outline for concentration specific requirements.

  - 18 dissertation credits are required to meet the dissertation requirement for the PhD degree.

  - No more than 9 of the credits can be independent studies or practica.

  - Audited courses do not count toward degree requirements.

- All credits must be earned within the Statute of Limitations period (see Statute of Limitations)
The College of Education requires competencies and/or course work in five areas. Each concentration has specific requirements for meeting these competencies for the doctoral degree which the doctoral student must fulfill.

- human development
- social justice
- curriculum and pedagogy
- foundations and philosophy of education
- research (4 courses; 2 must be quantitative)

All credits you plan to use towards your doctoral degree must be approved by your advisor.

Comprehensive Examinations

The purpose of the exam is to demonstrate a student’s foundational knowledge and preparation to do the dissertation research. The comprehensive exam must be clearly described by the concentration/specialization. If an area of concentration/specialization offers more than one option to fulfill its comprehensive exam requirement, it must clearly describe all such options and make them available to all students pursuing that area of concentration/specialization. Specific timelines for the completion of the comprehensive exam must be clearly described by the concentration (one year from completion of the formation of your comprehensive examination committee is strongly recommended).

Dissertation

The Dissertation must be a formal manuscript that addresses a specific research problem. The dissertation should meet the scholarly standards required by refereed publications. The dissertation should involve systematic empirical/theoretical inquiry. The manuscript should include an Abstract; Introduction; Literature Review; Design and Methods; Results; and Discussion of Findings.

ENROLLMENT STATUS

Degree Status
Students admitted as fully qualified to undertake a program toward a graduate degree are termed degree-seeking students as opposed to non-degree students.

Full/Half/Part-Time Degree Status
Degree status is often critical to College of Education students because of the way it relates to student loan payments or loan deferments. The Graduate School defines full-time status as nine (9) or more credits; part-time status as eight (8) or fewer credits; and (for loan deferments) half-time status as six (6) or more credits per semester. Audited courses do not count toward degree requirements or enrollment status.
STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

The Statute of Limitations (SOL) is the period within which all degree requirements must be completed. Doctoral students are required to complete their program within a given number of years of achieving candidacy, which is defined as completing the comprehensive examination. Follow the link below to view the Graduate School’s policy on Statute of Limitations (SOL).

http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/current-students/graduate-student-handbook/1-enrollment

If your Statute of Limitations is due to expire you will receive an email from the Graduate School informing you of the deadlines to either request an extension of your SOL or apply for the upcoming degree period. To request an extension, you should write to your Committee Chairperson (i.e. advisor), stating the rationale for the extension and outlining your academic progress to date. This correspondence should include a time line projecting the month and year you plan to complete each remaining part of the program (comprehensive examination, dissertation proposal, and final oral defense). Your Committee Chairperson must then endorse this request and forward it to the Graduate Program Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs (Room W114, Furcolo Hall) at least one month before the Graduate School deadline.

INDEPENDENT STUDY AND INDIVIDUALIZED PRACTICUM

An Independent Study or Individualized Practicum is intended to serve as an opportunity for students to develop a specific knowledge base or set of professional competencies which cannot be developed through regular course offerings. They cannot be used to satisfy specific course requirements in a degree program or for state licensure, nor should an Independent Study or Individualized Practicum serve as the core of a student’s degree or licensure program.

Students choose an instructor whose knowledge or professional competency will provide depth in a particular area. The student and the instructor work out an explicit contract which specifies the goals, procedures, and outcomes of the Independent Study or Individualized Practicum. Note: If the instructor is an adjunct or is not a member of the College of Education faculty, a faculty sponsor from their concentration will have to sign. Contracts are available on the College’s website: http://www.umass.edu/education/students/current/overview

A student’s completed program of study cannot have more than 9 credits of Independent Studies or Individualized Practica.

COURSE REGISTRATION

Registering for a Course
To register for a course, students use SPIRE, the University’s secure online student information system. Information on how to use SPIRE can be obtained at http://www.oit.umass.edu/spire or at OIT offices in the Lederle Low Rise Building.
Registering for an Independent Study or Individualized Practicum

The Independent Study or Individualized Practicum forms are available on the College’s website at http://www.umass.edu/education/students/current/overview/. Enter the information online, then print and obtain the instructor’s signature. Note: If the instructor is an adjunct or is not a member of the College of Education faculty, a faculty sponsor from your concentration will have to sign. As students cannot register for these kinds of courses, they must bring the form to the Curriculum Coordinator in W114 Furcolo Hall who handles the registration.

Registering for Dissertation Credits

Doctoral students are required to register for eighteen (18) dissertation credits. These are usually taken after the successful completion of the comprehensive examination. Contact the Graduate Program Coordinator to register for these dissertation credits. A maximum of nine (9) dissertation credits may be taken during any one semester. You may find that registering for dissertation credits during the summer session is cost effective. It should be noted that summer session registration will not fulfill the residency requirement. Dissertation credits are recorded on the transcript by the Graduate School with the grade of IP (In Progress) until the degree is completed, at which time they will be converted to SAT (Satisfactory).

MAXIMUM CREDIT LOAD

You may register for up to sixteen (16) credits during the fall and spring semesters, nine (9) credits during the summer session, and four (4) credits winter session.

If you want to register for more than the maximum credit load, you must complete a Course Credit Overload Form obtained from the Curriculum Coordinator in the College of Education’s Academic Affairs Office. Signatures must be obtained from your advisor and the Graduate Program Director indicating approval. Return the form to the Curriculum Coordinator who obtains the Graduate Program Director’s signature, then forwards it to the Dean of the Graduate School for review.

ADDING, DROPPING OR CHANGING A COURSE

You may add and/or drop courses on Spire up to 10:00p.m. Eastern Standard Time of the tenth class day of the semester. This period is referred to as the Add/Drop period. Only your final selections will appear on your permanent record. A student is not able make any changes on their own after this date.

You can request a change to your course schedule after the Add/Drop period by obtaining a Late/Add Drop form from the Curriculum Coordinator in the College of Education’s Academic Affairs Office and obtaining the appropriate signatures. Return the form to the Curriculum Coordinator.
Advising Guidelines for the Doctoral Degree

You can drop a course after the Add/Drop period providing approval is obtained by your instructor. You will receive a grade of Drop (DR) from the 3rd to the 6th week of the semester and recalculation of the bill will depend on when the course is dropped.

If you drop a course after the 6th week of the semester, your instructor will assign you a grade of Withdraw Passing (WP) or Withdraw Failing (WF). You cannot withdraw from a course after final examinations begin.

WITHDRAWING FROM THE UNIVERSITY

Graduate students voluntarily withdrawing from the University must send a letter to the Graduate Program Director, indicating the reasons for the request. Please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator in room W114 for more information.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

Graduate students not enrolled for any course credits, but who are candidates for a degree, must pay a Continuous Enrollment Fee each semester (excluding summer terms) to maintain continuous registration until the degree for which the student has been accepted has been formally awarded. Deadline for payment of this fee is by the deadline indicated on your Spire account. Any student who does not pay this fee by the appropriate deadline, and later seeks readmission or applies for graduation, must pay the accumulated program fees plus a readmission fee. Students seeking readmission must file a written request with the Graduate Program Director, endorsed by their Chair/Advisor, for review. If approved, the Graduate Program Director will request readmission with the Graduate Dean.

GRADING POLICY

Grades
Instructors of graduate courses determine whether the courses are graded with letter grades or a SAT/Fail. Faculty must clearly describe the grading policy and options at the beginning of the semester. Many courses allow the student to change the grading options. However, you must request a change in the grading policy at the beginning of the semester. If you want to follow this course of action, contact your instructor. You then change the grading policy in your SPIRE account.

Letter grades carry the following numerical equivalents for purposes of computing grade point averages: A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, F = 0. Graduate students enrolled in undergraduate courses may receive grades of C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0.

Incompletes
You can obtain credit for an Incomplete (INC) only by finishing the work required by that course. If a grade has not been submitted by the end of one year after initial enrollment in that course, the Incomplete (INC) changes to an Incomplete Failure (IF). The initiative in arranging for the removal of an Incomplete rests with you. To be considered as making satisfactory progress, graduate students are expected to carry no more than 6 credits of Incompletes (INCs).

**Satisfactory and Reasonable Progress**

A student must make satisfactory and reasonable progress toward completion of a degree program within the Statute of Limitations for that degree. A student who is not making satisfactory or reasonable progress is subject to termination.

**Academic Average**

In the courses you are taking to satisfy your degree requirements, a minimum standard for satisfactory work is a 3.0 grade point average. If you have a semester grade point average below 2.8 in any two semesters (consecutive or otherwise), you will be subject to academic dismissal.

**Residency Requirement**

As indicated in the *Graduate School Bulletin*, a minimum of one academic year as a full-time graduate student in residence at the University is required. The residency year must consist of two consecutive semesters, either a fall/spring or a spring/fall sequence of nine (9) credits each. The summer session cannot be considered for residency. Dissertation credits can be used to fulfill this residency requirement.

In order to qualify for full-time status, a doctoral student must be enrolled for **nine or more credits** per semester, either in regular graduate courses, Doctoral Dissertation Credits (899), or in some combination of both. If a doctoral student is registered for less than 9 credits but is working full time on their comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal or dissertation, they must petition their Chairperson who must then endorse and forward the petition to the Graduate Program Director.

**Leave of Absence**

Graduate students who request a leave of absence must petition the Graduate Program Director through their Committee Chairperson who, in turn, provides justification for the request to the Dean of the Graduate School. If the Dean of the Graduate School grants a leave of absence, the student’s statute of limitations is extended appropriately.

A student on leave of absence must maintain continuous enrollment by registering for Continuous Enrollment and paying the Program Fee every semester during the leave. A student on leave is not considered to be actively completing a degree program, relinquishes full-time status, and loses deferred status on any outstanding student loans.
READMISSION

You must reapply and pay all associated fees if you are:

- an applicant who has previously been admitted to the College of Education, but did not enroll on the entrance date stated in the acceptance letter
- a graduate student at the College of Education who was accepted for one degree program and wishes to apply for another degree program
- a degree candidate who has not continuously enrolled in courses or has not registered for Continuous Enrollment and paid the Continuous Enrollment/Program Fee

COMPLETION OF DEGREE

Your degree is not automatic after the completion of coursework. You must complete required paperwork and apply for the degree.

You must fill out the Doctoral Form D-9 Results of Final Oral Exam and the Doctoral Degree Eligibility Form online and obtain the appropriate signatures.

Submit both them at the same time to the Graduate Program Coordinator in the Academic Affairs Office, W114 Furcolo Hall by the deadline posted in the College of Education’s weekly bulletin, The Beacon, which can be found at http://www.umass.edu/education/news/beacon/

Earning a Master’s Degree or Education Specialist Degree en Route to a Doctorate

For doctoral programs that do not require a Master’s degree at the point of admission, doctoral students who do not have a Master’s degree (M.Ed.) may file for the Master’s degree (M.Ed.) after the completion of the M.Ed. credit-hour requirement for their program. To then satisfy doctoral degree requirements, a minimum of 36 credits of non-dissertation coursework is required with an additional 18 dissertation credits.

Doctoral students may also file for an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree after the completion of 30 semester hours beyond the Master’s degree. Students apply for an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree by completing the Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree paperwork and submitting it to the Graduate Program Coordinator in the Academic Affairs Office.

Doctoral students who discontinue doctoral study after they complete at least 30 credit hours may apply for a terminal Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree. In this instance, the student must also submit a statement affirming that they are terminating their doctoral program for an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FINANCIAL AID

The University’s Financial Aid staff members are available to assist you in learning more about the various loans, employment, and scholarship programs. For current application procedures, contact Financial Aid Services, Room 243, Whitmore Administration Building or go to http://www.umass.edu/umfa.

Some graduate assistantships are available within the College of Education for teaching, project, and research assistantships. When available, they are advertised in the College of Education’s weekly bulletin, The Beacon which can be found at http://www.umass.edu/education/news/beacon. Information and application procedures are included in the listings.

FIVE COLLEGE LIBRARY USE

The libraries at Amherst College, Smith College, Hampshire College, and Mount Holyoke College are normally available to students from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, subject to the rules and procedures established by each library.
DOCTORAL FORMS - MILESTONES

D-1 Advising Information

Form D-1 assures you meet with your advisor, receive appropriate academic advising, and receive and review appropriate catalogs, handbooks, guidelines, rules and regulations. The signed form is used by the Office of Academic Affairs to create a file for you at the College of Education and enter your student information on the University’s computer database.

The Form D-1 must be submitted by the end of the first semester of study in the concentration to the Graduate Program Coordinator in the College of Education’s Academic Affairs Office.

D-2 Formation of a Guidance Committee and a Proposed Program of Study

Form D-2 establishes your doctoral Guidance Committee and records a proposed program of study.

In effect, it is an academic plan developed by you and your committee. Your Form D-2 will be reviewed prior to the scheduling of your Comprehensive Exams to assure that requirements agreed upon have been satisfactorily completed. You should attach any additional documents which are required by individual concentrations to Form D-2.

If you have taken graduate level courses as a non-degree student at UMass Amherst or at other universities (provided they are not used for another degree) you may use up to 9 credits toward the minimum of 36 course credits required by your concentration. You should discuss this possibility with your Guidance Committee. If the committee agrees, list the course(s) on the Form D-2.

The Form D-2 must be submitted by the end of the second semester of study in the concentration to the Graduate Program Coordinator in the College of Education’s Academic Affairs Office.

D-2A Amendments to Program of Study

Since the Program of Study is a proposed plan, there may be changes or revisions. Use the Form D-2A to record any changes to your Program of Study and your Guidance Committee approval of those changes. It is used by the Office of Academic Affairs to record the approved changes in your student file. The Form D-2A should be submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

D-3 Committee Membership/Comprehensive Qualifying Examination Committee

Form D-3 is used to establish your Comprehensive Examination Committee and to record the information in both student and faculty databases. This committee should be established and convened prior to completion of your formal course work. Committee
members may be changed, but note that students have found it very helpful to have a committee membership which carries through all six phases of the degree process. Submit the Form D-3 to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

D-3A Institutional Review Board (IRB). The following is a change to the IRB process, please read carefully and follow directions. Students are required to submit proof of IRB approve along with the D-3A prior to beginning their research.

Any scientific research being conducted by a University of Massachusetts Amherst affiliate that involves interacting or intervening with human subjects/participants must undergo a review by the IRB. The IRB ensures that research plans are in compliance with all laws and regulations, and that the risks to subjects are properly balanced against potential scientific gains. This is in accordance with federal law, and all research with human subjects, regardless of location or category of review, is subject to IRB review.

Before submitting an IRB application, all researchers must also complete an ethics education online training course via CITI. Certification of completion of the CITI training Group 2 Social Behavioral and Education Research Investigators & Key Personnel – Basic Course must also be attached to the protocol application whether the research is funded or unfunded. CITI courses are free and usually take about two hours to complete.

Link to Compliance Homepage - http://www.umass.edu/research/research-compliance
and questions found in e-protocol - http://www.umass.edu/research/sites/default/files/sbe_eprotocol_questions.pdf (what investigators will be asked to complete)
Forms and Templates - http://www.umass.edu/research/compliance/human-subjects-irb/forms (The Determination form can be found here)

D-4 Announcement of Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination

Form D-4 verifies the completeness of your coursework, content of your exam, and represents a public notice in the College (via The Beacon, the College of Education’s weekly bulletin) that your Comprehensive Examination is to take place. You must submit the Form D-4 to the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the Comprehensive Examination.
Advising Guidelines for the Doctoral Degree

D-5 Results of the Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination

Form D-5 notifies the College and Graduate School of the results of your Comprehensive Examination.

D-6 Formation of Dissertation Committee

Form D-6 establishes your Dissertation Committee. It is used by the College and Graduate School to review the Graduate Faculty Status and academic appropriateness of the membership of the members and to record that information in the student and faculty databases.

Your Dissertation Committee is composed of two faculty members from the College of Education (usually from your department) and one faculty member from the University, who is outside of the College of Education. You should check with the Office of Academic Affairs to verify each faculty member’s Graduate Faculty Status to be sure they are eligible to serve on a Dissertation Committee. Excerpts from your Form D-6 will be published in The Beacon. You should complete your Form D-6 at the time of or soon after completion of your Comprehensive Examination and submit it to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

D-7 Dissertation Proposal Approval

Form D-7 notifies the Graduate School that your proposal has been approved and that your committee members have agreed to review and evaluate your proposed research. You must submit two copies of Form D-7 and your proposal to the Graduate Program Coordinator. They are used for review and processing by the College of Education and the Graduate School. Your approved proposal must be on file for seven (7) months before the final oral defense may be scheduled.

D-7A Institutional Review Board (IRB). The following is a change to the IRB process, please read carefully and follow directions. Students are required to submit proof of IRB approve along with the D-7 (Dissertation Proposal) prior to beginning their research.

Any scientific research being conducted by a University of Massachusetts Amherst affiliate that involves interacting or intervening with human subjects/participants must undergo a review by the IRB. The IRB ensures that research plans are in compliance with all laws and regulations, and that the risks to subjects are properly balanced against potential scientific gains. This is in accordance with federal law, and all research with human subjects, regardless of location or category of review, is subject to IRB review.

Before submitting an IRB application, all researchers must also complete an ethics education online training course via CITI. Certification of completion of the CITI training Group 2 Social Behavioral and Education Research Investigators & Key Personnel – Basic Course must also be attached to the protocol application whether the research is funded or unfunded. CITI courses are free and usually take about two hours to complete.
Announcing Final Oral Examination

Form D-8 notifies the Graduate School and the University when and where your final oral examination is to take place and that the committee members will attend the examination and that they agree the dissertation is complete and ready for presentation. You must submit the Form D-8 to the Graduate Program Coordinator at least four (4) weeks plus 2 additional business days before the oral defense. Both the College of Education and the Graduate School publish scheduled oral examinations.

Results of Final Oral Examination

Form D-9 informs the College of Education and the Graduate School of the results of your oral examination. When successfully completed, you proceed with final required revisions of the dissertation: you submit your dissertation electronically and complete the Graduate School protocols associated with receipt of the degree and graduation.

Change of Committee Membership

Form D-10 is used at any stage of the doctoral process to change the composition of your committee. Form D-10 indicates that the new member has agreed to serve and that the previous member agreed to withdraw from the committee. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Graduate School use the information to revise appropriate databases. Submit the Form D-10, if necessary, to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

We recommend that you keep a copy of ALL forms for your files.

These forms can be found at the following link:
http://www.umass.edu/education/students/current/advising-guidelines/doctoral-guidelines