COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Ph.D. Education: 
Research and Evaluation in Education

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Ph.D. Education: Research and Evaluation in Education

**OVERVIEW**

The Research and Evaluation in Education Ph.D. option, represents an entirely new offering at the College of Education, and seeks to prepare individuals with expertise in research methods and program evaluation skills. The Ph.D. requires a minimum of **60 credits beyond the master's degree.** The degree is designed to not only provide core knowledge, but to heighten the research skills of students by requiring them to work closely with faculty in research experiences prior to commencing their own dissertation.

Students pursuing the Ph.D. in Education at UMass Lowell enroll in shared coursework early in their matriculation and branch into distinctive coursework and research experiences as they progress. All students enroll in a two part, foundation course for six credits. This year long course, Perspectives and Visions I (EDUC.6450) and Perspectives and Visions II (EDUC.6460), introduces students to educational history, philosophy, and psychology with a focus on original research literature from seminal and contemporary scholars. All students also are required to enroll in four research methodology courses: Research Design (EDUC.7000), Quantitative Data Analysis (EDUC.7012), Qualitative Research Methods (EDUC.7040), and one additional research course, which for students in this option is Foundations of Program Evaluation (EDUC.7420).

Beyond the foundational course work, students must take one additional course in each of these areas.

*Program Evaluation Specialization* - Prepares students to use mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative) in order to evaluate the effectiveness of projects and programs.

*Quantitative Specialization* - Prepares students to plan and conduct research using quantitative data collection and analysis skills.

*Qualitative Specialization* - Prepares students to plan and conduct research using a broad range of qualitative methodological approaches.
Because experience with authentic research projects is essential to the education of students in this degree, students engage in two research experiences. Students undertake their research experiences after the core course requirements have been met. They may do it in one of two ways:

1) Serving as a UMass Lowell Research Assistant for a faculty project for a minimum of two semesters, or

2) Through two semesters of a 3-credit course (Research Experience I and II) overseen by the doctoral advisor.

Students must also complete elective courses (6cr), attend doctoral research seminars throughout their program (six, 1 credit seminars) and complete a research writing course (3 cr). Passing a comprehensive and a qualifying examination and completing a dissertation are required before the Ph.D. is awarded.

**Program Outcomes**

Students in the Research and Evaluation in Education Ph.D. option will develop expertise in research methods and program evaluation skills, including:

1. Deep knowledge of historical, philosophical, and theoretical concerns related to the field of research methodology and evaluation
2. Broad knowledge of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches—similarities, differences, and concerns—and deep knowledge within a selected area of expertise.
3. Expertise in all phases of research design, conduct, and analysis
4. Capacity to take critical perspectives on theoretical and practical issues of research and evaluation methodology
5. Flexibility and capacity with a range of software tools for data collection and analysis
6. Capacity to design and conduct research or program evaluation for diverse problems in diverse settings
7. Capacity to work with research teams and related collaborators in a thoroughly professional and collaborative manner.
8. Capacity to communicate research findings in diverse forms (written, oral, digital, etc.), to diverse audiences.
To qualify for admission to the Ph.D. all applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Admission statement which addresses the applicant’s purpose for embarking on advanced graduate study, research interests and aspirations for future employment.
- Earned master’s degree from an accredited institution. The most appropriate master's degree is the M.Ed.; however, other related master’s degrees will be considered if the candidate can demonstrate work experience or knowledge of public education policy and/or research. The master's degree must have been earned with a 3.0 GPA or better.
- Resume, which highlights the applicant’s education and experience relevant to the degree after completion of the bachelor’s degree.
- Satisfactory GRE scores taken within the last five years.
- Satisfactory TOEFL scores taken within the last year for international applicants as appropriate.
- Three letters of recommendation that speak to the suitability of the applicant for advanced graduate work and their work ethic and knowledge of the field of education and/or educational research.
- Writing sample which demonstrates the applicant’s ability to present a cohesive, focused, and persuasive response to an education issue.
- Interview on-campus or via a video-conferencing tool for those applicants seeking TA or RA-ships or for those whose application materials raise unanswered questions.

APPLICATION INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT [HTTP://WWW.UML.EDU/GRAD](HTTP://WWW.UML.EDU/GRAD)

UNIVERSITY RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR DOCTORAL STUDY ARE FOUND IN THE GRADUATE CATALOG [HTTP://WWW.UML.EDU/CATALOG/GRADUATE](HTTP://WWW.UML.EDU/CATALOG/GRADUATE)
Program of Study

Ph.D. Education

60 credits beyond the Master’s Degree
Option: Research and Evaluation in Education

FOUNDATIONS COURSES TAKEN BY ALL STUDENTS 6 CREDITS
EDUC.6450 Perspectives and Visions I
EDUC.6460 Perspectives and Visions II

RESEARCH COURSES 12 CREDITS
EDUC.7000 Introduction to Research Design and Methods
EDUC.7012 Quantitative Data Analysis
EDUC.7040 Qualitative Research Methods
EDUC.7420 Foundations of Program Evaluation

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION I

ADVANCED RESEARCH COURSES 9 CREDITS
EDUC.7101 Advanced Topics in Qualitative Research
EDUC.7430 Program Evaluation in Practice
EDUC.7050 Survey Research or
XXXX.XXXX other advanced quantitative research course with permission of advisor

DOCTORAL RESEARCH SEMINARS 6 CREDITS
EDUC.6990 Doctoral Research Seminars (6 x 1cr)

ELECTIVES 6 CREDITS
Electives with approval of advisor

ADVANCED RESEARCH 9 CREDITS
EDUC.7110 Research Experience I (3cr)
EDUC.7120 Research Experience II (3cr)
EDUC.7130 Research Writing Seminar (3cr)

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

DISSERTATION RESEARCH 12 CREDITS
Phase III Evaluation – Proposal Defense
Phase III Evaluation – Dissertation Defense
**TIME LIMIT TO COMPLETE THE PH.D.**

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree have 8 years from the time of admission to complete the degree. A one year extension may be granted by the Dean upon receipt of an academic petition. Such an extension will only be allowed if the student has successfully defended his/her dissertation proposal. Further extension may only be granted by the university’s Graduate Policy and Academic Affairs Committee (GPAC).

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS**

**Comprehensive Exam**

**The purpose of the first comprehensive examination is to determine the student's breadth of knowledge in Research and Evaluation.**

The Comprehensive Examination occurs after the student has completed the six foundational courses in the program. The exam takes the form of a portfolio and an oral presentation.

Each student is required to present their materials to the program committee in a format and at a time to be designated by the committee. The committee will review the materials prior to meeting with the student.

**Qualifying Examination**

**The purpose of the second comprehensive examination is to determine the student's readiness for dissertation work.**

Within 9 credits of completion of all coursework, but after the specialization courses and research experiences have been completed, students in this program undertake their qualifying examination. Students must be enrolled in or have completed Research Writing Seminar (EDUC.7130) in order to submit their qualifying examination. The examination requires the student to submit a professional paper written about research related to the Research Assistantship or the Research Experience I & II. The paper must be of a quality that would be acceptable at a professional peer-reviewed conference or journal (ready to be submitted quality). The paper must represent original work by the student. Students
may not formally propose their dissertation until the qualifying examination has been successfully completed.

If a candidate fails either examination, s/he may attempt the examination a second time. A second failure leads to automatic dismissal from the Ph.D. degree.

**DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

Students are considered doctoral candidates once they have passed both comprehensive examinations and have entered the dissertation research phase.

Doctoral candidates must:

- Complete a minimum of 12 dissertation credits.
- Select a dissertation chair person
- Identify an appropriate dissertation committee
- Complete appropriate forms in a timely manner
- Prepare a proposal and defend it orally
- Complete IRB requirements (as needed) after the proposal has been approved by all dissertation committee members at the proposal hearing.
- Complete a dissertation and defend it orally

**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE**

The chair should be from the candidate’s major field of specialization. A second committee member is also chosen from the candidate’s major program of study. A third member (faculty member at the College of Education) may be selected from outside the major field of specialization. All Ph.D. committee faculty must be designated as Research Active, Productive or Intensive, or have equivalent research credentials.

In some instances, the student may wish to select a fourth member who offers particular expertise from another college at UMass Lowell or from another institution of higher education or research organization. That individual must hold appropriate research
credentials as determined by the Dissertation Chair, the Faculty Chair, and the Dean of the College of Education.

If the student wishes to select a chair from the College of Education who has particular expertise in the main area under investigation, but is not aligned with the candidate’s field of specialization, approval must be obtained from the Faculty Chairperson of the College of Education in consultation with faculty in the area of specialization.

Once the student has obtained consent from the faculty members who will constitute the Dissertation Committee, the student should prepare and submit the “Dissertation Committee” form (available in the College of Education Office). The student may not schedule a dissertation proposal hearing before the dissertation committee form has been submitted and approved by the department chair.

Changes in committee membership after the proposal hearing may only occur when the following steps are taken. First, the doctoral candidate meets with the committee members to discuss the desired change. If consensus cannot be obtained at that level, the student then meets with the Faculty Chairperson to discuss the desired change. If questions or issues are still unresolved, the Faculty Chair will appoint an ad hoc Dissertation Review Committee (DRC). The DRC is charged with approval or denial of the changes requested with explanation in writing from the doctoral candidate. The DRC may elect to require a personal meeting with the student and/or member of the original dissertation committee if further clarification is needed.

In some instances, it may be necessary for a faculty member to resign from a dissertation committee. In these cases, the faculty member must provide a written explanation to the candidate, the chair of the committee, the faculty chair and the dean. The candidate may then select another faculty member to replace that individual in accordance with the committee composition guidelines.
CONDUCTING RESEARCH (CONSULTANT POLICY)

The faculty assume that doctoral candidates are solely responsible for designing, researching and writing their own dissertations. Candidates must secure explicit and prior written approval of the nature and extent of any outside assistance they intend to receive, from their dissertation chair and the committee. This record is maintained in the candidates’ files until graduation.

Candidates writing dissertation should analyze their own data. They may engage someone to transcribe interviews or input data into a table, but they should run their own analyses and interpret the findings themselves. Consultants may code subsets of data for inter-rater reliability, but data coding is the responsibility of the candidate. Copy editors may correct grammar and APA format, but write the text remains the responsibility of the candidate.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is defined as (i) direct quotation or word-for-word copying of all or part of the work of another without identification or acknowledgement of the quoted work; (ii) extensive use of acknowledged quotation from the work of others which is joined together by a few words or lines of one’s own text; and (iii) an unacknowledged abbreviated restatement of someone else’s analysis or conclusion, however skillfully paraphrased. All reported violations are handled in accordance with the University’s established procedure described in the graduate catalog

http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx
**Structure and Defense of the Proposal**

The accepted format for the proposal will be specified by program faculty and may vary depending on the area of study. While the proposal does not have a fixed format, it must justify the intended study in terms of its value, validity, and feasibility. To that end, all proposals should:

- Clearly state the main questions or themes that will guide the study
- Link the guiding questions to relevant theory and research
- Describe and justify procedures that will be followed to address those questions

**Structure and Defense of the Dissertation**

The dissertation builds from the proposal to include the data gathered, data analysis, findings, interpretation and recommendations for further study. The candidate must gain the approval of all committee members to move to the final oral defense of the dissertation. In accordance with university policy, the candidate may not receive more than one dissenting vote from members of the dissertation committee.

**Dissertation Registration Requirements**

- Doctoral candidates must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 dissertation research credits.
- Doctoral candidates must be registered for 3* dissertation research credits in order to defend a proposal or dissertation. They may not defend either the proposal or dissertation while registered for Continued Matriculation.
- If the doctoral candidate requires the use of University resources to continue his or her dissertation, but has completed the required number of credits for dissertation research, he or she may sign up for 3, 6, or 9 credits of Continuing Graduate Research.
- Doctoral candidates who have completed all the requirements except the writing and defense of the dissertation and who do not need to use university resources (including faculty time) must register for Continued Matriculation (CONT.6010) and pay a fee each semester until they graduate.

*If the doctoral candidate has completed the required 12 credits of dissertation research, s/he may, with permission of the chair, register for 1 dissertation credit (course # EDUC.7600) in order to defend the dissertation within the first two weeks of the semester. This 1 credit option is for candidates who will not continue to work with their dissertation chair or committee after the dissertation defense.
**Dissertation Progress**

Doctoral candidates are expected to work closely with their dissertation chair and committee to develop a dissertation proposal. Students are expected to make progress during each semester in which they are registered for dissertation credit, and faculty are required to assign a grade to indicate progress or unsatisfactory progress during a semester. Students who do not make progress on a regular basis are at jeopardy of not completing the dissertation within the eight year time limit. Any student who has not yet defended her or his proposal and who receives a grade of U for three consecutive semesters or receives 15 credits or more graded U shall be dismissed from the doctoral program.

**Other Graduation Requirements**

- No doctoral student may graduate if his/her GPA is below 3.0
- No doctoral student may have more than two grades below B as part of the Ph.D. degree.

**Degree Clearance Requirements and Dissertation Binding**

1. During the semester in which the doctoral candidate intends to defend the dissertation, s/he must submit the INTENT TO GRADUATE FORM [http://www.uml.edu/docs/clearance_form_tcm18-3565.pdf](http://www.uml.edu/docs/clearance_form_tcm18-3565.pdf) by the required date specified on the graduate calendar. This does not mean that the dissertation must be defended by the clearance date. The defense can occur as late as two weeks before the end of the semester if it is anticipated that no major revisions will be required. The date of the final defense must be set with the agreement of the chair and the committee.

2. Upon successfully defending the dissertation, the doctoral candidate must submit one clean copy (NOT the original) of the signature page for the dissertation to the
Registrar’s office (University Crossing) as proof that the dissertation is complete. The signature page must be signed and dated by the dissertation chair and all assenting committee members.

3. Unless the Registrar’s office receives the intent to graduate form, the completed signature page and is informed by the library that the dissertation has been submitted, the candidate will NOT be eligible to graduate.

4. All doctoral candidates are asked to submit a completed "Survey of Earned Doctorates" obtained from the Registrar’s office in University Crossing.

5. The original dissertation with the original signature page (and any copies the candidate wishes to make) must be submitted to the Library for binding and microfilming prior to the end of the semester.

6. The binding of all dissertations is done through the Theses Office, located on the first floor of Lydon Library, UML North. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Please call (978) 934-5905 to arrange an appointment.

Please read the instructions carefully and hand-deliver the following materials to the library:

1. A completed and signed copy of the UMI Thesis/Dissertation Agreement Form. The form is available at the Registrar’s Office, University Crossing
2. The complete dissertation on normal printer paper with the original signature page.
3. Additional copies for personal use may be submitted at this time.
4. A copy is NOT required for the College of Education

Processing charges include the following:

- Binding: $15, per copy
- Publishing fee: $65 for Doctoral Dissertations

Make one check for all bound copies and publisher fee payable to: UML Library Trust Fund.

Optional Copyright fee: $55 - Make check payable to: PROQUEST