

HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION, PH.D.

The Higher Education Administration Program offers a PhD program in Tuscaloosa only.

The PhD degree prepares students to assume scholarly roles in higher education. The PhD program emphasizes working with faculty in one-on-one settings with students participating in a mentored teaching and research sequence. Students investigate and contribute to a body of knowledge that informs higher education policy and practice at institutional, statewide, national, and international levels.

Admissions

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include:

- Three letters of recommendation
- A one-page statement of purpose for pursuing the degree
- Vita or resume
- Writing Sample: A five-page (minimum) writing sample describing a problem that faces higher education today (nationally), analyzing salient points of the issue, and evaluating potential solutions. The sample should demonstrate formal writing and should include appropriate citations. Applicants may submit an academic paper in lieu of the five-page essay, preferably on a recent topic related to higher education, but it should be single-authored to demonstrate the student's own work.

Application Deadline

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Higher Education: January 15. Qualified students interested in graduate assistantships should have all application materials by this date.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Curricular Requirements

The PhD requires 72 semester hours beyond the master's degree. These 72 semester hours include at least 54 hours of coursework and 18 hours of dissertation research. The program of study also includes 12 semester hours in theoretical foundations and a minimum of 12 semester hours in research methods. Students have a core of courses that are required, and then both breadth and depth options to build the rest of their degree requirements as noted below.

Code and Title	Hours
Program Core (24 hours)	
AHE 601 Professional Sem High Ed	3
AHE 603 College & University Teaching	3
AHE 610 Academic Culture & Learn	3
AHE 640 Organizational Change	3
AHE 645 Higher Ed/SA Assessment	3
AHE 670 Higher Education Policy	3
AHE 685 Higher Ed in the US	3
BEF 653 Studies in Higher Ed History *	3
AHE Elective Track (12 hours)	12

Students are required to take an additional 9 semester hours in ONE of the below AHE elective tracks, and have another 3 hours of their own choosing in AHE.

Teaching/Academic Affairs Track:

AHE 503 Learning w/ Tech in Higher Ed

AHE 602 Problems In Higher Education

AHE 644 Sem Acad Progm Dev Eval

AHE 688 Mentored Teaching

Orgs/Contexts Track:

AHE 510 The Community College

AHE 530 Law & Higher Education

AHE 540 Org and Governance

AHE 560 Comparatv Higher Eductn

AHE 602 Problems In Higher Education

AHE 621 Power Politics Change

Admin/Leadership Track:

AHE 505 Grant/Project/Res in HigherED

AHE 521 Student Affairs

AHE 550 Financing Higher Eductn

AHE 625 Community College Leadership

Identities/Equity Track:

AHE 507 Student Development Theory I

AHE 520 Student In Higher Eductn

AHE 602 Problems In Higher Education (Impact of College on Students)

AHE 602 Problems In Higher Education (HBCUs and HSIs)

Integrative Track:

AHE 500 Perspect High Educ Admin

AHE 592 Internship in Higher Education

AHE 593 Student Affairs Capstone Sem

AHE 689 Mentored Research

Research Courses

12

AHE 680 is a required research course offered within the program; this should be taken as students prepare to use literature to build their dissertation research design, and thus be taken later in the program. Students should discuss a course sequence with the advisor and select 9 further hours from BER courses. Suggested courses include an introduction to quantitative and qualitative design, plus and advanced courses in either quantitative or qualitative research depending on your best fit, after discussion with your advisor on your plan of study.

AHE 680 Readings in HE

BER 540 Statistical Methods In Educ

BER 631 Inqry As Interp: Qual I

Theoretical Foundations

3

BEF 653 Studies in Higher Ed History is required and counts toward the 6-hour Foundations requirement as well as fulfillment of the programmatic core; it is already applied toward total degree credit hour requirements above. Students should discuss additional course options with the advisor prior to registration. A theoretical foundations course may be selected from BEF courses, or any courses outside the department, excepting research method courses, with approval of advisor on your plan of study.

Integrative Capstone

PhD students are required to take AHE 690 in their final term/the term in which they are taking their comprehensive exam. This ensures a more seamless flow from coursework to dissertation processes.

AHE 690	Direct Doctoral Study	3
Dissertation Research		18
AHE 699	Dissertation Research	
Total Hours		72

Transfer Credit

The HEA program accepts a maximum of 12 credit hours of transfer from other post-graduate study, with approval of advisor on your plan of study and acceptance from the Graduate School after all forms are completed and approved.

Graduate School information on Transfer Credit.

Doctoral Plan of Study

Graduate School information on the Doctoral Plan of Study can be found here.

Comprehensive Exam

Students take the comprehensive exam in the last semester in which they are completing their required coursework for the PHD program, unless otherwise approved by the program coordinator. Applying for the comprehensive exam requires you indicate your dissertation chair who must both agree to chair your study and agree in principle on the nature of that study. Doctoral students complete a take-home exam question which is followed by an oral defense at the end with their dissertation chair and one other faculty member.

Graduate School information on Comprehensive Exams.

Admission to Candidacy

Once students pass the comprehensive exam, they will be considered a candidate and can enroll in dissertation hours, based on the approval of faculty.

Graduate School information on Admission to Candidacy.

Continuous Doctoral Research Hours Registration

Continuous enrollment in dissertation hours after successful completion of the comprehensive exam is required, but not immediately after the comprehensive exam. See Graduate School policy for doctoral hours.

Once doctoral dissertation (AHE 699) hours are begun, however, the following policy applies. Once a student has begun dissertation hours, if a student fails to register in either the fall or spring, it constitutes lack of continuous enrollment. Failure to register for any two aggregate terms after initial AHE 699 enrollment will result in the withdrawal of their chair from their role. The chair's role will cease, the student will not be allowed to enroll in further AHE 699 hours with that chair, and the student will need to identify a new chair. Note that inability to find a chair constitutes lack of progress; it is not guaranteed that another faculty member will agree to take the student on, which could mean discontinuation in the program. Failure to enroll in any four aggregate terms once beginning AHE 699 will result in the immediate withdrawal of the student from the program and will require a readmission to the program with a detailed timeline appended to the request. Please note that it is highly unlikely the

program would consider this request favorably, and requests after the 6th year will not be considered.

Graduate School information on Continuous Doctoral Research Hours Registration.

Dissertation Requirements

Ph.D. students complete a dissertation, with the guidance of a faculty chair, after all course work and comprehensive examinations have successfully been completed. A student should invite a faculty member to chair and secure her/his/their agreement to do so prior to signing up for that faculty member's section of AHE 699 Dissertation Research. Once a student begins taking dissertation hours, continuous enrollment must be maintained until the dissertation project is completed and approved by the Graduate School. Students should not enroll for hours during the summer without having gained prior approval from the dissertation chair.

The dissertation committee consists of at least four faculty: a dissertation chair and four members. At least three members of the committee (may include chair) must be Higher Education Faculty members. At least one member must be from outside of the Department of Educational Leadership, Technology, and Policy Studies.

There are two options for dissertation, the traditional five-chapter dissertation, and the three article dissertation (see Graduate School webpage for more details on requirements for each). The dissertation proposal generally comprises the first three chapters of the dissertation (or an introductory chapter and then the introduction through proposed methods for each of the three articles in the case of the three-article format). The student works carefully with a dissertation chair and submits work to a committee for review. The committee must have 10 working days prior to the proposal defense to review the document. An oral defense follows, with all committee members present to review and critique the proposal.

The final dissertation defense comprises all chapters of a dissertation. The committee must have 10 working days prior to the dissertation defense to review the document. An oral defense follows, with all committee members present to review and critique the proposal.

AHE faculty are not available to work on dissertations during the summer terms. This means students should not enroll in AHE 699 hours during the summer. Faculty have a "quiet" period of June 1 - August 15, during which time they do not respond to dissertation issues and requests.

Similarly, faculty do not work on University holidays or breaks; for documents requiring two weeks for review before defense, for example, the two required weeks do not include official university breaks as part of that time. Requests for meetings or submissions requesting reading or review of written work submitted over university holidays will not be honored. Doctoral students need to keep this in mind in planning their timeline and schedule to allow for successful completion of their dissertation.

Graduate School information on Dissertation Requirements.

Time Limit for Degree Completion

To ensure adequate progress and allow for a defensible document to be completed with the edits needed post-defense, the Higher Education Administration faculty require the following progress checkpoints for doctoral degree completion.

No later than the end of year 7:

Doctoral Committee formation formally completed with Graduate School

Successful dissertation proposal defense and IRB approved

Admission to Candidacy successfully completed with the Graduate School

No later than the end of year 8:

Data collection complete and complete draft in chair's hands

Before the end of the **penultimate** term of the student's Graduate School approved timeline:

Successful final dissertation defense

Failure to meet any of these deadlines will mean the student has been unsuccessful in making substantial and adequate progress in the program toward degree completion, and the student will be unable to continue in the program. Please note, there will be no extension requests supported for failure to meet any of these deadlines. If the student has medical, family, or other issues causing difficulty, they should discuss official leave / stopping their clock with the Graduate School registrar's office (see **Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information**).

Graduate School information on Time Limits.

Student Progress Requirements

Adequate progress includes but is not limited to the following: completion of Graduate School requirements in a timely fashion, completion of dissertation work in a timely fashion, and completion of key advancement checkpoints in a timely fashion.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure all documents, forms, proof of progress, admission to candidacy, formation of committee, application to graduation, etc., are appropriately filed, received, and accepted by the Graduate School. Students are advised to check with the Graduate School registrar's office to ensure they comply with all requirements, including completing all necessary coursework is correctly and appropriately noted and accepted for completion of degree requirements. Failure to complete any of the Graduate School requirements in a timely fashion is deemed inadequate progress, and the student must complete them before being allowed to enroll in further dissertation hours. As noted above, if a student fails to register for dissertation hours in two terms (not including summer, excepting Executive EdD students), the chair's role will cease, and the student will need to seek a new chair. Note that inability to find a chair constitutes lack of progress; it is not guaranteed a second chair will agree to take the student on, and the student's program options may be over.

At any point in the dissertation process after successful completion of comps and beginning AHE 699 enrollment, if there are two consecutive semesters in which doctoral students fail to submit substantive written progress on their dissertation, their chair will have one of two options:

1. Require the student to complete and sign an agreed upon completion schedule. If at any future point the student fails to meet checkpoints on the schedule, the chair's role will cease, and the student will need to seek a new chair. Note that inability to find a chair constitutes lack of progress; it is not guaranteed another faculty member will agree to take the student on, and the student's program options may be over.
2. The chair may decide to end their role as chair. As such, the chair's role will cease, and the student will need to seek a new chair. Note that inability to find a chair constitutes lack of progress; it is not guaranteed another faculty member will agree to take the student on, and the student's program options may be over.

To ensure adequate progress and allow for a defensible document to be completed with the edits needed post-defense, the Higher Education Administration faculty require the following progress checkpoints for doctoral degree completion.

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Successful final dissertation defense

Failure to meet any of these deadlines will mean the student has been unsuccessful in making substantial and adequate progress in the program toward degree completion, and the student will be unable to continue in the program. Please note, there will be no extension requests granted for failure to meet any of these deadlines. The provision of nine years for doctoral completion constitutes a two-year extension over time previously allowed. As such, no further extensions or allowances will be sought.

Academic Misconduct

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence information

Graduate School information on Withdrawals and Leave of Absence information.

Academic Grievances

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

Grades and Academic Standing

Graduate School information on Grades and Academic Standing.

Graduate School Deadlines

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

Application for Graduation

Information on the Application for Graduation.

Accepted graduate students are encouraged to apply for College of Education scholarships.

Students who are interested in other assistantships or funding are encouraged to explore opportunities available through the student employment websites (Careers at University of Alabama (ua.edu); Job Search (ua.edu)).

Graduate School information on Financial Assistance.