

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, PH.D.

The Educational Psychology Program offers a number of graduate programs leading to a master's (MA), Educational Specialist (EdS), and PhD degree. The mission of the program is to provide students with a thorough understanding of the theory and research related to the nature of the learner and to the processes of teaching and learning. All degree programs reflect this mission and prepare students for careers as faculty members, researchers, and school practitioners.

The PhD is an advanced research degree and is designed specifically for students interested in careers within academic and research settings. PhD students may develop areas of study in:

- learning
- motivation
- human development
- educational neuroscience (an established PhD concentration)

The PhD in Educational Psychology with a concentration in Educational Neuroscience is based on an emerging transdisciplinary field that incorporates findings, methods, and theoretical perspectives from various fields, including cognitive neuroscience, learning sciences, cognitive science, and educational psychology. The concentration is currently open only to educational psychology PhD students. However, graduate students from any program can enroll in the courses offered.

Admissions

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

- A curriculum vita
- Three reference letters
- A Statement of Purpose that indicates a preferred track (i.e., learning, motivation, development, or educational neuroscience)

The Educational Psychology Ph.D. Program does not require GRE scores for admission, and applications without GRE scores will be given a full review. However, applicants are encouraged to submit GRE scores, especially if they are seeking an assistantship, applying without a master's degree, and/or if they do not have previous post-undergraduate research experience. A composite GRE score of 300 or better is required for all candidates, irrespective of degree program, who are seeking an appointment as a college-sponsored Graduate Assistant.

We will start reviewing all applications on December 15th for fall admission. Please contact the graduate program coordinator if you have any questions.

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

Curricular Requirements

A total of 90 credit hours (including 24 dissertation hours) is required to complete the coursework requirements for the Educational Psychology PhD Program.

Code and Title	Hours
Doctoral Required Core Courses (18 hours minimum)	
BEP 500 Adv Educational Psych	3
HD 500 Lifespan Human Development	3
BEP 501 Proseminar in Ed. Psychology (in the first year of PhD or MA studies)	3

Choose THREE 3-hour Educational Psychology Core courses (typically 500-level BEP and HD courses) 9

Specialization or Concentration Courses (15 hours minimum)

Choose courses based on specialization, including but not limited to BEP, HD, PY, and BEF courses. 15

Foundations Courses (12 hours minimum)

These courses should inform student research at a foundational level, especially covering philosophy, history, or broad epistemological/methodological topics. Such courses may include, but are not limited to, HD, PY, and BEF offerings.

BEF History and/or Philosophy of Education (Suggested courses include BEF 503, BEF 504, or BEF 510.) 3

BER 631 or Inqry As Interp: Qual I 3

BEF 642 Studies Philosophy Education

Foundations course (500- or 600-level) 3

Foundations course (500-or 600-level) 3

Research Courses (15 hours minimum)

These should be courses that will help students conduct research and data analysis for their research, including but not limited to BER courses.

Quantitative I (BER 540 is suggested.) 3

Quantitative II (BER 640 is suggested.) 3

Research course (600-level course is suggested.) 3

Research course (600-level course is suggested.) 3

Research course (600-level course is suggested.) 3

Electives (6 hours minimum)

Electives can be any graduate-level course relevant to the student's focus and interests, including but not limited to courses from education, psychology, biology, human development, statistics, or computer science.

Elective 1 3

Elective 2 3

Dissertation Research 24

Total Hours 90

Educational Neuroscience Concentration Concentration Courses

Students in the Educational Neuroscience concentration are expected to fulfill all requirements of the Educational Psychology PhD Program. In addition, they are expected to complete the concentration courses and/or other relevant courses offered by other departments (e.g., human development, psychology, anthropology, and computer science). For the concentration students, the recommended progression is BEP 570 Foundations of Educational Neuroscience and BEP 670 Methods & Trends in Ed. Neuro..

Students choose a combination of courses to meet the minimum credit requirement (15 credits) to complete the Educational Neuroscience concentration. Students will choose from the course list shown in the table below. This list is not exhaustive, and students are encouraged to work with their advisors to develop a suitable plan-of-study.

Educational Neuroscience Concentration Courses		Hours
BEP 570	Foundations of Educational Neuroscience	3
BEP 670	Methods & Trends in Ed. Neuro.	3
Select One of the following BEP Courses		3
BEP 641	Learning and Cognition	
BEP 645	Dev Cognitive Neuroscience	
BEP 656	Embod Situated Approaches Edu	
BEP 671	Introduction to fMRI	
Other 600-Level BEP courses with advisor approval		
Select Two of the following courses or consult with your advisor for a course that will best prepare you for the dissertation topic.		6
Other 600-Level BEP courses with advisor approval		
PY 650	Cognition And Learning	
PY 655	Seminar in Cognitive Psych	
Courses selected with advisor consultation		
Total Hours		15

Transfer Credit

Students may transfer up to 24 credit hours of coursework from previous graduate studies, including a completed master's degree, contingent upon the relevance of the coursework and the approval of the advisor and the department chair.

Graduate School information on Transfer Credit.

Doctoral Plan of Study

All Ph.D. students entering the program will be allocated a major advisor who will represent the student's major area of study.

Doctoral students are required to file official program of study forms with the Graduate School at the beginning of graduate studies. These forms require each student and her or his advisor to list the specific course requirements necessary for the student's completion of the degree. Doctoral programs of study may not be completed until the student successfully completes doctoral screening. Although a master's degree is not required for initial admission into the doctoral program, the completion of a master's degree is required before any student may complete and file the official program of study form. Doctoral programs of study are approved by the program advisory committee, area head, and assistant/associate deans of the College of Education.

Graduate School information for the Doctoral Plan of Study.

Comprehensive Exam

All degree students in the Educational Psychology program are required to successfully complete written comprehensive examination before the degrees will be granted. To be eligible to take the comprehensive examination for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, a student must have completed the majority of their coursework, especially all required Educational Psychology Core Courses and all areas of specialization courses, and received approval from their advisor. The Educational Psychology program's comprehensive examination is designed to assess the development of the student's competencies and skills according to the following criteria:

- **Written:** Students review current and historic literature in two of the four major areas of educational psychology (learning, motivation, development, or neuroscience). Responses should highlight seminal papers and people. Each response should include 10-12 pages of text and approximately 40 references.

- **Oral:** Students review the existing literature and propose a novel study in their specialty area. Students should prepare a written document or "prospectus" and give an oral presentation. The document should include 20-25 pages of text and approximately 50 references. **Note that the prospectus is intended to serve as the basis for the dissertation proposal.**

Scoring of the Comprehensive Exam

- **Written:** Written exams are scored by faculty members. There are seven scoring categories: evidence of knowledge, accuracy, adequacy, depth, organization and flow, grammar, and format (e.g., APA style). Each category is scored 1-5, but the first five categories are weighted two points while the other two are weighted one point. A student must average 3.0 or more on each response to pass the written exam.
- **Oral:** Oral exams are scored by prospective dissertation committees (see *Dissertation Proposal* subsection below for further details about the committee composition). Each committee member votes (pass/fail) at the end of the student's presentation. A student must receive a majority "pass" votes to pass the oral exam and be deemed to be capable of conducting independent research.

For further details about the timeline and deadlines, refer to the program website.

Graduate School information for Comprehensive Exams.

Admission to Candidacy Requirements

PhD students advance to PhD candidacy when they pass their comprehensive exam.

Graduate School information on Admission to Candidacy.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

Graduate School Policy on Continuous Enrollment.

Dissertation Requirements

Dissertation Proposal

Upon preparation of a dissertation proposal, students should form their dissertation committee and the committee should be approved by the Graduate School. A dissertation committee, with the director of the dissertation as its chairperson, supervises the preparation of the dissertation. If the committee chair is not a faculty member of the Educational Psychology Program, then the co-chair of the committee should be a program faculty member. The committee shall have not fewer than five members, all of whom are appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. At least two committee members should be Educational Psychology faculty members. All members of a dissertation committee must hold Graduate Faculty status at UA and must represent at least two academic departments. The chair of the committee must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. A majority of the Dissertation Committee members must be regular UA faculty.

The proposal involves writing the first three features of the dissertation – introduction, literature review, and methods. The proposal needs to be presented orally to the dissertation committee who will provide feedback and decide whether or not the student can progress to the next stage by becoming a PhD candidate. This is known as the proposal defense. Similar to the prospectus, the student will need to take account of the following:

1. The student will need to send the proposal to their dissertation committee to read 10 working days before they attend an oral presentation of it.
2. The student will need to book a room and check availability of their dissertation committee who all need to attend a presentation by the student of their proposal.
3. The student will need to present their proposal to the committee and receive their signatures from all members of the committee.
4. After successfully passing the proposal defense, the student will need to consult with their advisor about dissertation committee feedback, apply to the IRB if it is necessary, start to conduct their project, and write their dissertation.

Dissertation

The dissertation involves completing 5 features of the dissertation – introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion. The dissertation needs to be presented orally to the dissertation committee who will provide feedback and decide whether or not the dissertation of the student is accepted to get a PhD degree. This is known as the dissertation defense. Similar to the proposal, the student will need to take account of the following:

1. The student will need to send the dissertation committee to read 10 working days before they attend an oral presentation of it.
2. The student will need to book a room and check availability of their dissertation committee who all need to attend a presentation by the student of their dissertation.
3. The student will need to present their dissertation to the committee.

The student will need to consult with their advisor about dissertation committee feedback, make necessary corrections on their thesis, get signature from the committee on the presentation form to submit it to the graduate school, and submit their thesis to ProQuest.

Graduate School information on Dissertation Requirements.

Time Limits for Degree Completion

Graduate School information on Time Limits.

Student Progress Requirements

Annual Review

As a way to provide students with evaluation about their progress and appropriate feedback on the direction of their studies, the program faculty conduct a progress review for each student at the end of each academic year. Review materials, including a summary of achievements in domains of teaching, research, and/or service and an up-to-date CV should be submitted to the Educational Psychology program coordinator at the end of each academic year. A request for these materials and a submission deadline will be provided during the Spring semesters. Once the faculty have reviewed these materials, they will make recommendations regarding the student's continued progress in their Program of Study.

Additional Academic Requirements

1. Obtain a grade of A or B in all coursework
2. Produce one research or evaluation effort (e.g., presentation of a paper to a professional conference or have an article accepted for publication). Note that this is a minimal requirement—consult with your advisor to develop a more optimal plan
3. Pass First Year Review
4. Plan Ph.D. program with Program Chair and Program Committee
5. Pass written and oral comprehensive examinations

6. Pass defense of dissertation proposal to be admitted into Ph.D. candidacy
7. Complete dissertation
8. Successfully defend the dissertation

Doctoral students are required to participate in and conduct research, and faculty members work closely with doctoral students to help them complete their research requirements. Each doctoral student takes a number of research courses and seminars and is required to participate in ongoing research projects prior to dissertation.

Academic Misconduct Information

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

Academic Grievances Information

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 Application for Graduation.