Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education

Special Education Doctoral Program

The mission of the doctoral program in special education is to prepare civicly-committed scholars who, through rigorous and relevant research and transformational interventions, address significant educational and social problems in ways that advance education, social policy, research, care giving, and public service to enhance the quality of life of persons of all ages with (dis)abilities and their families. Program students and graduates rely on interdisciplinary theoretical knowledge and the full range of methodological approaches to engage, influence, and transform educational and social institutions and their practices to promote learning, equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

Program graduates are highly-competent, socially-committed educational researchers, leaders, and teacher educators engaged in the design, development, and/or use of educational and social interventions that result in transformational outcomes. Graduates are scholars who steward the profession, working across disciplinary boundaries to address the educational and social challenges of the 21st century. Moreover, as civic professionals, they also engage in stewardship with their communities.

Our graduates are scholars who recognize that resolving the great social and education challenges we face requires a sense of collective social purpose among the professions, and that the professions’ greatest responsibility is to the people most affected.

The specific principles that define how students will be engaged in learning build upon the idea that doctoral education is a complex process of formation emphasizing development of scholars’ professional identity in all its dimensions, including their recognition of the role the discipline and its scholars are to play in academe and in society. Because such a professional identity requires students to play an active role in its development, the doctoral program is premised on four instructional principles: (a) problem-centered learning focusing on the formulation of significant research questions and specification of corresponding methods of inquiry; (b) apprenticeship with multiple mentors involving intentionality, collective responsibility, recognition, respect, trust, and reciprocity; (c) creating and sustaining a safe and engaging intellectual community/culture in which students feel support among themselves and in collegial relations with faculty; and (d) scholarly integration in which the teaching and research mission of the department and faculty is closely linked.

Every year the doctoral program accepts a cohort of students from throughout the world. Each cohort consists of students with diverse interests and career goals. Underlying this cohort design are weekly seminars, various research and teaching experiences, and an interrelated specialization structure. Each doctoral student chooses an area of specialization and potentially a secondary area of interest as a cognate. Currently, our program has the following areas of specialization:

- Early Childhood Unified (http://specialedu.ku.edu/academics/doctorate/program-structure/specializations/#ECU)
- Disability and Diversity in Education and Society (http://specialedu.ku.edu/academics/doctorate/program-structure/specializations/#DDES)
- Instructional Design, Technology, and Innovation (http://specialedu.ku.edu/academics/doctorate/program-structure/specializations/#IDTI)
- Special Education Policy and Systems Studies (http://specialedu.ku.edu/academics/doctorate/program-structure/specializations/#SEPSS)
- Strengths Based, Inclusive Education: Adolescents with Extensive and Pervasive Support Needs

Please find additional information on the doctoral program on our website (http://specialedu.ku.edu/academics/doctorate).

Graduate Admission to the School of Education

Graduate programs in education are open to students with acceptable baccalaureate and graduate degrees whose academic records indicate that they can do successful work at the graduate level. Regular admission requires a grade-point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in prior degrees. Individual departments may require additional information and may have more stringent admission requirements.

Some departments may offer special provisional admission categories to students who may not qualify under regular admission criteria. Departments that offer provisional admission require a grade-point average of at least 2.5. Applicants must provide evidence of ability to work successfully at the graduate level, including experience in and commitment to the profession. Exceptions to established policies must be sought individually by petition to the Graduate Division of the School of Education.

See Admission in the Graduate Studies (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies) section of the online catalog for more information.

Each department in the School of Education sets its own application deadlines. Prospective graduate students should contact their departments for more information.

Ph.D. Degree Program

The doctoral degree program encourages and supports students to work with faculty on cutting-edge research and development related to address significant educational and social problems that advance education, social policy, and research in the field of disabilities. The degree requires intensive and rigorous study in educational foundations, disability issues, special education, organizational and individual change, curriculum, teaching, program development, and research. The Graduate Record Examination is required for admission.

Doctor of Philosophy

This is a full-time research degree. Graduates are prepared for roles as university faculty members, researchers, or policy analysts. Specific core and research skills for the Ph.D. are required. Students typically take 3 courses per fall and spring semester and 1 course in the summer in the first 3 years of the program followed by work on their dissertation. In addition to the special education and research cores, students complete course work in a specialization, a 12-hour minor in a related field (at the
discretion of the specialization area or advisor), and a dissertation based
on original research.

Minimum hours for the program are 72.

• Research skills require 15 credit hours of research methods classes.
• Students may select to fulfill a research minor by completing an
  additional 3 credit hours of research.
• Students may also complete a Cognate comprised of 12 credit hours
  of coursework (includes the 6 credit hours outside the program area
  required of each specialization).
• Responsible Conduct of Research is satisfied with EDU 800. All
  students complete the Human Research Protection Tutorial (https://
  research.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training) in Fall of the
  first year of the program.
• College Teaching Experience: We require one teaching internship.
  Students may enroll in SPED 996 or not, depending on the student/
  advisor.
• Research Internship Experience: We require at least one research
  internship. It is at the discretion of the student and advisor to
  determine if students enroll in credit hours.
• Doctoral seminar. At least 9 doctoral seminar hours are completed by
  all students.
• Dissertation: 18 minimum, 24 maximum, does not count toward Major
  courses.

Course List: (Note: Full Course plan is best viewed in handbook)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>EDUC 800</td>
<td>Education as a Field of Scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED 851</td>
<td>Law and Special Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED 930</td>
<td>Praxis Seminar: Scholarship and Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED 932</td>
<td>Praxis Seminar: Scholarship of Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED 936</td>
<td>Cross-Spec I: Conceptual Issues in Special</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>SPED 937</td>
<td>Cross-Specialization Seminar II: Methodological</td>
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<td>Issues in Special Education</td>
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<td>SPED 950</td>
<td>Civic Professionalism</td>
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<td>SPED 983</td>
<td>Research Funding and Proposal Development</td>
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<td>SPED 999</td>
<td>Doctoral Dissertation</td>
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<td>Specialization Courses</td>
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Research courses, Outside courses, Internships, Cognate courses &
Individual Study courses as directed by program plan and advisor