



**Ph.D. in Education and Human Development  
Graduate Student Handbook**

College of Education and Human Development  
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## **Introduction**

The **PhD in Education and Human Development (PhD-EHD)** at Western Michigan University is a degree that offers flexibility to students with interests in a variety of existing academic programs and departments within the College of Education and Human Development. The degree offers a strong core of research classes along with an individualized curriculum specific to the specialty area of the student and faculty mentor.

The PhD-EHD supports the learner-centered, discovery-driven, and globally engaged mission of WMU by meeting individual student needs, promoting academic collaboration, and producing scholars who strive to solve problems that have local and global implications.

For additional information about the PhD-EHD contact the College of Education and Human Development at 269-387-2960 or visit the College website at [www.wmich.edu/education/](http://www.wmich.edu/education/).

## **Purpose of the Handbook**

This handbook is intended as a guide to assist prospective students, students admitted to the PhD-EHD program, and the faculty serving on dissertation committees. All guidelines described herein are subject to compliance with the policies and procedures of the university, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog ([catalog.wmich.edu](http://catalog.wmich.edu)). For additional information, please contact the Graduate College.

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**For Prospective Students:**

Thank you for your interest in the PhD-EHD degree offered at Western Michigan University. The PhD-EHD degree is designed for students with interests in the following Departments/emphasis areas at this time:

Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology  
Educational Technology; Organizational Change Leadership

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences:  
Work Force Education and Development; Family Science

Department of Human Performance and Health Education:  
Athletic Training; Biomechanics; Coaching Sport Performance; Exercise Physiology; Physical Education; Sport Management

Department of Special Education and Literacy Studies:  
Literacy Studies; Teaching English as Second Language

Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies:  
Curriculum and Instruction; Early Childhood Education; Foundations of Education; Youth and Community Development

The PhD-EHD degree allows incoming students with a master's degree to further their education and training within their chosen emphasis area. The student, along with one's faculty advisor/dissertation chair, will help in designing the program of study for this degree, with oversight by a dissertation committee. If you believe this program is right for you, you are encouraged to begin a conversation with the PhD-EHD coordinator in the department of interest. You are encouraged to look at faculty research areas by searching the department websites that relate to your area of interest and contact faculty that might be able to assist you with your goals. If you are not a WMU student, please be aware that you may need to visit campus to meet with potential committee members before applying to this program.

Admission decisions will be made by a committee consisting of faculty in the area of emphasis. Upon admission into the program, a student will be assigned an initial academic advisor. If an applicant has been dismissed from another doctoral program at WMU prior to applying for the PhD-EHD, a review of their credentials will include evaluation of evidence of personal and academic improvements since the dismissal.

The PhD-EHD graduate committee, a committee of faculty with full graduate faculty status representing each department offering an emphasis area, will have general oversight of the PhD-EHD program related to policies and procedures.

**Admission Requirements**

Application materials may be obtained from the WMU Admissions Office website [www.wmich.edu/apply/graduate](http://www.wmich.edu/apply/graduate). The following application materials are required for regular

admission to the PhD-EHD degree program:

1. Master's degree in emphasis or related area with a minimum of 3.25 GPA
2. Graduate Record Examination scores, with such scores above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical Writing preferred. If applicants do not meet these minimums they must add a page within their written narrative that addresses this concern, describing how they would secure assistance with their writing and/or mathematical skills as needed to successfully complete the program, and justify why they should be considered for this program.
3. Current curriculum vita/resume.
4. Statement of purpose outlining the applicant's professional experience and goals for pursuing the given emphasis area.
5. Three letters of recommendation that address the academic qualifications for the degree program
6. Appropriate evidence of English language proficiency for international students (as required by WMU).

### **For PhD-EHD Admitted Students**

Welcome to the College of Education and Human Development Doctoral degree program! The requirements outlined below will form a framework for your unique plan of study.

### **Program Requirements**

The PhD-EHD requires a minimum of 54 credit hours beyond the Master's degree distributed as follows:

1. Interdisciplinary Foundation of Research and Inquiry Core (21 credits)
  - a. EMR 6450 Data Analysis I: Design of Studies
  - b. EMR 6480 Qualitative Methods
  - c. EMR 6580 Qualitative Practicum
  - d. EMR 6650 Data Analysis II: Correlation Studies
  - e. Three other research or research design courses (as selected in conjunction with, and approved by, the student's advisor)
    - i. Note that within this interdisciplinary foundation of research and inquiry core of courses, each student shall demonstrate mastery of two research tools. The research tools are qualitative and quantitative methods.
2. Emphasis Area (21 credits)
  - a. The course of study within this emphasis area is developed by the doctoral advisor and the student, including guided electives, research seminars, and independent studies.
3. Dissertation (12 credits)

The supervision of the program of study and research project will be provided by the dissertation chair/advisor along with additional consultation with dissertation committee members.

Successful completion and defense of a research proposal, and other requirements for a comprehensive exam as determined by the emphasis area, is required for advancement to candidacy. The dissertation chair and committee will ensure that the standards for their discipline/emphasis are met.

Completion of a dissertation that involves original research is required.

The student and the dissertation committee will meet at least annually to review the student's progress.

Successful oral defense of the dissertation and approval by the dissertation committee is required. The dissertation chair or co-chairs and committee will ensure that the standards for their disciplines are met.

### **Dissertation Committee Chair**

Each student in the PhD-EHD program should identify a dissertation chair/advisor following admission to the program. The dissertation chair/advisor will help in course selection, provide guidance in selecting and executing a project for the dissertation research, help in selecting other faculty members to serve on the dissertation committee, advise student during preparation of the dissertation proposal, and supervise preparation of the dissertation.

### **Dissertation Committee Formation**

PhD-EHD students should select a dissertation committee prior to the comprehensive examinations. Doctoral dissertation committees must be composed of at least 3 members including the dissertation chair. An external member from outside the student's department should also be included (this person can be from a related discipline, from outside the student's college, or from outside WMU). All members of the dissertation committee must have full or associate graduate faculty status, as defined by university policy ([www.wmich.edu/registrar/catalogs/](http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/catalogs/)). Once the committee is formed, students must submit to the Graduate College a "Notification of Appointment to a Dissertation, Thesis or Specialist Project Committee" Form). This form can be revised at a later date if changes are needed. The form can be found at the following site ([wmich.edu/grad/forms/](http://wmich.edu/grad/forms/)). The permissions and paperwork for establishing the dissertation committee should be completed by the first annual committee meeting.

This committee will serve to supervise your dissertation research. You must meet with your graduate committee at least once per year. This committee will advise you on your plan of study and coursework, provide input on your research plan, perform annual reviews of your progress, and administer your comprehensive examination and final defense. The dissertation chair and committee will ensure that the standards of quality for their discipline/emphasis are met.

### **Annual Committee Meetings**

Each PhD-EHD student must meet with his or her doctoral dissertation chair/advisor at least once per year. Students admitted in the fall must have their first committee meeting before March 1 of their first year. Students beginning at other times have until March 1 of the

following year to have their first committee meeting. Once the student's dissertation committee is formed, members of the committee may hold more than one committee meeting a year if desired, and it is recommended that students stay in contact with their dissertation committee throughout the year.

Committee meeting formats may vary, depending on the requirements of faculty on the dissertation committee, so ask your dissertation chair and committee for their preferences before the first annual meeting. Students are required to provide their committees with an update on coursework and research progress in the past year. This may be in the form of a PowerPoint presentation or a written report. It is recommended that an updated copy of your curriculum vitae also be provided to the committee. The presentation or written report should provide sufficient background information and preliminary evidence so that the committee can be prepared to discuss the proposed course of research with the student during the meeting. The student should expect the committee to provide them with feedback on their progress and suggestions for continued success. The "Annual Review" Form (available on the Graduate College website) must be completed at the yearly committee meeting.

### **Annual Review**

All graduate students in the PhD-EHD program will be subjected to an annual review. The purpose of this review is to ensure that students are making reasonable progress towards completion of their degree. Student performance in both research and coursework will be examined during the review process. The review will be conducted by the student's advisor/dissertation chair, with feedback provided by the dissertation committee.

Before the first annual review, students must complete an Individual Development Plan (available on the Graduate College website). For each annual review, the student's dissertation committee will complete a recommendation for "continuation, continuation with reservations, or dismissal" on the "Annual Review" Form with comments about the student's progress and suggestions/requirements for continued success. The form is submitted to the student's dissertation Chair/advisor. The review will result in a letter to each graduate student, student's dissertation Chair/advisor. This letter will indicate whether the student's progress towards the degree has been found to be satisfactory, satisfactory with reservations, or unsatisfactory. If a student receives an unsatisfactory evaluation, he/she will be placed on probation for one year. An unsatisfactory evaluation may lead to an immediate withdrawal of teaching or research assistantship funding. A second unsatisfactory evaluation will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

### **Permanent Program of Study**

All graduate students must file a "Doctoral Program of Study" form. This should be done by the end of the first year of study. A "Doctoral Program of Study" form is a document composed by a graduate student and his/her Dissertation chair/advisor, which lists all course requirements necessary for completion of the degree program to which the student was admitted. This permanent program of study is approved by the student's dissertation committee and is filed in the Registrar's Office for use in auditing the student's eligibility for the degree. This form can be revised at a later date if necessary with a "Change of Program"

form. Failure to complete and submit this form in a timely fashion may result in an unsatisfactory annual review.

At least half of the credits must be at the 6000 level or above, and at least 42 credits must be taken at WMU once admitted to a doctoral program.

### **Advancement to Candidacy**

Before advancing to a candidacy status, they must complete their comprehensive exams and approved dissertation proposal.

#### *Comprehensive Exams*

The comprehensive exams will consist of three components. Students should contact their dissertation Chair/advisors to learn more about the structure of the exams.

The three components of the Comprehensive Exams are as follows:

1. An assessment in which the student will demonstrate an ability to design the methodology for a research study and demonstrate the proper application and use of research tools;
2. An assessment in which the student will demonstrate expert-level mastery of program-related content based on a set of pre-determined readings in their specific field of study. This will take the form of a paper that will address a specific question (or a choice from among a set of two or three questions) written by faculty in the student's program area or a manuscript for submitted for publication;
3. An assessment which will be negotiated between the student and her/his doctoral advisor that will focus on content and/or skill expertise related to the student's research and/or practitioner goals. The form of this assessment will also be negotiated between the student and her/his doctoral advisor.

The student's performance on the comprehensive exams will be evaluated by the dissertation committee. A positive recommendation from a majority of the dissertation committee is required to pass. In the event of failure, the comprehensive exams may be repeated once within one calendar year. Student submits proposal approval and doctoral candidacy forms with dissertation committee signatures ([wmich.edu/grad/forms/](http://wmich.edu/grad/forms/)).

### ***Dissertation Proposal***

As part of the advancement to candidacy, students must submit a dissertation proposal. The format of this proposal shall conform to the standard format for the discipline/emphasis; students should ask the dissertation chair/advisor for examples. Students should submit the research proposal to the dissertation committee at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the oral presentation of the proposal.

### **Assessment**

Students who successfully complete the PhD-EHD program will demonstrate the following



learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate a breadth of knowledge about research tools in education and human development
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply theories and methodologies to address fundamental questions in a defined area in education and human development
3. Demonstrate skills in oral and written communication sufficient to function effectively in today's academic and professional environment in a defined area of education and human development
4. Demonstrate professional integrity in the execution of the roles of educator and researcher

Learning outcomes will be assessed as follows:

1. Outcomes 1-4 will be measured by successful completion of coursework in the proposed discipline/emphasis area and an assessment of the student's dissertation proposal, comprehensive exam, dissertation, and final oral defense
2. Outcomes 2 and 3 will be measured by participation and successful completion of the required interdisciplinary foundation of research and inquiry core courses, and an assessment of the student's dissertation proposal, comprehensive exam, dissertation, and final oral defense

### **Degree Completion and Graduation**

Upon admission, students have seven years to complete their degree unless an extension has been approved by the Graduate College.

Students should file an application for graduation audit with the Registrar two semesters prior to the graduation semester. The date of graduation can be changed for no charge by contacting Graduation Auditing.

The semester prior to the final oral defense, all PhD-EHD students must meet with their dissertation Chair/advisor to verify that all requirements for graduation are complete (i.e., all coursework, research, etc.). Students can proceed with scheduling their final dissertation defense only when all course and research requirements are completed and the dissertation committee has agreed that they are near completion of the dissertation.

The dissertation must be formatted according to university guidelines. Information on training sessions and support in writing theses and dissertations can be found [here](#), while instructions for formatting can be found at <https://wmich.edu/grad/current-students/dissertation>.

At least 3-4 weeks before the proposed dissertation defense date all students must submit a final version of their dissertation to each committee member. Failure to follow the 3-4 week guideline will delay the date of the defense as committee members reserve the right to refuse to evaluate any dissertation that has been submitted late. This rule ensures that the dissertation committee members have sufficient time to evaluate the work.

Ph.D. candidates must schedule their defense through the Graduate College a minimum of 2

weeks in advance of the proposed oral defense date (with “Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form” found [here](#)). The defense must take place at least one week before the dissertation submission deadline.

Students must present their dissertation research findings as a scheduled oral, public defense. Based upon issues raised at the defense, the committee may ask the student to revise their document before approving the final version of the dissertation. The signature of each committee member must appear on the “[Dissertation Approval](#)” indicating that the student has submitted and successfully defended his/her dissertation.

Doctoral students may then submit their “Dissertation Approval” form to the Graduate College. The dissertation must be successfully defended and submitted to the Graduate College by the deadline for graduation. All graduation requirements must be completed by the date of commencement.

### **Continuous enrollment in 7300**

Doctoral Dissertation (7300) credits may be registered in increments of one or more hours. Following the student’s first enrollment in 7300 credits, the student must have continuous enrollment in 7300 credits until all dissertation requirements are completed satisfactorily and approved by the appropriate bodies. Continuous enrollment is defined as enrollment in all Fall and Spring semesters from initial enrollment in 7300 credits to the semester in which the student graduates (some programs may require students to be enrolled during Summer sessions as well as Fall and Spring semesters; students should refer to their dissertation chair/advisor as to their policy). If the student will graduate in Summer I or Summer II, the student must be enrolled in that session.

### **Dismissal Policy**

Graduate students who fail to make adequate progress towards their degree will be dismissed from the PhD-EHD program. When reviewing the progress of graduate students, the Graduate College Dean or designee takes into account the annual reviews, feedback from dissertation committee members, and performance in coursework. While the following criteria serve as guidelines, these are not to be considered the only requirements.

#### Guidelines of the Graduate College for academic standards include the following:

- Overall grade point average in the degree program must be at least 3.0.
- Whenever the GPA for a particular semester is less than 3.0, but the overall GPA is 3.0 or above, the student will be warned.
- If the overall GPA falls below 3.0, the student is placed on probation for one semester.
- If the student makes some improvement to the overall GPA, although still below the standard, the student can continue on probation for one additional enrollment period, at the Graduate College Dean’s discretion, based on input from the dissertation committee.
- When the conditions are restored, probation is removed.
- If a student fails to increase the overall GPA while on probation, or fails to reach the

standard GPA on a continuation of probation, he/she will be dismissed from the university. Dismissed students must apply for readmission, but they must remain out at least one full 15-week semester.

- A student may appeal to the Graduate College.

**Additional guidelines to be considered for dismissal:**

- Failure to participate in the annual review process for two consecutive years is grounds for dismissal.
- An unsatisfactory evaluation in the annual review process will result in the student being placed on probation for one year. During that year, the student must remedy the issues outlined in the annual review letter and make obvious progress towards their degree. Probation will be removed if the second annual review results in a satisfactory or satisfactory with reservations evaluation.
- A second unsatisfactory evaluation in the annual review process is grounds for dismissal.
- Failure in two candidacy exam attempts may result in dismissal.
- Students found responsible for academic misconduct may be dismissed at the discretion of their dissertation committee or the Graduate College Dean.

**Forms for PHD-EHD Students**

<b>Form</b>	<b>When Due?</b>	<b>Where Found?</b>	<b>Done</b>
Doctoral Research Credits	As needed for electives		
Doctoral Dissertation Credits	Final semesters		
Committee Formation “Notification of Appointment to a ... Committee”	Within 1 <sup>st</sup> year	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms">https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms</a>	
Doctoral Program of Study	Within 1 <sup>st</sup> year, after 9 credits	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/doctoral-graduation">https://wmich.edu/grad/doctoral-graduation</a>	
Change of Program	As needed, if you alter your Perm. Program of Study	dissertation Chair/advisor	
Individual Development Plan	Before first annual review	dissertation Chair/advisor	
Annual Review	Before March 1	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/review">https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/review</a>	

Proposal Approval	As determined by dissertation Chair/advisor	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms">https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms</a>	
Advancement to doctoral candidacy	As determined by dissertation Chair/advisor	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms">https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms</a>	
Under-enrollment	As needed when on assistantship and enrolled in <6 credits		
Graduation Audit	2 semesters before graduation	<a href="https://wmich.edu/trombone/graduate">https://wmich.edu/trombone/graduate</a>	
Dissertation Defense Scheduling	At least 2 weeks before defense date	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms">https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms</a>	
Dissertation Approval	Bring to defense	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms">https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms</a>	
Dissertation Submission Check-In	When turning in dissertation to Graduate College	<a href="https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms">https://wmich.edu/grad/forms/dissertation-specialist-project-thesis-forms</a>	

### **Funding and Awards Information**

The PhD-EHD Doctoral degree program students are eligible for teaching or research assistantships, although students are responsible for finding their own resources. The departments/programs related to the PHD-EHD student's disciplines will consider these students for teaching or research assistantships, if appropriate. Please consult your dissertation chair/advisor for information on funding opportunities. In addition, PHD-EHD students are encouraged to apply for scholarships or fellowships. Information on scholarships and financial aid and on research funding is available via: [wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants](https://wmich.edu/grad/fellowships-grants).

### **Research Integrity**

#### Research Compliance

All graduate students in the PhD-EHD Doctoral degree program must complete a research project. Research projects involving use of human subjects, animal subjects, hazardous

chemicals, biohazards, or genetically engineered organisms must be approved by appropriate

university committees. Discuss issues concerning research compliance with your dissertation chair and make sure you have the proper training in these areas. Information concerning research compliance at Western Michigan University can be found at the following web site ([www.wmich.edu/research/](http://www.wmich.edu/research/)).

### Academic Honesty

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. [The policies can be found at <https://wmich.edu/conduct/honesty>]. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test. In addition, you are encouraged to visit the web sites of the [Office of Student Conduct](#) and review the [Code of Honor](#) and general academic policies on such issues as diversity and religious observance.

The library at Western Michigan University provides training on how to search for information using library resources, and how to properly cite information in a written document. The plagiarism policy applies to any materials turned in, including drafts of proposals and dissertations, not only materials that will be published.

### **Additional Advice for PhD-EHD Students**

Graduates with a PhD-EHD Doctoral degree need to emphasize the area of their expertise and not necessarily the degree name to potential employers, i.e., *PhD Education and Human Development with an Emphasis in Literacy Studies*.

Suggestions for your employment search following graduation:

- Keep in mind that it is the quality of your research and education, not the title of your degree, that will get you your next position.
- Concentrate your efforts on research methodologies so you will be sought after for your expertise in particular techniques and methods.
- You should build a record that is strong in your emphasis area. Ways to do this include attending conferences in that area, publishing in journals respected in that field, and applying for grants related to that discipline/emphasis.
- When applying for positions, make sure you draw particular attention to your area of emphasis in your letters. Your degree name will state that you have a PhD in Education and Human Development, so you will have to clarify your expertise.

### **Responsibilities of Faculty Working with PhD-EHD Students**

#### Dissertation Committee

Faculty who are approached by a student who is interested in applying for the PHD-EHD

degree should keep several factors in mind before agreeing to serve on the dissertation committee.

1. Faculty will ensure that the proposed work is of doctoral-level significance, and meets or exceeds the expectations of their department/discipline/emphasis.
2. Serving on dissertation committees of PHD-EHD students includes a commitment to make every attempt to attend committee meetings, review and provide comments on the dissertation proposal and dissertation, participate in the proposal defense/comprehensive exam and final dissertation defense, suggest coursework as needed, and provide quality control of the work.
3. Dissertation committee members will participate in the annual review of PHD-EHD students, including evaluation of students' progress, achievements, and steps towards meeting degree requirements.
4. We hope that faculty on PHD-EHD student dissertation committees will consider these students for TA and RA appointments, if appropriate.
5. These students should count towards the credit for supervising graduate students in faculty workload and in promotion and tenure decisions.
6. Keeping in mind the learning objectives for the PHD-EHD degree, committee members are asked to assess the student's abilities during the candidacy and final defense using the rubric at the end of this document.

#### Dissertation Chair

Since the PHD-EHD degree is individualized and unique for each student, faculty who agree to serve as dissertation chair for an PHD-EHD student are expected to participate in the following:

1. Providing guidance in selecting and executing a project for the dissertation research.
2. Providing assistance in selection of other faculty members to serve on the dissertation committee.
3. Advising student during preparation of the dissertation proposal.
4. Coordinating the candidacy exam, with input from the dissertation committee, and relaying the format and expectations to the PHD-EHD student.
5. Supervising preparation of the dissertation.
6. Maintaining standards of the discipline in the research proposal and dissertation.
7. Ensuring that the program requirements are followed in a timely fashion.
8. Mentoring the student and holding regular meetings to discuss progress.
9. Conducting annual reviews of the student.
10. Assisting the student in finding resources for the dissertation research project.
11. Including the PHD-EHD student in the research culture of your department/program, including department mailing lists, invitations to seminars and social functions, and access to research facilities. This requires the consent of the department chair.