

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | EDUCATION

University of Houston

Ph.D. Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies

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Student Handbook

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Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies Ph.D. Program Student Handbook

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Handbook

This Handbook is intended for students in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (DELPS) in the College of Education (COE) at The University of Houston (UH). It provides an overview of program requirements, policy, rules, and regulations. The information included is designed to facilitate students' progress toward the attainment of their degree objectives. *The purpose of this handbook is to supplement and clarify – not supersede – policies and procedures provided at the College of Education or University of Houston level.*

Goals of the Program

The Ph.D. program in Higher Education Leadership & Policy Studies is grounded in a philosophical belief in the transformational nature of higher education as an institution of social change. As such, the primary objectives of the Ph.D. program in HELPS are to advance scholarship, research, and practice around issues of access, equity, affordability, student learning, degree completion, and excellence in higher education. Ultimately, these efforts are intended to strengthen education at the local, state, national, and international levels and further equity of opportunity for all students, but particularly those traditionally underserved by our current systems. Successful progress through the program requires academic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and professional skill development. Participation in the program necessitates that the students balance their personal commitments (e.g., current employment, family, personal health) with the professional development commitments associated with the program.

University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Graduate Catalog

It is important for all students to read the catalog and be familiar with the requirements and policies currently in effect for all graduate students at the University of Houston. The catalog is available online at <http://publications.uh.edu/index.php?catoid=22>.

Specifically: It is the responsibility of students to be aware of rules and regulations. As such, please view the *Graduate Catalog* to review all policies regarding, but not limited to:

Academic Honesty
Dropping Courses
Examinations
Leave of Absence
Low Grade Policy

Plagiarism (Definition of)
Time Limitations on Completion
of Degree Requirements
Transfer Credit
Withdrawal

University of Houston Website

The UH website available at <http://uh.edu/> contains policies in regard to student business services including tuition/fees amounts, payment options with due dates, and refunds; academic calendar; enrollment schedules; and more.

COE Office of Graduate Studies Website

The COE Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) provides leadership and continuous support for all graduate programs, faculty and students in the College of Education. COE policy information is available on the OGS website at <http://www.uh.edu/education/student-services/graduate-office/>.

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Website

Please visit <http://www.uh.edu/education/departments/elps/> for information about the department, mission, degree programs, faculty and staff, DELPS centers and institutes, testimonials, and more.

MyUH

The University of Houston is a student-focused, yet self-service, academic community. As such, students must complete many administrative actions themselves. Through the *myUH* portal, students may check admission status, register for classes, reserve parking, reset passwords, add classes, view financial aid, make payments, download 1098Ts, and much more by visiting <https://myuh.uh.edu/>.

As personal contact information such as phone numbers, mailing addresses, and destination email addresses change, students are required to update MyUH..

MyAdvisor

The *MyAdvisor* portal is the electronic interface for student services in the College of Education. Students use this online application primarily to document their progress toward the degree and to submit required forms for approvals. Please note that students must use their UH CougarNet credentials to log into the *MyAdvisor* application by accessing <https://www.coe.uh.edu/MyAdvisor/login.cfm>.

Detailed information pertaining to *MyAdvisor* usage is provided within the handbook.

Faculty Advisor and Departmental Staff

Your faculty advisor and administrative staff within the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies also serve as resources and will provide guidance on where to go in order to get more information about particular University of Houston, College of Education, and DELPS policies and procedures. Information about these policies and procedures as well as program requirements not described in this handbook can be discussed with your faculty advisor.

Visit the DELPS website at <http://www.uh.edu/education/departments/elps/> to access faculty and staff contact phone numbers and email addresses.

Core Faculty

Detailed DELPS core faculty information is available at <http://www.uh.edu/education/departments/elps/faculty/>.

Note: Adjunct faculty vary by semester given the subject matter of the specific course offered at the time.

Cohort Captain

Each incoming cohort will be assigned a Cohort Captain from within the cohort. This student will serve as the primary representative for the particular cohort. Responsibilities include reporting any issues or concerns that arise within the cohort to the DELPS program staff.

II. COURSEWORK AND BENCHMARK REQUIREMENTS

The curriculum for the HELPS Ph.D. program involves the completion of specific coursework that includes foundations of educational theory, leadership and administration, public policy, statistics, and research methodology. Completion of the program typically requires three years of full time study and four years of part-time study, inclusive of coursework, candidacy research project, comprehensive exam, and dissertation.

Since degree plans are enhanced periodically to support continuous improvement planning objectives, students will follow their approved degree plan that is in place at the time in which they complete an official, approved degree plan. The most current sample degree plan and academic benchmarks are provided below.

**Sample Academic & Administrative Benchmarks for Full-Time Ph.D. Students
Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies**

Year of Study	Fall Semester	Summer Semester	Spring Semester
Cohort Year 1	<p>ELCS 8360 Topics in Higher Education</p> <p>EDRS 8380 Research Methods in Education: Introduction to Inquiry</p> <p>EDRS 8382 Introductory Statistics</p> <p>1) August – Orientation 2) Submit Degree Plan 3) Select Broad Rsch Topic 4) Begin Ongoing Work on Comprehensive Portfolio Requirements</p>	<p>ELCS 8331 Finance in Higher Education</p> <p>SAER 8320 Ethnographic Research</p> <p>EPSY 8322 Intermediate Statistics</p> <p>1) Read about Selected Topic 2) Narrow Focus of Topic 3) Consider Methodology 4) IRB Training</p>	<p>CUST 8378 Current Issues in Education</p> <p>ELCS 8338 Administration of Higher Education in Multicultural Settings</p> <p>1) Choose Candidacy Paper Advisor/Comm 2) Develop Rsch Question and begin work</p>
Cohort Year 2	<p>CUST 8375 History and Philosophy of Higher Education</p> <p>5th Methods or Elective</p> <p>ELCS 8332 Student Development in Postsecondary Institutions</p> <p>1) Candidacy Paper Proposal Defense 2) Complete Analysis for Candidacy</p>	<p>ELCS 8335 Seminar in Adult Education</p> <p>5th Methods or Elective</p> <p>ELCS 8355 Policy, Politics, and Governance of Education</p> <p>1) Candidacy Paper Final Defense 2) Submit Comprehensive Portfolio 3) Submit for ASHE</p>	<p>SAER 8388 Research Residency</p> <p>ELCS 7371 Higher Education Law</p> <p>1) Write dissertation proposal 2) Submit for AERA</p>
Cohort Year 3	<p>ELECTIVE</p> <p>ELECTIVE</p> <p>ELECTIVE</p> <p>1) Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Defense</p>	<p>ELCS 8699 Doctoral Dissertation</p> <p>ELECTIVE</p> <p>1) Doctoral Dissertation Defense 2) Submit Graduation App</p> <p align="center">CONGRATULATIONS!</p>	

Course Information

UH Course Listing

The *UH Course Listing* allows students to search for, and receive, information regarding available courses for each semester. It is available at <http://www.uh.edu/academics/courses-enrollment/class-schedule/>.

Course and Benchmarks Inquiries

Contact your advisor regarding questions related to course content, course sequence, and benchmarks.

Course Registration via MyUH Assistance

Contact Ms. Isabelle Soifer, Higher Education Program Coordinator, at issoifer@uh.edu regarding assistance with course registration in *MyUH*. Students need to ensure to make payment in order to register if a financial hold is posted in *MyUH*. Contact the Office of Student Business Services at <http://www.uh.edu/about/offices/enrollment-services/student-business-services/> with questions related to financial holds. Students may register once the financial hold is cleared.

Enrollment Schedule

Students can begin planning the registration timeline by viewing <http://www.uh.edu/academics/courses-enrollment/enrollment-schedule/index.php>.

Core Requirements

In the first two full years of studies (i.e., fall, spring and summer in each year), students in the HELPS doctoral program are required to complete at least 6 hours of coursework each semester (i.e., Fall, Spring, and Summer) to satisfy doctoral residency requirements. Students should reference the schedule of course offerings and, in consultation, identify the courses required for a given semester.

A. Program Core Requirements (30 hours)

Students in the HELPS doctoral program are required to complete a Program Core consisting of 10 courses (30 hours). The 10 required courses are listed below.

Course Number	Course Name
CUST 8378	Current Issues in Education
CUST 8375	History and Philosophy of Higher Education
ELCS 7371	Higher Education Law
ELCS 8331	Finance in Higher Education
ELCS 8332	Student Development in Postsecondary Institutions
ELCS 8335	Seminar in Adult Education
ELCS 8338	Administration of Higher Education in Multicultural Settings
ELCS 8355	Policy, Politics, and Governance of Education
ELCS 8360	Studies in Postsecondary Education
ELCS 8397	Seminar Topics in Educational Leadership and Cultural Studies

B. Research Methods Core Requirements (15 hours)

Students in the HELPS program are required to complete a Program Area Core consisting of 5 courses (15 hours).

Course Number	Course Name
EDRS 8380	Research Methods in Education
EDRS 8382	Inferential Statistics
SAER 8320	Ethnographic Research
ELCS 8330	Statistical Analyses for Non-Experimental Research in Educational Settings
Ad. Eth. Methods or Other Course on with Advisor App.	

C. Independent Research Requirements (9 hours min)

Students in the HELPS program are required to satisfy two major research requirements: (1) the candidacy research paper, and (2) a doctoral dissertation. Both of these projects typically involve the collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and/or qualitative data.

a. SAER 8388 Residency Research Course (3 hours)

The Residency Research Course is designed to facilitate the development of the proposal of each student's candidacy research paper under the guidance of the course instructor. The candidacy paper requirement may be waived if students previously have completed a Master's thesis. Discuss this possibility with your advisor.

b. ELCS 8399 Dissertation (for a total of at least 6 hours)

As described in more detail below, students are required to complete at least 6 hours of Dissertation during the course of their studies. Three (ELCS 8399) of the six dissertation hours must be taken in the semester when students complete their Doctoral Dissertation (i.e., the semester of final defense of the dissertation). Students may register for additional dissertation hours, but only 6 hours may be listed on their degree plan. After first enrolling in dissertation hours, a student must be continually enrolled in dissertation hours (at least 3 hours) every Fall/Spring semester until he/she graduates.

D. Specialization Electives (minimum 12 hours)

Students in the program are required to pursue one of the four Areas of Specialization within the program. These areas include *Equity and Social Justice*, *International Perspectives*, *Policy and Politics*, and *Research Methods*. Although all students in the program gain some background in these areas through the Program Area Core courses, students within each area add to their expertise by selecting electives relevant to a particular area of specialization. For these electives, students are encouraged to pursue coursework pertinent to their individual career goals, including courses offered by faculty within the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department as well as courses offered by other departments in the College of Education, and those related to the fields of sociology, economics, political science, and other behavioral and social sciences. These electives should be identified in consultation with the student's academic advisor.

Sequence of Courses

A typical sequence of courses for a student in the HELPS program is listed below. This sample reflects the minimum 66 credit hours required to complete the degree. Any particular student's sequence of

course-taking and the number of courses completed will depend on that student’s academic background, area of specialization, and the courses that are offered in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and other departments during their matriculation.

Full-Time Example*

<i>Fall Year 1</i>	<i>Spring Year 1</i>	<i>Summer Year 1</i>
EDRS 8382	SAER 8320	CUST 8378
EDRS 8380	ELCS 8330	ELCS 8338
ELCS 8360	ELCS 8331	
<i>Fall Year 2</i>	<i>Spring Year 2</i>	<i>Summer Year 2</i>
CUST 8375	ELCS 8335	SAER 8388
(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	ELCS 7371
ELCS 8332	ELCS 8355	
<i>Fall Year 3</i>	<i>Spring Year 3</i>	
elective	elective	
ELCS 8397	6 hours dissertation	

Part-Time Example*

<i>Fall Year 1</i>	<i>Spring Year 1</i>	<i>Summer Year 1</i>
ELCS 8360	SAER 8320	CUST 8378
EDRS 8380	ELCS 8331	ELCS 8338
<i>Fall Year 2</i>	<i>Spring Year 2</i>	<i>Summer Year 2</i>
CUST 8375	ELCS 8335	EPSY 8382
EDRS 8382	EPSY 8322	ELCS 7371
<i>Fall Year 3</i>	<i>Spring Year 3</i>	<i>Summer Year 3</i>
(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	elective
ELCS 8397	ELCS 8355	elective
<i>Fall Year 4</i>	<i>Spring Year 4</i>	
EPSY 8352	(6 hours dissertation)	
Elective		

* At least one course must be taken in these (and all long) semesters to satisfy UH policies regarding continuous enrollment of graduate students.

Selected Benchmarks Explanations

Doctoral Residency

The University of Houston requires that doctoral students complete a period of full-time residency consisting of one academic year of continuous full-time enrollment. That is, students must complete contiguous Fall and Spring semesters with an enrollment of at least nine hours of coursework each. Alternatively, students can establish residency through enrollment in six semester credit hours in 3 consecutive summers.

Professional Development Activities

In addition to full time enrollment, students in the HELPS program are required to satisfy a Professional Development requirement during their first year in the program.

Students are required to complete a separate **Residency Report** via *MyAdvisor* for the Fall and Spring semesters of their first year in the program that will serve to satisfy their doctoral residency/professional development requirement. Copies of this form are available online at *MyAdvisor*. These forms must be approved by the student's academic advisor, the chair of the department, and the Dean or his/her designee.

Within the residency *year* (Fall and Spring semesters of the first year), the following professional development activities are required for doctoral students in the HELPS program. Activities completed each semester should be listed on separate Residency Reports for each semester. At a minimum, students should complete activities and list them on the first page of the Residency Report for each semester (approximately 15 activities or hours each semester). Students should consult with their advisor regarding selection of additional activities that will augment their academic preparation in scholarship, teaching, and service, such as attending presentations of scholarly speakers at the University of Houston or elsewhere (e.g., Rice University, the Medical Center, in the community), assisting other doctoral students with data collection, etc.

1. Attendance at least one defense of a candidacy research proposal in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.
2. Attendance at least one defense of a candidacy research final paper in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.
3. Attendance at least one defense of a dissertation proposal in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

4. Attendance at least one defense of a dissertation final paper in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.
5. Attendance at a local, state, or national conference that pertains to education or a relevant social science. The sessions attended may be listed as additional activities.
6. Attendance at the Houston Symposium for Research in Education, sponsored by the College of Education, when it is offered.
7. Membership in the Graduate Students Organization.
8. Student membership in a professional organization (e.g., American Educational Research Association, American Association for the Study of Higher Education).

Candidacy Research Paper

HELPS doctoral students must complete a candidacy research paper before they are eligible to have their Comprehensive Examination Portfolio submission materials officially reviewed. Students are expected to conduct a research project within the general domain of higher education. The scope of this research project should be equivalent to what would be expected from a master's level thesis. Students who previously have completed a Master's Thesis may petition to have the thesis count for the candidacy research requirement. Consult with your academic advisor regarding this matter. The goal of the candidacy research paper is to help students acquire the necessary skills to conduct research. While research skills are taught in the context of research methods and statistics courses, the candidacy paper allows students to apply and practice their research skills under the mentorship and direct guidance of members of the faculty. The candidacy research paper may or may not be related to the topic area the student selects for his/her dissertation. The following are some guidelines for doctoral students regarding the completion of a candidacy research paper:

1. Forming a Candidacy Committee

- a. A student's Candidacy committee must consist of at least three members. The candidacy committee must be chaired by a core program faculty member (tenured or tenure-track) of the HELPS program. The faculty member who directs the student's candidacy research project becomes the student's research advisor. If the research area of a student is not matched by members of the HELPS core program faculty, the student should consult with his/her academic advisor in order to identify an outside person to co-direct the candidacy paper and serve as co-chair of a student's candidacy committee.

- b. The student and his/her candidacy chair identify individuals to serve on the student's committee based on the nature of the research questions and the methods adopted. It is important for the committee to consist of individuals who can provide conceptual and methodological support for the student's specific research area. In all cases the committee must have at least two core program faculty members with appointments in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. The candidacy committee must also include a designated methodologist. To this effect, the student must complete and submit a departmental ***Appointment of Candidacy Research Committee*** form online via *MyAdvisor* [attached to a *general petition*]. This form must be approved by the Chair of the candidacy committee.
- c. If there is a need to invite an outside member because of his/her special expertise, this outside person can serve as the third person of the committee. Outside committee members can be from outside the University of Houston but must hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree in a relevant field.¹

2. Proposal Defense

- a. Students work closely with their Chair to identify a set of research questions, and write a proposal describing the research project. The proposal should include a title page (with signature lines), 100-200 word abstract, a review of relevant literature, a description of the research questions, and a description of the specific methodology to be employed.
- b. A formal oral defense of the proposal is required. A final defense draft of the proposal must be submitted to all the members at least 10 working days prior to the defense date. Following a successful defense, a copy of the abstract and a cover sheet that includes the title, student name, committee members (with signatures), and date of the oral defense of the proposal should be retained by the student and provided to each committee member. In addition, a copy of the cover page (with signatures & proposal defense date) and abstract should be uploaded in *MyAdvisor* as an attachment to a *general petition* after the student has successfully passed the candidacy research paper proposal defense.

¹ Students must upload the CV and contact information for outside committee members in *MyAdvisor* (as an attachment to a *general petition* together with the *Appointment of Candidacy Research Committee* form).

3. Data Collection and Initial Drafts for Candidacy Paper

- a. Students' candidacy research papers involve data collection (quantitative or qualitative) or the use of archival data. **Students must obtain approval from the University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects before initiating their research work.** Information regarding human subjects approval is available from the *Office of Policies, Compliance, and Committees* (www.research.uh.edu).
- b. After data are collected and analyzed, the student is required to write a draft of the candidacy paper. The initial draft is typically written with input and guidance primarily from the student's chair and methodologist. The student should obtain feedback from other committee members when appropriate. All committee members must have an opportunity to provide feedback and suggest revisions before the final defense copy of the paper is completed.

4. Final Defense

- a. The final defense version of the paper must be presented and approved by the candidacy paper committee in a final oral defense meeting. A final defense draft of the candidacy paper must be submitted to all the members at least 10 working days prior to the defense date. The format, length, and style of the final candidacy paper should be consistent with those identified in the instruction to authors for a journal in which the paper might typically be published. The final version must also include a cover page and 100-200 word abstract.
- b. Upon successful completion of the final oral defense of the candidacy research paper, the student is required to submit a ***Departmental Candidacy Report*** form (available online at *MyAdvisor*). This form must be approved by the Chair of the candidacy committee. The student should also submit a copy of the cover page (with signatures & final defense date) and abstract in *MyAdvisor* as an attachment to the *Departmental Candidacy Report* form.
- c. The quality of these projects must warrant submission for presentation at regional or national association meetings and/or publication in appropriate refereed journals.

5. Timelines and Candidacy Research Coursework

Students are advised to start planning their candidacy research paper early in their program of study. The progress of a student could be delayed significantly if a candidacy research paper is not completed before the Spring semester of the second year. Students who believe they have completed

a Master's thesis that might allow this requirement to be waived should discuss the possibility and the procedures involved in this process with their advisor. **The candidacy research paper requirement must be successfully completed (or waived) before a student will be eligible to have their Comprehensive Examination Portfolio officially reviewed.**

Comprehensive Examination Portfolio

All students in the HELPS program are required to submit a Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio and pass the faculty review of this portfolio. This section describes the current requirements, policies, and procedures regarding this process.

1. Timeline

Students are advised to become familiar and initiate work on the components of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio in the first year of doctoral studies. **It may take two or more years to satisfy all requirements.** Students must have successfully defended their candidacy paper before they can submit materials or be reviewed for the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. Successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio must occur before the student will be permitted to form a committee and defend the proposal for his/her dissertation. Students are required to submit their portfolio for review at least one time no later than during the student's third year of doctoral studies. Students have three opportunities per year to submit their portfolio materials. Typically, these deadlines will occur at the beginning of Fall semester, the end of Fall semester, and the end of Spring semester. Exact dates for the application deadlines are available in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies office (Rm. 112 FH) or electronically from the Chair of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Evaluation Committee. In order to initiate a review of their portfolio, students should complete the ***Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Application*** forms available online through *MyAdvisor*.

2. Required Components and Supporting Evidence

The Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio requires students to gather and present evidence that they have successfully completed activities/requirements in each of six components that together make up the portfolio. The six components include 1) Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Submission Form, 2) Goal Statement and Curriculum Vita, 3) Foundations of HELPS Program, 4) Scholarship, 5) Teaching, and 6) Professional Development. A more detailed description of the

requirements of each component can be found in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies office (Rm. 112 FH) or obtained electronically from the Chair of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Evaluation Committee. Except where specifically noted in these policies or previously approved, accomplishments or experiences substantially completed *prior* to initial enrollment in the HELPS program *cannot* be used to satisfy any of the portfolio components. It is in the best interest of the student to consult with his/her advisor from the beginning of the doctoral studies as to the best way to match portfolio components to the student's career goals. The importance of seeking faculty input on these matters cannot be overstated!

Students must provide specific supporting evidence to document that they have successfully completed each of the necessary components of the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. A description of evidence required for each component is available in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies office (Rm. 112 FH) or electronically from the Chair of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Evaluation Committee. Materials must be submitted on-line via *MyAdvisor* (signed forms or other artifacts should be scanned and submitted as PDFs). In addition, faculty on the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Committee may request specific additional materials when necessary to better document the successful completion of any component.

3. Evaluation Procedures

Portfolio materials are reviewed by a Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Committee. Each member of the Evaluation Committee will consider independently all materials submitted by each student. Next, the Evaluation Committee will meet to complete a single *Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Form* for each portfolio. Using this form, the Evaluation Committee will assign a score of Pass or Fail to each of the individual aspects that comprise each component. A minimum of two committee members must agree that the student has fulfilled the necessary requirements for any particular aspect within each component in order for the student to be assigned a Pass and successfully complete that portion of the portfolio. In addition, each of the six components will be assigned a score of Pass/Fail and the portfolio as a whole will be given an overall score of Pass or Fail. Each aspect of each component must be rated as a Pass in order to get a Pass for that component, and all six components must receive a Pass in order for the overall portfolio to be given an overall score of Pass. The Evaluation Committee will indicate in writing some explanation as to why a student has failed to pass the doctoral comprehensive examination and identify any specific deficiencies needing improvement.

4. Remediation

If a majority of the Evaluation Committee determines that the student has not fulfilled the necessary

requirements for any particular component of the portfolio, the student has failed that component and cannot pass the overall Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. For any subsequent submission deadline, students can revise and resubmit their portfolio materials. Any specific portfolio components that were passed in the first doctoral comprehensive examination submission will be considered passed for the second doctoral comprehensive examination submission and not be evaluated again. The student will only be required to resubmit supporting materials (i.e., revised doctoral comprehensive examination submission form, revised supporting evidence) for the doctoral comprehensive examination component(s) that he/she did not pass on a first attempt. Alternatively, the student may opt to submit supporting materials for a specific doctoral comprehensive examination component that was not previously reviewed by the doctoral comprehensive examination evaluation committee but also satisfies the requirements and in this sense replaces the originally reviewed component.

A doctoral student can apply and submit Comprehensive Examination Portfolio materials for review a maximum of two times. A student who fails to pass all components of the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio upon the second attempt will be terminated from the HELPS program and become ineligible for the degree.

Doctoral Dissertation

The final milestone in the HELPS program is the completion of a doctoral dissertation. A student is expected to complete a major research study within the general domain of higher education independently but under the direction of a dissertation advisor. The dissertation committee must be chaired by a core program faculty member (tenured or tenure-track) of the HELPS program.

The college policies regarding the completion of a doctoral dissertation are presented in the *Doctoral Policies, Procedures, and Program Guide* and in the College of Education *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*. **It is the responsibility of students to be aware of college rules and regulations, including those concerning the doctoral dissertation.** The doctoral dissertation requires frequent communication between the faculty and the student. Students are permitted to do formal dissertation work after they have successfully completed the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. The following is a step-by-step description of the dissertation process:

1. Forming a Dissertation Committee

- a. A student identifies a core program faculty member (tenured or tenure-track) of the HELPS program to serve as a dissertation chair and research advisor. If the research area of a student is not matched by members of the HELPS core program faculty, the student should consult with his/her academic advisor in order to identify an outside person to co-direct the dissertation and

- serve as co-chair of a student's dissertation committee.
- b. The student works with his/her dissertation advisor to identify a general research area, the literature base of this area, and the research questions to be addressed.
 - c. The student and his/her dissertation chair identify individuals to serve on the student's dissertation committee based on the nature of the research questions and the method adopted. It is important for the committee to consist of individuals who can provide conceptual and methodological support for the student's specific research area.
 - d. A student's dissertation committee must consist of at least four members. At least two of the members of the student's dissertation committee must be core program faculty of the HELPS program with appointments in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. One committee member must be designated as methodologist. One of the committee members may be an outside person.
 - e. If there is a need to invite an outside member because of his/her special expertise, this outside person can serve as the fourth or fifth person of the committee. Outside committee members can be from outside the University of Houston but must hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree in a relevant field².
 - f. Approval is needed to formalize the committee by submitting an ***Appointment of Dissertation/Thesis Committee form*** online via *MyAdvisor*. This form must be approved by the students' advisor, the Chair of the Department, and the Dean or his/her designee.
 - g. Changes in a student's dissertation committee must be formally approved by the Dean or his/her designee.

2. Dissertation Proposal Defense

- a. Students are expected to develop a dissertation research proposal under the supervision of their dissertation chair.
- b. A preliminary draft of a student's dissertation proposal must be approved by all members of the dissertation committee. After the approval is obtained, the student is required to write an abstract of this proposal to be distributed electronically to all the faculty members of the College of Education at least 10 working days prior to the proposal's defense meeting. This abstract must be approved and signed by all members of a student's dissertation committee before it can be electronically posted.
- c. Students must bring a copy of the proposal's abstract signed by all members of their committee to the College of Education Records Office in order to obtain instructions and a password to post their dissertation abstracts in the University's computer system. As described in the College of Education *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*, the abstract for a dissertation should be no more than 600 words.
- d. The student must schedule an oral defense of the proposal when approval is received from the dissertation committee chair and members. The Dean or his/her designee must be notified of the

² Students must upload the CV and contact information for outside committee members in *MyAdvisor* (as an attachment together with the *Appointment of Dissertation Committee Request form*).

date and time of the proposal defense at least 10 working days before the actual date of the oral defense. This is done by the student in *MyAdvisor* (upload abstract, signed abstract cover sheet, and defense date, time, and location in the **Dissertation Abstract Proposal** portal under **Upload My Student Products**). The student must have successfully completed the comprehensive examination portfolio prior to holding an oral defense of their dissertation proposal.

- e. During the scheduled oral defense, students are expected to present their research proposal to all the members of the dissertation committee. The members of the committee may approve the proposal as presented, suggest changes, or disapprove the proposal.
- f. The dissertation proposal must be approved by all the members of the dissertation committee. This approval is indicated by the signatures on the front page of the dissertation proposal. The dissertation chair must inform the Dean or his/her designee in writing of the outcome of the defense. In addition, a copy of the signed cover page and abstract should be uploaded in *MyAdvisor* as an attachment to a *general petition* after the student has successfully passed the dissertation proposal defense.

3. Data Collection and Initial Drafts for Dissertation

- a. Students are not permitted to carry out data collection for dissertation until the proposal is formally approved by all members of the dissertation committee after an oral defense. Data that are collected before the proposal is officially approved may or may not be considered acceptable by the dissertation committee. Students may be required to collect additional data.
- b. If data collection is required, the student must obtain approval from the University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects before starting data collection. Approval by this committee is also needed in cases where archival or public data is used. The approval process can take up to one to two months. A student may apply for this approval prior to taking the oral defense of the proposal if the members of the dissertation committee approve this application. Information regarding human subjects approval is available from the *Office of Policies, Compliance, and Committees* (www.research.uh.edu).
- c. Students are expected to carry out the research study described in the proposal under the supervision of the dissertation chair. Planning is important, and each student should meet and design a timeline with their research advisor. Students must take into consideration the time it takes to complete the data collection and analyses, and the time needed for faculty to review the paper.
- d. After data collection and analyses are completed, students write an initial draft of the dissertation. Feedback and comments based on the initial draft should be solicited primarily from the student's chair and methodologist. The student should obtain feedback from other committee members on subsequent drafts. All committee members must have an opportunity to provide feedback and suggest revisions before the final defense copy of the dissertation is completed.

** *Additional IRB information is available below.*

4. Final Draft and Dissertation Defense

- a. A dissertation must be formally presented to the members of the student's dissertation committee. Prior to the scheduled defense, a student obtains approval from the chair and

members of the committee. A final defense draft of the dissertation must be submitted to all the members at least 10 working days prior to the defense date.

- b. Students must prepare an abstract of the dissertation (600 words or less) and have it signed by the committee members. Students must bring a signed copy of the abstract to the College of Education Records Office in order to obtain instructions and a password to post their dissertation abstract in the University's computer system. The abstract of the final defense draft of the dissertation must be distributed electronically to all the faculty members of the College of Education at least 10 working days prior to the final oral defense meeting.
- c. The student must schedule the final oral defense when approval is received from the dissertation committee chair and members. The Dean or his/her designee must be notified of the date and time of the final oral defense at least 10 working days before the actual date of the final oral defense. This is done by the student in *MyAdvisor* (upload abstract, signed abstract cover sheet, and defense date, time, and location in the **Dissertation Final Defense Abstract** portal under **Upload My Student Products**).
- d. During the final oral defense, the committee may approve, suggest changes, or disapprove the dissertation.
- e. Students must make an appointment in advance and meet with a graduate studies staff person in the College of Education Office of Graduate Studies to submit a final copy of their dissertation. Information concerning the formal requirements of the final copy of your dissertation (e.g., type of paper, number of copies, etc.) is described in the *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*. When students meet with the graduate studies staff person, the staff member will give them additional paperwork required by their office that is necessary to finalize the completion of the dissertation process.

5. Registration for Dissertation Credits (6 hours min.)

Once students sign up for dissertation credits **they must continuously enroll for a minimum of 3 credits** of dissertation every subsequent Fall and Spring semester until the Dissertation is completed. Students typically should be enrolled in 3 credits of dissertation the semester they defend the Proposal. **The semester of the final defense, students must enroll for 3 credits of Dissertation.** Summer enrollment is only required if the student is actively engaged in the Dissertation and using university resources (meeting with faculty, using library or computer resources, discussing content with faculty on the telephone or via email, requesting feedback, etc.).

IRB Training/Data Collection for Doctoral Thesis Research

Review and oversight of research involving human subjects or identifiable data derived from human subjects is the charge of a federally mandated committee called an Institutional Review Board, or IRB. The University of Houston has two IRBs, collectively known as the Committees for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). CPHS is responsible for safeguarding of the rights and welfare of all persons participating in research projects.

All University of Houston faculty, staff, or students proposing to engage in any research activity involving the use of human subjects must have approval from the Committees for the Protection of Human Subjects prior to the recruitment for, and initiation of, research procedures.

It is important to remember: The University of Houston will not allow data collected prior to IRB certification, or IRB research study approval, to be utilized for any research project. Practically, the previous statement means that any student preparing to collect qualitative or quantitative data for thesis development, proposal, or doctoral thesis MUST BE certified by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board. General information is available at <http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb/>.

Then, the student must fill out the appropriate IRB forms - and receive approval – in order to collect data. IRB training information is available at <http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb/hs-training/>. Contact your thesis chair with questions.

Students may pursue IRB as soon as the thesis chair agrees on the question. The proposal does not need to be defended prior to pursuing IRB.

Graduation and Commencement

Through *myUH*, students should file applications to graduate either the semester prior to or the semester in which they plan to graduate. Students must complete ALL requirements toward their degree before the end of the semester they intend to graduate. Graduation applications cannot be retracted. Once students submit a graduation application they must graduate if they meet the graduation requirements.

The application can be completed by logging in to *myUH* (<https://my.uh.edu>). Application filing deadlines are included in the UH Academic Calendar.

For details please visit <http://www.uh.edu/education/student-services/graduation/>.

III. DEGREE PLAN, MY ADVISOR, AND DOCTORAL THESIS PROCESS

Students in the program are required to complete a *Degree Plan* via *MyAdvisor* that lists the coursework a student will complete for the degree. The degree plan should be submitted in the early stage of a student's program by the end of the first semester. A degree plan must be approved by the student's faculty advisor, the Chair of the Department, and the Dean or his/her designee.

A change in a student's degree plan must be approved by the faculty advisor. To make changes to an approved degree plan, students submit via *MyAdvisor* a *Submit/Change Degree Plan* form indicating the changes to the degree plan and the reason for such changes.

Please note that you must use your UH CougarNet credentials to log into the *MyAdvisor* application available at <https://www.coe.uh.edu/MyAdvisor/login.cfm>.

For password assistance or to reset/change to a new password, please access <https://ssl.uh.edu/password/index.php#/> and follow the prompts. If you have questions about how to enter information in *MyAdvisor*, please contact the COE Office of Graduate Studies at 713-743-7676 or coegrad@central.uh.edu.

Also, ensure that you have the correct faculty advisor assigned to your *MyAdvisor* account.

Details in regard to the doctoral thesis process and completing the degree plan are available in the "*MyAdvisor How To*" instructions guide located in the Appendix at the end of this handbook.

Please contact your advisor if you have questions about your degree plan.

Doctoral Thesis Proposals and Defenses Information

Information is available at <http://www.uh.edu/education/student-services/graduate-office/Current%20Students/grad-student-resources/>.

Sample Doctoral Thesis and Resources

The sample doctoral thesis is available at <http://www.coe.uh.edu/cite/training/tutorials/office/SampleDoctoralThesis.pdf> illustrates the University of Houston College of Education and APA manual page formatting standards. Use this sample to help organize or format your doctoral thesis. Resources include formatting tips, style guides, and more.

IV. TRANSFER CREDIT

The University of Houston Graduate Catalog intends to reflect current academic policies, procedures, degree offerings, course descriptions, and other information pertinent to graduate study at the University of Houston. Please view the Graduate Catalog available at <http://catalog.uh.edu/index.php> to view transfer credit policy information.

V. ACADEMIC ADVISING, ANNUAL REVIEW, GRIEVANCE, AND DISMISSAL POLICIES

Advising and Valid Contact Information

Upon admission to the program, all students are assigned a faculty advisor. The initial assignment of a faculty advisor takes into account current faculty advising loads, a variety of other factors, and the consistency of research interests between the student and the faculty member. Although an effort is made to match students with faculty members who may share their professional interests, students may change their advisors if such a change can support the student's academic progress and research goals.

The student's relationship with his or her faculty advisor is one of the primary means by which the program monitors and facilitates student progress through the program and professional and personal competency development. Students are expected to maintain regular contact with their faculty advisors throughout their matriculation, keep their faculty advisors apprised of any problems or concerns that may affect their academic work, complete degree plans in close consultation with their faculty advisors, and seek their faculty advisor's consultation and assistance as appropriate.

Students must keep their *myUH* accounts updated with their UH email address and/or destination email address, mailing address and telephone number that will enable the faculty advisor to reliably contact the student. Failure to maintain valid contact information is a serious issue since the faculty must be able to have confidence that time-sensitive and/or important information will be delivered to the student. Failure to maintain valid contact information is a serious deficiency that may lead to the development of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), at any time that the faculty determine that the contact information is not valid.

Changing Faculty Advisors

Students who desire to change their faculty advisors should first alert their current faculty advisor and the Program Coordinator about this intention prior to soliciting other faculty as potential faculty advisors. Once this reassignment has been approved, the student must complete and submit a **Request for Change of Advisor Form** on *MyAdvisor* so that this change is officially recognized. If the student's efforts in soliciting another faculty member to serve as faculty advisor are unsuccessful, the student's current faculty advisor should bring this matter to the attention of the DELPS Department Chair. The student's current faculty advisor continues serving in this capacity until another faculty member in the Program agrees to accept the student as a new advisee. In the event that none of the faculty are willing to accept the students as an advisee, the DELPS Department Chair will appoint an advisee on a time limited basis.

Ongoing and Annual Review

The overall progress of all doctoral students is evaluated annually by advisors associated with the DELPS program. Students are given feedback each year concerning the outcome of this evaluation. Students are in good standing if they:

- a. register continuously at the University in courses consistent with the approved degree plan, or seek a formal leave of absence from the program if they must interrupt their enrollment;
- b. maintain close contact with their faculty advisor concerning progress toward the degree;
- c. make adequate progress in their research (e.g., candidacy paper, etc.) in accordance with the length of time that the student has enrolled in the program; and,

- e. do not violate any standards of ethical conduct for psychologists as defined by the Ethical Guidelines for the American Educational Research Association;
- d. maintain adequate progress and performance in their coursework. Adequate progress includes formally resolving all Incompletes received in any course during the previous semesters.

Dismissal Policies and Procedures

The dismissal of a student from the program is a significant event for the student, the program, and the program faculty and represents the conclusion of the faculty that the student has not demonstrated appropriate, consistent matriculation; has engaged in academic dishonesty; has not met multiple program milestones; has been charged with or convicted of a criminal offense; has failed to demonstrate an adequate level of professional or personal competency, or for other serious reasons (e.g., has been disruptive to the education and training process). Dismissal action is typically the outcome of careful inquiry and collection of data from multiple sources as well as communication with the student regarding his or her unsatisfactory performance in basic or, where appropriate, remedial work, as outlined in a Performance Improvement Plan. However, immediate dismissal may occur under dangerous (e.g., threat of bodily harm, slander, libel), unusual, or other serious circumstances.

Grievance Policy and Procedures

Students may grieve any faculty decision or action that affects their progress through the program. If the student chooses to grieve, he or she must follow the formal grievance procedures as specified in the College of Education Student Grievance Policy and in the UH Graduate Studies Catalog.

VI. LIST OF COMMON PETITIONS

The student is the responsible party for enrolling and dropping coursework using the online system and/or completing the appropriate forms and petitions for other administrative requests.

UH graduate forms and petitions are available at <http://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/>.

These forms typically should be completed through *MyAdvisor*:

Annual Report Form

Graduate Petition

Submit/Change Degree Plan

Candidacy Report

Residency Report

Application to take Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio

Appointment of Doctoral Thesis Committee

Request Change of Advisor

This form must be completed online at *myUH*:

Graduation Application

*****Forms/petitions must be submitted to the COE Office of Graduate Studies in Farish Hall, Room 256.**

VII. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The DELPS program is situated within a university that offers students an array of support services sponsored by a variety of campus offices and facilities. This section describes some of these services and resources.

Academic Calendar

<http://catalog.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=22&navoid=6057>

Costs, Fellowships, Assistantships, Financial Aid, Payment Due Dates, and Refunds

Information about these programs are available through the University of Houston Office of Student Business Services at <http://www.uh.edu/about/offices/enrollment-services/student-business-services/>.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

More information about University of Houston services are available at <http://www.uh.edu/caps/>.

Problem-Solving Resources/Ombudservice

The ombudservice directly assists students to resolve problems or refers them to the office or person who can help resolve a particular problem. More information regarding the ombudservice can be found at Dean of Students office web page <http://www.uh.edu/dos/>. The Legal Clinic at the Law Center provides advice and counsel to students for problems of a legal nature. Students will be advised of steps that can be taken without a lawyer. When an attorney is required, referrals to agencies and other legal services are provided. More information regarding this service is located at <http://www.law.uh.edu/clinic/>. Contact the Legal Clinic at 713-743-2094 for assistance.

Student Life Resources/Wellness

A great education extends beyond the classroom. At University of Houston, we support your success with wellness programs, counseling services, a professional police service and much more. University of Houston also offers specialized programs for international students and students with disabilities. More information is available at <http://www.uh.edu/student-life/resources/>.

Technology

Center for Information Technology (CITE) at the COE

This department offers multi-faceted technology services to the entire College of Education and information is available at <http://www.uh.edu/education/student-services/technology-services/>.

University Information Technology (UIT)

UIT services cover issues pertaining to email accounts and other general technology. Additional information is available at <http://uh.edu/infotech/>.

UH General Overview of Resources and Quick Links

Please visit <http://www.uh.edu/students/index.php> for details regarding multiple resources available to students at University of Houston.

VIII. OBTAINING TEXAS RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES

If you are not a Texas resident, University of Houston tuition is very costly relative to the resident rate. Therefore, nonresident students are urged to take steps during their first year to obtain residency. For more information, consult the *Graduate Catalog*.

IX. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Looking to join and participate in a student organization within the College of Education such as the Graduate Student Organization (GSO)?

Please view the link below to find out more information:

<http://www.uh.edu/education/student-services/student-organizations/>

X. APPENDIX

Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio

MyAdvisor How To Instructions