Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Student Handbook 2022 – 2023

College of Education
Tennessee Tech University

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I. The Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Degree

The Exceptional Learning Ph.D. (ELPhD) degree in the College of Education at Tennessee Tech has been in existence since 2000. The degree takes approximately four to six years of full-time study beyond the Master's degree to complete.* The Ph.D. degree program is coordinated as a college-wide degree. Most often, but not exclusively, in selecting the Ph.D. program, a student projects a career focused on **being engaged in research**. For the dissertation, a clear, well-defined research design and methodology are required. ELPhD students are expected to do original research for the dissertation.

The ELPhD program focuses on the characteristics, strengths, and educational needs of individuals and groups whose learning potential and opportunities for success are frequently unrealized. Exceptional populations include people for whom social, economic, and physical characteristics may serve as a barrier to development and learning.

The ELPhD will prepare leaders to work in schools, agencies, and universities to effect positive change in populations of diverse learners, addressing social, economic, and physical characteristics that may serve as barriers to learning, primarily through research and service activities. The program core develops an understanding of the characteristics of these populations. The research core provides a strong emphasis on research techniques and applications. The five concentrations include:

Applied Behavior Analysis prepares professionals who can develop and deliver behavioral interventions and supports for individuals in educational and habilitative settings. There are two tracka in ABA:

> **Young Children and Families** prepares professionals to provide support and interventions to young, at-risk children and families with emphasis on building relationships with and advocating for children and families.
>
> **Applied Behavior Analysis School-Aged Children and Adult Populations** prepares professionals who will implement and provide empirical support for behavioral interventions for a range of populations and pursue board certification as a behavior analyst (BCBA). The ABAS course sequence is approved by the national Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB).

Health Behaviors and Wellness Education offers cutting-edge, hands-on experiential courses along with related pedagogical methods and theory. HBWE research courses supply additional opportunities to research and address discipline-specific concerns. This comprehensive and novel design supplies students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to succeed professionally and lead change in health sciences and wellness disciplines.

Literacy empowers educational innovators to develop cutting-edge, socially conscious approaches to multiliteracies and challenge narrow conceptions of learners, families, and worldviews.

Program Planning and Evaluation prepares professionals for leadership roles in the field of PPE. Program content includes the history of the field, influence of context and cultures on PPE design and methodology, quantitative and qualitative methods, and practical application of PPE skills through practicum experiences.

STEM Education builds the capacity of innovative educational leaders to advance new ideas and to design/implement strategic innovations in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

* Students have eight years from the point of enrollment to complete the doctoral degree.

II. Admissions Procedures for Students

A multifaceted approach is taken in the application and admissions decision process. The applicant will be evaluated on the criteria listed below in order to determine the applicant's overall potential for success in the ELPhD program. Please note, however, that fulfillment of the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission, nor does admission guarantee funding.

Please make certain all application materials are submitted as Adobe PDF documents.

Admissions Criteria*

1. **GPA** – consideration for admission to the program is based on the applicant's grade point average (GPA) in the last graduate degree or the last 60 hours of undergraduate work if no graduate degree has been completed. If a student has successfully completed some graduate hours but not attained a graduate degree, the GPA for these courses may also be considered. An average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or above from a recognized baccalaureate, graduate, or professional degree from an accredited college or university, or an international equivalent based on a four-year curriculum is required for admission.

2. **GRE** – valid GRE scores (score date within 5 years of application) must be submitted as part of the ELPhD application.

3. **Scholarly Writing** – Students must demonstrate the scholarly writing skill and mastery by submitting a reference-based paper, thesis, or other written document in which information from various sources has been cited and synthesized. *The applicant must be the sole author*.

4. **Letter of Intent** – One to two pages that address intended enrollment, intended concentration, autobiographical statement, education and professional goals, and areas of interest for future research. If you are applying to the ABA concentration, you **must** indicate the track in which you wish to enroll: *School-Aged & Adult Populations (ABAS)* or *Young Children & Families (YCF).*

5. **Three Letters of Recommendation** – Recommendation letters should be from individuals, preferably professors, who are able to comment on your qualifications and scholarly aptitude for doctoral study. The letters should also address characteristics that will contribute to your success as a doctoral student should you be accepted in the ELPhD program. Consideration will be made based upon the content of these letters. *Please make certain the recommenders know they must submit a letter as well as evaluate the applicant on a series of qualities (done when submitting the letter)*. Applications without three letters may not receive full consideration.

6. **Professional Curriculum Vitae (CV)/Resume**

7. **Interview** – Applicants who pass the initial evaluation will be required to have an interview with the ELPhD program faculty and Director of Graduate Programs.

8. **International Students** must also meet the English Language Requirement by providing TOEFL test scores: a minimum of 80 on the TOEFL iBT is required. If you have taken another TOEFL version that is still valid, the requirements are: 213 on TOEFL CBT or 550 on the TOEFL PBT.

Note: Applicants who have citizenship in a country where English is a primary language or have been awarded a degree from a university in one of the following countries are exempt from the TOEFL requirement: Australia, Belize, the British Caribbean and British West Indies, Canada (except Québec), England, Guyana, Ireland, Liberia, New Zealand, Scotland, the United States, and Wales.

If a candidate does not have access to a TOEFL testing site, it may be possible to accept another language proficiency test score. *Please inquire before submitting a test score other than the TOEFL*.

***Please note the STEM Education concentration requires the following additional admission requirements**:

1. Three years of STEM teaching/outreach (P–16),
2. a Master's Degree, and
3. **one** of the following:
   a. A minimum of 18 semester hours of graduate credit in a STEM discipline,
   b. Teacher Licensure in a STEM discipline (Grades 6–8, 6–12, or 7–12),
   c. Teacher Licensure (K–5) with 24 semester hours in math/science, or
   d. Teacher Licensure (K–5) with a passing score on the state-approved licensure exam for a STEM content area

Application Process

Prospective students are encouraged to make application to the College of Graduate Studies in time for admission to be completed at least one full semester before expected entrance to the Ph.D. program. Admission is open for Fall semester only. Please see the College of Graduate Studies website for admissions application deadlines and to apply to the program:

https://www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/admissions.php

If you are interested in financial aid through grants, scholarships, or a Graduate Assistant position, please see *Section VIII* (*Assistantship and Financial Aid Information*) for details.

Application Processing

The application process has multiple steps. Once Graduate Studies has the complete application, it is put in queue & moved to the system used for departmental evaluation. This can happen before the application deadline; though that is dependent on a complete application & the number of applications being processed. For fall applications, if all the applications for summer have not been processed, there can be a bit of a delay, as summer must be done first.

Your application is not moved to the departmental review system until it is fully complete. This includes health forms, official transcripts, official test scores, & all letters of recommendation. These are generally out of the applicant's control once requested & are often sticking points in the process. I encourage

everyone to follow-up regularly with the appropriate contacts (particularly the references!) if these items have not been received. If you have unofficial copies of test scores & results, I encourage you to upload those as part of the application. It is also helpful to keep the Director of Graduate Programs in the loop. For example, if the only hold up is an official test score, but unofficial results are included in your application, it may be possible to have the application pushed the platform for departmental review. We can do our initial review, hold the interview, & make an admission decision, which will be processed officially once the missing official score (in this example) is received by Graduate Studies.

Once it has moved to our system, the file will be reviewed to see if the criteria for admission have been met. The Director of Graduate Programs works with the concentration leader & admissions committee to find possible interview times. The applicant is then contacted to schedule the interview. After the interview, an admissions decision is made, typically within 24–48 hours of the interview, & is then submitted the decision to Graduate Studies. You will generally hear from Graduate Studies with an official admission decision in 2–4 weeks.

All these factors are why applicants are encouraged to submit early applications & notify the Director of Graduate Programs on application progress (or obstacles!).

III. Graduate Assistantship and Financial Aid Information

Acceptance into the ELPhD program does not guarantee full funding. We have a *very limited* number of Graduate Assistant (GA) positions. ELPhD GA positions are all research positions—though the tasks vary widely, so GAs get a good variety of scholarly experience.

All ELPhD GA positions cover tuition and fees, and include a small stipend. These positions are year-round. ELPhD GA assignments are generally full and a wait list is maintained. A chronological list of those who have expressed interest in a GA position is used to guide who will be asked about accepting a position (assuming the prospective student has applied and been admitted). If you are interested in a GA position, let the Director of Graduate Programs know immediately (and copy the Administrative Associate for the Associate Dean's Office) – **prior to application is best**.

Applications for an ELPhD GA position should be made **no later than the time of application to the program**. Please do the following:

1) email the GA application to the Director of Graduate Programs, the Administrative Associate for the Associate Dean's Office, and Graduate Studies, and
2) include your GA application as a part of your ELPhD application.

You may also apply to GA positions other than those in the ELPhD program. The list of other GA opportunities can be found on the Graduate Studies's GA web page (link below). To see the list of possible campus-wide GA positions, click on the *Graduate Assistantship Stipends* link (highlighted in purple, right below the *Graduate Assistantship Application* link). Many other GA positions are only Fall & Spring semester positions. You may wish to consider this as you look at other potential GA options. Stipends also vary across campus. You can see the other stipend levels when you visit the *Graduate Assistantship Stipends* link noted above. You may apply for multiple positions, but you may only accept one GA position.

Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for more specific information:

https://www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/stipend.php

IV. Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Program Structure

	Concentration	Major Field/Core	Guided Electives	Research	Dissertation
ABA: Young Children & Families	23 sh*	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
ABA: School-Aged & Adult Populations	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
Health Behaviors & Wellness Education	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
Literacy	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
Program Planning & Evaluation	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
STEM Education	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh

*sh = semester hours, all which are minimums

V. Description of the Degree Program

The Exceptional Learning Ph.D. curriculum includes 79 (78 for the Young Children & Families track) semester credit hours. ELPhD curriculum is organized around three areas of knowledge development—core knowledge, research knowledge, and concentration knowledge. Classes are held in the evening and weekends and are scheduled in a pattern to allow two to three courses to be completed each semester.

A student may elect to earn an en-route M.A. or Ed.S. in Curriculum and. Please see *Section VII* for more details.

All courses are 3 semester credit hours unless otherwise noted. Courses with a single asterisk (*) are not restricted to Ph.D. students; students enrolled in MA or EdS degrees may also take the course.

Core

The purpose of the core is to provide an interdisciplinary framework for the Ph.D. program. The core is comprised of 13 sh prescribed courses and 6 sh guided electives.

EDU 7000 – Trans-Concentration Seminar (1)
EDU 7010 – Theoretical Foundations of Research
EDU 7020 – At-Risk Populations: Research, Service, & Delivery
EDU 7040 – Program Planning and Proposal Development
and *one* of the following
EDUL 7200 – Equity Literacy
OR
EDUL 7400 – Literacies of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations
OR
EDUL 7500 – Linguistic Perceptions
OR
EDU 7950 – Doctoral Seminar: Special Topics in Education (*for Literacy students; other courses possible pending advisor approval*)

Guided electives may be selected from the list below in addition to courses in the core and research components in consultation with your advisor. Other electives may be proposed by the student and are subject to approval by the advisor and/or the Director. *Please note that for those in the Literacy or PPE concentrations, the concentration courses listed will* **not** *count as an elective in your Program of Study* (i.e., one class does not count for 2 requirements).

CSED 6000 – Digital Literacy & Computing
CSED 6010 – Programming Fundamentals & Computational Thinking for Educators
CSED 6020 – Computer Science Concepts for Teachers
CSED 6030 – Computer Science Instructional Methods
CUED 6010 – Curriculum Development & Evaluation
CUED 6010 – Curriculum Development & Evaluation
CUED 7010 – Learning Theories

CUED 7030 – Rural Schools and Communities
CUED 7510 – Instructional Design
CUED 7520 – Teaching & Learning Online
CUED 7803 – Field Experience in Education – Autoethnography
EDU 7060 – Issues in Education
EDU 7440 – Technology Applications for Institutional Dissemination of Information
EDU 7950 – Doctoral Seminar: Special Topics in Education
EDUL 7200 – Equity Literacy
EDUL 7300 – Multiliteracies
EDUL 7400 – Literacies of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations
EDUL 7500 – Linguistic Perceptions
EDUP 7410 – Advanced PPE Methods I (survey research, methods, & design)
ENGL 5521* – History of the English Language
ENGL 5561* – American English
ENGL 6010*– Teaching Composition
FOED 6020* – Perspectives in American Education
FOED 7020* – Philosophy & Public Policy
HEC 6630 – Strategies & Advocacy for Families
SPED 6120* – ECSE Evaluation, Assessment, and Methods
SPED 7110* – Family Collaboration

Research

The research coursework (21 sh minimum) includes basic preparation in research methodology and design, including both quantitative and qualitative research. Each student who completes the ELPhD program should have knowledge of various research inquiries for use in answering educationally related questions. In addition to possessing a well-developed expertise in at least one method of inquiry, each student should be familiar with other techniques. By the time ELPhD students complete their doctoral work, they should understand that the choice of methodology, or methodologies, is guided by the nature of the question(s) posed, rather than the preferred methodological or analytical techniques of the researcher.

Before beginning their doctoral dissertation, ELPhD students should become familiar with ethical standards associated with the conduct of educational research. Students must know how these ethical considerations apply to (a) any interventions used with human beings, (b) the collection and analysis of evidence, and (c) the dissemination of research.

Quantitative sequence
EDU 7420 – Quantitative Inquiry in Education I
EDU 7430 – Quantitative Inquiry in Education II
EDU 7300 – Research Design

Qualitative sequence
EDU 7010 – Theoretical Foundations of Research (*counts Core; does not count toward 21 Research hours*)
EDU 7330 – Qualitative Inquiry in Education
EDU 7340 – Data Analysis & Representation in Qualitative Inquiry

Additional research courses (choose 1)

EDU 7320 – Research Methods in Behavior Analysis (*covers Single Subject research design*)
EDU 7350 – Advanced Regression
EDU 7950 – Doctoral Seminar: Special Topics in Education (*must be research-related*)
CUED 7803 – Field Experience in Education – Autoethnography
EDUP 7410 – Advanced PPE Methods I (*counts as research only for students* **not** *in the PPE concentration*)
CSED 6000 – Digital Literacy & Computing

***Note:** *Students may take a research course from another concentration or a research-based EDU 7950 for this requirement if approved by the course instructor, advisor, and Director of Graduate Programs.*

EDU 7920**– Research Seminar in Education (aka: prospectus)

The overriding goal of EDU 7920 is for students to develop their dissertation research proposals (called a dissertation prospectus) and present those proposals to their committees for approval. With the exception of dissertation credit, **all of the courses in a student's program of study **should be completed prior** to enrolling in EDU 7920 (including removing any grade of "I"). On rare occasions, and with permission from their entire committee and the Director of Graduate Programs, students may take EDU 7920 with one class in the core or concentration series that has not yet been completed.

There are, however, **no exceptions with regard to the research series**: EDU 7420, EDU 7430, EDU 7300, EDU 7010, EDU 7330, EDU 7340, and the selected additional research course must have been successfully completed prior to enrolling in EDU 7920.

Students typically take their comprehensive written exams during the second half of the semester in which they are enrolled in EDU 7920.

Concentration

Although the major is Exceptional Learning, a concentration (24 sh minimum) provides an area of specialization.

Applied Behavior Analysis

Young Children and Families (YCF) (23 credits)*

ABAP 7120 – Positive Behavior Support & Families
ABAP 7920 – Topics, Issues, Research in Early Childhood Special Education (2)
ECED 7220* – Early Childhood Instruction & Materials
EDUC 7400 – Programs and Service Delivery Models
EDUC 7450 – Doctoral Seminar: Young Children & Families
HEC 6610* – Families: Normative/Catastrophic Issues
SPED 6120* – Early Childhood SPED: Evaluation/Assessment/Methods
SPED 7110* – Family Collaboration

School-aged Children and Adult Populations (ABA)

(see *Section XIV* for BCBA certification requirements)

ABAP 7120 – Positive Behavior Support & Families
EDU 7320 – Research Methods in Behavior Analysis
EDUB 7000 – Conceptual Topics & Principles in Behavior Analysis
EDUB 7010 – Topics in Behavior Analysis
EDUB 7020 – Behavior Change Procedures & Systems Supports in ABA
EDUB 7030 – Assessment in Behavior Analysis
EDUB 7050 – ABA Approaches in Developmental Disabilities
EDUB 7060 – Ethics in ABA

Note: If students are interested taking their supervised practicum hours through Tech, they may enroll in EDUB 7810 – Practicum in Behavior Analysis.

Health Behaviors and Wellness Education (HBWE) *(choose 8 of the 10 offered)*

EDUH 7000 – Current Issues in Exercise Science, Health, and Human Behavior
EDUH 7010 – Pedagogical Theory of Physical Education
EDUH 7020 – Advanced Teaching in Exercise Science and Health-Related Fields
EDUH 7100 – Biomechanics of Human Movement
EDUH 7200 – Foundations of Health Promotion
EDUH 7300 – Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity
EDUH 7500 – Health and Human Behavior Research
EDUH 7520 – Inquiry in Health Behavior & Wellness Education (1–4)
EDUH 7600 – Special Topics in Exercise Science
EDUH 7610 – Independent Study in Exercise Science/Health & Human Behavior

Literacy

EDUL 7100 – Literacy History, Theory, & Policy
EDUL 7200 – Equity Literacy
EDUL 7300 – Multiliteracies
EDUL 7400 – Literacies of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations
EDUL 7500 – Linguistic Perceptions
EDUL 7600 – The Literacy Professional
EDUL 7700 – Theory, Methodology, & Trends in Literacy Research
EDUL 7900 – Community Literacy

Program Planning and Evaluation (PPE)

EDUP 7410 – Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods I
EDUP 7420 – Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods II
EDUP 7810 – Practicum in Planning and Evaluation
(*18 sh total; may be broken up into blocks of 3, 6, &/or 9 as appropriate*)

STEM Education

EDUS 7500 – STEM Education Foundations
EDUS 7510 – STEM Curriculum and Assessment
EDUS 7515 – STEM Education Seminar (1) or EDUS 7520 – STEM Technology Seminar (1)
EDUS 7530 – STEM Education Research
EDUS 7540 – STEM Education Pedagogy
EDUS 7550 – STEM Education Trends and Issues
EDUS 7560 – STEM Learners and Learning
EDUS 7580 – STEM Education Field Study (2)
EDUS 7570 – STEM Education Policy and Leadership

Dissertation Coursework (15 sh minimum)

EDU 7990* – Research and Dissertation (*15 hours minimum; may be taken in 3, 6, or 9 hour blocks)*

VI. Course Descriptions

This list includes core, concentration, & research courses. It does not include electives.

ABAP 7120. Positive Behavior Support & Families Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Issues and practices associated with partnering with families in designing, implementing and evaluating positive behavior support for their children with challenging behavior.

ABAP 7910. Independent Study in Early Childhood Special Education Lec. 2. Cr. 2.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and consent of instructor. Advanced study of an individual basis focusing on an area directly related to young children with special needs and their families.

ABAP 7920. Topics, Issues & Research in Early Childhood Special Education Lec. 2. Cr. 2.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and consent of instructor. Advanced study of a topic(s) relevant to research and/or practice in early childhood special education, early intervention or young children and positive behavior support.

CUED 7030. Rural Schools & Communities Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. An in-depth study of the historical, cultural, and economic characteristics of rural places and the role of schools and agencies in shaping the destiny of those places and their citizens.

ECED 7220. Early Childhood Instruction & Materials Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Planning objectives, activities, and materials for children, teaching techniques, and evaluation of curricula.

EDU 7000. Trans-Concentration Seminar Lec. 1. Cr. 1.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. An introduction to the Ph.D. in Exceptional Learning familiarizing students with the procedures, requirements, and expectations of the program.

EDU 7010. Theoretical Foundations of Research (*1st qualitative course*) Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. A study of the impact of culture in society and its significance for formulating policy design to serve diverse groups effectively and equitably.

EDU 7020. At-Risk Populations: Research, Service, & Delivery Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. A survey of at-risk and diverse populations, their common and unique characteristics, and the research base for designing and implementing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

EDU 7040. Program Planning & Proposal Development Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Theoretical perspectives, models, and effective practices in the development, planning, and evaluation of programs and services in a variety of educational settings.

EDU 7060. Issues in Education Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. An examination and analysis of contemporary trends and issues in education, including leadership, legal, and ethical issues.

EDU 7300. Research Design (*3rd quantitative course*) Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7420. Overview of planning, designing, and conducting experimental and non-experimental research in order to maximize research validity.

EDU 7320. Research Methods in Behavior Analysis Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7300. An in-depth analysis of single-subject research design and the application of this research methodology in applied settings.

EDU 7330. Qualitative Inquiry in Education (*2nd qualitative course*) Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7010. An analysis of assumptions and types of procedures and criteria for evaluation in qualitative and interpretive research methods.

EDU 7340. Data Analysis & Representation in Qualitative Inquiry (*3rd qualitative course*) Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7330. An analysis of both theoretical and practical dimensions of conducting qualitative research.

EDU 7350. Advanced Regression Analysis Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program, EDU 7420, and EDU 7430. Advanced applications of regression analysis techniques.

EDU 7420. Quantitative Inquiry in Education I (*1st quantitative course*) Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and introductory course in statistics. In-depth training and understanding of common descriptive and inferential statistical techniques for conducting research and engaging in scholarly activities.

EDU 7430. Quantitative Inquiry in Education II (*2nd quantitative course*) Lec. 3. Cr. 3
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7420. In-depth analysis that reinforces and expands common descriptive and inferential statistical techniques and includes advanced material appropriate for more complex research problems.

EDU 7920. Research Seminar in Education Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; EDU 7010, EDU 7300, EDU 7330, EDU 7340, EDU 7420, and EDU 7430; EDU 7310 or EDU 7320. In-depth examination of experimental, quasi-experimental, and evaluation research as applied to dissertation research.

EDU 7950. Doctoral Seminar: Special Topics in Education Lec. 1-3. Cr. 1-6.
Prerequisite: Consent of the student's doctoral chairperson required.

EDU 7990. Research & Dissertation Cr. 1, 3, 6, 9.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; EDU 7920.

EDUB 7000. Conceptual Topics & Principles in Behavior Analysis Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
An introduction to concepts and principles related to behavior analytic procedures. For students in ABA concentration only. Students enrolled in the 7000-level course will be required to complete additional work as stated in the syllabus.

EDUB 7010. Topics in Behavior Analysis Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

An in-depth study of instructional methodologies for persons with moderate and severe disabilities. For students in ABA concentration only. Students enrolled in the 7000-level course will be required to complete additional work as stated in the syllabus.

EDUB 7020. Behavior Change Procedures and Systems Supports in ABA Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
The design, implementation, and evaluation of behavioral interventions and individualized behavioral supports using theoretical origins and behavior-analytic behavior change procedures. For students in ABA concentration only. Students enrolled in the 7000-level course will be required to complete additional work as stated in the syllabus.

EDUB 7030. Assessment in Behavior Analysis Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Instruction in the functional analysis of severe and challenging behaviors. Students enrolled in the 7000-level course will be required to complete additional work as stated in the syllabus.

EDUB 7040. Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to the Ph.D. program and SPED 6050. A comprehensive overview of assessment methods used in the evaluation of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

EDUB 7050. ABA Approaches in Developmental Disabilities Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; SPED 6050, and EDUB 7040. A comprehensive overview of research-based practices in the design and delivery of intervention and treatments to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

EDUB 7060. Ethics in ABA Lec. 3 Cr. 3
Prerequisite: Admission to the Doctoral Program. An overview of the ethical concerns related to the practice of applied behavior analysis. Students enrolled in the 7000-level course will be required to complete additional work as stated in the syllabus.

EDUB 7810. Practicum in Behavior Analysis Cr. 1-3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; EDUB 7010, 7030; SPED 6050. Supervised practice in development and application of behavioral intervention.

EDUC 7400. Programs and Service Delivery Models Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Analysis and comparison of organizations, program design, leadership, administrative, and supervisory practices.

EDUC 7450. Doctoral Seminar: Young Children and Families Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Inquiry into social policy, theory, research, issues, and intervention practices and personnel preparation.

EDUH 7000. Current Issues in Exercise Science, Health, and Human Behavior Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
The content of this course will vary according to current research and publications in areas of exercise science, health, and human behavior related to exercise and physical activity.

EDUH 7010. Pedagogical Theory of Physical Education Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
This course will cover interpretation and critical analysis of research on selected topics related to teaching and instruction in physical education.

EDUH 7020. Advanced Teaching in Exercise Science and Health Related Fields Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
This course is designed to provide knowledge, opportunity, and support for quality teaching in exercise science and related health fields. Methodology of teaching in higher education will be explored.

EDUH 7100. Biomechanics of Human Movement Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. This course will cover kinetic and kinematic principles governing efficient human movement. Selected methods of analyzing human movement will be covered.

EDUH 7200. Foundations of Health Promotion Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. This course is designed to provide focus on health promotion and behavior changing strategies. Individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy will be considered as potential factors that can inhibit or promote behavior change specifically related to health issues.

EDUH 7300. Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. This course will include topics such as the effects exercise has on mental health, behavior change theories applied to mental health effects of exercise, behavior change theories applied to physical activity, and physical activity determinants and interventions.

EDUH 7500. Health and Human Behavior Research Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. Students will read, interpret, and critique scientific research.

EDUH 7520. Inquiry in Health and Human Behavior Cr. 1–4.
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. Can be repeated for up to 12 hours credit. Students will conduct research.

EDUH 7600. Special Topics in Exercise Science Cr. 1–3.
This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to review literature on topics they are interested in and to write a literature review. The intent is for the candidate to expand their knowledge base, gain factual information about topics of interest, and identify options for future research projects.

EDUH 7610. Independent Study in Exercise Science/Health & Human Behavior Cr. 1–3.
Topics to be assigned and approved by instructor and advisor.

EDUL 7100. Literacy History, Theory, & Policy Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Exploration of the history and theory related to reading and writing instruction. Policies influencing literacy instruction, past and present, will also be examined.

EDUL 7200. Equity Literacy Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Promotes understanding of deficit thinking in education as it relates to students who are disadvantaged by poverty and guides students to develop language, skills, and competencies for countering deficit thinking in order to promote equity in education.

EDUL 7300. Multiliteracies Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Explores multiple and new literacies, moving beyond traditional reading and writing to examine the multimodal ways of meaning making and communicating and their place in pedagogy and practice.

EDUL 7400. Literacies of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Literacies of culturally and linguistically diverse groups through a critical lens.

EDUL 7500. Linguistic Perceptions Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Explores perceptions of the world through the language that we use and belief systems we create.

EDUL 7600. The Literacy Professional Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Exploring the various roles of the literacy professional. Preparing for grant and article submission.

EDUL 7700. Theory, Methodology, & Trends in Literacy Research Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Examines major theories and methodologies in literacy research and explores new trends in the field.

EDUL 7900. Community Literacy Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Working to explore and participate in various literacy initiatives within the community.

EDUP 7410. Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods I Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Exploration of advanced methods, particularly survey research, used to evaluate programs and improvement initiatives.

EDUP 7420. Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods II Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Integration of context, history, and evaluation skills into program planning and evaluation processes.

EDUP 7810. Supervised Practicum in Program Planning and Evaluation Cr. 3–9.
Prerequisite: Consent of the student's doctoral chairperson is required.

EDUS 7500. STEM Education Foundations Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Introduction to the educational, political, economic, and socio-cultural foundations of the STEM and STEM education disciplines including the history and development of STEM education with attention to the STEM content in P-16 settings. Topics include: introduction to the nature of each of the STEM and STEM education disciplines; investigation of related political, economic, and socio-cultural foundations; and frameworks for constructing personal perspectives and philosophies of integrative STEM education.

EDUS 7510. STEM Curriculum & Assessment Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Current trends in STEM curriculum development and assessment. Topics include: defining objectives; planning for improvement; organization of instructional materials; and STEM curriculum evaluation.

EDUS 7540. STEM Education Pedagogy Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Signature pedagogies unique to the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education; strengths and limitations associated with signature pedagogies; and insights into pedagogical strategies that can serve to enhance practices within chosen STEM fields.

EDUS 7550. STEM Education Trends and Issues Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Introduction to contemporary P–16 STEM education trends and issues, including both integrative and within-discipline trends/issues. Topics such as STEM literacy, integrative STEM teaching/learning, purposeful design and inquiry, legislative initiatives, and change theory are among those addressed in this course.

EDUS 7530. STEM Education Research Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program; EDU 7420 and EDU 7010. Survey of the educational research practices of STEM disciplines; investigates the approaches used in studying the teaching/learning processes within the context of each discipline; similarities, distinctions and overlaps among questions posed, research designs, and investigations into best practices with respect to improving teaching and learning among STEM disciplines.

EDUS 7560. STEM Learners and Learning Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Designed to explore the theoretical bases for STEM learning. Topics will include the development of STEM learning environments; research on learning in STEM; and STEM learner exceptionalities.

EDUS 7515. STEM Education Seminar Lec. 1. Cr. 1.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Designed as a general exploration into the issues surrounding the development of a STEM literate populace through education. This exploration will be facilitated by a blend of readings, discussions, and personal reflections.

EDUS 7520. STEM Technology Seminar Lec. 1. Cr. 1.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Focused on STEM-specific technologies (e.g., Vernier probes, TI-Navigation systems, LoggerPro software, etc.), how to use them, and the issues surrounding their use in STEM education.

EDUS 7580. STEM Education Field Study Lec. 2. Cr. 2.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Applied study in one or more educational institutions. Research, evaluation, curricular, and instructional STEM projects are examples of appropriate areas of study.

EDUS 7570. STEM Education Policy & Leadership Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. The course explores topics in STEM education with attention to STEM education policy and leadership.

ENGL 6010. Teaching Composition Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Theories and pedagogies of teaching writing in the middle schools, secondary schools, and on the college level.

HEC 6610. Families: Normative/Catastrophic Issues Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
In-depth study of family stress and effective coping mechanisms that relate to normative transitions and crisis events.

SPED 6120. Early Childhood Special Education Assessment Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: CFS 2400 and CFS 2410 or SPED 5010 or consent of instructor. Assessment, planning, and intervention procedures specific to child, environment, and family. Design and evaluation of intervention plans.

SPED 7110. Family Collaboration in Special Education Lec. 3. Cr. 3.
Concepts, intervention strategies, and issues related to working with parents of exceptional children.

VII. En-route M.A. or Ed.S Degree in Curriculum and Instruction

A student pursuing an Exceptional Learning Ph.D. may elect to earn an en-route degree as they progress through the ELPhD program. Those students entering the program with no prior graduate degree may earn an M.A. in *Curriculum & Instruction* (C&I) with a *Curriculum* concentration, as the student successfully advances toward completion of the Ph.D. Those who enter the program with a graduate degree may elect to earn either the M.A. or an Ed.S. in *Curriculum & Instruction* with a *Curriculum* concentration.

If a student elects to forego the en-route degree, the full 79 credit hours of the program must be completed. The Ph.D. is not reduced to 46–49 hours, even if a student enters with one or more graduate degrees.

En-route M.A. in Curriculum & Instruction (with Curriculum concentration)

The en-route M.A. degree may be awarded when the student successfully completes 33 semester credit hours *and must include* successful completion of nine (9) credit hours of either quantitative (EDU 7420, EDU 7430, and EDU 7300) or qualitative (EDU 7010, EDU 7330, and EDU 7340) research. The M.A. will *not* be awarded without completion of these 9 research credit hours.

Students who have already earned a graduate degree before entering the ELPhD program or who have taken graduate courses that are relevant to the program (and for which the grade is a *B* or better) may be eligible to transfer in up to 9 credits *for the M.A. portion of the ELPhD program of study*. Any courses taken or transferred in at the 5000-level must be applied to the en-route M.A. portion of the program, unless special exception has been secured. Courses applied to the en-route M.A. *must be completed within six years of enrollment*.

The en-route M.A. degree may be awarded at any point during the program, given that the student:

- meets both the C&I M.A. and Ph.D. research course requirements as listed above;
- has submitted an approved Program of Study with signatures from the student's advisory committee, the Chair of C&I, and the Director of Graduate Programs;
- has satisfied all College of Graduate Studies General Degree Requirements policies; and
- has applied for graduation in accordance with the requirements of the College of Graduate Studies.

Students *must apply for graduation* as required in order to earn their en-route degree—it is not automatically awarded.

Once the en-route M.A. in Curriculum & Instruction has been awarded, the remaining portion of the Program of Study must include a minimum of 45–46 semester credits of appropriate graduate-level coursework consisting of research, concentration, core, and elective credits at the 6000– and 7000–level, as approved by the student's advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Programs. A minimum of 15 semester credit hours of doctoral research and dissertation is required in no fewer than two (2) semesters.

En-route Ed.S. in Curriculum & Instruction (with Curriculum concentration)

The en-route Ed.S. degree may be awarded when the student successfully completes 30 semester credit hours *and must include* successful completion of nine (9) credit hours of either quantitative (EDU 7420, EDU 7430, and EDU 7300) or qualitative (EDU 7010, EDU 7330, and EDU 7340) research. The Ed.S. will not be awarded without completion of these 9 research credit hours.

Students who have already earned a graduate degree before entering the ELPhD program or who have taken graduate courses that are relevant to the program (and for which the grade is a *B* or better) may be eligible to transfer in up to 9 credits *for the en-route Ed.S. portion of the ELPhD program of study*. Any courses taken or transferred in at the 5000-level must be applied to the en-route Ed.S. portion of the program, unless special exception has been secured. Courses applied to the en-route Ed.S. *must be completed within six years of enrollment*.

The en-route Ed.S. degree may be awarded at any point during the program, given that the student:

- meets both the C&I Ed.S. and Ph.D. research course requirements as listed above;
- has submitted an approved Program of Study with signatures from the student's advisory committee, the Chair of C&I, and the Director of Graduate Programs;
- has satisfied all College of Graduate Studies General Degree Requirements policies; and
- has applied for graduation in accordance with the requirements of the College of Graduate Studies.

Students *must apply for graduation* as required in order to earn their en-route degree—it is not automatically awarded.

Once the en-route Ed.S. in Curriculum & Instruction has been awarded, the remaining portion of the Program of Study must include a minimum of 48–49 semester credits of appropriate graduate-level coursework consisting of research, concentration, core, and elective credits at the 6000– and 7000–level, as approved by the student's advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Programs. A minimum of 15 semester credit hours of doctoral research and dissertation is required in no fewer than two (2) semesters.

VIII. Transfer Credit

While coursework taken prior to admission to the ELPhD program may, in certain instances, be used toward the degree, there are specific regulations governing how the coursework can be used and what part of the program must be taken at Tech after being admitted into the ELPhD program. All graduate course credit transferred from other degree programs must be approved by the student's advisory committee and Director of Graduate Programs prior to inclusion in the student's formal Program of Study.

Upon approval from the student's advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Programs, up to nine (9) graduate credit hours with a grade of *B* or better can be counted toward the first 30 hours of ELPhD Program of Study; these may be credits that are independent of ***or*** included in a previously earned degree.

Requests to transfer more than a total of 18 credit hours must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs ***prior*** to submitting the Program of Study or transfer request.

No more than 27 semester hours of credit at the Master's and Educational Specialist levels, excluding theses and problems courses, may be accepted for transfer credit toward the doctorate. All transfer credit must align with Tennessee Tech and SACSCOC guidelines.

Remember, **all requirements for the degree, including the dissertation and transfer credit, must be completed within a period of no more than eight (8) consecutive years** (Please refer to Policy 271 – General Graduate Degree Requirements https://tntech.policytech.com/).

IX. Academic Requirements & Expectations

Academic Requirements/Standards/Expectations

The student must maintain a cumulative point average of 3.25 and, in addition to adhering to the general regulations of the College of Graduate Studies, adhere to the specific regulations for the Ph.D. program. These regulations, standards, and expectations include:

1. A minimum of 78–79 semester hours of coursework, including 13 core semester hours, 21 research semester hours, 6 elective semester hours, 23–24 concentration semester hours, and a minimum of 15 semester hours in dissertation. All hours should be taken at the 6000– and 7000–levels. **Note**: an equivalent specialty course is not available at the 6000– or 7000–level, a 5000–level course that is germane to the student's research/areas of research interest may be used to meet the minimum requirements of course work only by permission of the instructor of the course in question, student's advisor or graduate advisory committee, and the director of graduate programs. Written approval must be secured before enrolling. This may be through inclusion on the approved Program of Study or separate documentation, such as a Substitution form or email approval.
    a. A minimum of 51 semester hours of course work beyond the baccalaureate must be completed after admittance into the doctoral program, including a minimum of 12 semester hours at the 7000-level (excluding dissertation credit).

    b. Upon approval from the student's advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Programs, up to nine (9) graduate credit hours with a grade of B or better can be counted toward the first 33 hours of the ELPhD Program of Study; these may be credits that are independent of or included in a previously earned degree. Requests to transfer more than a total of 18 credit hours must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs prior to submitting the Program of Study or transfer request. No more than 27 semester hours of credit at the Master's and Educational Specialist levels, excluding theses and problems courses, may be accepted for transfer credit toward the doctorate. All transfer credit must align with Tennessee Tech and SACSCOC guidelines.

2. All requirements, including the dissertation, must be completed within a period of no more than eight consecutive years.

3. *A*s and *B*s are required in coursework. A grade of C is considered a failing grade in doctoral programs. A student is allowed to carry one C on their transcript without academic dismissal. A student receiving two Cs **will be dismissed** from the program. If a second C is received, it may not be substituted or moved out of the student's program of study in order to avoid dismissal.

4. *D*s and *F*s are not acceptable in the Ph.D. program. A student receiving a grade of *D* or *F* in a course will be **dismissed** from the program.

5. If an Incomplete (*I*) is granted, the student has one academic year to complete the requirements. The student is not allowed to carry more than one *I* at any time during the

program. If the requirements have **not** been met in the allotted time period, the grade is converted to an *F* or *IF*, the student will be **dismissed** from the program.

6. A maximum of 12 credit hours may be taken in one semester. Written approval from the student's advisor/chair, Department Chair, and Director of Graduate Programs is required to register and take more than 12 credit hours in one semester.

7. Course repetition is not allowed in the Exceptional Learning Ph.D. program, unless a course has been explicitly designed (e.g., special topics, practicum, and dissertation); courses for which a C has been earned may not be repeated to earn a higher grade.

8. Course substitutions are allowed upon written approval from the student's graduate advisory committee, Department Chair, and Director of Graduate Program's approval.

9. Students should complete their Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations either a) following completion of all course work, excluding EDU 7920 and EDU 7990, or b) during the last semester during which such course work is to be completed. Comprehensive Examinations should occur no later than the end of the semester in which the student completes EDU 7920.

10. Approval of the dissertation topic, a successful dissertation proposal presentation to the entire graduate advisory committee, and IRB approval (where appropriate) must precede any significant work on the dissertation. IRB approval must be obtained for any human subjects research project initiated by a student (or faculty member); this includes studies using secondary data.

11. Satisfactory completion of the dissertation requires an oral defense.

12. Dissertation hours (15 hours minimum) may not be completed in fewer than two semesters.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

The faculty and staff at Tech are committed to the lifelong learning of students and thus provide an environment for learning that fosters the highest academic conduct. Plagiarism.org (2017) defines plagiarism as "The improper use, or failure to attribute, another person's writing or ideas (intellectual property)," and explains that "It can be as subtle as the inadvertent neglect to include quotes or references when citing another source or as blatantly unethical as knowingly copying an entire paper verbatim and claiming it as your own work."

According to Merriam-Webster Online (2019), to plagiarize is "1) to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own or to use (another's production) without crediting the source, or 2) to commit literary theft and/or present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source" (para. 1–2).

Online educational resources that provide information for understanding plagiarism and proper ways to cite the work of others are available at:

https://www.plagiarism.org

https://www.turnitin.com/solutions/plagiarism-prevention

https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/certificationTests/index.html

Students **must** complete the online test available at https://www.indiana.edu/~plag/test.html and provide documentation that they understand what constitutes plagiarism and how they can avoid it and maintain academic integrity by providing a copy of the completed test certificate to the Director of Graduate Programs and appropriate faculty members as requested.

The faculty and staff at Tech are committed to the lifelong learning of students and thus provide an environment for learning that fosters the highest academic conduct. To this end, Tech and its faculty reserve the right to use electronic means to detect and help prevent the inappropriate use of intellectual property. The student agrees and understands that his or her work may be subject to originality check through Turnitin, and thereby grants any necessary copyright permission required to do so. Personally identifiable information (e.g., student name, social security number, student ID number) should **NOT** be included in the work submitted to Turnitin. This work will be encoded and stored in the Turnitin database, where it will also be used for originality checks on other works submitted by the student or anyone else using the system. The faculty may require that the students submit their work through Turnitin or questionable text may be submitted by the faculty for the student. The terms that apply to Tech's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct such as submitting another student's work as your own or the falsification of data are grounds for immediate dismissal from the ELPhD program. ELPhD students are held to a higher standard of ethical conduct especially considering the central focus of this program. Working with and for exceptional learners, at-risk populations, and diverse underrepresented groups demands the utmost ethical conduct and any evidence of unethical behavior or actions in coursework or research, including plagiarism, will result in the student's dismissal from the ELPhD program.

There is no statute of limitations on plagiarism or academic misconduct. If a student's plagiarism or academic misconduct goes undetected until after completion of the course and/or project, the student can still be dismissed from the program. The procedure for dismissal is:

1. An incidence of plagiarism or academic misconduct is presented to the student's advisor/chair, concentration leader, and Director of Graduate Programs.

2. The Director of Graduate Programs will review the evidence in consultation with faculty members, the student's advisor/chair, and concentration leader, as well as the student accused of plagiarism or academic misconduct. After this discussion and evaluation, the Director will decide if plagiarism or academic misconduct occurred and dismissal is warranted. A decision advocating dismissal will be forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies.

3. The College of Graduate Studies will inform the student in writing of the final, official decision.

Any substantiated incidence of plagiarism in the ELPhD program will result in the student's dismissal from the program. The student accused of plagiarism or academic misconduct may appeal the decision to the Ph.D. Admissions Committee.

XII. General Student Responsibilities

Forming a Committee

The student's Ph.D. committee includes a minimum of four members. Additional committee members are optional. The committee must include a Chair who has been credentialed by the university and three or more members, who must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status at Tech. Doctoral students have the right to amend their committees by adding, omitting, or replacing members, during the process of their study and in response to their changing needs. The committee must be designated in tandem with the Program of Study.

Filing a Program of Study

In pursuing the ELPhD, students have primary responsibility for knowing and meeting the program requirements. Students are expected to take the initiative in planning and following their Program of Study (PoS).

The completed PoS must be turned in early in the program—during the 1st 4 weeks of the semester the before the student will earn the en-route degree. For example, if a student is on track to earn the en-route degree in Spring, the PoS must be submitted no later than mid-September of the fall semester.

This is developed in collaboration with the total committee. Each committee member must review and sign it before it is submitted to the Chair of Curriculum & Instruction and the Director of Graduate Programs. The committee and the Director of Graduate Programs must approve all changes made to the PoS (via a *Substitution Form* or a revised PoS, as is appropriate).

Students are responsible for regularly consulting their PoS prior to advisement and to ensure any substitutions are processed at the time of the change. **Please note**: if course substitutions are made without a *Substitution Form*, graduation can be delayed. A course must be on the Program of Study in order to be counted toward the ELPhD degree.

Students should also regularly consult Degree Works in Eagle Online to confirm that courses have been correctly noted as progress toward degrees are made.

Keeping Up with University Policies

In addition to the Exceptional Learning Ph.D. program guidelines (this document), students are to follow the Graduate Catalog:

https://catalog.tntech.edu/index.php?catoid=33

Coordinating the Dissertation Defense/Notifying Others About the Defense/Submitting Copies of the Dissertation

PhD candidates should work closely with their Chairs to determine an appropriate defense date. PhD candidates should review the Graduate Student Calendar for the semester they intend to graduate and work back from important milestones shared via the calendar. PhD candidates should apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which their defense is scheduled to take place.

A copy of the final dissertation draft must be submitted to all committee members ***and*** the Director of Graduate Programs no less than two weeks prior to the defense, though earlier is appreciated.

At the same time, the PhD candidate should notify the Director of the defense day, time, and location. The *Dissertation Defense Form* is available on the Graduate Studies website. This form should be completed and brought to the dissertation defense. If the PhD candidate passes the defense, the committee signs the paper and routes it to the Chair of Curriculum & Instruction and Director of Graduate Programs.

Upon approval of final revisions, the Certificate of Approval is signed by the committee and submitted to the College of Graduate Studies (a copy should also be sent to the Director of Graduate Programs). An electronic PDF copy of the dissertation is then submitted to the College of Graduate Studies. Bound copies for the Chair and each committee member are courtesies, but strongly encouraged.

Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Required Procedure Checklist

Item	*Due By*	*Completed*
Temporary advisor appointed by Director	Between 2nd & 3rd semester enrolled	
Program of Study & Dissertation Committee designation submitted	no later than the 1st month of the semester before the student plans to earn the en-route degree (e.g., if you intend to graduate in spring, you must submit your PoS by mid-September)	
Annual Student Program Evaluation (ASPE) meetings (+ CV submission)	2nd half of each Spring semester	
En–route MA or EdS: apply to graduate	beginning of the semester **PRIOR** to the intended semester of graduation (e.g., if you intend to graduate in spring, you must apply in fall—see Graduate Student Calendar site for deadlines)	
Notify Director of intent to take EDU 7920	1st half of the semester **prior** to enrolling in EDU 7920; all research courses **MUST** be completed & a pre-prospectus form submitted before eligible to take EDU 7920	
Prospectus (EDU 7920)	after all coursework has been finished *(~61 credit hours completed)*	
Schedule written comprehensive exam	no later than 1st half of EDU 7920–to be scheduled with Committee Chair	
Written comprehensive exam	during EDU 7920 as scheduled with Committee Chair	
Dissertation prospectus defense	immediately after successful completion of EDU 7920–schedule with Dissertation Chair (*proposal must be submitted to committee 2 weeks before presentation*)	
Dissertation hours (*15 credit hours minimum*)	begins after successful prospectus defense, comprehensive examination, and IRB approval (if using human subjects); continues until completion	
Ph.D.: apply to graduate	beginning of the semester **PRIOR** to the intended semester of graduation (e.g., if you intend to graduate in spring, you must apply in fall)	
Dissertation draft plan to committee	create, with Committee Chair, a schedule of dates when drafts & revisions will be sent to the committee (including final draft)	
Schedule dissertation defense	work with Committee Chair to schedule dissertation defense	
Final dissertation to committee & Director	**no later than 2 weeks prior** to defense (*earlier is encouraged*)	
Defense invitation	send dissertation title & defense date, time, & location to Director of Graduate Programs no later than 2 weeks prior to defense	

Defense announcement	immediately after dissertation defense
Survey of Earned Doctorate	within 2 weeks of defense
Submit signed defense form and Certificate of Approval to Graduate Studies *	after completion of final revisions *(*check the Graduate Student calendar for more specific deadline dates)*
Submit final copy to committee & to Graduate Studies *	after completion of final revisions *(*check the Graduate Student calendar for more specific deadline dates)*

XIII. Prospectus Guidelines

In *Research Seminar in Education* (EDU 7920)—also called *Prospectus*, students craft their dissertation prospectus. They work closely with the instructor & their Committee Chair, as well as committee members. The prospectus typically consists of three chapters: *Introduction*, *Literature Review*, & *Methodology*. Some dissertations may require a different prospectus organization; this will be decided on among the student, Chair, & EDU 7920 instructor to ensure the appropriate information is captured.

EDU 7920 is **very fast-paced** & students should be well-prepared before the course begins. Below is information to support successfully navigating the prospectus process.

This document addresses pre-prospectus preparation, tips to assist in a smooth prospectus process, prospectus practice and full defenses, IRB application, and comprehensive exams. It incorporates student and faculty feedback about the processes—*thank you to everyone for sharing constructive criticism in service of improving the experience for everyone*!

Prospectus/Dissertation Roles & Responsibilities

Please note the list of responsibilities of the Ph.D. student/candidate and the dissertation committee below is not exhaustive (even though it may feel that way 😉)!

Chair/Co-Chair responsibilities

- schedule comprehensive exams
- schedule prospectus & dissertation defenses
- coordinate paperwork with Director of Graduate Programs
- work regularly with committee members to ensure dissertation work is high quality
- ensure clear communication among committee members & between candidate & committee
- address any confusion or conflict between candidate & committee members or amongst committee members
- assist the candidate in integrating/addressing committee feedback, especially when there are contradictory requests/comments
- ensure candidates stay on schedule (& help revise schedule when needed)
- offer support & guidance to candidates
- provide guidance on IRB draft applications &/or revision requests from the IRB
- advocate for the candidate & for quality research
- ensure the candidate d*oes not go up for defense until fully prepared & a successful outcome is anticipated;* work with committee & candidate to revise the dissertation & reschedule the defense if needed

Committee responsibilities

- provide timely, thorough feedback on prospectus & dissertation drafts as agreed upon in the timeline
- communicate any delays or timeline changes to the dates in which the candidate will receive feedback
- provide guidance on IRB draft applications &/or revision requests from the IRB (as requested)
- offer support & guidance to candidates
- work with other committee members & chair to ensure integrity & quality of the prospectus/dissertation
- advocate for the candidate & for quality research
- communicate any concerns about the dissertation quality well in advance of the scheduled defense date; the candidate should not defend if serious concerns exist
- work with the candidate & Chair(s) to address concerns and reschedule defense if needed

Candidate responsibilities

- clear, respectful, transparent communication with the committee
- work with Chair(s) to establish comp exam, prospectus, & dissertation defense dates
- provide & adhere to a detailed dissertation timeline (beginning with the dissertation prospectus)
- alert Chair(s) & committee to any timeline changes
- review Graduate Studies requirements & deadlines
- monitor timeline milestones & ensure they are met
- share prospectus chapter drafts to committee while in EDU 7920 & incorporate feedback received
- share IRB drafts to committee while in EDU 7920 & incorporate feedback received
- schedule, as appropriate, regular meetings with the Chair & committee members throughout prospectus & dissertation to discuss research progress, receive/review feedback, & address any issues or concerns
- submit IRB application to IRB (no data collection/analysis before approval)
- conduct research with ethics & integrity (IRB approval, appropriate citation, appropriate design/methods, etc.)
- alert Chair(s) & committee of any content, methodological, or other changes to the project
- submit high-quality prospectus, dissertation, & IRB drafts on time
- incorporate committee feedback; if questions arise or a decision is made not to incorporate a particular comment/suggestion, address this with the person(s) (& include the Chair)
- submit revised documents to the committee & Chair(s)
- provide rationale for any places feedback was not addressed

If you have a non-traditional dissertation, some of the guidance below may need to be adapted. We understand this. Please work with your Chair(s) and committee to make certain the appropriate content and quality are clearly addressed.

Pre-prospectus Preparation Process & Timeline

- **8 to 10 weeks PRIOR to EDU 7920**
  - List top dissertation idea(s).
  - For the top 3 ideas, identify:
    - → brief problem statement (1–3 sentences)
    - → brief purpose & significance statement (1–2 paragraphs suggested)
    - → potential research questions
    - → any important contextual &/or disciplinary elements that may influence your work
    - → proposed appropriate methodology
    - → proposed appropriate/feasible methods
    - → proposed data sources
    - → any other information, resources, or guidance needed to successfully complete (e.g., databases, subject matter experts, access to documents)
  - Schedule a meeting with your Chair(s) & send your "project sketches" *at least 2 days before the scheduled meeting.*
  - During the meeting, discuss:
    - → feasibility of your proposed project(s)
    - → potential obstacles or pitfalls for each
    - → research methodology & methods
    - → research questions
    - → data considerations
    - → work preferences…how does your Chair(s) wish to communicate, how often would they like to receive updates & drafts, do they wish to see drafts before they go to the committee, do they wish to be copied on all communication with the committee, etc.
  - After your meeting, send a recap to your Chair(s); share this with your full committee (with your Chair's permission…they may want some revisions before it is shared).
  - Make & share revisions with your Chair(s):
    - → refine problem statement
    - → finalize research questions
    - → finalize appropriate methods
    - → identify major themes—as well as important voices in the field—necessary to situate your study well via the literature review

- **at least 6 weeks PRIOR to EDU 7920**
  - Follow-up with your Chair(s) to finalize your project:
    - → decide on which project (if more than one)

- → agree on problem, purpose, & significance statements (these will be developed further in EDU 7920, but having a clear direction & foundation will be essential)
- → refine/finalize research questions
- → finalize appropriate methods
- → review themes & authors/voices for your literature review
- → discuss IRB draft timeline (this will be different from the deadline assigned to the IRB for EDU 7920)… the process is detailed & having specific check points & due dates will make sure you meet all the requirements & your Chair(s) has time to review & add input

- Offer to meet (virtually or in-person) with your committee members—as a group or individually—to discuss your project & any particular communication/work preferences.
- Share the finalized project details with your committee & request feedback.
- Obtain signatures on the pre-prospectus proposal form from your dissertation committee:
  - → you will **NOT** be allowed to register if the pre-prospectus proposal form has not been submitted)
  - → submit the completed pre-prospectus form to the Director of Graduate Programs, Mrs. Denette Way, & Mrs. Olivia Newman
- Incorporate any feedback from committee members:
  - → share/discuss with your Chair(s)
  - → send the revised information to your entire committee
- Begin your literature search & start collecting, organizing, & reading articles:
  - → consider revisiting Boote & Beile (2005)
  - → a matrix or other organization tool may be helpful
  - → the article critique resources offered in EDU 7000 & 7300 can be helpful
  - → as you accumulate articles associated with themes/authors, you may wish to begin a document noting connections, conflicts, omissions, questions raised among the articles in each theme
- If your Chair(s) approves, you may begin work on certain sections of the prospectus in advance.

– **2 weeks PRIOR to EDU 7920**
- Follow-up/check in with your committee.
- Discuss comps with your Chair(s) [*see separate Comprehensive Exam section below for details*]:
  - → including timing & possible dates
  - → they can occur anytime during prospectus or before dissertation work begins
  - → they should occur within a 2-week window; if there is a need to extend this window, the Chair(s) should reach out to the Director of Graduate programs

- Deadline to submit pre-prospectus proposal form to the Director of Graduate Programs.
- **Reminder**: you will NOT be allowed to register if the pre-prospectus proposal form has not been submitted.

Guidance during EDU 7920

- During the first 2 weeks of EDU 7920, go over the prospectus course syllabus & timing with your Chair(s) so that you can create a schedule that details when chapter & IRB drafts will be sent out [this can happen in person, via email, through a phone call, or on video conferencing—whatever is best for the candidate & Chair(s)].

- During the first 2 weeks of EDU 7920, send an email to your committee sharing the following:
  - due dates for chapter drafts (for the course)
  - intended date to send chapter drafts to the committee
  - intended date to send complete IRB draft to the committee
  - date they will receive your 1st draft of all 3 chapters (incorporating revisions from EDU 7920 faculty; must be no later than 2 weeks prior to practice defense)
  - practice prospectus date
  - you may also wish to share the rubrics for the course

- Review the Graduate Student calendar:
  - create deadlines for yourself ***PRIOR*** to the Grad Studies deadlines…life happens & if you don't allow for contingency time, you may be forced to wait another semester to graduate!
  - use these in creating your detailed dissertation timeline

- Review the formatting requirements (found on Grad Studies website)…you prospectus should be correctly formatted as discussed in these guidelines.

- Reminder: you **cannot** start your research until you have BOTH IRB approval ***AND*** have successfully defended your prospectus.

- *Transparency & good communication are vital*; you are encouraged to copy your Chair(s) on all your communication with committee members so that everyone is on the same page & everyone is aware of your work/progress. This is crucial for a smooth dissertation process.

- Share each draft of your chapters with your committee; incorporate any feedback shared with you into your final prospectus that you submit for EDU 7920.

- Meet regularly with your Chair(s) throughout the semester; you may also want to meet 1–2 times with other committee members as well.

- If any major changes happen to your project, discuss with your Chair & then alert your committee so that they are not surprised.

Remember: the more everyone sees drafts of your work [prospectus, defense documents, IRB, dissertation chapters] & the more feedback is given throughout the whole process, *the better it is for the Ph.D. candidates & the entire committee*! It seem a bit daunting, but developing a close working relationship with your committee improves the process as well as your work. Additionally, addressing concerns early on & throughout the process prevents unpleasant prospectus & dissertation defenses experiences.

Practice Prospectus Defense

- Share your revised prospectus with your committee *at least 2 weeks PRIOR* to your practice prospectus defense; if there are still revisions left to incorporate, note that when you send the document (more details below).

- Create a presentation that covers:

  note: *unless otherwise asked, use literature to support your entire presentation, incorporating it throughout each part, demonstrating the work's connection to/groundedness in the scholarship, rather than having a lit review slide—please discuss with your Chair(s) which they prefer & for any other preferences/guidance*

  - background & context
  - problem addressed
  - problem statement
  - research questions
  - study significance & goals
  - methodology
  - study design/theoretical approach
  - data sources
  - data collection processes
  - data analysis processes
  - full/detailed dissertation timeline
    - → chapters 1–3 & IRB draft deadlines to Chair (if requested prior to sending to whole committee)
    - → chapters 1–3 draft deadlines & IRB draft(s) to the committee
    - → feedback deadlines for chapters 1–3 & IRB draft(s) to the candidate
    - → full prospectus defense date

→ expected IRB approval date

→ expected data collection & analyses dates (may be a block of time; e.g., *October through December 2021 – data collection*); these blocks of time will overlap with chapter drafts & revisions!

→ chapter 4 & chapter 5 (& additional chapters if appropriate) draft deadlines to the committee

→ feedback deadlines for chapter 4 & chapter 5 (& additional chapters if appropriate) to the candidate

→ any times the candidate is unavailable (e.g., conferences, other trips)

→ dissertation defense date (estimate)

→ all Graduate Studies deadlines (back them up a few days; do not use the final day to submit in your timeline)

→ other deadlines/information as the candidate & committee feel appropriate

– Share your draft presentation with your Chair(s) & committee members ahead of time & solicit feedback—this will make for a much better presentation & a lot less stress for everyone!

– Should you get additional feedback on your prospectus &/or presentation after the practice prospectus defense:

  - incorporate it & send the revised prospectus to your committee ASAP (no later than 2 weeks before the defense date)
  - in doing so, the final prospectus that is submitted prior to the full prospectus defense will be more cohesive & polished.
  - the post-defense 2nd round of feedback should then have chapters 1–3 in good shape once revisions are applied (& as close as to final as can be with research & its ever-shifting nuances!).

– The final prospectus defense occurs after the practice defense (see separate section below).

Prospectus Defense (full)

- The final prospectus defense occurs after the practice defense, ideally within 3–4 weeks after completion of EDU 7920.

- Work with your Chair(s), who work with the committee, to schedule the full prospectus defense as early as possibly to ensure timeliness of dissertation progress:
    - allow at least 2 weeks between the practice defense & the full defense
    - incorporate feedback on the presentation & the prospectus document
    - submit the revised prospectus document to your whole committee at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled prospectus defense date

- Prospectus defenses are not open. You or your committee may wish to invite attendees, however. This is permissible, *but not required*.

- Block 1.5–2 hours for the prospectus defense:
    - 20–30 minutes for presentation (unless a different time allotment has been decided)
    - 15–30 minutes for questions
    - 15–30 minutes for deliberation
    - 5 minutes for conveying defense results

- It may be beneficial have a meeting already scheduled with your Chair(s) either immediately following the defense or within 2–3 days to discuss revisions & adjust the dissertation timeline if needed.

- Additional tips for a successful defense
    - after incorporating feedback, share with your Chair(s) for feedback
    - practice your defense in front of people as well as by yourself!
    - ask people who do not know your research to look at/listen to your defense presentation…see if they can grasp the main elements. If they can, you are clear & providing enough detail for anyone to follow!
    - after practicing on your own, work with your Chair(s) to further refine
    - consider dressing more formally for the defense…you do not need to go overboard, but consider dressing as if you were giving a presentation or attending a job interview
    - give yourself time before the defense to arrive, get settled, test technology
    - if feasible, take some downtime immediately following your defense! Even a couple of hours to process & unwind may be really helpful!

IRB Application

- Work on your IRB as you write each chapter draft; they both require the same/similar elements & you can use them to improve on another. This also prevents a last minute, poorly done IRB draft.

- Work closely with your Chair(s) & committee members (as appropriate) as you are working on your IRB draft—this ensures quality & prevents ugly surprises as much as possible.

- Review course timeline developed with your Chair(s) in the 1st 2 weeks of EDU 7920 so you meet those deadlines.

- Once your Chair(s) feels the IRB draft is in good shape, send it to your committee so that they have a chance to review it & offer feedback.

- Decide with your committee when you will submit your IRB; IRB approvals have been taking much longer than in the past & this should be considered *EARLY* on with respect to dissertation timing.

- You **cannot** start your research until you have **BOTH** IRB approval ***AND*** have successfully defended your prospectus.

Comprehensive Exam Information

- At the beginning of Research Seminar in Education (EDU 7920), work with your Chair(s) to will select a series of four consecutive days during a 2-week window.
    - These days may be back-to-back or spread out over the exam window.
    - This is not an exercise in endurance, but rather a demonstration of doctoral-level understanding, content mastery, and expertise in their areas of specialization.
    - Work with your Chair(s) to determine what schedule will best support you in meeting these expectations. Exceptions may be made with approval of the Director of Graduate Programs and Chair(s).

- Comps can occur any time during or immediately after EDU 7920.
    - Students have been split as to whether earlier or later in the semester is preferable for comps. Many students find earlier is better as comp questions ideally are related to the dissertation work & responses can inform or become incorporated into the dissertation during the prospectus revisions.
    - Others prefer later as they have fewer deliverables due for the class & their prospectus is more formed.
    - Work with your Chair(s) to determine what is best for you…make certain to take into account EDU 7920 requirements and any professional or personal demands that might affect your ability to successfully complete the exams.

- Each committee member submits an exam question or set of questions to the Chair(s).

- *These questions should be related to the student's dissertation work in some way* so that this not only demonstrates content mastery and expertise, but also brings added richness and depth to the dissertation work.
- It also makes this process meaningful both the student and committee members beyond simply meeting an expectation/benchmark.

– Students typically have 24 hours in which to craft a response to each member's question/question set.
  - Committee members may elect to allow the use of resources or to prohibit them.
  - Committee members may also elect to provide different time windows (e.g., 6 hours, 48 hours) depending on the question/question set.

– Responses are written to one committee member's question/question set at a time.
  - Students should not work on multiple responses at once.
  - The questions must be answered with appropriate detail, clarity, and insight, and display strong comprehension and integration of fundamental concepts, as well as specialized expertise.

– Once complete, the response is submitted to the Chair(s). The Chair(s) then send the response to the appropriate committee member for evaluation and feedback.

– A score of pass, low pass, or fail are based on pre-determined performance criteria devised by their committee and informed by evidence-based practices, disciplinary content knowledge, and professional skills introduced and reinforced in previous coursework taken by the student.

– If an answer lacks the desired mastery, committee members have two options.

  - If the response is reasonably close to the expected level of proficiency and fluency, the committee member may choose to ask for more detail and offer a student an opportunity to elaborate if necessary.
  - Alternatively, the committee member may fail the student.
    → Students who fail the comprehensive exam must wait a semester before retaking their exam.
    → Students may only retake their comprehensive exam one time.
    → A failure of any part of a student's retake examination warrants academic dismissal from the program.

– If a student passes all parts of the exam, they move into Ph.D. candidacy.
  - The Chair(s) will prepare the Ph.D. Candidacy form and obtain committee signatures.
  - Once the committee, Chair of C&I, & Director of Graduate Programs have signed, the form will be submitted to Graduate Studies for final processing.

XIV. Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Certification

The *School Aged and Adult Populations (ABA)* strand of Applied Behavior Analysis prepares candidates to sit for the BCBA certification exam. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.® (BACB) has established multiple eligibility standards that must be met prior to sitting for the exam. For more information on these standards please visit www.bacb.com.

The BACB has approved the following course sequence as meeting the coursework requirements for eligibility to take the Board Certified Behavior Analyst Examination®. Applicants must meet additional requirements to qualify.

1. **An Acceptable Graduate Degree.** BCBA applicants must have received, at minimum, a master's degree from an accredited university in behavior analysis, education, psychology, or a program with an approved BACB course sequence. All other degrees must be approved by the BACB.

2. **Completion of an Approved Course Sequence.** BCBA applicants are required to complete a sequence of graduate courses approved by the BACB. The course sequence at Tech has been approved by the BACB and aligns with the latest task standards (4th Edition).

3. **Supervised Experience.** BCBA applicants must complete 1,500 hours of supervised field experience. Supervision may not begin until the applicant (a) successfully completes one course from an approved BACB course sequence and (b) completes an online Supervision and Experience Training Program. No more that 50% of the experience can be in direct implementation of behavioral programs. The BACB maintains rigorous standards for supervision and requires documentation of experience hours on a weekly to biweekly basis. Tech offers a practicum in supervision, in which participants receive 1.5 hours of credit per hour of experience, beginning in the Fall semester of 2016.

4. **Certification Exam.** The final step in earning the BCBA credential is the completion of the nationally administered certification exam. Applicants may register for the exam at multiple sites throughout the United States.

Transferring Credit from other Course Sequences
As all course sequences are individually approved by the BACB, you will need to consult with the ABAS strand leader before attempting to receive credit for BCBA courses taken outside of Tech.