Institutional Effectiveness
2024-2025

Program: Exceptional Education, PhD
College and Department: College of Education and Human Sciences, Curriculum & Instruction
Contact: Ashley Akenson
Mission:

The central focus of the Exceptional Learning Ph.D. (ELPhD) program is the study of diverse exceptional learner populations. Exceptional learners may be a member of one or more of the following groups: at-risk, vulnerable, underserved, underrepresented, and/or marginalized populations. Exceptional learners include, but are not limited to, those persons for whom social, economic, cultural, and physical characteristics may function as a barrier to learning. These exceptional populations may be neglected, oppressed, or disempowered by society; often excluded from equitable access to governmental, economic, educational, sociocultural, and community resources; and viewed as inherently different from the majority population. The ELPhD program offers an outstanding graduate education that prepares professionals for careers as leaders in their disciplines and to effect positive change in diverse populations through research, leadership, and service.

The ELPhD program has a primary mission of offering rigorous and robust academic preparation of professionals who serve their communities, public school systems, institutions of higher education, and nontraditional educational environments. Core courses prepare students to address issues related to exceptional learners in all disciplines, traditional and nontraditional learning environments, inclusion, equity, and diversity. The research course sequence provides students a thorough grounding in research methods. Core, research, and concentration courses deliver interdisciplinary perspectives, advanced methodological preparation, and fundamental theoretical knowledge—which work together to shape inspired, engaged, and innovative professionals. Specific programs of study are available in five concentrations: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Literacy, Health Behaviors & Wellness Education (HBWE), Program Planning and Evaluation (PPE), and STEM Education. There are two tracks within ABA: *Applied Behavior Analysis School Age and Adult Populations* (ABAS) and *Young Children and Families* (YCF). Instruction and research are major components of the academic mission of the program. A committed faculty serves the students through instruction, scholarly activity, and service to provide quality academic experiences.

These goals and outcomes have been identified through faculty collaboration, and they are consistent with a central purpose of any Ph.D. program: to prepare individuals for scholarly and professional success in their chosen field. The objectives are broad enough to allow for the diversity of the concentrations yet maintain the focus on exceptional learners. Faculty routinely monitor current practices in core, research, and concentration courses—through attending

academic and professional conferences, examining theory, and reviewing evidence-based literature—and assess how they align with program goals and outcomes.

Curriculum Map (Educational Programs Only):
Attached Files: See Appendix 1

PG 1: Course Instruction

Define Outcome:

Provide course instruction that models evidence-based practices in the respective program areas.

Strategic Plan Connections

Core Principles: *Academic Excellence*, *Meaningful Innovation*, *Student Success*, *Value Creation*

Strategic Goals: SG1–PA A, B, D, E; SG2–PA B & C; SG4–PA B

Assessment Methods:

IDEA Evaluations

Course evaluations for each faculty member are implemented and maintained through the IDEA evaluation system and are used by faculty members to refine instructional practices and modify course content based on student feedback in support of program goals and student learning outcomes. The IDEA evaluation survey is nationally normed, standardized instrument. These evaluations allow for national comparisons against similar courses with student ratings of progress on relevant objectives and teacher and course effectiveness.

IDEA evaluations are used at higher education institutions all over the US. The evaluations have the support of 45 years of research and include questions to account for variables such as class size, student motivation, and other student and course characteristics. Scores, on a five-point scale, are used to gauge curriculum and faculty efficacy with respect to program goals and SLOs. The IDEA evaluation reports incorporate resources to support instruction development and improvement. The Director of Graduate Programs tracks and reviews all ELPhD faculty IDEA scores each semester. Reported scores are aggregated for each semester and compared against program-set quality benchmarks. Trend data (5-year) is also tracked and reviewed to ensure quality.

ELPhD Academic Achievement

Doctoral courses scores are based solely on exams, research projects, and application of disciplinary theory and skills, all of which require mastery of appropriate research content/theoretical knowledge and skills. Course grades solely reflect students' progress in research content knowledge and skill mastery. A grade of B (80–89 out of 100) or better demonstrates sufficient content mastery for each course, whether that content is methods, practical application of professional skills, theory, or any combination of the three. Failure is considered a C or below. Students are allowed one C (70–79 out of 100) during their time in the ELPhD program. A second C is grounds for academic dismissal from the program. Tables below demonstrate course alignment to SLOs & PGs; attainment of an acceptable grade or higher in these courses aligns with progress toward and attainment of SLOs & PGs. A particular programmatic focus is on the research sequences and the Program Planning & Proposal

Development course (EDU 7040) as these incorporate multiple skills acquired and developed across program curriculum. The Director of Graduate Programs tracks and reviews all ELPhD student final course grades each semester. Scores are aggregated for each year and cohort and compared against program-set quality benchmarks (thresholds). Trend data (5-year) is also tracked and reviewed to ensure program quality and identify any emerging needs. This data is paired with other specific direct assessment data to provide a robust picture of student academic progress and growth.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
IDEA Thresholds

1. Acceptability: 3.5 score
2. Expectation: 4.0 score
3. Exceptionality: ≥ 4.0 score

ELPhD Academic Achievement Thresholds

1. Acceptability: 3.25 GPA (mainly Bs; 80–89 out of 100)
2. Expectation: 3.5 GPA (As & Bs; 85–100)
3. Exceptionality: ≥ 3.9 GPA (almost all As or all As; 90–100)

Results and Analysis:
IDEA Evaluations

Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Course IDEA Evaluations 2024–2025

Faculty	*Overall Ratings*						*Summary Evaluation*			
	B. Progress on Relevant Objectives		*D. Excellent Teacher*		*E. Excellent Course*		*C. Average of D & E*		*A. Average of B & C*	
	Raw	*Adj*	*Raw*	*Adj*	*Raw*	*Adj*	*Raw*	*Adj*	*Raw*	*Adj*
Summer 2024	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
Fall 2024	4.4	4.4	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.6
Spring 2025	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5

Scores (5-point scale) indicate faculty and curricula are successful in achieving learning outcomes and objectives. Summer 2024 average score was 4.8, fall 2024 average was 4.7, and spring 2025 average was

4.5. The academic year average was 4.7. This exceeds the Threshold of Acceptability (3.5); ELPhD students report that faculty performing at the Threshold of Exceptionality (≥4).

ELPhD Academic Achievement

Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Academic Achievement (5–year)										
	EDU 7010	*EDU 7330*	*EDU 7340*	*EDU 7420*	*EDU 7430*	*EDU 7300*	*EDU 7040*	*Comps*	*Prospectus*	*Defense*
2020–2021	3.7	4.0	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0	5/6 passed on 1st attempt	6/6 passed on 1st attempt	6/6 passed on 1st attempt
2021–2022	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	8/8 passed on 1st attempt	–	–
2022–2023	4.0	3.7	–	3.8	3.5	3.8	4.0	–	–	–
2023–2024	3.7	4.0	–	3.4	3.2	3.0	4.0	–	–	–
2024–2025	–	–	–	3.5	4.0	–	–	–	–	–

ELPhD students are expected to demonstrate appropriate doctoral–level mastery of course content. Trend data indicate students are consistently performing at or above expectations in these foundational courses that cut across all concentrations. In the 2024–2025 cohort, students began the quantitative sequence; data for the final quant class will not be available util end of summer 2025. So far, there has been a slight increase when compared to the 2023–2024 cohort's quantitative sequence scores (EDU 7420, EDU 7430, EDU 7300). It is still slightly lower than in previous years. This will be monitored to see if this shift is an anomaly or if this is an area for modifications. The 5-year averages are: EDU 7010 – 3.9, EDU 7330 – 3.9, EDU 7340 – 3.7, EDU 7420 – 3.6, EDU 7430 – 3.5, EDU 7300 – 3.6, and EDU 7040 – 3.8. The slightly lower scores in EDU 7420, 7430, & EDU 7340 are typical.

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

IDEA Evaluations

Current IDEA data indicate students experience course instruction as high quality and using evidence- based practices. Scores over time have been fairly stable, demonstrating quality is maintained over time (2023–2024: 4.8; 2022–2023: 4.7; 2021–2022: 4.6; 2020–2021: 4.6). No current changes have been made based on the data at this time. The Director of Graduate Studies continues to monitor results and trend data to ensure quality and that learning objectives are attained.

ELPhD Academic Achievement

EDU 7420 begins the quantitative sequence and EDU 7430 applies theory and concepts to applied statistical analysis. EDU 7340 is the culminating qualitative sequence where students apply qualitative analysis methods to their data and write a publication-worthy manuscript; the complexity of this tends to result in slightly lower scores for EDU 7340. No current changes have been made based on the data at this time. The Director of Graduate Studies continues to monitor results and trend data to ensure quality and that learning objectives are attained.

PG 2: Scholarly Research

Define Outcome:
Initiate and maintain scholarly research activities that enhance program development and contribute to the design and delivery of services and supports to exceptional populations through research dissemination in the field.

Strategic Plan Connections
Core Principles: *Academic Excellence*, *Community Engagement*, *Meaningful Innovation*, *Student Success*, *Supportive Environment*, *Value Creation*

Strategic Goals: SG1–PA A, B, D, E; SG2–PA B & C; SG4–PA B

Assessment Methods:
ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report
The ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report captures scholarly activity for both students and faculty. Opportunities for collaboration, support, and skill development (e.g., calls for proposals for articles/chapters/conferences, workshops, seminars) in these areas are disseminated to all ELPhD students and faculty. Each faculty member submits a Faculty Activity report to Director of Graduate Programs addressing her or his efforts for the previous academic year. The report will address the following indicators: grant proposals, publications, presentations, other research endeavors, external consultants to public schools and agencies (including in- service and professional development). ELPhD students are asked annually to provide a current record of their scholarly activity (e.g., publication and presentations of original research or theoretical work, grant proposals, professional development activities).

The Director of Graduate Programs collects and reviews this data, then aggregates into the annual activity report. Scholarly activity 5-year trend is also tracked and reviewed to ensure application of appropriate scholarly and professional skills occur for students and that faculty maintain a strong scholarly presence. Trend data allows identification of change in scholarly productivity and professional skill development that may then be further examined as needed. Results are disseminated through faculty meetings, the College of Education Data and Assessment Forums, and institutional reports.

ELPhD Academic Achievement
Doctoral courses scores are based solely on exams, research projects, and application of disciplinary theory and skills, all of which require mastery of appropriate research content/theoretical knowledge and skills. Course grades solely reflect students' progress in research content knowledge and skill mastery. A grade of *B* (80–89 out of 100) or better demonstrates sufficient content mastery for each course, whether that content is methods,

practical application of professional skills, theory, or any combination of the three. Failure is considered a C or below. Students are allowed one *C* (70–79 out of 100) during their time in the ELPhD program. A second *C* is grounds for academic dismissal from the program. Tables below demonstrate course alignment to SLOs & PGs; attainment of an acceptable grade or higher in these courses aligns with progress toward and attainment of SLOs & PGs. A particular programmatic focus is on the research sequences and the Program Planning & Proposal Development course (EDU 7040) as these incorporate multiple skills acquired and developed across program curriculum. The Director of Graduate Programs tracks and reviews all ELPhD student final course grades each semester. Scores are aggregated for each year and cohort and compared against program-set quality benchmarks (thresholds). Trend data (5-year) is also tracked and reviewed to ensure program quality and identify any emerging needs. This data is paired with other specific direct assessment data to provide a robust picture of student academic progress and growth.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
ELPhD Scholarly Activity Thresholds

1. Acceptability: actively working on a presentation or publication manuscript; submitted at least one presentation proposal &/or publication; collaboration with ELPhD students and faculty
2. Expectation: submitted two or more presentation proposals &/or publication manuscripts; acceptance continued work on conference proposals and manuscripts for submission; collaboration with ELPhD students, faculty, and staff.
3. Exceptionality: submitted multiple presentation proposals &/or publications; at least one acceptance; cross-disciplinary and/or interdepartmental collaboration with students and faculty.

ELPhD Academic Achievement Thresholds

1. Acceptability: 3.25 GPA (mainly Bs; 80–89 out of 100)
2. Expectation: 3.5 GPA (As & Bs; 85–100)
3. Exceptionality: ≥ 3.9 GPA (almost all As or all As; 90–100)

Results and Analysis:
ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report
Note: data collection for this indicator was not complete prior to the early submission deadline; the previous year's data is discussed. Once data has been collected and analyzed, this section will be updated and will be included as part of trend analysis next academic year. Students enrolled in the ELPhD program during the 2023–2024 academic year submitted 13 manuscripts (article, book chapter, or other scholarly work), 9 of which have been published (see table below). Students consistently performed or above the Threshold of Expectation, with several attaining the Threshold of Exceptionality. The publication trend across the last five years has been steady.

ELPhD students belonged to 76 professional organizations and disseminated original work (either their own or part of an active research collaboration with faculty &/or peers) at 17 scholarly/professional conferences (4 regional presentations, 5 national presentations, 8 international presentations). Overall, students consistently performed or above the Threshold of Expectation, with several attaining the Threshold of Exceptionality.

Fewer students and faculty submitted their scholarly activity as part of the IE process this year, so numbers are slightly lower than typical. The Director of Graduate Programs will begin the data collection process earlier to give students and faculty additional time to submit their information. One point of difference in this year's activity is that no students reported being involved with a grant proposal outside of EDU 7040 and none took part in funded grants. The Director of Graduate Programs will encourage faculty to ask students to participate and/or share opportunities to do so. Students will also be encouraged to take part in grant opportunities. Data from the next two years will be compared to see if numbers move toward previous levels. If they do not, the Director of Graduate Programs will work with faculty and students to identify and implement a plan to increase scholarly activity.

5-Year Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Faculty Activity							
	In-Service Workshops	Grant Proposals Funded	National Presentations	International Presentations	Books	Book Chapters	Peer-Reviewed Publications
2019–2020	21	16	28	15	2	6	57
2020–2021	11	21	20	18	3	16	30
2021–2022	0	11	7	5	0	1	10
2022 – 2023	14	21	8	10	1	13	17
2023 – 2024	16	13	17	10	1	5	10

5-year Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Student Scholarly Activity								
	In-Service Workshops	Grant Proposals Crafted	Regional Presentations	National Presentations	International Presentations	Book Chapters	Peer-Reviewed Publications	Pending Peer-Reviewed Publications
2019–2020	1	14 *(7 funded)*	18	11	10	2	7	5
2020–2021	1	17 (7 *funded*)	15	5	10	0	7	7
2021–2022	2	12 (4 *funded*)	10	6	6	1	11	9
2022–2023	0	17 (7 *funded*)	22	0	12	1	9	9
2023–2024	0	4	4	5	8	2	7	4

Note: *publications and presentations in which multiple students took part are only counted once. For example, four students may have published a paper together; it is reported as one publication rather than four.*

ELPhD Academic Achievement

ELPhD students are expected to demonstrate appropriate doctoral–level mastery of course content. Trend data indicate students are consistently performing at or above expectations in these foundational courses that cut across all concentrations. In the 2024–2025 cohort, students began the quantitative sequence; data for the final quant class will not be available util end of summer 2025. So far, there has been a slight increase when compared to the 2023–2024 cohort's quantitative sequence scores (EDU 7420, EDU 7430, EDU 7300). It is still slightly lower than in previous years. This will be monitored to see if this shift is an anomaly or if this is an area for modifications. The 5-year averages are: EDU 7010 – 3.9, EDU 7330 – 3.9, EDU 7340 – 3.7, EDU 7420 – 3.6, EDU 7430 – 3.5, EDU 7300 – 3.6, and EDU 7040 – 3.8. The slightly lower scores in EDU 7420, 7430, & EDU 7340 are typical. EDU 7420 begins the quantitative sequence and EDU 7430 applies theory and concepts to applied statistical analysis. EDU 7340 is the culminating qualitative sequence where students apply qualitative analysis methods to their data and write a publication-worthy manuscript; the complexity of this tends to result in slightly lower scores for EDU 7340.

Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Academic Achievement (5–year)										
	EDU 7010	*EDU 7330*	*EDU 7340*	*EDU 7420*	*EDU 7430*	*EDU 7300*	*EDU 7040*	*Comps*	*Prospectus*	*Defense*
2020–2021	3.7	4.0	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0	5/6 passed on 1st attempt	6/6 passed on 1st attempt	6/6 passed on 1st attempt
2021–2022	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	8/8 passed on 1st attempt	–	–
2022–2023	4.0	3.7	–	3.8	3.5	3.8	4.0	–	–	–
2023–2024	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.2	3.0	3.8	4.0	–	–	–
2024–2025	3.0	–	–	3.5	4.0	–	–	–	–	–

Please note that for Academic Achievement tables, from fall 2020 forward, there are still cohort members actively working through the program. Data reflect the scores or total # of cohort members who have 1) completed a course and 2) attempted comps/prospectus/dissertation and of those how many passed. As such, the cohort averages and comps/prospectus/dissertation attempt data listed may change as the remaining cohort members move through the program.

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

No current changes have been made based on the data at this time. The Director of Graduate Studies continues to monitor results and trend data to ensure quality and that learning objectives are attained.

PG 3: Leadership Personnel

Define Outcome:
Develop leadership personnel in the areas of teaching and research for service in the fields of public education and social services such as public schools, state agencies, and higher education.

Strategic Plan Connections
Core Principles: *Academic Excellence*, *Community Engagement*, *Meaningful Innovation*, *Student Success*, *Supportive Environment*, *Value Creation*

Strategic Goals: SG1–PA A & D; SG2–PA B ; SG4–PA A, B, C, D

Assessment Methods:
ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report
The ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report captures scholarly activity for both students and faculty. Opportunities for collaboration, support, and skill development (e.g., calls for proposals for articles/chapters/conferences, workshops, seminars) in these areas are disseminated to all ELPhD students and faculty. Each faculty member submits a Faculty Activity report to Director of Graduate Programs addressing her or his efforts for the previous academic year. The report will address the following indicators: grant proposals, publications, presentations, other research endeavors, external consultants to public schools and agencies (including in- service and professional development). ELPhD students are asked annually to provide a current record of their scholarly activity (e.g., publication and presentations of original research or theoretical work, grant proposals, professional development activities).

The Director of Graduate Programs collects and reviews this data, then aggregates into the annual activity report. Scholarly activity 5-year trend is also tracked and reviewed to ensure application of appropriate scholarly and professional skills occur for students and that faculty maintain a strong scholarly presence. Trend data allows identification of change in scholarly productivity and professional skill development that may then be further examined as needed. Results are disseminated through faculty meetings, the College of Education Data and Assessment Forums, and institutional reports.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report
1. Acceptability: actively working on a presentation or publication manuscript; submitted at least one presentation proposal &/or publication; collaboration with ELPhD students and faculty.

2. Expectation: submitted two or more presentation proposals &/or publication manuscripts; acceptance continued work on conference proposals and manuscripts for submission; collaboration with ELPhD students, faculty, and staff.
3. Exceptionality: submitted multiple presentation proposals &/or publications; at least one acceptance; cross-disciplinary and/or interdepartmental collaboration with students and faculty.

Results and Analysis:

ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report

Note: data collection for this indicator was not complete prior to the early submission deadline; the previous year's data is discussed. Once data has been collected and analyzed, this section will be updated and will be included as part of trend analysis next academic year. Students enrolled in the ELPhD program during the 2023–2024 academic year submitted 13 manuscripts (article, book chapter, or other scholarly work), 9 of which have been published (see table below). Students consistently performed or above the Threshold of Expectation, with several attaining the Threshold of Exceptionality. The publication trend across the last five years has been steady.

ELPhD students belonged to 76 professional organizations and disseminated original work (either their own or part of an active research collaboration with faculty &/or peers) at 17 scholarly/professional conferences (4 regional presentations, 5 national presentations, 8 international presentations). Overall, students consistently performed or above the Threshold of Expectation, with several attaining the Threshold of Exceptionality.

5–Year Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Faculty Activity

	In-Service Workshops	Grant Proposals Funded	National Presentations	International Presentations	Books	Book Chapters	Peer-Reviewed Publications
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2022 – 2023	14	21	8	10	1	13	17
2023 – 2024	16	13	17	10	1	5	10

5–year Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Student Scholarly Activity								
	In-Service Workshops	Grant Proposals Crafted	Regional Presentations	National Presentations	International Presentations	Book Chapters	Peer-Reviewed Publications	Pending Peer-Reviewed Publications
2018–2019	0	5 *(1 funded)*	24	12	16	0	3	4
2019–2020	1	14 *(7 funded)*	18	11	10	2	7	5
2020–2021	1	17 *(7 funded)*	15	5	10	0	7	7
2021–2022	2	12 *(4 funded)*	10	6	6	1	11	9
2022–2023	0	17 *(7 funded)*	22	0	12	1	9	9
2023–2024	0	4	4	5	8	2	7	4

Note: *publications and presentations in which multiple faculty or students took part are only counted once. For example, four students may have published a paper together; it is reported as one publication rather than four.*

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

Fewer students and faculty submitted their scholarly activity as part of the IE process this year, so numbers are slightly lower than typical. The Director of Graduate Programs will begin the data collection process earlier to give students and faculty additional time to submit their information. One point of difference in this year's activity is that no students reported being involved with a grant proposal outside of EDU 7040 and none took part in funded grants. The Director of Graduate Programs will encourage faculty to ask students to participate and/or share opportunities to do so. Students will also be encouraged to take part in grant opportunities. Data from the next two years will be compared to see if numbers move toward previous levels. If they do not, the Director of Graduate Programs will work with faculty and students to identify and implement a plan to increase scholarly activity.

SLO 1: Content Mastery

Define Outcome:
Exceptional Learning Ph.D. (ELPhD) program students demonstrate progressively more complete and sophisticated content mastery appropriate for a doctoral student, building on and connecting theories, concepts, skills, and other subject matter through courses on their Program of Study. Performance on final portfolio from *At-Risk Populations: Research Service & Delivery* (EDU 7020), program planning and evaluation (PPE) model from *Program Planning & Proposal Development* (EDU 7040), culminating proposal in *Theoretical Foundations of Research* (EDU 7010), and comprehensive exams provide a picture of doctoral student growth.

Strategic Plan Connections
Core Principles: *Academic Excellence*, *Community Engagement*, *Meaningful Innovation*, *Student Success*, *Supportive Environment*, *Value Creation*

Strategic Goals: SG1–PA A, B, C, D, E; SG2–PA B & C; SG4–PA B & C

Assessment Methods:
EDU 7020 Final Exam
At–Risk Populations: Research, Service, & Delivery (EDU 7020) directly addresses vulnerable, underrepresented, and underserved populations that are served in education. It is a broad overview of the topic of at-risk populations, including historical and current significance, definitions, service delivery systems, policies and programs, research, and recommended practices. In addition to exploring the number of groups that fall under at-risk classification, students learn the environmental, biological, and physical causative factors associated with at-risk populations; analyze the research and empirical bases for programs and services for various at-risk populations; and examine the fundamental elements of recommended practices. At the end of the course, students complete a final exam that allows them to synthesize and discuss all the knowledge they have learned and gathered throughout the course. Students are asked to pull information and supporting knowledge from their course work which includes article reviews, class notes, reading notes, lecture documents for a focused presentation, and an analysis of a service delivery program. These cumulative responses on the final exam represent the breadth and depth of the student's understanding of and engagement with the course content.

EDU 7040 PPE Model
Program Planning & Proposal Development (EDU 7040) is a core ELPhD course. Goals include 1) identify, study, understand, evaluate, and synthesize the most frequently applied program planning and evaluation (PPE) models in education and human services; 2) to understand theoretical perspectives and the professional literature related to PPE in education; 3) to gain an understanding of and appreciation of PPE's place as an important part of the repertoire of a professional holding a Ph.D. in education; 4) to apply knowledge of best and effective PPE practices to proposal development; and 5) to develop a PPE model and apply the model to engage in program development.

The creation of a novel PPE model requires students to interpret and analyze relevant disciplinary information, create and refine model elements, and evaluate the model's individual parts and as a functioning whole. These skills are a regular part of professional expectations across disciplines, including but limited to curriculum development, course design, grant development and implementation, outreach initiatives, industry projects, and institutional processes and reporting.

EDU 7040 PPE Model Assessments –rubric categories (5–point scale; 30 points total)

1. Use of class discussion and class participants
2. Use of variety of sources (minimum 6) and existing models
3. Selection (development) of defensible model
4. Articulation between/among components
5. Complete/thorough model and paper
6. Quality — level of effort/thought

EDU 7010 Research Proposal

The research course sequence is an integral part of the ELPhD program. *Theoretical Foundations of Research* (EDU 7010) addresses foundational theoretical concepts, qualitative research methodology, and development of a qualitative research proposal. Students read extensively, including scholarly writings related to epistemologies and theories that influence and inform social science research and exemplary studies. Students' work undergoes faculty and peer review in preparation of an original research proposal.

The proposal guides data collection (EDU 7330) and analysis, interpretation, and presentation (EDU 7340). This succession allows students to develop the necessary research skills and emerge from the courses with original work that addresses gaps in the literature, investigates theory, uses sound and appropriate methodologies, and contributes knowledge to the discipline.

The research proposal is comprised of the chapters. Chapter 1 provides appropriate background and context to situate the study, research statement, study problem, and study significance. Chapter 2 a comprehensive review of relevant literature. Chapter 3 outlines the methods. This includes the proposed study's theoretical/conceptual framework (epistemology and existing theories that inform the study), theoretical perspective, approach, setting, participants, data sources, data collection procedures, data analysis, and trustworthiness. Students receive feedback on each chapter, which must be synthesized in the final research proposal. Successful completion of the research proposal demonstrates appropriate doctoral-level content mastery for research fundamentals and conceptual understanding.

EDU 7010 assessments for the research proposal include rubrics for each chapter and a checklist for the final revised proposal. In addition to each rubric, students receive extensive written feedback from the professor, using track changes and comments in Microsoft Word, so

that areas for improvement are clearly noted and explained. The aim of such extensive feedback is to ensure student understanding of the methodology and methods while also preparing students to become publishers of research in scholarly journals. All rubrics have a 3–point scale. The Chapter 2 rubric is divided into six criteria. The Chapter 1 rubric has eight criteria. The Chapter 3 rubric has seven criteria. After the first three chapters, with feedback, are evaluated, students revise and resubmit the chapters as a final proposal, which is evaluated using a checklist of 9 criteria.

Comprehensive Exam

Comprehensive examinations are administered near the end of each semester as needed, typically in conjunction with Research Seminar in Education (EDU 7920), after all other coursework has been completed. Rigorous comprehensive examinations provide an opportunity for ELPhD students to provide evidence of proficiency in and mastery of expected learning outcomes. Students illustrate mastery of theory, research proficiency, professional skills, and concentration-specific content through their comprehensive exam responses. Students must pass their comprehensive exams to move to Ph.D. candidacy and continue in the program.

At the beginning of Research Seminar in Education (EDU 7920), the student and their Chair will select a series of four days (or more if there are more than 4 committee members) in a two-week period during which the comprehensive examination will take place. They may be spaced out according to student and committee needs. Each committee member submits an exam question or set of questions to the Chair. The student typically has 24 hours in which to craft a response to each member's question/set of questions, though individual members may elect to set a shorter or longer response time limit. Committee members may elect to allow the use of resources or to prohibit them. Responses are written to one committee member's question at a time. A student 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.

Once complete, the student submits the response to the Chair. If the question being answer was the Chair's, the Chair will then grade the response. If the question was submitted by a committee member, the Chair shares the response with the appropriate member. Responses on the qualifying exam are scored by their program chair and members of their graduate committee.

Scores (pass, low pass, fail) are based on pre-determined performance criteria devised by their committee and informed by evidence-based practices, discipline content knowledge, and professional skills introduced and reinforced in previous coursework taken by the student. Upon passing the comprehensive exam, students move into Ph.D. candidacy.

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.
Student pass rates are monitored every semester. Any signs of declining competence and response quality are reviewed as a means of maintaining and/or improving curricular efficacy as well as ensuring student success. Trend data (5-year) is also tracked and reviewed to ensure program quality and identify any emerging needs. This data is paired with other SLO 1 assessment data to provide a robust picture of student academic progress and growth. Comp exam passing information is captured in the ELPhD Academic Achievement table.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
EDU 7020 Final Exam Thresholds

1. Acceptability: 70-79% overall score
2. Expectation: 80-89% overall score
3. Exceptionality: 90-100% overall score

EDU 7040 PPE Model Thresholds

1. Acceptability: 22.5 points
2. Expectation: 24 to 26.9 points
3. Exceptionality: ≥ 27 points

EDU 7010 Research Proposal Thresholds

1. Acceptability: minimum of 2 points per section (80%) across all chapters, 20% or fewer sections earn 0s or 1s.
2. Expectation: 50% of sections earn 3 points across all chapters; no sections earn 0s.
3. Exceptionality: 85% of sections earn 3 points across all chapters; no sections earn 0s or 1s.

Comp Exam Thresholds

1. Acceptability: students pass the comprehensive exam in no more than two attempts.
2. Expectation: students pass the comprehensive exam on the first attempt with no more than one Low Pass score.
3. Exceptionality: students pass the comprehensive exam on the first attempt and receive Pass for all sections.

Results and Analysis:
EDU 7020 Final Exam
The final exam is scored on a 10–point scale with a rubric. The rubric initially contained 5 categories (*Course Connections*, *Accuracy*, *Quality*, *Opinion & Reflection*, and *Grammar & Mechanics*) worth up to 2 points each. Notably, the previously separate categories of Quality and Grammar & Mechanics were merged into Writing Quality to better assess clarity,

organization, and mechanics in one rubric category. Additionally, a new category, Critical Thinking & Synthesis, was introduced to evaluate students' ability to apply course content comprehensively.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the course saw an increase in enrollment, with 12 students participating. Despite this growth, students performed exceptionally well, demonstrating strong comprehension and application of course material. Every student scored 95 or above, placing them within the exceptional threshold. Full points were achieved in the newly introduced category of Critical Thinking & Synthesis, as well as in Accuracy and Opinion & Reflection. The average scores for Course Connections and Writing Quality were 1.96 and 1.83, respectively, suggesting that students effectively connected course content to their career fields while showing room for improvement in writing clarity and organization.

In contrast, during the 2023–2024 academic year, only four students were enrolled. Their performance was also strong, with every student scoring 90 or above. Full points were earned in Course Connections, Accuracy, and Opinion & Reflection, but the separate categories of Quality and Grammar & Mechanics yielded average scores of 1.88 and 1.75, respectively. The adjustments to the rubric in the following year provided a more comprehensive evaluation framework, contributing to the continued success of the students.

EDU 7040 PPE Model

Trend data indicate that students typically perform at the Threshold of Exceptionality. After observing the data and the qualitative comments shared by the instructor with students to justify point deductions (based on rubric criteria), it is evident that the weakest area is C4: Articulation Between/Among Components. Since many students take this course within the first or second year in the doctoral program, they are still honing their writing skills and developing their skills at synthesizing information in coherent ways. The most typical written comment provided on C4 is related to some component of their PPE Model lacking clear connections to other related components (perhaps visually linked in the model representation but not connected (or insufficiently connected) within the accompanying narrative).

EDU 7040 PPE Model Average Scores				
	Year *(number of students)*			
Rubric Category *(Points Possible)*	2022 (n=6)	2023 (n=9)	2024 (n=8)	**Category Average**
C1 (5)	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
C2 (5)	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8
C3 (5)	4.5	4.9	5.0	4.8
C4 (5)	4.2	4.6	4.4	4.4
C5 (5)	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
C6 (5)	4.2	4.8	4.7	4.6
Total Score *(Sum of Averages)*	27.4	28.8	28.5	

The data indicate providing exemplars of PPE Model papers from previous cohorts might be helpful. Exemplars of visual model representations have always been shared (show-and-tell, but not provided to students as artifacts), but narratives have not. The instructor will create opportunities to discuss the expectations for successful articulation within the model by showcasing narrative selections from previous papers (with student permission) that exemplify excellent (level 5) articulation between/among the model components.

EDU 7010 Research Proposal

For Chapter 2, students' overall scores were Acceptable and aligned with the previous year's scores. Students generally scored adequate (2) or above and all scored exemplary (3) on one criterion. One student showed lower mastery with scores of developing (1) on 4 criteria.

Chapter 2 is the first chapter submitted, and some students are new to the process, especially to applying what they have learned about correct APA usage and style. Students may benefit from more examples and a demonstration on how to explain a study's methodology and methods (Literature Methodologies & Methods; Summary & Argument). Students also may benefit from a review of APA style expectations.

For Chapter 1, students overall scores were Excellent. Students scored adequate (2) or above on all criteria other than 1 student on 2 criteria. All students scored exemplary (3) on at least two criteria. Students improved on the Research Statement section compared to last year. Mechanics & Conventions remains a place students struggle as they are learning the elements of academic writing expectations for a research proposal, including APA.

Students scored slightly lower on the research purpose criterion when compared with last year. While a video walks students through creating and describing the study purpose, students may benefit from additional examples. It is important that students are viewing the video. The instructor may look at ways to monitor video usage. As students begin to revise chapters and apply detailed feedback, scores on Mechanics & Conventions should improve.

For Chapter 3, more students' scores were exceptional (3), with only two scoring less than adequate (2) in three categories. These scores were generally on par with last year, though 2 students continued to demonstrate need for improvement in Mechanics & Conventions and 1 in Setting & Participants, & Data Collection Procedures.

Comp Exam

Students are well prepared for their comprehensive examinations. All students in the last academic year passed their comprehensive examination on the first attempt and entered Ph.D. candidacy successfully. None received a low pass. Students are performing at or above the Threshold of Expectation. Historical comprehensive examination data show successful responses on the first attempt for students taking exams in the past 5 years, while only 3 have required a retake since 2009. In response to feedback about the comp exam experience, during the last year, comp content has transitioned to questions that relate course content to the proposed dissertation work. Students have expressed that this change is very helpful as they refine their dissertation prospectus. The Director of Graduate Programs will continue to monitor this initiative, seeking feedback from faculty and students and reviewing comp exam pass rates.

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

EDU 7020 Final Exam

While student performance remains at an exceptional level, *Writing Quality* continues to stand out as an area for targeted improvement. To support students in effectively articulating their knowledge in scholarly writing, efforts will be made to enhance feedback mechanisms, integrate targeted writing support resources, and track progress throughout the course. By reinforcing academic writing standards through detailed and constructive feedback, students will be better equipped to express their ideas clearly and effectively. Looking ahead, the goal is to sustain high performance while incrementally increasing the average *Writing Quality* score, ensuring that students continue to develop strong communication skills in alignment with the expectations of the field of education.

EDU 7010 Research Proposal

Students may benefit from a review of methodology since the material for Worldview, Theoretical Perspective, & Approach is covered early in the semester. Trustworthiness (design elements, ethical considerations, and subjectivities) scores demonstrated from the previous year. Students who continue to struggle with Mechanics & Conventions may be waiting until all chapters are submitted to begin applying feedback. Students continue to demonstrate a need for additional resources to master clear, concise writing and APA style.

In the final assessment all students demonstrated significant improvement, and the final assessment scores ranged between 80% to 100% on all rubric components. Note: due to technical issues with iLearn, individual 2025 rubric data for the final revised research proposal were not available.

SLO 2: Research Proficiencies

Define Outcome:
ELPhD program graduates develop, integrate, and apply foundational quantitative and qualitative research skills through successful 1) completion of course sequence cumulative final projects, 2) creation of an approved dissertation prospectus, and 3) generation of original research culminating in a dissertation.

Strategic Plan Connections
Core Principles: *Academic Excellence*, *Community Engagement*, *Meaningful Innovation*, *Student Success*, *Supportive Environment*, *Value Creation*

Strategic Goals: SG1–PA A, B, C, D, E; SG2–PA B & C; SG4–PA A, B, C, D

Assessment Methods:
EDU 7300 Final Exam
The EDU 7300 final exam is the culminating assessment for the 3-course quantitative research sequence. Students must have appropriate comprehension and proficiency at the doctoral level to pass the exam. The exam has a total of 85 questions pertaining to the nature of research (*n* = 17), measurement and instrumentation (*n* = 2), sampling (*n* = 5), reliability and validity (*n* = 19), the literature review (*n* = 5), proposal writing (*n* = 2), design characteristics (*n* = 12), choosing an appropriate design and methodology (*n* = 15), statistical choice (*n* = 5), and results interpretation (*n*= 5).

EDU 7300 Exam Questions

Week(s) covered	Content	Multiple choice	Matching	Yes/no	*TOTAL*
1	Nature of research	5	11	1	*17*
6	Measurement/instrumentation	2	–	–	*2*
4	Sampling	1	4	–	*5*
4, 5, and 6	Validity/reliability	1	16	–	*17*
3	Literature review	5	–	–	*5*
1, 3, 5, & 6	Proposal writing	2	–	–	*2*
2-5	Design characteristics	9	3	–	*12*
2-5, 8	Choose design	5	10	–	*15*
8	Statistical choice	5	–	–	*5*
8 & 9	Results interpretation	2	3	–	*5*
Total		*37*	*47*	*1*	*85*
85 QUESTIONS TOTAL					

EDU 7340 Culminating Paper

Data Analysis & Representation in Qualitative Inquiry (EDU 7340) is the culminating qualitative research course. This addresses both theoretical and practical dimensions of conducting qualitative research. Data analysis concerns are embedded within the larger processes of qualitative research methods and must be considered in holistic ways. For example, data analysis decisions are inherently tied to particular epistemological and ontological stances of the researcher as well as the research focus. This course also functions as an advanced seminar to develop data analysis and representation skills using hands-on application of data analysis and representation methods. We will also enter into the on-going discourse among qualitative researchers

concerning how to analyze and represent qualitative data. The transformation of "data" into "writing" makes a difference theoretically, practically, and ethically. As such issues around how we inscribe lives in our texts, how we contribute to hegemonies by maintaining marginality/dominance in our texts, and how our academic practices affect how and what we write are examined. Assignments are designed to facilitate the interaction between students' epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, data, analysis, write-up/representation, and the literature.

As professionals in their disciplines, students will be expected to produce manuscripts that are publication- ready. The final project in EDU 7340 is a manuscript for submission to a reputable peer-reviewed journal. Students reimagine their chapters 1–3 from EDU 7010, transforming that into the first portion of the draft: introduction, context, theory, and research design and methods. After practicing multiple methods of data analysis, students select the most appropriate method and analyze their study data. Then, the data analysis methods, findings, and implications are written as the final piece of the completed manuscript. This manuscript must meet expectations for publication in a peer-reviewed journal including, but not limited to, clarity, relevant context, relation to literature, methodological detail, rich description, substantiated findings, and well-founded discussion and implications.

Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus is presented each semester as needed, in conjunction with or immediately following Research Seminar in Education, EDU 7920 (successful written and oral prospectus defense to graduate advisory committee). Note: Ph.D. candidate is used in place of student as the individual will typically have passed comprehensive exams before presenting the prospectus.

Ph.D. candidates prepare their dissertation prospectus in Research Seminar in Education (EDU 7920). In this course, the Ph.D. candidate crafts the research design and write the prospectus for the proposed study. After receiving iterative feedback on the first three chapters of their research proposal from the course instructor and making revisions, the Ph.D. candidate presents a practice prospectus defense. The course instructor and candidate's Chair attend, though all committee members are welcome. Input from the course instructor and Chair is given at the end of the practice defense. The Ph.D. candidate then incorporates the feedback

into the prospectus presentation and the dissertation prospectus.

After the practice prospectus defense, the Ph.D. candidate is directed to either schedule a formal prospectus defense with his/her dissertation advisory committee (after successful defense) or is directed to continue working on the prospectus and presentation with guidance from the Chair and committee members.

Once a formal prospectus presentation and defense date has been selected, the Ph.D. candidate is required to submit the dissertation prospectus to committee members at least two weeks prior to the scheduled prospectus date, though earlier is encouraged when possible.

At formal prospectus defense, the Ph.D. candidate presents the prospectus using PowerPoint, Prezi, or Keynote (other mediums may be acceptable) and provides handouts for the committee. The presentation is 25–35 minutes long. The Ph.D. candidate covers study background and context, problem description, study purpose, significance, theoretical lens, connections to relevant literature, and a detailed description of the proposed research methodology. Other pertinent information may also be included. After the presentation has concluded, committee members pose questions that the candidate must answer. The Ph.D. candidate is then dismissed from the room, while the committee members deliberate on whether or not the candidate should pursue the proposed research. Once a decision has been reached, the Ph.D. candidate is brought back and the decision is shared. The committee also provides additional feedback on the prospectus. If the prospectus defense was not successful, the committee will ask the Ph.D. candidate to revise the proposal and convene at a later date to present the revised prospectus. Ph.D. candidates who successfully defend the dissertation prospectus are given permission to proceed with their dissertation work.

Dissertation prospectus defense pass rates are monitored each semester. Data are looked at in semester, annual, and cohort levels, as well as 5-year trend data. This data is also reviewed in conjunction with other assessment data (e.g., research sequence, comprehensive exam, academic achievement, scholarly activity) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the student progress and program quality.

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense occurs each semester as needed. Graduates must successfully complete a written and oral dissertation defense, scored by their dissertation advisory committee (minimum four qualified members).

Building upon the prospectus work, the Ph.D. candidate works closely with committee members throughout the dissertation process in preparation for the dissertation defense. A Ph.D. candidate regularly submits dissertation chapters to each committee member for feedback (schedule determined by Ph.D. candidate and committee Chair). The Ph.D. candidate incorporates feedback from all members and continually seeks additional guidance on revisions and refinement. The full dissertation must be submitted to the dissertation advisory committee and Director of Graduate Programs at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date,

though earlier is encouraged when possible.

During the dissertation defense, the Ph.D. candidate has 20–40 minutes to review the information covered in the prospectus proposal (e.g., context, problem addressed, significance, methodology) and present the original dissertation research findings, conclusions, and implications (defense time is determined by the Chair). The defense includes written materials and a formal presentation. After the presentation has concluded, the committee and any others present may pose questions to the Ph.D. candidate. Committee questions may focus on research methods, findings, connections to the literature, implications, and areas that have been the subject of substantial revision during the dissertation process. Once all questions have been answered satisfactorily, the Ph.D. candidate and any guests are dismissed from the room. The dissertation advisory committee then deliberates about whether the Ph.D. candidate's defense was successful. Once a decision has been reached, the Ph.D. candidate is brought back and the decision is shared.

If the dissertation defense was successful, the committee signs the Dissertation Defense form and submits it to the Director of Graduate Programs and Graduate Studies. If the defense was not successful, the committee also provides additional feedback and outlines revisions that need to be made before scheduling a second defense.

The dissertation defense serves as the final assessment of a Ph.D. candidate's content mastery, course competency, and professional skill development as well as their development as scholars and leaders.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
EDU 7300 Final Exam Thresholds

1. Acceptability: 65/85 points earned
2. Expectation: 70/85 points earned
3. Exceptionality: 75/85 points earned

EDU 7340 Culminating Paper thresholds

1. Acceptability: 22.5 points
2. Expectation: 24 to 26.9 points
3. Exceptionality: ≥ 27 points

Dissertation Prospectus thresholds

1. Acceptability: students pass the comprehensive exam in no more than two attempts.
2. Expectation: students pass the comprehensive exam on the first attempt with no more than one Low Pass score.
3. Exceptionality: students pass the comprehensive exam on the first attempt and receive Pass for all sections.

Dissertation Defense thresholds

1. Acceptability: Ph.D. candidate passes the dissertation defense in no more than two attempts; candidate answers to defense questions, but answers may lack some of the desired complexity/depth; dissertation and defense presentation address all the required elements (study context, problem description, study purpose, significance, theoretical lens, connections to relevant literature, research methodology, findings, conclusions, and implications), but may need additional information; major revisions may be required before submitting to Graduate Studies and ProQuest.
2. Expectation: Ph.D. candidate passes the dissertation defense on the first attempt; Ph.D. candidate adequately answers defense questions; dissertation is thorough and well-crafted, addressing all required elements in sufficient detail; minor revisions required before submitting to Graduate Studies and ProQuest.
3. Exceptionality: Ph.D. candidate passes the dissertation defense on the first attempt; candidate's answers to defense questions are exceptional and demonstrate deep understanding of and connection to the work; defense presentation is engaging, informative, and shows Ph.D. candidate's expertise as a scholar and appropriate professional skills; dissertation displays thoughtful organization, relevant study purpose, clear significance, excellent methodology, clear findings, and insightful, nuanced conclusions and implications; minimal, if any, revisions are required before submitting to Graduate Studies and ProQuest.

Results and Analysis:

EDU 7300 Final Exam Results and Use for Improvement

The average (n = 8) percentage of correct items was 86.66% (SD = 8.43%), or approximately 74/85 questions correct, representing an adjusted score of 94. [Note: No data were collected in 2023 as only 1 student completed the course; early summer 2024 data were used for the previous year's report in its place.]

Section I: The Nature of Research (17 points total)	**Section II:** Measurement & Instrumentation (2 points total)	**Section III:** Sampling (5 points total)	**Section IV:** Validity and Reliability (19 points total)	**Section V:** Literature Review (5 points total)	**Section VI:** Proposal Writing (2 points total)	**Section VII:** Design Characteristics (12 points total)	**Section VIII:** Choosing Appropriate Design and Methodology (15 points total)	**Section IX:** Statistical Choice (5 points total)	**Section X:** Results Interpretation (5 points total)	**Total** (85 possible)
84.5%	95.5%	92.4%	88.5%	89.1%	90.9%	77.6%	77.6%	94.5%	85.5%	86.7%

Results indicate that students successfully mastered content knowledge in the course, as indicated by foundational questions. Students succeeded in applying content knowledge to hypothetical prompts, as indicated by questions pertaining to choosing an appropriate design and methodology. Students answered fewer questions correctly in Sections 7 and 8. For future offerings, the instructor plans to give short quizzes weekly to assess student mastery in each section to target instruction towards weaker areas. This would also allow for more practice in successfully choosing an appropriate design and/or analysis method based on a given prompt.

EDU 7340 Culminating Paper

After observing the data and the qualitative comments shared by the instructor with students to justify point deductions (based on rubric criteria), it is evident that the weakest areas are C4 (Research Design & Methods Statement), C5 (Findings), and C6 (Discussion and Conclusions).

It is not surprising that these three areas remained students' weakest, although there was a slight improvement in C6 for the 2025 cohort. As novice researchers and writers, these are the most difficult sections to articulate. The point deductions for C4 this year were related to students' lack of detail to sufficiently follow their analytic methods. This was surprising since the level of detail in the two mini-projects leading to this culminating project were very good. The word count restriction for the final project likely led many students to shorten their analysis details to allow for more space for their findings. Per last year's report, students were encouraged to work in peer writing teams to receive feedback from their peer prior to submission to the instructor. Only two students reported that they took this advice. Most of the data is consistent from year to year indicating that student learning is equitable across cohorts.

EDU 7340 Average Scores				
	Year (number of students)			
Rubric Category *(points possible)*	2022 (*n*=12)	2023 (*n*=9)	2024 (*n*=8)	2025 (*n*=7)
C1 (2)	1.8		1.7	1.9
C2 (2)	2		2	1.7
C3 (5)	4.9		4.6	4.2
C4 (6)	5.3		5.5	4.9
C5 (8)	6.6		6.4	6.6
C6 (4)	3.2		3.4	3.8
C7 (3)	3		2.9	3.0
Total Score (30) *(Sum of Averages)*	**26.8**		**26.5**	**26.1**

Dissertation Prospectus

All Ph.D. candidates in the last academic year passed their dissertation prospectus defense on the first attempt. All students in 2024–2025 performed at or above the Threshold of Expectation. Dissertation prospectus data show successful completion of presentations on the first attempt for all ELPhD students. No changes to this assessment or data collection have been proposed.

Dissertation Defense

All Ph.D. candidates in the 2024–2025 academic year successfully passed their dissertation defense on the first attempt, performing at or above the Threshold of Expectation. Historical dissertation defense data show successful completion of defense on the first attempt for all ELPhD candidates, indicating candidates are well prepared and have appropriate mastery of disciplinary content and research proficiencies. Students must have mastered and integrated

the content and skills acquired throughout the ELPhD program in order to pass the dissertation defense.

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

EDU 7300 Final Exam

This exam was created and reviewed by content experts and was modified in spring 2024 to mitigate any instrument decay, as well as to transform some questions which did not pertain specifically to course content. While reliability and validity were assessed on this exam and deemed acceptable and high, reliability assessments, including alternate forms (online vs. in-person) and overall reliability, in addition to assessing content validity through correlating on exam scores with proposal scores, will be rerun in summer 2025 or spring 2026.

Trend data will be collected going forward and regularly reviewed.

Dissertation Prospectus

Data are looked at semester, annual, and cohort levels, as well as 5-year trend and "whole program history" trend data. Historical data show that students are well-prepared and generally pass on the first attempt. This data is also reviewed in conjunction with other assessment data (e.g., research sequence, comprehensive exam, academic achievement, scholarly activity) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the student progress and program quality.

Dissertation Defense

No changes to this assessment or data collection have been proposed at this time; creating a rubric for the dissertation defense has been discussed. ELPhD faculty and the Director of Graduate Programs will continue discussions; if the decision to use a formalized rubric is reached, they will move forward with rubric creation/adoption.

SLO 3: Professional Preparedness

Define Outcome:
ELPhD students masterfully apply program content and skills commensurate with professional expectations of Ph.D. graduates. ELPhD students contribute to scholarly knowledge through peer- reviewed presentations, publications, and other appropriate means of dissemination research. They also are trained in grant preparation through a comprehensive grant proposal project in *Program Planning & Proposal Development* (EDU 7040).

Strategic Plan Connections
Core Principles: Academic Excellence, Community Engagement, Meaningful Innovation, Student Success, Supportive Environment, Value Creation

Strategic Goals: SG1–PA A, B, C, D, E; SG2–PA B & C; SG4–PA A, B, C, D

Assessment Methods:
ELPhD Student Scholarly Activity
The ELPhD Scholarly Activity Report captures scholarly activity for both students and faculty. Opportunities for collaboration, support, and skill development (e.g., calls for proposals for articles/chapters/conferences, workshops, seminars) in these areas are disseminated to all ELPhD students and faculty. Each faculty member submits a Faculty Activity report to Director of Graduate Programs addressing her or his efforts for the previous academic year. The report will address the following indicators: grant proposals, publications, presentations, other research endeavors, external consultants to public schools and agencies (including in- service and professional development). ELPhD students are asked annually to provide a current record of their scholarly activity (e.g., publication and presentations of original research or theoretical work, grant proposals, professional development activities).

The Director of Graduate Programs collects and reviews this data, then aggregates into the annual activity report. Scholarly activity 5-year trend is also tracked and reviewed to ensure application of appropriate scholarly and professional skills occur for students and that faculty maintain a strong scholarly presence. Trend data allows identification of change in scholarly productivity and professional skill development that may then be further examined as needed. Results are disseminated through faculty meetings, the College of Education Data and Assessment Forums, and institutional reports.

Grant Proposals
Grant proposals are crafted each summer semester in Program Planning and Proposal Development (EDU 7040). EDU 7040 incorporates theoretical program planning perspectives; in-depth discussion of various program planning models; and effective program development, planning, and evaluation practices for a variety of educational settings. This class includes a focus on adult learners as exceptional learners, in and out of traditional educational environments, and their particular needs. These theories, skills, and practices are not

typically addressed in undergraduate or graduate programs and are especially important in preparing professionals who can lead sustainable change for exceptional learners. This course requires students to prepare products that may have real-world impact.

One of two main project students undertaken in EDU 7040 is creation of a grant proposal for a state- or federally-funded program. After completing the proposal, students must defend their proposal in mock "board meeting" discussions, which prepares them for gaining stakeholder buy-in, identifying unintended outcomes, and assessing needs in professional environments. This also provides students a chance to further improve their proposal via incorporation of the feedback given. The course instructor, who has authored or co-authored multiple successful grants over the last decade, evaluates the grant proposals and provides further input. Students who choose to submit proposals to the funding agency are encouraged to do so and directed to the Office of Research for instruction in grant submission policy and procedures.

Completion of culminating grant project that demonstrates analytic skill and proficient synthesis of required research, evaluation, and writing skills required to craft high-quality proposals. Number of proposals crafted and funded will continue to be used alongside the EDU 7040 proposal project to provide a clear picture of students' growth. Number of grants produced and funded is tracked year-by-year, with a 5-year trend as well (ELPhD Scholarly Activity Table). Informal feedback about the grant proposal process and collaboration (development of professional skills) is also collected.

Beginning summer 2025, rubric–level data will be collected for this assessment.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):
ELPhD Student Scholarly Activity

1. Acceptability: actively working on a presentation or publication manuscript; submitted at least one presentation proposal &/or publication; collaboration with ELPhD students and faculty.
2. Expectation: submitted two or more presentation proposals &/or publication manuscripts; acceptance continued work on conference proposals and manuscripts for submission; collaboration with ELPhD students, faculty, and staff.
3. Exceptionality: submitted multiple presentation proposals &/or publications; at least one acceptance; cross-disciplinary and/or interdepartmental collaboration with students and faculty.

Grant Proposals

1. Acceptability: successful completion of a grant proposal as part of Program Planning and Proposal Development (EDU 7040) with a score of ≥80% or better.
2. Expectation: successful completion of a grant proposal as part of Program Planning and Proposal Development (EDU 7040) with a score of ≥85% or better.
3. Exceptionality: successful completion of a grant proposal as part of Program Planning and Proposal Development (EDU 7040) with a score of ≥85% or better; grant proposal submission; collaboration with other Tech faculty and students on additional grant

proposals.

Results and Analysis:

ELPhD Student Scholarly Activity

Note: data collection for this indicator was not complete prior to the early submission deadline; the previous year's data is discussed. Once data has been collected and analyzed, this section will be updated and will be included as part of trend analysis next academic year. Students enrolled in the ELPhD program during the 2023–2024 academic year submitted 13 manuscripts (article, book chapter, or other scholarly work), 9 of which have been published (see table below). Students consistently performed or above the Threshold of Expectation, with several attaining the Threshold of Exceptionality. The publication trend across the last five years has been steady.

ELPhD students belonged to 76 professional organizations and disseminated original work (either their own or part of an active research collaboration with faculty &/or peers) at 17 scholarly/professional conferences (4 regional presentations, 5 national presentations, 8 international presentations). Overall, students consistently performed or above the Threshold of Expectation, with several attaining the Threshold of Exceptionality.

Fewer students and faculty submitted their scholarly activity as part of the IE process this year, so numbers are slightly lower than typical. The Director of Graduate Programs will begin the data collection process earlier to give students and faculty additional time to submit their information. One point of difference in this year's activity is that no students reported being involved with a grant proposal outside of EDU 7040 and none took part in funded grants. The Director of Graduate Programs will encourage faculty to ask students to participate and/or share opportunities to do so. Students will also be encouraged to take part in grant opportunities. Data from the next two years will be compared to see if numbers move toward previous levels. If they do not, the Director of Graduate Programs will work with faculty and students to identify and implement a plan to increase scholarly activity.

5–year Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Student Scholarly Activity								
	In-Service Workshops	Grant Proposals Crafted	Regional Presentations	National Presentations	International Presentations	Book Chapters	Peer-Reviewed Publications	Pending Peer-Reviewed Publications
2018–2019	0	5 *(1 funded)*	24	12	16	0	3	4
2019–2020	1	14 *(7 funded)*	18	11	10	2	7	5
2020–2021	1	17 (7 funded)	15	5	10	0	7	7
2021–2022	2	12 (4 funded)	10	6	6	1	11	9
2022–2023	0	17 (7 funded)	22	0	12	1	9	9
2023–2024	0	4	4	5	8	2	7	4

Grant Proposals

Grant proposals for an externally funding source are a required component of EDU 7040. Students are also encouraged to take part in grants with faculty and community members. In summer 2024, 4 grant were crafted. Students consistently performed at the *Threshold of Expectation*. Rubric data will be gathered beginning summer 2025 to increase the robustness of the data.

Summative Evaluation:
Overall, the ELPhD program performs at or above expectation. Scholarly activity reporting slowed; The Director of Graduate Programs will begin the data collection process earlier to give students and faculty additional time to submit their information. The Director of Graduate Programs will encourage faculty to ask students to participate and/or share opportunities to do so. Students will also be encouraged to take part in grant opportunities. Data from the next two years will be compared to see if numbers move toward previous levels. If they do not, the Director of Graduate Programs will work with faculty and students to identify and implement a plan to increase scholarly activity.

In EDU 7020, efforts will be made to enhance feedback mechanisms, integrate targeted writing support resources, and track progress throughout the course. By reinforcing academic writing standards through detailed and constructive feedback, students will be better equipped to express their ideas clearly and effectively.

In EDU 7040, the instructor will create opportunities to discuss the expectations for successful articulation within the model by showcasing narrative selections from previous papers (with student permission) that exemplify excellent (level 5) articulation between/among the model components. Grant rubric-level data will also begin to be collected.
In EDU 7300, reliability assessments and assessing content validity will be rerun in summer 2025 or spring 2026.

Assessment Plan Changes:
No changes to program goals or SLOs are planned at this time.

List of Appendices:
Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

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ELPhD Core & Research Course Alignments (Curriculum Map)

I = introduced R = reinforced M = mastery A = assessment

Core Course Alignment with Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Course	Title	Content Mastery (SLO 1)	Scholarly Research Activities (PG 2)	Professional Skill Development (PG 3, SLO 2)	Evidence-based Practices (PG1)
EDU 7000	Trans-Concentration Seminar	I	I	I	I
EDU 7010	Theoretical Foundations of Research	I	I, A	I	R
EDU 7020	At-Risk Populations: Research, Service, & Delivery	R, A	R	R, A	R, A
EDU 7040	Program Planning and Proposal Development	I, R	I, R, A	R, M, A	R
CUED 7430	Specialized Applications of Technology to Education	I	I	R, A	R

Research Course Alignment with Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Course	Title	Content Mastery (SLO 1)	Scholarly Research Activities (PG 2)	Professional Skill Development (PG 3, SLO 2)	Evidence-based Practices (PG1)
EDU 7010	Theoretical Foundations of Research	I	I, A	I	R
EDU 7330	Qualitative Inquiry in Education	R	R	R	R
EDU 7340	Data Analysis and Representation in Qualitative Inquiry	R, M, A	M, A	M, A	M, A
EDU 7420	Quantitative Inquiry in Education I	I	I	I	I
EDU 7430	Quantitative Inquiry in Education II	R, M	R, M	R	R
EDU 7300	Research Design	M, A	M, A	M, A	M, A
EDU 7320	Research Methods in Behavior Analysis	I, R	R, M, A	R, M, A	R, M
EDU 7350	Advanced Regression Analysis	R, M	R, M, A	R, M	R, M
EDUL 7700	Theory, Methodology, & Trends in Literacy Research	R, M	M, A	M	M
EDUS 7350	STEM Education Research	R, M	M, A	M, A	M
ABAP 7920	Topics, Issues, & Research in Early Childhood Special Education	I, R	R, M	M, A	R