

Catalog Description

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Adult Learning and Development focuses on the needs of developing community college leaders and preparing practitioners to work with adult learners and workforce development. Graduates will be qualified to assume advanced leadership roles in areas of community college leadership, workforce development, post-secondary education, adult learning and development, scholarship, and other areas in which adult learning occurs.

The program offers a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree for students who intend to pursue or advance their careers in the professional practice of adult learning and development or post-secondary leadership. The Doctor of Education is a practitioner degree program that prepares students for the advanced practice of adult learning and leadership across the following domains: teaching and learning, curriculum and instructional design, adult development, workforce development, program management and planning, organizational change, and community college leadership.

Two concentrations are available: *Community College Leadership* and *Adult Learning and Workforce Development*.

Admission and Application Requirements

The Doctor of Education Program admits students through a selective, competitive application and interview process. Admission requirements are in accordance with Northwestern State University's Graduate School requirements found in the Northwestern catalog, with the addition of the following application components and admission requirements*:

Additional Application Components

- Resume or curriculum vitae;
- Essay writing sample - Must be a research-based paper;
- Statement of purpose – Student's reason for applying and preparation for the program; strengths and experiences that are relevant; and how the program can help the student realize expectations and goals;
- Three letters of recommendation - Must be from people who have supervised applicant in academic, employment, or other similar setting.

Selected applicants who meet the admission requirements will be invited to interview with the Doctoral Admission Committee.

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Additional Admission Requirements and Policies

All requirements for admission to the Graduate School and master's degree, plus:

- Earned master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0;
- GRE requirements are waived if applicant earned a master's degree with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5;
- There is no conditional or provisional admission to the Doctor of Education;
- Applicants must have all application components on file and meet all admission criteria prior to acceptance to the doctoral program;
- Any defined special requirements of the department for the degree to be pursued.

*Meeting all application and admission requirements does not guarantee acceptance into the doctoral program.

General Degree and Graduation Requirements

Degree candidates must successfully complete the doctoral program of 63 semester hours above the master's degree, which includes 12 semester hours in a concentration and a minimum of 9 semester hours dissertation credit. Additional dissertation hours may be required beyond the required 63 semester hours. No course with a grade lower than "B" may be used to satisfy a course requirement for the Doctor of Education degree.

A preliminary examination, comprehensive examination, dissertation prospectus, dissertation proposal, and an approved dissertation must be completed with a satisfactory oral defense.

Residence Requirement/Transfer Credit

At least two-thirds of the required hours for the Doctor of Education, not including dissertation credit, must be earned at Northwestern. Dissertation credit may not be transferred from another institution. The additional hours required for the degree, other than dissertation, may be transferred from another institution provided the institution, including its Graduate School, is regionally accredited, the grade earned is B or above, the course is completed within the six years immediately preceding the application to the Doctor of Education program at Northwestern, the student is/was in good standing in a doctoral program at the transferring institution(s), and the credits are accepted as applicable to the student's degree program. Transfer credit not completed within six years of application to the Doctor of Education program may be considered for transfer if all other transfer criteria are met and the student demonstrates current knowledge of course content. Course syllabi for potential transfer courses must be submitted with the transfer request. The Dean of the Graduate School must approve the

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method by which the student demonstrates current knowledge. All other transfer credit policies of the Northwestern Graduate School apply to the Doctor of Education.

Applying Credit from Other Graduate Degree Programs

A student seeking the Doctor of Education may be allowed to apply from a previous graduate degree or graduate degree program a maximum of 12 credit hours to the Doctor of Education. The request to apply other degree credit must be made to the Graduate School and an appropriate course description and syllabus must accompany the request. All requests to apply credits must be reviewed and approved before adding to a plan of study. Applied credits submitted with an application to graduate study and intended to meet degree requirements must be reviewed by the major professor and college dean and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School within the first term of enrollment. Graduate credits applied from other graduate work may not be used to satisfy admission requirements or to raise a student's GPA to meet regular admission requirements and must meet the same criteria as transfer credit.

Other Policies, Requirements, and Procedures

All other relevant policies, requirements, and procedures listed in the Northwestern catalog for the Graduate School and master's degree programs apply to the Doctor of Education.

Dissertation Process and Advising

Selection of the Major Advisor, Dissertation Advisory Committee Chair, and Dissertation Committee

Students will be assigned a major advisor as soon as possible during the first year of doctoral work. The major advisor will be selected from program faculty or administration and will also serve as the advisory/dissertation committee chair. A student advisory/dissertation committee, approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, will be assigned to the student by the end of the first year of doctoral coursework. The committee is comprised of the student's major advisor and three additional faculty members and will guide the student through the doctoral studies and research. The three committee members will represent relevant disciplines to best support student research goals and interest and must be members of the NSU Graduate Faculty or be eligible for temporary membership as graduate faculty of NSU. When appropriate, an off-campus expert may be named as a fourth committee member. Given the online format of the program, all meetings between the student and the major advisor or committee may be either face-to-face or virtual, based on the needs of the student. Students will have input in the selection of their committees, although

the program director and Dean of the Graduate School will determine final assignments.

Dissertation Prospectus

Near the end of coursework, the student will write a dissertation prospectus, which will be sent to the committee for approval. The approved prospectus will function as the guide for the development of the dissertation proposal and dissertation.

Preliminary and Comprehensive Examinations

Students will participate in both qualifying/preliminary and comprehensive examinations. The qualifying/preliminary examination will be given by the end of the student's third semester and will consist of both oral and written components. The nature of this examination is developmental and provides the student and committee the opportunity to reflect on program progress to date, propose the plan of study for the remainder of the program, and discuss potential research interests. The comprehensive examination also includes both written and oral components and will be completed near the end of the student's coursework and before the dissertation phase. The purpose of this examination is to determine the student's development to date and to assess the student's readiness for the final phases of the program.

Dissertation Proposal and Candidacy

After the committee approves the prospectus and the student successfully completes the comprehensive examination, the student constructs a dissertation proposal under the direction of the committee chair. A minimum of 9 hours of dissertation coursework is required for graduation, and a student may not take more than six hours of dissertation coursework in any single semester. The proposal consists of the first three chapters of the dissertation and serves as the point of transition to writing the dissertation. When the committee chair approves the proposal, it is forwarded to the committee and the oral defense of the proposal is scheduled. Once the committee approves the proposal, the student advances to candidacy status.

Dissertation Writing and Defense

The dissertation is written under the primary guidance of the major advisor with input from committee members. The format of the dissertation may vary with the research topic and method and must be approved by the major advisor. The advisor and committee provide guidance on the dissertation structure, content,

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research and analysis methods, and set expectations for quality and timely completion. Once the committee chair and members feel the dissertation is substantially complete, the dissertation defense will be scheduled. The dissertation defense will commonly be an oral presentation of the dissertation by the student and discussion and questions by the committee members. However, the exact nature and format of the dissertation defense may vary with research topic and method and will be determined by the committee chair. The committee will deliberate on the presentation and defense and issue a decision on the status of the dissertation. Possible results include: rejection of the dissertation, conditional approval with significant changes, approval pending recommended changes, or unqualified approval.