

Annual Academic Assessment Report

Ph.D. in Higher Education

2024-2025

Program Goals and Objectives

The Higher Education Ph.D. degree equips its students with the skills and knowledge to be able to:

- Provide effective leadership to institutions of higher education
- Make evidence-based decisions and solve problems through processes that recognize a wide variety of environmental factors, constituents, and influences.
- Communicate effectively through written and verbal means to a variety of audiences and stakeholders.
- Respect ideas, perspectives, motivations, and behaviors of students, faculty, and leaders and understand their unique roles and responsibilities within institutions of higher education.
- Create more diverse and inclusive institutions, programs, and policies.
- Conduct original research and effectively communicate research findings to diverse audiences.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Higher Education Ph.D. degree, students will be able to:

- Understand the relationship between postsecondary education institutions and social, economic, and political systems.
- Appreciate how historical and contemporary inequities affect access to and experiences in higher education.
- Use data to inform decision-making and problem solving.
- Assess risk and develop strategies for creating acceptable levels of legal risk.
- Demonstrate sufficient understanding of leadership, change, and culture to ensure competence and confidence in leading and managing change in a postsecondary setting.
- Conduct themselves in a professional, thoughtful, and ethical manner that represents good institutional stewardship.
- Engage in research, identify and implement appropriate research designs, and disseminate research findings through presentations and publications.

Direct Means of Assessment for Learning Outcomes:

- Course projects, including program milestones such as:
 - Research Proposal (Research Techniques)
 - Historical Context Paper (History)
 - Final issue papers (various courses)
- Comprehensive doctoral examination

- Dissertation completion

Timeline and Process for Assessment and Analysis

- Course projects tend to occur at the end of semesters.
- Comprehensive doctoral examinations occur throughout the year.
- Completion and defense of doctoral dissertations occur throughout the year.
- Indirect measures of overall doctoral grade point average and grades in doctoral core courses will be collected and analyzed annually.

Results of Assessment

- Course Projects
 - All doctoral students in the History course complete a historical context paper, earning at least a 91%, in Fall 2024. The assignment enabled them to place a potential subject of their dissertation in historical perspective.
 - All doctoral students in the Research Techniques course successfully completed a research proposal in Spring 2025.
 - Overall, courses often offered doctoral students the opportunity to tailor final projects into issue papers informing future dissertation work.
- Comprehensive Doctoral Examination
 - This academic year, most doctoral students who took their comprehensive examination successfully passed, moving into the candidacy phase. One doctoral student is currently revising the comprehensive exam.
- Completion of Doctoral Dissertation
 - This academic year, all doctoral students who defended their dissertations successfully passed the examination. Six students successfully defended their dissertations in the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters.
- Grade Point Averages
 - GPAs of current doctoral students range from 3.54 to 4.0. The average GPA is 3.89. Overall GPA in doctoral core courses this academic year ranged from 3.78 to 4.0