Doctoral Programs in Higher Education

For more information: (626) 815-5349

APU's doctoral programs in higher education produce values-driven scholars and leaders who have a positive impact on student learning and social justice in higher education. The department offers the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Higher Education and the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Higher Education Leadership. The Ph.D. emphasizes research and leadership skills that make a difference in the field of higher education; the Ed.D. emphasizes leadership development that makes a difference at the institutional level.

The doctoral programs require that the student already holds a master's degree in a field related to higher education. Because the programs are geared for higher education professionals, all students are expected to be employed in a college or university setting and to have at least five years of experience in higher education or a closely related field. Both doctoral programs employ a cohort model in which students are in residency in Azusa part time; the Ph.D. program meets for two weeks each January and July, with students completing course assignments online, and the Ed.D. program meets for one week in June and one weekend (Friday/Saturday) each month except for May and August, with students completing course assignments online. Campus intensive sessions continue to be required each term during the dissertation phase, as well.

Mission Statement

The mission of the doctoral programs in higher education is to produce values-driven scholars and leaders who have a positive impact on student learning and social justice in higher education.

Core Values of the Doctoral Programs in Higher Education

The doctoral programs in higher education are driven by these core values:

- A Christian worldview that enables students to become “big-picture thinkers” who are people of character and integrity
- A strengths-based perspective of learning and leadership that encourages students to become the persons they were created to be
- A commitment to rigorous research that makes a difference in real-world settings
- A passion for social justice and the belief that diversity is a strength that enhances learning for all
- A passion for learning and student success
- A commitment to mentoring doctoral students academically, personally, and spiritually

Admission

University graduate admission and program acceptance requirements must be met before an application is complete (see the Admission to the University (http://catalog.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/admission-policies/graduate-admission-university) section of this catalog).

Program-specific application requirements are available online (http://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessionalcenter/admissions/requirements/program).

International students have a separate application procedure. Contact the International Center (http://www.apu.edu/international) at +1-626-812-3055.

Application Deadlines

For the Ph.D. program, completed applications with all supporting documentation received by January 31 will receive priority consideration for July admission. The final application deadline is May 1.

For the Ed.D. program, completed applications with all supporting documentation received by January 31 will receive priority consideration for May admission. The final application deadline is April 1.

Note: Applications for both programs are reviewed on a rolling basis and are accepted until the new cohort has been finalized.

Interview

Upon invitation, doctoral applicants complete an interview with at least one member of the doctoral faculty. The purpose of the interview is to discuss career and education goals, evaluate the match of the program to the student, and ascertain, at least initially, the applicant's potential for success in the doctoral program.
Admission Decisions
Applicants must meet department and university criteria for admission; admission to the university is the first step in the process, but it does not guarantee admission to the doctoral program.

The department reserves the right to offer provisional admission to students who fail to meet all the specified admission criteria. In such cases, program faculty specify the additional requirements necessary for full admission and the time limit for completing them. Failure to meet these requirements will result in dismissal from the program.

Upon notification of admission, applicants to either doctoral program have 30 days to confirm via email their intent to begin their doctoral studies at APU. A nonrefundable deposit of $500 is due by April 15 to secure a place in the cohort.

Advisement
Upon admission, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. Academic advising is viewed as a collaborative relationship between the student and the faculty advisor, and the purpose of the collaboration is to enable the student to achieve maximum benefits from his or her doctoral experience. The advisor's role is to work with the student to develop a plan for timely and successful completion of the doctorate. The student should plan to meet with the advisor regularly. Once the student selects a dissertation chair, that person assumes the role of faculty advisor.

Transferring Units from Another Doctoral Program
Students in the Ed.D. program may transfer up to 12 units from another regionally accredited doctoral program. Students in the Ph.D. program may transfer up to 18 units of doctoral work from another regionally accredited university. Official transcripts and course descriptions must be submitted. The department chair will determine the courses that successfully transfer.

International Travel Requirement in Second Year
In both programs, one week of international travel is included in the required coursework during the spring term of the second year, often in late May or early June. The costs of the trip are included in tuition, except for airfare to the selected location and some meals while in country.

Computer Requirement
Students must bring a laptop computer or tablet to campus for all coursework. The SPSS statistical software package is required of students in their research courses throughout the Ph.D. program. The University Bookstore makes arrangements to enable students to purchase computers and software at economical rates on convenient terms. Often, the required purchase of the laptop and software can be budgeted into student loans. For more information, contact the Office of Graduate and Professional Student Financial Services (http://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessionalcenter/sfs) at (626) 815-4570.

Residence Requirement
Students must meet a residence requirement by completing a minimum of 39 units in the Ed.D. program or 42 units in the Ph.D. program through APU.

Statistical Competency
Students admitted to the Ph.D. program are expected to have completed a master's-level course in statistics and/or research design prior to admission. Students without this level of preparation are expected to design a plan to adequately prepare for doctoral-level statistics.

Research Assistantships and Financial Aid
Federal Stafford loans and personal bank loans are available to all eligible graduate students through the Office of Graduate and Professional Student Financial Services (http://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessionalcenter/sfs). Students are advised to contact the office early in the admissions process at (626) 815-4570 or gpc@apu.edu.

In addition, the department offers a limited number of research scholarships to entering Ph.D. students by application: the Social Justice, Leadership, and Student Success scholarships. These research scholarships are offered on a competitive basis for $3,500 per year for three years of coursework for those students whose research interests and dissertation plans align with one of these priorities. Dissertation fellowships of $2,000, as well as research and teaching assistantships of varying amounts, are available to continuing students by faculty invitation. The Noel Academy for Strengths-Based Leadership and Education (https://www.apu.edu/strengthsacademy) also offers two $4,000 scholarships to Ed.D. and Ph.D. students whose research interests align with strengths development; these scholarships are by separate application through the Noel Academy. Information will be mailed to all admitted students about the availability of scholarships and the application process for each.