

Doctoral Programs in Higher Education

For more information: (626) 815-5349

APU's doctoral programs in higher education produce ethical scholars and leaders who have a positive impact on student learning and social justice in higher education. The department offers the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Higher Education and the Doctor of Education (EdD) in Higher Education Leadership. The PhD emphasizes research and leadership skills that make a difference in the field of higher education; the EdD 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 PhD program meets for two weeks each January and July, with students completing course assignments independently, and the EdD program meets for one week in June and one weekend (Friday/Saturday) each month except for May and August, with students completing course assignments independently. 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 ethical 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
- An appreciative perspective of learning and leadership that nurtures talent and 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 a commitment to inclusion and equity that emerges from our faith
- A passion for learning and student thriving
- A commitment to mentoring doctoral students academically, personally, and spiritually

Admission

University graduate admission and program-specific requirements must be met before an application is complete (see Admission to the University (<http://catalog.apu.edu/admissions/>)). **Program-specific application requirements are available online (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>).**

International students should contact Graduate and Professional Admissions (<https://www.apu.edu/graduateprofessional/apply/>) for application procedures.

Students admitted to the PhD in Higher Education or the Doctoral-Level Certificate in Strengths-Oriented Higher Education programs cannot be simultaneously enrolled in any other APU program, nor can they enroll in classes outside of their program.

Application Deadlines

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

For the EdD 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 EdD program may transfer up to 12 units from another regionally accredited doctoral program. Students in the PhD 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 PhD program. The Campus Store 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 Student Financial Services (<https://www.apu.edu/student-services/finances/>) at (626) 815-2020.

Residence Requirement

Students must meet a residence requirement by completing a minimum of 39 units in the EdD program or 42 units in the PhD program through APU.

Statistical Competency

Students admitted to the PhD 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. Students are given a take-home diagnostic exam to complete during the first year of the program, so that they are adequately prepared for the research courses that begin in the second year.

Research Assistantships and Financial Aid

Federal Stafford loans and personal bank loans are available to all eligible graduate students through the Student Financial Services (<https://www.apu.edu/student-services/finances/>). Students are advised to contact the office early in the admissions process at (626) 815-2020 or ssc@apu.edu.

In addition, the department offers a limited number of research scholarships to entering PhD 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. In addition, students who are employed by institutions with any level of membership in the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities receive a 10% tuition discount. Students who enter either doctoral program with another student from their same home institution that same year receive a 10% tuition discount, as well. Information will be mailed to all admitted students about the availability of scholarships and the application process for each.