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Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations at UNC Greensboro. We are so pleased that you have chosen to further your education with us. This Handbook is designed to provide you with essential information needed to plan a successful course of study in ELC. The materials included serve as a guide to program requirements, procedures, and program deadlines. In addition, several important forms are included in the Handbook. Although we have attempted to provide links to individual forms in this handbook, *the most up-to-date forms can be found using the links found on the ELC resources page.*

This ELC Student Handbook should be referred to in conjunction with the UNCG Student Policy Handbook and The University Catalog: Academic Regulations and Policies.
General Overview

About UNCG and the School of Education

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is a challenging, supportive and engaged community. Founded in 1891, UNCG is the largest and most diverse university in the Triad, serving more than 20,000 students. UNCG offers 85 undergraduate degrees in more than 100 areas of study, 74 masters programs and 32 doctoral programs.

The School of Education serves 1600 students, 60% of which are graduate students. The department of Educational Leadership & Cultural Foundations is 1 of 6 departments, spanning 5 undergraduate programs and 15 graduate programs.

ELC Mission Statement

The Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations (ELC) is concerned with issues of educational theory and philosophy, sociocultural analysis, educational leadership and school organization, educational policy, and critical pedagogy. The faculty members share a sociopolitical perspective that undergirds our scholarship, teaching, and service. We are committed to the development of a just and caring democratic society in which schools serve as centers of inquiry and forces for social transformation that foster social, economic, and educational equity by honoring differences in race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexual preference. The ELC faculty seek to prepare thoughtful and effective leaders in education through programs of study that are interdisciplinary in focus and that emphasize questions of moral concern, the cultural context of education, and a reconstructive vision for excellent and equitable schooling. As we explain in our Statement of Commitments, “Our purpose is to create change agents who work with parents, staff, students, and communities to develop critical understandings of the assumptions, beliefs, and regularities that support schooling and who identify and create practices that allow schools to function more fully as democracies while preparing students for democracy.”

The department offers four graduate programs and two certificate programs: Master of School Administration, Specialist in Education in Educational Leadership, Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, and Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies with a concentration in Cultural Studies and Post Masters in School Administration and Post Masters in Cultural Foundations and Social Justice Education. As a valued member of our academic community, you will have the advantage of a supportive environment in which you are known, cared for, challenged and invested in. Faculty members take your preparation and your success very seriously. For that same reason, we equip you with more than knowledge; we give you the tools and experience to understand what your future decisions in the field will mean to learners and how you can use your position to
bring about positive change for education. ELC is committed to embodying our shared commitments in all of our actions, with social justice and equity as the expressed centerpiece of who we are.

**ELC Statement of Commitments**

The Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations (ELC) is committed to the development of a just and caring democratic society in which schools serve as centers of inquiry and forces for social transformation. We believe that:

- education is an ongoing process of knowledge creation and acquisition, lived experience, interaction with others, and conscious reflection;
- good schooling and a good society create occasions for people to build human, intellectual, and spiritual connections;
- schools must foster social, economic, and educational equity;
- honoring differences in race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and ability are critical to human understanding;
- every human being is worthy of respect and deserving of dignity.

Our purpose is to create educational leaders who work with parents, staff, students, and communities to develop critical understandings of the assumptions, beliefs, and regularities that support schooling and who identify and create practices that allow schools to function more fully as democracies while preparing students for democracy.

We believe educational leaders should:

- advocate for teaching and learning by articulating and working to achieve a school-community’s shared educational commitments;
- facilitate processes that engage self and others in critiquing the way things are, exploring the way life should be in moral and just communities, and stimulating action directed toward achieving the latter;
- mobilize economic, political, social, and personal resources to articulate and achieve a school-community’s shared educational commitments;
- appreciate the joy of learning, delight in the growth of self and others, promote the love of learning, and create practices in schools that provide an outstanding education for all students.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Keywords</th>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>Office</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Research Interests</td>
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**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

As a School of Education, we are committed to promoting a just society through valuing diversity and fostering educational and social equity. We are equally committed to interrogating what this means as we operationalize and understand the needs of students, staff and faculty in the complex condition of our world today.

University policy governs grievances related to protected-class discrimination, undue favoritism, sexual harassment, and other forms of interpersonal violence. ELC fully supports and abides by these policies. Please refer to the [UNCG Student Policy Handbook](#) and [The University Catalog: University Policies](#).

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in a course or practicum, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the disability is documented and registered with the [Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS)](#).

If you believe you have a disability that would affect your performance in the program, the Department is ready to provide appropriate accommodations. To be able to receive any accommodation - and to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations -
student must first be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) at UNCG (Suite 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, http://ods.uncg.edu/). Once your disability has been documented and registered with OARS, please contact your instructors to discuss necessary accommodations.
Financial Assistance

Graduate Assistantships
Graduate assistantships require full-time enrollment. There are limited numbers of doctoral graduate assistantships in the department; however, students who are diligent in their search for an assistantship across the university are usually successful. Stipends for graduate assistantships (20 hours per week) on campus are typically about $11,000 for the academic year and do not automatically include a tuition waiver(s). Often this amount is augmented with a small scholarship. Reappointments to assistantships are contingent on a student’s satisfactory academic progress and satisfactory performance of assistantship responsibilities. Graduate assistantships come with tuition waivers.

Admitted students are free to investigate assistantships in any department or office at UNCG; openings are listed on SpartanCareers (visit the UNCG Career and Professional Development Handshake site and click on the student login). If you are interested in obtaining a graduate assistantship from the ELC department, please contact the ELC Department Chair. The applications for ELC assistantships are distributed once per year, usually in March.

Residence Hall Staff Positions
A limited number of residence hall staff positions are offered to qualified graduate students. Address inquiries to Director of Residence Life, UNCG, Ragsdale/Mendenhall Residence Hall, P.O. Box 26170, Greensboro, North Carolina 27402-6170, Phone (336) 334-5636, https://hrl.uncg.edu/.

Fellowships and Scholarships
Fellowships and scholarships are awarded by the Graduate School to exceptionally qualified students who meet the specific criteria for the award. There are also scholarships available through the School of Education; faculty nominate students for these awards.

NC Principal Fellows Scholarship: The NC Principal Fellows Program is an essential part of the Master of School Administration Degree Program at UNCG. Students who are admitted to the MSA degree program at UNCG and who have applied and been accepted by the North Carolina Principal Fellows Commission, receive a financial scholarship loan in the amount set by the state legislature. The scholarship loan must be paid back, if, upon graduation from the MSA program, the recipient does not work for a minimum of 5 years as a school administrator to the state of NC. The Principal Fellows program was established to ensure that highly qualified students are able to earn the Master of School Administration degree in two years on a full-time basis and to provide a well-qualified
group of administrators for schools in North Carolina.

Please visit www.ncpfp.org to read more about the program, to access the application, and to read endorsements of the program written by former Principal Fellows recipients.

**Luther Winborne Self Fellowship:** Luther Winborne Self Fellowship Awards are designed to provide financial assistance to doctoral students in The Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations. The department awards fellowship money yearly to doctoral students in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Ph.D. in Cultural Foundations programs. The Fellowship is funded by an annual gift from the Self Family (in memory of Dr. Luther Winborne Self, a graduate of the ELC department). The Fund provides fellowships to students of outstanding promise to complete their doctoral programs. This award is intended for students who are in or close to the dissertation writing stage. *Students must be in the proposal and/or dissertation writing stage during the award year; award amounts may vary based on stage in the program.* Entering students are not eligible; students must be enrolled in the department at the time of application. Students with significant financial need will be given priority.

**Loans, Grants, and Other Aid**

For information on student loans and grants, contact the [Office of Financial Aid](http://fia.uncg.edu/), UNCG, Phone (336) 334-5702.
ELC Academic Programs

Master of School Administration (MSA) in Educational Leadership

The Master of School Administration (MSA) is a 42-semester hour program that meets state standards for North Carolina Level I administrator licensure principal). Students engage the content of leadership preparation through graduate classroom engagement and assignments, observing schools and school leaders in practice, and performing tasks under the supervision of a school-based and university mentor during the internship.

Courses are offered in the evenings during the Fall and Spring terms and at various times in the Summer term. Courses are offered off campus or in blended, online formats. Most students are enrolled part-time.

For MSA program requirements, see School Administration, MSA in the University Catalog.

Post-Master’s Certificate (PMC) in School Administration

The Post-Master’s Certificate (PMC) in School Administration requires 24-27 semester hours and is designed to prepare students for positions as principals or assistant principals and meets the requirements of the state legislation that supports an alternative path to school administration licensure (also known as “add-on” principal licensure). Students can enroll in either the online or face-to-face PMC program.

For PMC in School Administration requirements, see School Administration, Post-Master's Certificate in the University Catalog.

Specialist in Education Degree (EdS) in Educational Leadership

The Specialist in Education (EdS) in Educational Leadership is a 33-semester hour program of advanced study beyond the master’s degree designed to prepare students for leadership and administration at the district office level of a K-12 school system. The EdS typically leads to North Carolina Advanced Principal and Advanced Superintendent licensure. Potential students who do not have North Carolina Principal licensure must first obtain such licensure by completing the Post-Masters Certificate (PMC) program. The EdS is the first step many students take toward the EdD. Up to 18 credits of the EdS can be applied to the EdD.

For EdS program requirements, see Educational Leadership, EdS in the University Catalog.
**EdD in Educational Leadership**

The EdD in Educational Leadership is a 54-semester hour doctoral program designed to prepare students for the advanced study of educational leadership and administration. The EdD program is intended for professionals who work in K-12 schools, districts, and systems. The EdD in Educational Leadership requires commitment to the pursuit of four ambitious goals: in-depth inquiry and research on issues and topics related to educational administration and leadership, leadership for improvement in teaching and learning, equity and social justice for all students, and the development of schools as democratic communities.

Students who hold the North Carolina Advanced Principal and Advanced Superintendent license are eligible to add the North Carolina Doctoral Superintendent license upon completing the EdD program.

For EdD program requirements, see [Educational Leadership, EdD](#) in the University Catalog.

**PhD in Educational Studies with a concentration in Cultural Foundations**

The program in Educational Studies with a Concentration in Cultural Foundations is a 60-semester hour doctoral program. Concerned with the breadth and depth of what is fundamental to educational practice—its ideology, philosophical assumptions, and moral claims, the program is grounded in the study of education and culture with a particular interest in the integration of social analysis, cultural analysis and praxis.

For PhD program requirements, see [Educational Studies, PhD](#) in the University Catalog.

**Post-Master’s Certificate (PMC) in Cultural Foundations and Social Justice Education**

The aim of the certificate in Cultural Foundations and Social Justice Education is to provide students with a broad understanding of the cultural, social, political and ideological forces that have shaped, and continue to shape, education in the United States. Building on this knowledge the certificate introduces students to those pedagogical traditions that speak to the quest for more socially just, equitable and liberating institutions and social structures, and the movements, both political and intellectual, that have been instrumental in this quest. The required courses for this program are intended to provide students with a broad, interdisciplinary exposure to the rich scholarly and research traditions that currently shape studies in the cultural foundations of education and social justice.
For PMC in Cultural Foundations and Social Justice Education program requirements, see Cultural Foundations and Social Justice Education, Post-Master's Certificate in the University Catalog.
Academic Policies

UNCG Graduate School Academic Regulations and Policies
To learn about the Graduate School’s Academic Regulations and Policies (including but not limited to Academic Eligibility to Continue in Graduate School, Appeals Policy and Procedures, and Grades), visit the The University Catalog: Graduate Policies by clicking here. Students should also be familiar with, and abide by, UNCG policies related to academic integrity and ethical/professional conduct. These policies are linked below:

UNCG Student Code of Conduct:

UNCG Policy on Academic Integrity:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJvbDHUExSZmFFaWFmb00/view

The Graduate Policies contain vital information about various academic matters and regulations. **It is the responsibility of the student to be thoroughly familiar with all Graduate School requirements, policies, and procedures.** Particular attention should be given to regulations concerning hours required for a degree, grade averages required, removal of incompletes, use of transfer and extension credit, and requirements for continuing in Graduate School. Other rules and procedures may be required by the Department.

In addition to the above, there are several professional organizations that publish professional standards that are designed to guide decision making in K-12 and Higher Education settings. Just two of numerous examples are provided below for consultation as needed.

**American Association of University Professors:**
https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-professional-ethics

**National Education Association:**
http://www.ucea.org/2014/09/01/code-ethics/

Please note, your professors will outline course specific grading policies for each course in the course syllabus.
Plans of Study

Plan of study forms for each ELC academic program can be found by clicking the link or visiting the SOE ELC Resources webpage. In order to complete your program, you must have a plan of study on file at the graduate school. Doctoral students should confer with their committee chair/advisor; other program students should contact the Director of Graduate Study regarding this plan.

Independent Study

The Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations department values individualized, student-centered learning activities for advanced graduate students. Accordingly, the Department offers the following ELC 692 Independent Study. As per the course description, the course can include guided readings, research and individual project work under the direction of a staff member. In order to engage in Independent Study, you must receive approval from a faculty member in who agrees to work with you to guide your Independent Study work.

Engaging in ELC 692 Independent Study requires submission of a signed form available here: https://www.uncg.edu/reg/Forms/IndependentStudyPermission.pdf

As per Graduate School policies:

- Post-Master’s Certificate students may count no more than 3 credit hours of independent study toward certificate requirements.
- Master’s students may register for no more than 3 credit hours of independent study per semester and may count no more than 6 credit hours of independent study toward satisfying the minimum requirements for the master’s degree.
- The graduate school policy allows up to 15 credits of independent study, in our department you may take no ore than 9 credit hours toward degree requirements. These must be negotiated with your committee Chair or advisor. Independent studies can be taken with any willing faculty member.

Continuous Enrollment

As per Graduate School policy, students are required to be in continuous enrollment once they commence their program of study. A graduate student who has not completed any 500-level or above courses for two consecutive semesters, or a semester and summer session, is considered to have withdrawn from the curriculum. The student will be required to file an application for readmission to the University.
Leave of Absence

If a student needs to interrupt their studies, they may need to apply for a personal or educational leave of absence. Please consult The University Catalog: Graduate Policies by clicking here for a full explanation of the leave policy.

Applying to Graduate

You must apply to graduate in UNCGenie and the Graduate School Office for degree and pay the graduation fee within seven days after the start of classes in the semester the degree will be earned. This deadline is rigidly enforced for the May, August, and December Commencements. Hooding ceremonies and graduation proceedings are held in December and May only.

Please note that if you apply for graduation in one semester (e.g., Spring semester and May graduation date) but do not graduate during that semester, you MUST REAPPLY for graduation in the semester you will graduate (e.g., Summer semester and August graduation date). You only pay the graduation fee once.

Note: You are responsible for meeting degree requirements for graduation in your specific area. Your faculty advisor is available to assist you.
Professional Development

Student Organizations

**UNCG Graduate Student Association:** This association represents the interests of graduate students at UNCG. It also provides limited funding to support travel and research expenses. More information is available at its website: https://graduatestudentassociation.uncg.edu

**ELC Student Group:** The mission of the ELC Student Group is to serve as a support for current students in any program within the ELC department. The group will provide social, emotional, intellectual and academic support to current students in their journey towards obtaining their personal, professional, and academic goals.

All students enrolled in any program within the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro are considered non-voting members. There is no minimum GPA requirement. There are no differentiated membership types for ELC students. Honorary membership is available to any interested UNCG students or faculty from other academic departments as well as all UNCG alumni. All members have the right to attend meetings, voice input, represent themselves electronically, participate in planned events, declare an interest in serving on the Executive Committee, and participate fully in the life and governance of the group. Participation is voluntary, and there are no membership obligations. Members will be removed only if the member submits a written request to the Executive Committee to be removed from the group.

Professional Organizations

**American Education Research Association**

The American Educational Research Association (AERA), a national research society, strives to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.

Graduate students in AERA are represented by the Graduate Student Council: http://www.aera.net/About-AERA/Member-Constituents/Graduate-Student-Council

Graduate students are encouraged to join AERA at a reduced rate: http://www.aera.net/Membership/Membership-Categories
American Educational Studies Association

The American Educational Studies Association (AESA) was established in 1968 as an international learned society for students, teachers, research scholars and administrators, who are interested in the foundations of education. AESA is a society primarily comprised of college and university professors who teach and research in the field of education utilizing one or more of the liberal arts disciplines of philosophy, history, politics, sociology, anthropology, or economics as well as comparative/international and cultural studies. The purpose of social foundations studies is to bring intellectual resources derived from these areas to bear in developing interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education, both inside and outside of schools.

University Council of Educational Administration

From the organization’s website: “The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) is a consortium of higher education institutions committed to advancing the preparation and practice of educational leaders for the benefit of schools and children. UCEA fulfills its mission by: Promoting, sponsoring, and disseminating research on the essential problems of schooling and leadership practice; Improving the preparation and professional development of educational leaders and professors; and, Positively influencing local, state, and national educational policy.”
Information for Doctoral Students

Two Doctoral Programs

As noted previously, ELC has two doctoral programs: the **PhD in Educational Studies with a concentration in Cultural Foundations** and the **EdD in Educational Leadership**.

Though the two doctoral programs share some common policies and procedures, there are also some distinct policies and procedures specific to the PhD or EdD. When possible, we note these distinctions in the information that follows.

If you have questions or concerns about doctoral or dissertation policies and procedures, contact your advisor or the Director of Graduate Study for your doctoral program.

Doctoral Advisory/Dissertation Committee Membership

The advisory/dissertation committee, consisting of at least three members of the graduate faculty, shall assist the student with the preparation of the plan of study and shall guide and evaluate the doctoral dissertation. This committee will be appointed by the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School upon the recommendation of the major department head or dean and must be mutually acceptable to the student and all committee members.

Of the three members, the chair must hold an Endorsement to Chair Doctoral Committees, and no more than one may be an Adjunct Member of the graduate faculty. The committee chair must be from the major department.

Work with your advisor/doctoral committee chair to ensure the paperwork is submitted in a timely manner. Any subsequent changes in the advisory/dissertation committee must be submitted to The Graduate School for approval.

Selection of Doctoral Advisory/Dissertation Committee

PhD Program

The following procedures are offered as a guide in the selection of your PhD doctoral advisory/dissertation committee. Take full advantage of any opportunities to meet ELC faculty.

1. About 18 hours into your program, speak with a program faculty member about the possibility of chairing your doctoral committee and directing your research. If
you choose someone other than your assigned advisor, be sure to let your advisor know. It is recommended that you email the person who you want to chair your committee indicating the reason(s) you would like him or her to act as chair (e.g., dissertation interests and future career goals) or set up a meeting to ask them in person.

2. Discuss your prospective focus, concentration, and research interests with your chair and ask them who would be appropriate for your committee and with whom they would like to work. Discuss with your chair the amount of input to expect from each committee member regarding your doctoral program and dissertation.

3. Discuss who else you would like to have on your committee with your Chair before asking other committee members.

4. Discuss your dissertation focus with each potential committee member. Invite the persons decided upon to be on your committee.

5. With the help of your advisor, complete and submit **Recommendation for Doctoral Advisory/Dissertation Committee form** and a **Plan of Study**. Turn this all in to your advisor who will work with the ELC Office Manager to get all the signatures.

**EdD Program**

The EdD follows a structured doctoral preparation sequence in which students choose their dissertation topics, design their research methods, and draft their dissertation proposals during a year-long sequence of courses. Students’ doctoral advisory/dissertation committees are created, in consultation with EdD program faculty, during the latter part of the year-long sequence of courses. Students will receive further information on the committee selection process as their program proceeds.

Once your doctoral advisory/dissertation committee is formed, with the help of your advisor, complete and submit **Recommendation for Doctoral Advisory/Dissertation Committee form** and a **Plan of Study**. Turn this all in to your advisor who will work with the ELC Office Manager to get all the signatures.

**Roles of the Doctoral Advisory/Dissertation Committee Members**

The doctoral advisory/dissertation committee is composed of at least three faculty members. One is an ELC faculty member who serves as the dissertation chair. The remaining committee members include faculty within and outside the Department.

**Chair:** A significant part of a faculty member’s responsibility in a department that grants doctoral degrees is directing doctoral students through the three to four years of post-
master’s work that is necessary to complete the doctoral degree. Accordingly, the dissertation committee chair’s relationship with the student involves an intensive, highly professional training experience which is critical to the student’s success in completing the dissertation.

The primary distinguishing feature between the dissertation chair and other committee members is the amount of work that is involved in the process of the student’s development and the dissertation. The chair provides time and scholarly commitment that is well beyond that expected or required of committee members.

**Members within the Department:** Faculty members within the Department who serve on a dissertation committee provide advice, support, and counsel to assist the student with the dissertation and serve a “balance and oversight” function.

**Members outside the Department at UNCG:** Similar to the member within the Department, this committee member provides advice, support, and counsel which assist the student in completing the program of study and dissertation. Members outside the Department also represent the Graduate Faculty and provide both balance and oversight to help maintain a level of quality for the dissertation.

**Members outside the Department not at UNCG:** These members serve the same function as those listed regarding UNCG members. To add an outside dissertation member, you need to work with your committee chair who will obtain the individual’s CV and complete an online verification process administered by the Graduate School.

**Change of Committee Members**

If a committee member leaves or if, based upon your dissertation topic and discussion with your committee, you need different areas of competency for your dissertation than are available within your original doctoral committee, in coordination with your committee chair you can pursue the appropriate change(s). (See [Recommendation for Doctoral Advisory/Dissertation Committee Revision](#) form).

**Meetings with the Dissertation Committee**

During your doctoral program, you will attend at least three meetings with your full committee about the following:

(a) your oral comprehensive examination,
(b) your dissertation proposal defense, and
(c) the oral defense of your dissertation.

Your chair may call other meetings as needed.
Comprehensive Examinations

PhD Program

There are several goals for the PhD doctoral comprehensive examinations in ELC:

1. To promote and evaluate high levels of critical thinking.
2. To promote thinking at the highest stages of Bloom’s taxonomy: analysis (e.g., analyze, classify, compare, contrast, experiment); synthesis (e.g., create, combine, integrate, design, generalize, hypothesize, construct, summarize); and evaluation (appraise, assess, defend, evaluate, recommend, critique).
3. To serve as a bridge from coursework to the dissertation, building theoretical and research knowledge around the dissertation topic (which likely is still somewhat broad at this point).
4. To promote scholarly work (i.e., thinking beyond what others have said about the issue). In responding to the comprehensive examination questions, then, you will need to demonstrate the above: high levels of critical thinking, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to integrate and synthesize their learning from various courses as well as their practical or applied experiences. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination indicates that the student has mastered the content and skills, including thinking and writing skills necessary to complete a dissertation project successfully. The comprehensive exam is scheduled after at least 36 hours of coursework in the PhD program. You must have no incompletes. Speak with your Chair about when you should take exams as you near completion of your coursework. Comprehensive exams must be completed successfully prior to enrolling in ELC 799 Dissertation and prior to submitting a dissertation proposal.

The comprehensive examination consists of a written examination. The written essay-type examination is taken over a three-month period. The student receives the questions and has three months to complete and return them. Each semester, the PhD Director of Graduate Studies will send an email through the listserv when it is time for students to register for the comprehensive exam. Students planning to take the exam must confer with their committee chair, and if the chair is in agreement, the student responds to the email giving notice of intent to take the exam. The questions will be distributed via email. These must be kept confidential and not shared with other students.

The three-month timeframe is a FIRM deadline. Responses received after the deadline, for whatever reason, constitute a violation of the test procedures and the examination will be null and void. In this event, the student’s committee members will determine whether the student can retake the exams. (Note: Students registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) may be eligible for an extended time frame to complete the written comprehensive examination. In addition, international students may be allowed time-and-a-half to complete the written comprehensive examination.)
Your Doctoral Committee Chair will arrange a defense date for you and the rest of your committee. Bring the **Results of Doctoral Preliminary Examinations (Comprehensive) form** to the meeting. As with the written exam, students prepare independently of their committee members for the oral exam. All dissertation committee members must participate in the preliminary oral examination.

Committee members read and evaluate each response on the student's exam. A satisfactory evaluation will require unanimous approval by your doctoral committee. For an unsatisfactory evaluation, corrective action will be determined by your committee members. This corrective action should be detailed in a written contractual program approved by and supervised by your committee. Corrective action may include retaking the unsatisfactory portion(s) of the examination and/or completing additional work as required by your committee. If a student fails a majority of the exam sections, the student will need to retake the entire written examination. You cannot retake comprehensive exams in the same semester that you originally took them, and only one re-examination is allowed (see the Graduate Bulletin [https://grs.uncg.edu/bulletin/](https://grs.uncg.edu/bulletin/)). It is important to stress that comprehensive exams are designed to help you identify both your strengths and weaknesses that could be crucial later on in the doctoral program, particularly in moving forward to work on the dissertation.

Upon successful completion of both the written and oral comprehensive examinations, your chair will complete the appropriate form (which you should bring to the oral examination meeting; see [The Graduate School: Documents & Forms](https://grs.uncg.edu/bulletin/) website to access forms. Submit appropriate forms to the departmental administrative assistant for processing.

Successful completion of the written and oral comprehensive examinations is an indication that the student is ready to proceed to the proposal and dissertation stage of the doctoral program. Formal work on the dissertation, including writing the proposal, should not begin until after successful completion of the comprehensive exam.

**EdD Program**

The EdD comprehensive exams are intended to help students to make the transition from coursework to conducting independent dissertation research on a topic that they have been working on as part of advanced coursework. The questions relate to the design of your dissertation study. Students are also asked to make connections between their dissertation research and our departmental commitments (available on our website). The doctoral exam process is as follows:

1. You must notify the EdD Coordinator that you are planning to take comprehensive exams at the end of the semester before you wish to take the exams. To be eligible to take the exam, you must have completed 75% of your coursework, as well as all your research course requirements. Unless there are special circumstances, we
suggest you wait until you have completed your coursework (or are scheduled to complete your coursework during the semester you do the exams), before signing up. You should also consult with your Dissertation Chair to make sure you are ready before signing up to take the exams.

2. You will be sent the exam questions via email in the beginning of the semester. You will have 6 weeks to complete your responses. You must send your responses as email attachments to your Committee Members and the EdD Coordinator by the specified deadline.

3. Upon receipt of your Comprehensive Examination responses, your Chair will schedule an Oral Hearing with your full Dissertation Committee. The Oral Hearing will occur within 6 weeks of your turning in your exams. You should fill out and bring the Results of Doctoral Preliminary Examinations (Comprehensive) form to the meeting.

4. At the Oral Hearing, the Chair and Committee will determine whether your written responses to the Comprehensive Examination are acceptable and provide feedback. The Hearing will begin with you leaving the room so the Committee can confer briefly and then you will return and make a few opening remarks about your experience writing the exam responses (no more than 10 minutes). After this, members of the committee will ask questions about the responses. Once all questions are asked, you will leave the room, and the committee will deliberate on the outcome of the exam. After deliberation, you will be invited back into the room and told of the outcome. The options are the following:
   - **PASS:** The Chair and Committee deem all parts of your written and oral responses acceptable.
   - **PASS WITH REVISIONS:** The Chair and Committee deem all parts of your written and oral responses acceptable, but they request revisions that you must address in your dissertation proposal.
   - **FAIL:** The Chair and Committee determine that your written and/or oral responses are unacceptable. You may address the Committee’s concerns through revision of your answers and a second Hearing. This is a one-time option. The second Hearing must occur in a subsequent semester (e.g. if you do not pass your Hearing in the Fall semester, you can schedule a 2nd Hearing in the Spring semester). As per Graduate School policy, if you do not pass the re-examination, you are dismissed from the program.

5. Passing, or Passing with Revisions, the Comprehensive Examination allows you to progress to the proposal process. If you Pass, your paperwork indicating success will be sent to the Graduate School immediately following your Oral Defense. If you Pass with Revisions, your paperwork will be held by your Dissertation Chair and submitted to the Graduate School when you have satisfactorily completed all revisions and have received approval from all of your committee members. You will be required to either submit a revised draft of your exam responses, or address these revisions in your expanded Dissertation Proposal.
6. During the exam process, your Dissertation Chair, Committee members, and the EdD Coordinator will be available to consult with you only about matters of process, but they will not discuss the substance of your responses with you until after you submit your written responses.

7. If you have registered for the Comprehensive Examination and received the questions but you do not submit your responses by the deadline, this will be considered a Withdrawal. You can then register to take the Comprehensive Exam in a subsequent semester. This is a one-time only option.

Proposal Content

PhD Program

The PhD dissertation proposal format will vary depending upon the type of research you choose to do. The requirements of the proposal should be discussed with your chair.

Your chair will determine how other committee members are involved in the proposal development and writing process, which could include formal meetings with some or all of the committee members. Proposals for non-empirical dissertations typically look significantly different than those for empirical studies. For example, non-empirical proposals are often short (20-40 pages) and are commonly a draft of only the first chapter of the dissertation, ending with a description (several paragraphs for each) of the ensuing chapters and their role in the study. Alternatively, many proposals for empirical studies include drafts of the first three chapters, and consequently can be much longer (sometimes as much as 75-100 pages). What it looks like depends upon

- the methods/research traditions you are using/drawing upon,
- how well-versed you already are in the literature and theory surrounding your topic (these sections are not complete in your proposal),
- the nature of your project (how complicated or routine it is),
- how much data you have already collected, and
- the expectations of your advisor or committee.

All proposals do, however, have some basic elements. They illustrate

- what your study is about,
- the scholarly/theoretical conversations of which it is a part,
- why it is important,
- how you will undertake it, and
- what it will look like when you are done.

Copies of materials related to the study (e.g., assessment instruments, letters to solicit participants, informed consent forms, scripts, training manuals, etc.) should be included in the appendices.
Ask your chair to recommend other proposals to review in helping you write your proposal. Any submissions to your chair should be of high quality in terms of writing and presentation of ideas. Overall, it is extremely helpful to your committee members if you plan the entire dissertation process carefully, setting a timeline, anticipating potential difficulties, and avoiding unnecessary demands on your committee members' schedules.

EdD Program

Students in the EdD Program receive a document titled “Proposal Guidelines” during their coursework. Program faculty will provide further guidance on the suggested and requested elements of your dissertation proposal during the program.

Proposal Defense

A significant event during your doctoral program is the opportunity to present your proposal formally to your committee members. The proposal defense allows you to share knowledge of your dissertation area and thus broaden the knowledge of all who attend. At the beginning of your defense, you will be asked to briefly leave the room while your committee members confer. You will then be invited back in and the meeting will begin with you giving a brief presentation about major learning moments and your proposal writing process. After your presentation, your committee will ask you questions about your work. When finished, you will be asked to leave the room so the committee can discuss your work and make decisions regarding whether or not there are any necessary changes or revisions, or if you are ready to move forward with the dissertation work.

It is crucial that you plan carefully with your chair and allow ample time to complete your proposal before scheduling the proposal defense. Keep in mind that your committee chair will need sufficient time to deem your proposal ready. The defense should not be scheduled until your chair gives approval. Your chair will not allow you to schedule the meeting until they are satisfied that the project is appropriate for a dissertation level of research, and that the proposal itself is complete and well-written.

At the time the proposal defense is held, all materials and plans related to the full study should be completed, so you can answer with clarity and certainty any questions about how the full study will be done.

Specific steps involved in making arrangements for the defense are as follows:

1. When your chair gives you the approval, work with them to determine next steps in scheduling your defense (determining whether you or the chair emails the committee members to set up the meeting).

2. All members of your doctoral advisory/dissertation committee should attend the defense. Members who are long distance can attend virtually if necessary.
3. Your chair will facilitate the meeting. Typically, your chair takes notes of the discussion during the meeting.

4. After the proposal defense, your chair will provide you information about what changes and corrections must be made and what your next steps should be.

5. Make any changes or corrections as discussed at the seminar and with your committee.

6. Bring the Dissertation Topic Approval form and Application for Admission to Candidacy form to the proposal defense. If there are significant revisions needed on your proposal, members may choose not to sign at the defense and will instead sign after revisions are approved. Once signed, submit the signed form to the Departmental Office Manager.

### Admission to Candidacy

When a student has completed all required major courses, passed the comprehensive exams, conducted the dissertation proposal defense, and submitted a revised dissertation proposal that has been approved by their dissertation chair and committee, the student may then make formal application to the Graduate School office for admission to candidacy for the EdD or PhD.

Submission of the Dissertation Topic Approval form and Application for Admission to Candidacy form after your proposal defense (see #6 above) is the mechanism for admission to candidacy.

### Registering for Dissertation Credit Hours

After you have advanced to candidacy, you begin registering for ELC 799 Dissertation. You must register for 12 credit hours of ELC 799 Dissertation as part of your dissertation work. Speak with your chair to determine how you should divide these hours. Summer school registration for ELC 799 is not required.

If at the completion of 12 hours of ELC 799 you have not completed your dissertation, you are required to maintain continuous registration by registering for ELC 802 Dissertation Extension and/or ELC 803 Research Extension until the dissertation is completed. You have a seven-year timeline to finish.
Research with Human Subjects

Students planning to conduct research involving human subjects must submit an online application for approval to the UNCG Institutional Review Board (IRB) after the proposal has been approved. It is important to allow sufficient time for the complete review procedure (typically, two to four weeks, depending on the time of year and the nature of your study). No data can be collected until you receive formal notification of final approval by the Institutional Review Board.

See http://integrity.uncg.edu/institutional-review-board/ for application forms and required training. Confer with your committee chair before submitting a proposal to IRB.

Dissertation

To help doctoral students design and complete high quality relevant doctoral dissertations, students are required to take courses in research design and to work closely with their selected professors. Faculty members view a student's doctoral research as providing a student with a starting point for developing an ongoing research program that continues beyond the completion of this degree.

Students should be aware that dissertation etiquette requires allowing two weeks, preferably three weeks "turn-around" time from committee members to read and respond to submitted materials.

EdD Program

Students in the EdD Program receive a document titled “Dissertation Guidelines” during their coursework. Program faculty will provide further guidance on the suggested and requested elements of your dissertation during the program.

Dissertation Defense

The oral dissertation defense in the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations specifically is designed to serve two primary functions:

1. Provide a basis for sound faculty judgments of the qualifications and capability of the student concerning doctoral level research, and

2. Provide an integrative educational experience that complements the student’s learning. Generally, the oral dissertation defense both explores and “celebrates” the student’s knowledge on the dissertation topic. However, it is not viewed as a high-stakes examination; students will be provided opportunities to address any concerns or issues with their dissertation that are expressed at the defense.
The oral dissertation defense takes place when the student has successfully completed all requirements for the degree. The student schedules the defense in agreement with the chair of the dissertation committee. It is the chair’s responsibility to determine whether the written dissertation is ready to proceed to the oral defense. Committee members are typically asked to review the dissertation within a week of the defense and inform the dissertation chair if any major revisions are needed.

The oral defense must be held by the final date to defend dissertations set by the Graduate School.

The defense is open to the “UNCG Community” (i.e., all UNCG faculty members and students), and family members and friends also are welcomed to attend, however this is not typical in the ELC Department; please inform your chair if you intend to have guests; guests may be asked to leave during questioning by committee members.

The policy of the Graduate School for advertising the time and location of a dissertation defense requires completion of the Final Oral Examination Schedule form, which is to be filed with the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the dissertation defense.

The Department’s procedures for the dissertation defense include a brief presentation by the doctoral candidate. Plan with your Chair what this presentation should include. Following this part of the defense, any community guests may be excused, and the candidate and Committee members will remain for further questioning.

The following items are specific Departmental rules that apply to the defense:

1. Doctoral degree candidates must deliver a fully prepared copy of the dissertation to each member of the dissertation committee well in advance of the scheduled dissertation defense. A minimum of two (2) calendar weeks is required; 3 weeks is preferred. Leave yourself ample time to finalize the format, make copies, etc.

2. The dissertation defense is to be scheduled at a time when all members of the Dissertation Committee are present.

3. The Dean of the Graduate School should be notified immediately if the schedule for the doctoral student’s dissertation defense is changed from that which was submitted on the Final Oral Examination Form.

4. Guests from the UNCG community who attend the dissertation defense do not vote on the student’s performance at or during the dissertation defense. At the end of the dissertation defense, the student and guests will be asked to leave the room while the committee confers.
5. The Chair will notify the Graduate School of the results of the oral defense, using the form titled “Results of the Oral Examination in Defense of Thesis/Dissertation.” Students should bring this form, completed as much as possible, to the defense.

Dissertation Approval Process

In brief, the overall steps to obtaining approval for your dissertation are as follows:

1. Submit a copy of your dissertation to each of your committee members.
2. Present your oral defense.
3. Get suggestions for revising the dissertation from the committee. In conjunction with your chair, document these changes and corrections in writing (memo to all committee members).
4. Follow whatever guidelines are set out by your committee to obtain a final copy acceptable to all committee members. Prepare an approval copy.
5. Submit the approval copy of the dissertation (pdf file) via the online submission site by the deadline date outlined by the Graduate School.
6. Deliver the signed originals (hard copies) of the Title Page and Approval Page to the Graduate School. Items must be received by the approval copy deadline. It is the student’s responsibility to know and adhere to the Graduate School deadlines.
7. Make revisions based upon the Graduate School's requirements. Submit the final copy of the dissertation (pdf file) via the online submission site by the deadline date outlined by the Graduate School. See The Graduate School Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD) page for more information on submission guidelines.
8. Mail or deliver the completed ETD Release Form to the Graduate School. In addition, it is customary to give each committee member a copy of the final dissertation.

Preparation of Dissertation for Submission to Graduate School

Consult the UNCG Thesis and Dissertation Manual, which should be the primary source for formatting your dissertation. It is available at https://grs.uncg.edu/current/about-etd/. The Graduate School also holds training sessions about the required format each semester.

Electronic submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School is required. Directions for converting a Word document to a pdf file are available at https://grs.uncg.edu/current/about-etd.

Please be aware that you may be notified of needed corrections to conform to the Graduate School format; you will need to satisfy any corrections before you can be cleared for graduation, so timely responses to emails about needed corrections is critical.
**Estimated Costs**

See the Estimated Costs section of the Graduate School webpage (https://grs.uncg.edu/financial/estimated-cost/) for information on required fees related to your doctoral studies. It is important to be aware of the many costs involved in doing your research, writing your dissertation, and fulfilling graduation requirements.