

School of Teacher Education and Leadership
Distance Doctorate of Education (PhD)
Curriculum and Instruction Specialization
Declaration of Commitment

A doctoral degree is the highest professional degree given in higher education. Potential students should be aware that the course work, reading assignments, and research expectations in a doctoral program are extremely demanding. For every three-credit class, six-to-eight hours of out-of-class study a week may be expected. Thus, a typical semester of doctoral work in this program would require 18 to 20 hours a week of your time. Once course work is finished, students must successfully complete a comprehensive examination and present a written dissertation proposal to a faculty committee. When the comprehensive exam is passed and the doctoral committee approves the proposal, the candidate may begin work on the dissertation. Visits to Logan to meet with your doctoral committee during the proposal and dissertation stages are to be expected.

The dissertation is a research project that makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the discipline being studied. Students in the Distance Doctorate program are encouraged to engage in research that has immediate application and long-term implications for the quality of education in their communities and beyond. Once the dissertation is completed, a committee of five faculty members critiques it and an oral defense of the research is held. After all revisions requested by the doctoral committee and the supervisory chair and liaisons for the School of Graduate Studies are completed, the degree of Doctor of Education is awarded.

The Distance Doctorate provides a unique opportunity for you to develop content and research expertise. There are, however, at least 10 important questions you should ask yourself before pursuing this degree.

1. Can I commit the time necessary to be successful in this program?
2. Will I be able to balance the demands of my professional position and other responsibilities with those of the doctoral program?
3. Is my personal learning style such that I will be successful in a program that involves (a) a substantial number of electronically delivered and web-enhanced courses, and (b) the need to communicate electronically with peers, faculty, and library services?
4. Do I have the proper attitude? (Doctoral work is an intensely intellectual experience and should not be considered as anything less.)
5. Are my summers available? (For two consecutive summers, students need to plan on spending approximately one month in residency on the USU campus in Logan.)
6. Can I develop and complete projects in a reasonable amount of time?
7. Am I committed to developing research competence?
8. Is perseverance one of my strengths?
9. Are the rewards I will receive upon earning my doctorate (intellectual, psychological, monetary) sufficient to sustain me through the challenges of doctoral study?
10. Is there a high probability that I will be able to complete the scheduled program in the 4 years that are allotted? This program is a lockstep cohort program in which students take a set sequence of courses as parts of the program. Each cohort group will have a cap on enrollment; therefore, there will be no space available for students from past student cohorts to join future cycles of the program.

Please do not take these questions lightly. The College of Education and Human Services is in the top 2% of graduate schools of education in the country. You should assume that the rigor expected in this program will be consistent with expectations in our on-campus program and those of other major research universities. The program will be academically rigorous.

I declare that I have read the above information, answered all the questions affirmatively, and I would like to apply to the doctoral program with full knowledge of the commitment I am making.

Name (printed) _____

Signature _____ Date _____