

EDUCATIONAL STUDIES, PH.D.

Overview

Mission

Talbot School of Theology of Biola University offers graduate work leading to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Educational Studies (<https://www.biola.edu/degrees/g/educational-studies-phd/>). The doctoral program, established in 1984, is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The doctoral degree is offered within the Department of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology.

The doctoral course of study is designed for men and women to enhance their leadership roles in a variety of theologically-oriented educational contexts within God's Kingdom — Christian higher education, the local church and parachurch organizations throughout the world.

Students come to the programs already having completed a graduate degree and significant experience in education related contexts. In general, doctoral students are established within a particular educational setting and return following completion of the program. A few students are in transition in their career path. The curriculum particularly encourages conceptual thinking, integrative synthesis of Scripture and social science data, and original empirical research. Courses typically follow a graduate seminar format requiring student initiative for significant participation in class discussion. Small class sizes of 8–15 students permit such a dialogical format, an important element for promoting critical and integrative thinking.

The mission of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is to mentor men and women with evident gifts of leadership and teaching in mind and character, within a Christian community of scholars and practitioners, to make contributions, from a distinctly Christian perspective, in scholarship for and in the practice of Christian educational studies within God's Kingdom — as faculty and administrators in educational institutions, as leaders in parachurch organizations, and as pastoral staff in local churches, throughout the world — in order to nurture spiritual vitality, growth, and maturity.

Distinctives

An important component of the Talbot doctoral program is the integrative synthesis of social science data within a Christian worldview perspective. Since both education and theology address the human condition, the doctoral faculty believe there is a great deal to be gained by an interdisciplinary study of biblical and theological knowledge, philosophical issues, human development, the teaching-learning process, and issues of leadership. Consequently, students are expected to come to the program with a sufficient background of theological training. (A minimum of 18 graduate credits of Bible and theology is required. For those lacking these prerequisites, distance learning courses are available from Talbot School of Theology. Contact the Graduate Admissions office for further information.)

Students selecting Talbot's Ph.D. in Educational Studies degree are interested in combining educational leadership and teaching with a strong emphasis in developing a competency in empirical research and the contribution of theory in the practice of education-related studies. Research training in the Ph.D. program is primarily empirical with some opportunity for conceptual research as well.

Cohort Approach

New groups of students begin the program every year in the fall semester. Students work through the program courses together, with some choice of elective options to fit their study interests.

Course Design for Distance Students

The coursework phase and candidacy exam capstone course can be completed in two or three years. Designed for those living at a distance and who may be working full-time, program required courses are taught as one-week intensives on campus in early November (fall semester) and in early March (spring semester) that include both pre-intensive and post-intensive video conferences, readings, and assignments.

Elective courses in the fall and spring semesters are also offered as one-week intensives that provide face-to-face instruction and interaction (the week following the required intensive, permitting one trip to campus per semester). A few electives are available as online courses or as weekly online seminars.

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate competence and ethical practices in designing and carrying out sound original empirical research to extend knowledge in the field of educational studies (ULO 1, 2 and 3).
2. Locate, analyze, critically evaluate, synthesize, and apply knowledge from the literature of the broad field of educational studies to address the needs of educational and ministry settings (ULO 1 and 3).
3. Demonstrate proficiency in carrying out biblical and theological research, integrating theological and social science data to inform and guide educational and ministry research, theory development, and practice (ULO 1 and 3).
4. Demonstrate teaching abilities and skills suitable for higher educational settings (ULO 3).
5. Demonstrate the needed writing skills to communicate with academic audiences (ULO 3).
6. Give evidence of ongoing personal openness and spiritual responsiveness to God and a desire to continue to grow in relationship with God (ULO 2).

Each Program Learning Outcome (PLO) listed above references at least one of the University Learning Outcomes (ULO 1, 2, 3), which may be found in the General Information section (<http://catalog.biola.edu/general-information/#UniversityLearningOutcomes>) of this catalog.

Admission Requirements

Admission Requirements

The doctoral program seeks to admit applicants whose background clearly demonstrate scholarly aptitude, a commitment to the historic Christian faith and theological tradition, personal character and integrity, a service-oriented motivation toward endeavors of leadership and teaching and a deepening relationship with God. Biola University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnic group identification, gender, age or physical disability.

As in many graduate programs, enrollment is limited. In order to be admitted to full graduate standing, the applicant must comply with the following:

1. Have earned an accredited Master's degree with 18 credits of graduate Bible and theology. A minimum GPA of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale in all previous graduate work is required.
2. Applicants whose formal educational preparation does not include all of the required prerequisite coursework must make arrangements to satisfactorily complete them prior to beginning doctoral studies. Graduate pre-requisite study in theology and Bible may be completed online through Talbot School of Theology.
3. Submit a completed online Talbot School of Theology doctoral application form and application fee. The form will provide a place to indicate the degree program for which application is being made, either the Ph.D. or Ed.D.
4. Test Scores: (a) GRE scores are not required for admission. (b) For international applicants for whom English is not a primary language, submit scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT) with an overall score of at least 100 on the TOEFL iBT, with expected minimum scores for the four sections as follows: Writing (25), Reading (25), Speaking (25), Listening (25). Since doctoral seminars involve regular student discussion, it is expected that international students have the requisite ability in listening to and speaking spoken English at a doctoral level so as to be contributing members of such discussions.
5. Present evidence of potential for original academic research at the doctoral level by submitting a sample of scholarly writing (with citations and bibliography), preferably related to education, of at least 10 pages, but not more than 20 pages.
6. Applicants may be asked to be interviewed by the program director or the Doctoral Program Committee as a requirement for admission.

Note: Official documents presented for admission or evaluation become part of the student's academic file and normally cannot be returned or copied for distribution.

Application Deadlines

The application deadline for the Ph.D. degree program is March 1. A new cohort of students is admitted in the fall semester only.

Since enrollment for the degree programs is limited and admission is on a selective basis, applications should be made as early as possible.

Special Study Status

Students actively enrolled in an accredited doctoral program in education may be eligible to take an elective course either for enrichment purposes or transfer credit. An abbreviated application for such purposes would include a completed short special sessions form, a letter from the Registrar of the school indicating good standing and a completed pastoral reference form.

Those wishing to explore the possibility of entering doctoral studies at Talbot, or who have already earned a doctoral degree and wish to pursue further study for personal enrichment, and who generally meet the doctoral admission requirements, may be able to enroll in one elective course as a special student. Contact the Graduate Admissions office at Biola University for more information.

Graduation Requirements

While the doctorate is not awarded simply for completion of stated coursework, the Ph.D. degree requires 36 semester credits of coursework including 21 credits of required courses (including the Candidacy Exam Capstone Course, 3 credits), and 15 credits of electives. After the student advances to candidacy, they will enroll in a 3-credit dissertation course each semester until they have completed their dissertation.

Students will meet with an academic advisor at the beginning of their studies to plan out a course plan. All dissertation students must contact a graduate academic records and degree specialist in the Office of the Registrar one year prior to graduation to declare their intent to graduate. (See Graduate Graduation Check description in the Admission, Enrollment and Graduation Requirements section (<http://catalog.biola.edu/general-information/admission-enrollment-graduation-requirements/#GraduatePrograms>)).

Candidacy Exam Capstone Course

During the final semester of coursework, the student enrolls in and completes the TTDE 8950 Candidacy Exam Capstone course before advancement to begin dissertation studies in the following semester. TTDE 8950 provides the opportunity to evaluate the student's attainment of program learning outcomes.

Advancement to Candidacy

Official candidacy for the doctorate signifies an advanced stage in the student's progress and is characterized by self-directed research in the completion of a dissertation under the direction of a faculty dissertation Chair. The following criteria must be met by each doctoral student at the completion of the coursework phase of doctoral studies to be awarded Candidacy Status by the Doctoral Program Faculty. Then, the doctoral student is eligible to begin dissertation studies. For students not meeting these criteria, the Doctoral Program Faculty will review the matter and the student may be subject for dismissal from the doctoral program.

1. Successfully completed Candidacy Exam Capstone Course.
2. Successfully completed 36 credits, including all required courses for the particular degree program.
3. Has attained a minimum GPA of 3.25 for all coursework completed for the doctoral degree.
4. Has established evidence of Christian life and character during his or her course of studies.

Dissertation

After passing the TTDE 8950 Candidacy Exam Capstone Course and being awarded Candidacy Status, the dissertation student will be approved to enroll in TTDE 8960 (3 credits) for up to five semesters with full-time status. A student must be enrolled during the semester of graduation. Students who require more time must receive approval to enroll in TTDE 8970 (3 credits). If needed, enrollment in TTDE 8970 does not constitute full-time status. Doctoral students must submit a dissertation evidencing high attainment in scholarship. Detailed information may be found in the Dissertation Guidelines Handbook.

Dissertation Chairs are available to supervise dissertations during the regular fall and spring terms only. See the current Dissertation Guidelines for a detailed explanation.

Final Dissertation Defense and Graduation

The final examination is an oral defense of the dissertation before the student's dissertation committee and other invited guests. Detailed information regarding the defense and final submission deadlines for graduation may be found in the Dissertation Guidelines Handbook.

All students must:

1. Present an acceptable dissertation,
2. Satisfactorily pass their candidacy exam capstone course, and
3. Complete all coursework with a minimum 3.25 GPA to qualify for graduation.

Beyond completion of academic requirements,

1. Doctoral Program faculty must also recommend that the student is eligible for conferral of the degree on the basis of evidence of Christian life and character established during his or her course of studies, and
2. All financial obligations must be settled.

Attendance at commencement ceremonies is required when the degree is granted unless approval has been received to graduate in absentia.

Program Requirements

General Academic Information

Classification of Students

Doctoral students will be classified as regular graduate students. All prerequisites must be satisfied before beginning doctoral study. Full-time study is defined as 6 credits per semester. All doctoral students must be enrolled as full-time students with at least 6 credits each semester. Exceptions may be granted by the doctoral office under extenuating circumstances. While most students are enrolled in a hybrid modality (including online, residency, and weekly in-person courses), a fully online modality may also be possible.

Coursework students enrolled only in TTDE 8950 Candidacy Exam Capstone are considered full-time students for that semester only.

Dissertation students are given full-time status for up to five semesters of TTDE 8960.

Research Competence

Specific research skills appropriate for proposed dissertation study are to be demonstrated. Appropriate research tools and methods may include biblical languages, statistical analysis and qualitative research methodologies applicable to educational problems and issues. Deficiencies in research competence may result in additional program specialization components.

Grading System

Students wishing to obtain a doctoral degree must maintain a consistently high academic performance throughout their program. An overall grade point average of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale, is required. Only grades of A, B, or C earn graduate credit, although the course grade of B- or lower will trigger a review of the student's qualification to remain in the program, as noted below under Academic Probation and Dismissal. Grades of all students are recorded in the Office of the Registrar.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Cumulative Grade Point Average: A student failing to maintain the minimum GPA of 3.25 will be placed on academic probation. The following semester, should the student not meet the minimum cumulative GPA (3.25), the Doctoral Program Faculty will review the matter and the student is subject to dismissal from the doctoral program. Students who receive one course grade of B- or lower will be reviewed by the Doctoral Program Faculty and are subject to Academic Probation. For a second course grade of B- or lower, the Doctoral Program Faculty will review the matter and the student is subject to dismissal from the doctoral program.

Timely Progress

Timely Progress in the Coursework Phase: During the coursework phase, doctoral students must complete a minimum of 12 credits toward the doctoral degree per academic year, except for the final year of coursework study.

Timely Progress in the Dissertation Phase: Students in the dissertation phase of doctoral studies must make timely progress toward the completion of a dissertation. Timely progress is made by achieving the relevant semester-by-semester milestone requirements related to the particular degree program as specified in the Program Handbook. If a Ph.D. student is not able to successfully defend their dissertation proposal by the fourth semester of dissertation studies, then the Doctoral Program Faculty will review the matter and the student may be subject for dismissal from the doctoral program.

Time Limit for Degrees

All course and academic requirements must be completed within seven years from the date of the student's first registration for graduate study in the doctoral program.

Failure to Register/Unofficial Withdrawal

Students who fail to register or pay the necessary portion of their tuition bill in any given semester without arranging for a leave of absence or formal withdrawal are dismissed from the program by default since official registration for that semester was never completed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of course selection and registration procedures and deadlines, and program deadlines for paying tuition and fees.

Students who unofficially withdraw from the program and are later readmitted may be required to pay continuation fees for semesters during which they were not enrolled and are subject to doctoral program curriculum changes and graduation requirements implemented during their program inactivity.

Leave of Absence

Inactive students are those who have requested and been granted a Leave of Absence from the program. A Leave of Absence may be granted upon petition for change of status if there is deemed sufficient reason for interrupting the program and there is an intention to return to the program. A Leave of Absence longer than one semester will require withdrawal from the program and later a petition for readmission if the student wishes to regain active status. A Leave of Absence request must receive the approval of the Program Director. Students on leave are required to register for TTDE 8891 (a 1-credit fee may be assessed).

Readmission

A person who has withdrawn or been dismissed from the doctoral program may request and file a reapplication to the program one-time,

following a minimum of six months after termination. The reapplication request should include the reasons for requesting re-admittance as well as any other issues deemed relevant by the applicant. The letter should directly address the causes for dismissal, and present a realistic plan and time schedule for completion of the program, should readmission be granted. The application will be considered with the regular admissions pool of applicants.

Curriculum Requirements

The curriculum of the doctoral program is organized into two parts: a series of common required program courses taken by all students and elective courses from which the student will select those appropriate for a program of study.

Code	Title	Credits
Program Courses		
TTDE 8010	Philosophical Issues in Educational Studies	3
TTDE 8020	Research I: Introduction to Educational Research	3
TTDE 8030	Research II: Qualitative Research	3
TTDE 8040	Research III: Quantitative Research and Statistics	3
TTDE 8050	Theological Research and Integration for Educational Studies	3
TTDE 8800	Internship in Higher Education	3
TTDE 8950	Candidacy Exam Capstone	3
Elective Courses		
Select a minimum of 15 credits of Elective Courses		15
Dissertation		
TTDE 8960	Dissertation ¹	6-15
Total Credits		42-51

¹ After passing the Candidacy Examination, the student will enroll in TTDE 8960 (3 credits) for up to five semesters. A student must be enrolled during the semester of graduation. Students who require more time must receive approval to enroll in TTDE 8970 (3 credits). Dissertation students are considered full-time for a maximum of five semesters of TTDE 8960 only.