

Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction

**An interdisciplinary degree offered by
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
with study in Elementary Education, Literacy, Mathematics, and
Urban Education**



Doctoral Student Handbook



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The Program



Overview

The Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction is an interdisciplinary degree program involving the Departments of English; Mathematics; Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education; Reading and Elementary Education; and many others across the UNC Charlotte campus.

The program offers the following four areas of concentration, all of which emphasize the context of urban education issues:

1. Elementary Education with research and theory applied to problems of learning and teaching in elementary education.
3. Literacy Education with research and theory applied to problems of literacy learning and instruction, oriented around three sub-concentrations of Reading, English Education, and Teaching English as a Second Language.
5. Mathematics Education with research and theory applied to problems of learning and teaching mathematics. Students focus on elementary, middle/secondary, or post-secondary.
6. Urban Education with research and theory applied to critical social issues affecting schools and society from a historical, contemporary, and theoretical perspective in a global context. In order to address the complexities of urban schooling, this program is interdisciplinary and draws on education, public policy, sociology, anthropology, and ethnic studies.

Course of Study

The Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction requires a minimum of 60 hours of coursework and dissertation preparation, with additional study possible as an individual's needs arise. A distinctive characteristic of the program is a common urban education core that is required of all students. This urban education core consists of 12 hours of coursework, including: Critical Issues and Perspectives in Urban Education; Power, Privilege, and Education; Social Theory and Education; and Globalization, Urbanization and Urban Schools. A fifth course is highly recommended for all students, and it is required for those in the urban education concentration. See additional information in concentration planning sheets.)

In addition, the research component consists of at least 15 hours of research courses including: RSCH 8210: Applied Research Methods (a prerequisite for all other research courses). See individual concentration planning sheets for suggestions or specific requirements.

The 21 to 24-hour specialization component consists of courses relevant to urban education, literacy education, elementary education, or mathematics education, depending on the selected concentration of study. Finally, the nine-hour dissertation component consists of a dissertation proposal seminar and a minimum of six hours of dissertation research.

In broad summary, doctoral students in this program are admitted in the fall of each year. Both part-time and full-time study are possible, with part-time students taking three to six hours per semester, including summer term, and full time students taking nine hours each semester. All requirements, including the dissertation, must be completed within eight years.

Mission Statement

The mission of this PhD program is to prepare excellent professionals who are knowledgeable, effective, reflective, collaborative and responsive leaders, and who can contribute uniquely and significantly to the field of urban education within a selected concentration of study. This mission nurtures student and faculty partnerships with schools, communities, and university colleagues, in response to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's commitment to children, families, and schools.

Urban Education

Urban Education as a focus provides students with the opportunity to more closely examine factors affecting schools and communities in our major cities. These factors include but are not limited to: race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, school finance, tracking, segregation, immigration and marginalization. In addition, urban education explores issues of cultural diversity, social stratification both local and global, and structural inequalities that impact the lives of many families living in our cities.

Disability Services

UNC Charlotte is committed to access to education. If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services early in the semester. For more information on accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 704-687-0040 or visit their office in Fretwell 230.

Diversity Statement

The College of Education at UNC Charlotte is committed to respect for all individuals, and it seeks to create a culture of inclusion that actively supports all who live, work, and serve in a diverse nation and world. Attaining justice and respect involves all members of our community in recognizing that multi-dimensional diversity contributes to the College's learning environments, thereby enriching the community and improving opportunities for human understanding. While the term "diversity" is often used to refer to differences, the College's intention is for inclusiveness, an inclusiveness of individuals who are diverse in ability/disability, age, economic status, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Therefore, the College aspires to become a more diverse community in order to extend its enriching benefits to all participants. An essential feature of our community is an environment that supports exploration, learning, and work free from bias and harassment, thereby improving the growth and development of each member of the community.

Admissions Information



Admission to the Program

Applications for admission will be accepted once a year and must be submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office by **November 15** for admission consideration in the following fall semester. **All required admission materials, including the application, recommendations, transcripts, test scores, and application fee, must be received by this date.** Students should not take courses prior to full admission to the degree program unless the program and concentration coordinators agree, and then only under exceptional circumstances.

Admission to the program is highly competitive and seating is limited. Application materials will be carefully reviewed by Curriculum and Instruction faculty, particularly those who teach within the requested concentration of study. The following criteria will be fundamental to the admission decision. (Note: * items are required of applicants to any of UNC Charlotte's doctoral programs.)

- Master's degree appropriate to the program of study
- GPA of 3.5 (on a scale of 4.0) in a graduate degree program and an acceptable score on the Graduate Record Examination or Millers Analogies Test within the last five years*
- High level of professionalism and potential for leadership (shown through letters of reference and faculty interview)
- Strong writing skills (demonstrated in purpose statement; professional writing sample such as published article, manuscript submitted for publication, research paper submitted in prior coursework with abstract of thesis; on site writing sample)*
- Clear career objectives related to obtaining Ph.D. as evidenced in purpose statement, faculty interview, writing samples, and references from persons who know applicant's current work or academic achievement in previous degree*
- International students must submit official test scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), with at least 550 on the written test or 220 on the computer-based test, or a score of at least 85% on the Michigan English Language Assessment (MELAB). All tests must have been taken within the past two years.*

NOTE: Each concentration may cite additional admission criteria

Specific Documents Necessary for Admission

- Official transcripts of all academic work attempted (two copies) Official GRE or MAT scores
- At least three reference forms and letters Purpose statement
- Current resume or vita
- Professional writing sample
- TOEFL scores if the applicant is an international student
- Program information is available at:
<http://education.uncc.edu/mdsk/programs/Ph.D/>

Overview of Doctoral Program Admissions Process

Admission to the program is by recommendation of the Curriculum & Instruction faculty in the requested concentration, program director, and the final approval of the Graduate School. Each applicant is considered individually, and the applicant is responsible for ensuring that all application materials are on file by the November 15 deadline. Folders will be reviewed once all materials have been received, and a limited number of applicants will be invited to the campus for interviews. Following this campus meeting, the interviewing faculty will forward admissions decisions to the Graduate School for final review and processing.

Interview Process

Applicants selected as potential students will be invited to campus for an interview. This meeting will allow applicants the opportunity to become more familiar with the program and faculty in order to determine whether the program will help them achieve their individual goals. It will also give the faculty an opportunity to observe the interpersonal skills of each applicant and to evaluate his/her suitability for the UNC Charlotte doctoral program in Curriculum and Instruction, Urban Education. The individual strand coordinators will schedule these interviews, which will include members of the Curriculum & Instruction faculty within the candidate's chosen concentration of study (designated here as the Selection Committee).

Applicants will be asked a series of questions by the Selection Committee, which will provide information for the admissions decision. The interview questions will focus primarily on information about the applicant's educational background, commitment to urban education, and potential to contribute positively as a student in the program. Following the interview, applicants may be asked to read a short passage and prepare a written response to a prompt that will be reviewed and rated by the Selection Committee.

When the process has been completed, the Selection Committee will meet and consider all information from the admissions process before making final recommendations to the Graduate School regarding admission to the program. At any point during the application review process, applicants may be asked to supply additional information to guide the committee's decision.

Notification of Admission Decision

The Graduate School will notify applicants in writing and via email of their final decision. This notification usually occurs within four weeks of the candidate's interview.

General Information



Degree Requirements

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum & Instruction is awarded for completion of scholarly inquiry, study, and research that advances the knowledge base in the chosen field of study within the larger context of urban education. All students will demonstrate their competence in the field by writing and successfully defending a PhD dissertation. In addition, recipients of the degree must demonstrate a mastery of relevant subject matter and a potential for success in future research and teaching. The program requires a minimum of 60 hours of approved coursework.

Study is available in one of the following areas, each of which is examined through the lens of an urban educator: Elementary Education; Literacy Education (including English, Reading, and English as a Second Language); Mathematics Education; or Urban Education.

Grades Required

A student must maintain a cumulative average of 3.0 in all coursework taken. An accumulation of more than two C grades will result in termination of the student's enrollment in the graduate program. If a student makes a grade of U in any course, enrollment in the program will be terminated.

Transfer Credit Accepted

The program will accept six transfer hours from an accredited institution, providing the appropriate Curriculum and Instruction faculty determine that the course or courses to be transferred are appropriate for the program of study and are graduate-level courses beyond the master's degree. (See the concentration coordinator about this course-by-course review.) Courses accepted for transfer are subject to the same time limitation as courses taken in residence. Finally, the grades in these transfer courses must be an A or B. The remaining 54 hours, including all dissertation work, must be completed at UNC Charlotte.

Time Limitation

Students will be admitted each fall with the understanding that most students will be part time and will usually take six hours per term. (NOTE: Students will take some courses together as a cohort, including those taken the first semester.) The program requires a minimum of 60 semester hours. Students will have a total of eight years to complete the program, including dissertation, beginning from the date of the first course, including transfer credits. With the approval of the student's concentration coordinator and the doctoral program coordinator, six hours of transfer credit for post-Master's coursework earned at an accredited university within the previous five years will be accepted.

After acceptance into the program, students will begin work in both the urban core and the area of specialization; for example, it is recommended that a student take one specialization course in each of the first two semesters. Guidance concerning course selections will be provided by the program and concentration coordinators upon the student's acceptance to the program.

Note, as well, that summer courses will be available based on demand and funding. Though the university will target three or more summer courses each year, variations may not always be available. (For example, the same courses might be taught every summer, with minimal rotation.) Concentration coordinators will talk with students during fall semester to determine summer course needs and will work to accommodate those needs whenever possible.

Student Dispositions and Faculty Expectations

Doctoral students are expected to actively and enthusiastically engage in a variety of opportunities that will both contribute to their program and prepare them for their desired careers after graduation. For example, students should be able to:

- Read and reflect on complicated texts
- Prepare for class thoroughly in order to participate in intellectual discussions with deep analysis and synthesis
- Submit reflective and purposeful assignments with appropriate formatting by the established due date
- Develop an organized compilation of foundational readings throughout all courses using a systematic process of tracking and note taking
- Plan for and embrace the depth of knowledge and skills required to produce a research study that has the potential for making a significant contribution to the field
- Present at local, state, and/or national conferences
- Write for publication
- Show the potential for service to the field
- Exhibit professional ethics and outstanding conduct in all situations

Advising

An adviser will be assigned by the coordinator of the concentration (Elementary Education, English Education, Reading, Teaching English as a Second Language, Mathematics Education, or Urban Education) when the student is accepted into the program. Program requirements will be based on a comprehensive planning sheet that lists the courses required by the concentration.

As the student proceeds with coursework, advisers will identify faculty whose research interests and expertise are congruent with the student's probable area of dissertation inquiry. The student should reach an agreement with a faculty member to serve as dissertation chair during the semester in which the student takes the comprehensive examination. This chair must be a member of the Curriculum & Instruction Graduate Faculty and should be invited in consultation with the adviser, the concentration coordinator, and the doctoral coordinator.

Please note that the assistance of the adviser does not relieve the student of responsibility for completing required work and for following program, department, and university procedures. **Forms**, required by the Graduate School at various stages of the program (described below), can be accessed from the **Graduate School homepage**, by clicking on "forms."

The Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is taken after a student has completed all the core courses, a minimum of 12 hours of required research courses, and at least 18 hours of concentration courses. The comprehensive examination will be offered in the spring of each year near the end of the spring semester. The exact date for comps will be announced in the opening weeks of each spring semester. Students will be expected to arrange their schedules so that they have suitable time to complete the comprehensive exam. Students must notify their adviser of their readiness by mid-term of the fall semester prior to taking the examination.

The examination will be divided into three parts : Core, Research, and Concentration.

The first part of the examination, the Urban Core, will cover substantive course content and additional readings, research, and research methodologies from the required courses.

The second part (Research and Specialization) will vary in design by concentration. For example, one concentration might require additional examination questions on campus in a monitored setting, while other concentrations may ask students to complete a project with a final presentation to a committee of evaluators.

Details for all three parts follow:

1. **Core:** The questions will be prepared and graded by faculty members affiliated with the urban concentration and who have provided relevant instruction to the students in the urban core coursework. This exam is a take-home exam. Students choose one of five questions and craft responses up to fifteen pages, double-spaced. It is expected that the students complete the exam within one full week (seven days), cite relevant research and reference in APA format. Submissions are uploaded to the current academic platform used at UNC Charlotte.

The comprehensive examination is given once per year in the spring semester. For those students who receive a Revise and Resubmit or a failing grade, retakes are held in the late summer to early fall semester. The urban concentration faculty members review and

rate the examination responses independently and then meet to review their scores. Using the consensus scoring method typical of federal grant panels, committee members can change their scores subsequent to this discussion. Consensus is then reached on the final scores by the committee members. All portions of the examination are evaluated by professors using the following scale:

* A grade denoting Pass indicates that a student has sufficiently answered the questions for that section of the examination, demonstrating mastery of the content and covering relevant content.

* A grade denoting Revise and Resubmit indicates that a student has answered most of the questions correctly from a particular section of the examination, but the evaluations were not sufficient for a grade of Pass. Therefore, the evaluators recommend that the student Revise and Resubmit his or her responses based on the evaluators' comments.

A grade denoting Fail indicates that a student has not answered the questions sufficiently on the examination. If a Fail is issued on any section(s) of the examination, students will only be required to retake section(s) that were failed. Students will be allowed to retake the failed portion only one time during the semester immediately following the spring examination (which will allow the student time to study or perhaps take a summer or fall course as needed.) If this second attempt fails, then the student will be denied Admission to Candidacy. The student will then be expected to develop a plan for strengthening his or her knowledge base prior to retaking the examination. This plan must receive approval from concentration's faculty and the doctoral director before it is approved. No student is permitted to defend a dissertation proposal or do official dissertation work until all sections of the comprehensive examination are passed.

2. Research and Concentration: Because the second portion of the exam will be determined by the concentration faculty, this portion of the examination will vary. For the research and specialization section, students should consult with their adviser and concentration coordinator for specific specialty requirements for their concentration of study. This assignment may be an additional examination, or it may require the submission of an assignment like a project, a major research paper, an article, the design of a course, or a pilot study that synthesizes the content of the courses that make up the student's specialty. This will be graded by the faculty members who are a part of the student's concentration. For this specialization examination, students will receive a grade of Pass, Revise and Resubmit, or Fail.

After Passing, or after successfully revising and resubmitting, students might be required to complete an oral presentation of their work, which will be reviewed by faculty members who are a part of the student's concentration. Students are expected to incorporate technology into their presentations.

Evaluation for all portions of the examination:

- A grade denoting Pass indicates that a student has sufficiently answered the questions

for that section of the examination, receiving a majority of the votes from the evaluators.

- A grade denoting Revise and Resubmit indicates that a student has answered most of the questions correctly from a particular section of the examination, but the evaluations were not sufficient for a grade of Pass. Therefore, the evaluators recommend that the student Revise and Resubmit his or her responses based on the evaluators' comments. Students who receive a Revise and Resubmit on any part of the examination will be responsible for rewriting their responses and addressing the concerns from the initial reviews. The section(s) are to be rewritten and submitted to the evaluators within the time designated by the examiners.
- A grade denoting Fail indicates that a student has not answered the questions sufficiently on the examination. If a Fail is issued on any section(s) of the examination, students will only be required to retake the section(s) that were failed. Students will be allowed to retake the failed portion only one time during the fall semester immediately following the spring examination (which will allow the student time to study or perhaps take a summer or fall course as needed). If this second attempt fails, then the student will be terminated from the program.
- Finally, while the full test will be offered only in the spring of each academic year, a fall scheduling of the comprehensive examination will be provided as needed for students who are retaking a section(s) failed during the previous spring. During the interim period between the spring test and the fall retest, the student may continue taking courses. **No one will be allowed to defend a dissertation proposal or do official dissertation work until all sections of the comprehensive examination are passed.**
- Advisers and students must complete the **Comprehensive Examination Report Form for Doctoral Candidates**.

Continuous Registration Requirement

When students have completed their coursework, they must remain continuously registered during both the fall and spring semesters while they are working on their dissertation. Students should register for the three-credit hour EDCI 8999 (Dissertation Research) each semester in order to fulfill the continuous registration requirement. In the semester that they are waiting to graduate, students may register for the one-credit hour GRAD 9999 (formerly EDCI 9999). Student may register only once for GRAD 9999.

Admission to Candidacy

Students are considered candidates for the doctoral degree upon:

1. Successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination
2. Approval of the Dissertation Proposal
3. Submission of the Application for Candidacy form
4. A minimum of 48 hours of coursework successfully completed

The **Petition for Topic Approval Form, Doctoral Dissertation Committee Application Form**, and the **Application for Candidacy Form** should be submitted together. Candidacy must be achieved at least six months before the degree is conferred. Forms can be found on the web page for the Graduate School. (NOTE: Use the forms on the Graduate School's current website, as they may be updated there before they are

in paper copies that you might find in departments or from colleagues.)

Graduation

A student is entitled to graduate upon fulfillment of all requirements in effect at the time of admission into the doctoral program. Students must file an **Application for Degree Form**. Students are responsible for knowing the relevant published deadlines and for meeting them independently. The degree is conferred at the commencement following the fulfillment of all requirements, which may be December or May (with summer graduates included in the December ceremony). Candidates are expected to be present at the ceremony and will be accompanied to the stage by their dissertation chairs. Candidates are responsible for obtaining the details and requirements of the commencement from the Graduate School.

Dissertation Proposal and Defense



Preparing to Begin the Study

Although the dissertation study is culminating evidence of a candidate's knowledge base and skill set, students should actually begin preparations much earlier in the program. Consider the following recommendations:

- In all courses, students should read research studies through the lens of a researcher. What makes a study credible? Valuable? Important for the field? Intriguing?
- Students should seek out faculty and meet them as researchers. Initiate conversations about research interests and on-going projects. Join these projects whenever possible. (NOTE: Read through the list of Curriculum and Instruction Faculty found elsewhere in this handbook and peruse the faculty research interest database found on the program website.)
- Students should also note that the degree's requirements are not simply a list of courses; rather, this is a comprehensive program of study. Each course will add to the last and thus contribute to the development of a strong foundation of knowledge and skills. Opportunities for research will be woven throughout these courses, so students should begin to consider and prepare for the dissertation study fairly early.
- Students must read this document carefully and then merge the information here with deadlines and specifics required by the Graduate School. These deadlines and plans must then be added to the student's overall program of study. This program of study should then become the student's roadmap through the degree, and should guide advising sessions, course selection, research opportunities, publications and presentations, and the like. (See the concentration program of study forms on the website along with the 3-year plan of course roll-out.)

Selecting the Committee

The student must seek input from the adviser and the concentration coordinator prior to forming a dissertation committee. Further, this committee should be invited and finalized during the semester in which the student completes the comprehensive examination. The adviser will assist the student in this task. (Note: If it would benefit the student, then the chair may be selected prior to this time. The student should present their chair decision to the program and concentration coordinator, but not before the student has completed a minimum of 39 hours.)

The committee must consist of at least three faculty members and an additional member who is appointed by the Graduate School. The chair and at least one other member of the committee must be members of the Curriculum and Instruction faculty in the student's area of study. The third committee member will usually be a methodologist who is might be a Curriculum and Instruction faculty member, though this person may be from another concentration of study within the program. In addition, the Graduate School will appoint a Graduate Faculty Representative whose purview is to ensure that the student is treated fairly and that standards for dissertation requirements are upheld. File the **Committee Selection Form** with the Graduate School.

Finally, once it is formed, the dissertation committee should not be changed except in very rare cases such as the following:

- The faculty member finds that his or her interests or opportunities have changed and that it is in the best interest of the student for the faculty member to relinquish his or her position on the committee.

- The student finds that his or her interests have changed and the faculty member no longer holds an expertise in the new direction
- The student and faculty member find they have a conflict, professional or personal, that keeps them from being able to work together successfully.

In such situations, the student should immediately consult with the concentration adviser and doctoral program coordinator.

Dissertation Proposal

General Information:

The dissertation is the final example of the candidate's readiness for the degree. In close consultation with the student's dissertation committee, the student will finalize a topic for study and will then develop an original research study that contributes to the body of knowledge in the field. This proposal must be fully approved by the dissertation committee. (Note that each concentration area may require different components; for example, students in mathematics education are expected to include the results of a pilot study that informs and provides a rationale for the dissertation research. Each committee chair and concentration adviser will guide the student through these requirements.)

The proposal should include a draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation, as determined by the committee chair. This will likely include the Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology. Both the proposal and the final dissertation should be in compliance with the guidelines in the Graduate School's Dissertation Manual as well as the current APA publication manual.

Students must familiarize themselves with the policies, guidelines, and deadlines of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects in order to be in compliance. Approval to conduct research from the IRB must be obtained immediately after the proposal's defense and prior to data collection of any kind, which will ensure that all committee recommendations are accounted for in the final approval documents. See this website for information:

<http://www.research.uncc.edu/Comp/human.cfm>.

Following the approval of the dissertation topic, students are required to maintain continuous enrollment in both the fall and spring semesters for dissertation study until the work is completed. Continuous enrollment begins the semester after the dissertation topic is approved. Dissertation hours appear in the catalog for course credit, which will ensure the required continuous enrollment. Students should take a minimum of six dissertation hours, but may repeat them as often as needed beyond the requisite six hours.

Preparation of the Proposal:

1. Although students should begin preparations for their dissertation study early in their program, they are not ready to begin their dissertation proposals until they have selected their dissertation committee. With permission from both the concentration adviser and the dissertation chair, a student should enroll in EDCI 8699 with the goal of establishing a framework for their dissertation proposal depending on the amount of preparation that has preceded this course and depending on the direction provided to the course instructor by the dissertation

- chair. Throughout their Program of Study, students should explore possible topics for the dissertation based on specific research questions, eventually selecting and narrowing their study's topic. Once this has been determined, students should integrate course assignments and readings into a review of the relevant literature in the field.
2. Throughout the development of the dissertation proposal, the student should schedule systematic, structured meetings with the chair and selected members to report progress and to ask for guidance. Though strong committee structure is emphasized during this study's progress, it is important that the research idea come from the student, as the purpose of this project is for the student to lead a research endeavor. In addition, it is the student's responsibility to undertake a study of sufficient quality to make an important contribution to urban education in the selected concentration.
 3. In consultation with all dissertation committee members, the student (or chair) will reserve a time for the proposal defense. Once the time has been determined, the chair of the committee will reserve a space and will arrange for the necessary equipment, if applicable. The student will provide the necessary copies of all materials, either in print form or electronically, as determined by the committee chair.
 4. In consultation with the dissertation chair, the student may need to schedule individual meetings with each committee member prior to the defense. This will allow each member time to discuss any concerns and to give suggestions and prompts for the defense meeting. At least three weeks prior to the dissertation proposal defense date, the student should distribute paper or electronic copies of the proposal to the committee members, including the graduate faculty representative, the doctoral coordinator, and the chair of the department in which the concentration is located. Questions or concerns should be relayed by the committee members to the dissertation chair at least five full days prior to the scheduled proposal meeting. (NOTE: The chair may ask the committee members to send feedback directly to the student and simply copy the chair on this communication. Consult the chair for this decision.)

Proposal Defense Meeting:

1. The dissertation committee members and Graduate School representative, all Curriculum & Instruction program faculty, and department chairs are invited to the presentation of the proposal. The student and the committee chair may give permission for other doctoral students to attend.
2. The proposal presentation will likely last one to one and one-half hours. Standard format should include introductions, introductory remarks by the student regarding his/her interest areas, and an explanation of the proposed study. After this portion of the presentation is complete, the student will field questions from committee members and then may call for questions from outside audience members.
3. After the student has concluded the presentation, the student and any other observers should leave the room and the committee chair should then allow committee members time for additional comments. Once all discussion is complete, the committee will determine whether the student can move forward with the study or whether revisions are necessary. If revisions are required, then it is the committee's obligation to provide very specific feedback and guidance about these. Information

follows in the next section.

4. The student is then invited to return to the session and is informed of the committee's recommendation(s) regarding the proposed study.

Proposal Outcome:

Subject to review by the Dean of the College of Education and the Dean of the Graduate School, the student's doctoral committee has final recommending authority. The outcome of the proposal will be to:

1. Approve,
2. Modify and Approve, or
3. Disapprove

If the proposal is approved or modified and approved, the student submits the **Dissertation Proposal Form** with all committee members' signatures to the doctoral coordinator and then to the Graduate Dean. Upon full approval, the student may begin the data collection phase of the study. If, however, the proposal is not approved, then the student must correct the concern(s) immediately and to the committee's satisfaction. Those proposals that earn a rating of Disapprove must be defended a second time in front of the dissertation committee. No proposal can be presented for committee examination more than two times.

Dissertation Work:

Once the proposal process has been successfully completed, the candidate is ready to move into data collection and the final stages of the written research study, as guided closely by the dissertation chair and committee. Recognition of this work is granted through the course called Dissertation Hours, with the chair serving as the individual instructor of this course. A student is expected to enroll in a minimum of two three-hour sections of Dissertation Hours per semester.

Dissertation Defense

A doctoral dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret independent, original, and creative research using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methodologies. Further, it should make a unique contribution to knowledge in the field of curriculum and instruction within a selected concentration of study. Under the direct supervision of their doctoral committee chairs, students are encouraged to consult regularly with their doctoral committee members during the planning, conducting, and writing of the dissertation.

Once the study has been completed and the document is written, it should be submitted to the committee following the same general procedures as the proposal's distribution. Each candidate must then pass a final oral examination regarding the completed dissertation. Sometimes called the "dissertation defense" or the "dissertation oral," this meeting is open to members of the University community. The Graduate School must be informed of the date and place of the defense at least three weeks in advance. (**The Graduate School posts firm deadlines on its website, which impact several of the steps in this process. Each student is responsible for knowing and meeting these deadlines.**)

With the approval of the dissertation committee, the student will schedule the

dissertation defense. The student, with the committee chair's assistance, will arrange for a public announcement of the date, time, and place of the examination so that any interested member of the University may attend. Three weeks before the date, the student will distribute copies of the completed dissertation in either electronic or paper form, as directed by the committee chair. The defense will be conducted by the full doctoral committee.

Following the candidate's formal presentation and responses to questions posed by committee members, the committee will render a decision, with this decision requiring a majority vote. The following options are available to the committee:

1. Approve,
2. Approve contingent upon specific changes being made.
3. Defer pending an additional defense
4. Disapprove

If a student's work earns a rating of Disapprove, then that student must revise the final draft as directed by the committee and must defend the final report a second time. Further, the student may not sit in defense of the study more than two times.

Once successfully completed, the chair will file the **Dissertation Defense Report Form** in the Graduate School.

Following the successful completion of the defense, the doctoral candidate must meet with the Graduate School to check the final format of the dissertation. (An initial meeting prior to this one is advised but not mandatory.) Once the final format has been approved by the Graduate School, the student should submit either four unbound copies or an electronic copy of the approved, error-free manuscript to the Graduate School no later than the filing date indicated in the University calendar. See the **Graduate School's Manual of Basic Requirements** for details regarding such things as the final dissertation, number of copies, deadlines, and fees. The candidate is responsible for paying for archiving and optional copywriting fees. In addition, the candidate is responsible for presenting each committee member with a bound or electronic copy of the final manuscript, as requested by the committee.

NOTE: Though the Graduate School encourages electronic submissions rather than paper copies for its use, most faculty prefer paper copies; therefore, students should consult with their chairs early in the process to determine the committee's preference and should respond accordingly. Further, when paper copies are requested, students should prepare them professionally and should present them bound, in binders or with spiral binding. (The chair will make this determination.) Whether electronic or paper, each copy should include a cover page, abstract, table of contents, and all appendices in the proper format.

**Graduate Faculty
Curriculum and Instruction**



Curriculum and Instruction Faculty

Department of Middle, Secondary & K-12 Education

324 College of Education

704-687-8875

Program website:

education.uncc.edu/mdsk/academic-programs/phd-ci

Director

Dr. Paul Fitchett

Concentration Coordinators

Dr. Vic Cifarelli, Mathematics Concentration Coordinator

Dr. Chance Lewis, Urban Concentration Coordinator

Dr. Lara Vetter, Literacy Concentration (English Education) Co-coordinator

Dr. Spencer Salas, Literacy Concentration (Teaching English as Second Language) Co-coordinator

Dr. Brian Kissel, Literacy Concentration (Reading) Co-coordinator

Dr. Drew Polly, Elementary Education Concentration Coordinator

Other Graduate Faculty (Faculty research interest database which includes contact information can be found on the program website)

Dr. Lynn Ahlgrim-Delzell

Dr. Kelly Anderson

Dr. Julianna Avila

Dr. Ian Binns

Dr. Bettie Ray Butler

Dr. Anne Cash

Dr. Jeong-Lim Chae

Dr. Heather Coffey

Dr. Warren DiBiase

Dr. Amy Good

Dr. Anthony Fernandes

Dr. Claudia Flowers

Dr. Michael Green

Dr. Stephen Hancock

Dr. Tina Heafner
Dr. Charles Hutchison
Dr. Jeanneine Jones
Dr. LuAnn Jordan
Dr. Scott Kissau
Dr. Cy Knoblauch
Dr. Lan Kolano
Dr. Richard Lambert
Dr. Jae Hoon Lim
Dr. Christy Luce
Dr. Ron Lunsford
Dr. Adriana Medina
Dr. Lisa Merriweather
Dr. Greg Mixon
Dr. Chris O'Brien
Dr. Malin Pereira
Dr. Teresa Petty
Dr. Jack Piel
Dr. Paola Piloneta
Dr. David Pugalee
Dr. Mike Putman
Dr. Brenda Romanoff
Dr. Adalira Saenz-Ludlow
Dr. Tehia Starker-Glass
Dr. Michelle Stephan
Dr. Bruce Taylor
Dr. Chuang Wang
Dr. Karen Wood
Dr. Greg Wiggan

Academic Regulations and Policies



Academic Integrity

All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at: <http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407>

University Policy for Student Grievance Procedure

When a student complains about a certain action or inaction by a member of the University community, the student should follow the procedure as set forth in the Student Grievance Procedure which may be found at <http://www.legal.uncc.edu/StudentGrievanceProcedure.html>.

Appeal Procedures

College of Education Policy for Decisions Affecting Status as Graduate Student

1. When a student wishes to appeal a decision affecting his/her status as a graduate student, the student should first raise the issue with the person who made the decision or the person who represented the department of the college which made the decision at issue. If the person hearing the student complaint is not the department representative, as described above, he/she shall advise the student that the student should see the appropriate representative.
2. If the student decides that the complaint has not been responded to satisfactorily by the department representative, then the student should be directed to the department chair by the representative as described above.
3. If the student pursues the complaint with the department chair, the department chair will meet with the student at a time mutually convenient to both parties but not more than ten (10) work days after receiving a request from the student.
4. If the student decides that the chair has not responded to the complaint satisfactorily, the chair will advise the student that he/she may proceed with an appeal, as set forth below, or, if appropriate, a grievance as set forth above, and will provide him/her with the procedures for either or both of these actions.
5. It should be noted that grievances must be received by the appropriate individual as set forth in the Student Grievance Procedure not later than forty- five calendar days after the student first became aware of the facts which gave rise to the grievance. Appeal due dates are set forth below.

University Policy

Any student or applicant may appeal any decision affecting his/her status as a graduate student by submitting a written petition to the Appeals Committee of the Graduate Council in care of the Graduate School, after the student has attempted to resolve the matter in the appropriate college. The petition shall briefly describe the facts which support his/her claim and the remedy being sought. The petition must be submitted within six calendar months of notification of the action being appealed. After receiving the petition, the chairperson of the Appeals Committee will schedule a hearing as soon as possible. A hearing will be held within 60 days of receipt of the written petition of appeal. Evidence

will be received from the petitioner and other parties having information bearing on the appeal. The chairperson of the Appeals Committee shall report its decision on any appeals matter (a) directly to the Dean of the Graduate School, and (b) to the Graduate Council at the first board meeting following the hearing. Questions about the procedure should be addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Course grades are appealed through the concentration offering the course and then, if necessary, through the college in which the grade was assigned. Course grades may not be appealed to the Graduate Council.

Lack of Progress Policy

Students are expected to complete their degrees within the eight-year time frame mandated by the Graduate School, and they should hold **continuous enrollment** throughout those years unless excused circumstances intervene. (Should this be the case, then the adviser, concentration coordinator, and program coordinator must be notified immediately, with the Graduate School granting final approval for a leave of absence.) To confirm that students are moving systematically through the program, faculty will assess their progress toward program completion each spring, with advisers and concentration coordinators chiefly responsible for this work. To accomplish this, students will be required to submit an updated planning sheet/Program of Study with a current transcript during the last week in April of each year. These will be given to the adviser, who will be the primary contact for this work. Each student will be informed in writing of the results of that meeting by the concentration coordinator (with copies sent to the program coordinator and posted in the student's program records).