



**The Department  
of  
Theory and Practice in Teacher Education**  
*Advancing Equity Through Excellence in Education*

**PhD Handbook  
2019-2020**

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## **Welcome from the TPTE Department Head**

Welcome to doctoral study at The University of Tennessee! On behalf of the faculty in the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education (TPTE), I trust you will find your time here challenging and rewarding. Within the department we offer three doctoral concentrations and a number of specializations under those concentrations. Doctoral study gives you a unique opportunity to challenge yourself in ways that should ultimately give you new perspectives toward education and your particular areas of interest within the field. I encourage you to take the opportunity to study and work with a variety of faculty within the department and college, not just those in your own area of interest. Our faculty includes experts in quantitative, qualitative, and single-subject research design, assessment, policy issues, teacher change, urban multicultural education, and educational technology. Particular expertise is available to support doctoral study for persons interested in Literacy Studies (children's and young adult literature; English as a second language, literacy/reading); Special Education, Deaf Education, and Interpreter Education; and Teacher Education (cultural studies, elementary education, English education, mathematics education, science education, and social sciences education). Collectively, we encourage you to take a global perspective while getting involved locally. We are dedicated to scholarship and instructional practices and policies that promote social equity for all children and families, including those who live in economically distressed areas of this country and the world. We look forward to having the opportunity to share with you in the learning process.

This handbook contains many useful pieces of information; I hope that your transition to and progression through doctoral study will be made a bit easier as a result of this handbook.

Please feel free to stop by my office in Bailey Education Complex to introduce yourself and let me know how your studies are progressing some time during your work with us.



Sherry Mee Bell, Ph.D.  
Professor and Department Head

**The University of Tennessee**  
**Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education**  
**PhD Handbook**

**Introduction**

The Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education offers programs leading to the PhD degree in Education with concentrations in Literacy Studies, Special Education/Deaf Education/Interpreter Education, and Teacher Education. Specializations for these concentrations are listed below:

Literacy Studies

- Children's and Young Adult Literature
- ESL Education
- Literacy Education

Special education, Deaf Education, and Interpreter Education

Teacher Education

- Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations
- Elementary Education
- English Education
- Mathematics Education
- Science Education
- Social Science Education

The departmental guidelines in this handbook are in addition to the policies of the UT Graduate School. Graduate students must assume full responsibility for knowledge of rules and regulations of the Graduate School (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/>) and departmental requirements for the chosen degree program (<https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php> and <https://tpte.utk.edu/drprograms/>). Any exceptions to the policies stated in the Graduate Catalog must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

*All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admissions without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.*

*Eligibility and other terms and conditions of employment benefits at The University of Tennessee are governed by laws and regulations of the State of Tennessee, and this non-discrimination statement is intended to be consistent with those laws and regulations.*

*In accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, The University of Tennessee affirmatively states that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or disability in its education programs and activities, and this policy extends to employment by the University.*

*Inquiries and charges of violation of Title VI (race, color, national origin), Title IX (sex), Section 504 (disability), ADA (disability), Age Discrimination in Employment Act (age), sexual orientation, or veteran status should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED), 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996-3560, telephone (865) 974-2498 (V/TTY available) or 974-2440. Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the Office of Equity and Diversity.*

### **Chair/Advisor**

A student will be assigned an advisor upon being admitted to the doctoral program. If course work toward the doctorate is taken prior to admission, the advisor will most often be the professor that he/she has been working with up to that point. However, the continuance of that arrangement is based on mutual agreement. Early in the program, a doctoral student should determine who will be his or her permanent advisor and work with that advisor in forming the doctoral committee. That advisor is the chair of the student's doctoral committee.

### **Committee Composition**

The doctoral committee is composed of at least four people. At least two committee members must be tenured or tenure track UT faculty. The chair of the committee is typically from the student's department/intercollegiate program. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's department; in interdisciplinary programs, one member shall be from outside that program. Committee members outside the student's home department/program may be from outside of The University of Tennessee, but must be approved by the Graduate School.

The PhD committee should be formed toward the end of the student's first year of doctoral study. Subject to Graduate Council policies and individual program requirements, the committee must approve all coursework applied toward the degree, certify the student's mastery of the major field and any cognate field, assist the student in conducting research, and recommend the dissertation for approval and acceptance by Graduate Student Services.

### **Program Planning**

Program planning is done with the advisor and committee. Normally, a program planning meeting is held for the committee to approve the student's program; following this, a copy of the proposed Program of Study (see pages 18-19) should be filed with Ms. Lori Daniels in A228 Bailey Education Complex. A graduate program is not the mere accumulation of miscellaneous credit hours but rather the result of careful planning of courses and other experiences directed toward clearly-defined goals accepted by the student and the committee. The program must meet the minimum requirements of the Graduate School and of the Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education.

### **Concentrations and Specializations**

The selection of the major area of study is made from among the concentrations and specializations offered (see p. 3). Courses required will vary based on the student's background and interests. The final decision about course requirements is negotiated with the chairperson and the doctoral committee. The PhD Program of Study (page 5) and the sequence for coursework (PhD Program Flow Chart, page 6) can be found in this handbook.

### **Cognate:** (At least 6 semester hours)

Cognate areas are defined as related areas to the major which are congruent to the goals and objectives of the individual student's program. As such, cognate areas should be complementary to the major and need not be expected to produce a specialist capable of doing research or teaching as a specialist in that field. Because we are a diverse department, the cognate may be in

a field in TPTE or outside of the TPTE department. TPTE graduate course prefixes include Art Ed (ARED), Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations (CSE), Ed/Deaf & Hard of Hearing (EDDE), Educational Technology (ETEC), Elem Ed (ELED), English Ed (ENED), Math Ed (MEDU), Literacy Ed (REED), Science Ed (SCED), Social Science Ed (SSCE), Special Ed (SPED), World Languages/ESL (WLEL), and TPTE.

## PhD Program of Study

### Doctoral Core

*Research Area .....	15
**Core Requirements.....	12
Concentration/Specialization .....	15
Cognate .....	6
Dissertation .....	24

\*Must include Theory and Practice in Teacher Education 640 (3)

\*\* Seminar in each of the three department primary concentrations (TPTE 617, REED 602, SPED/EDDE 601, or other course from each of the three departmental PhD concentrations as approved by doctoral committee; 9 hours); TPTE 604 (1), 605 (1), at least one 612 (3)

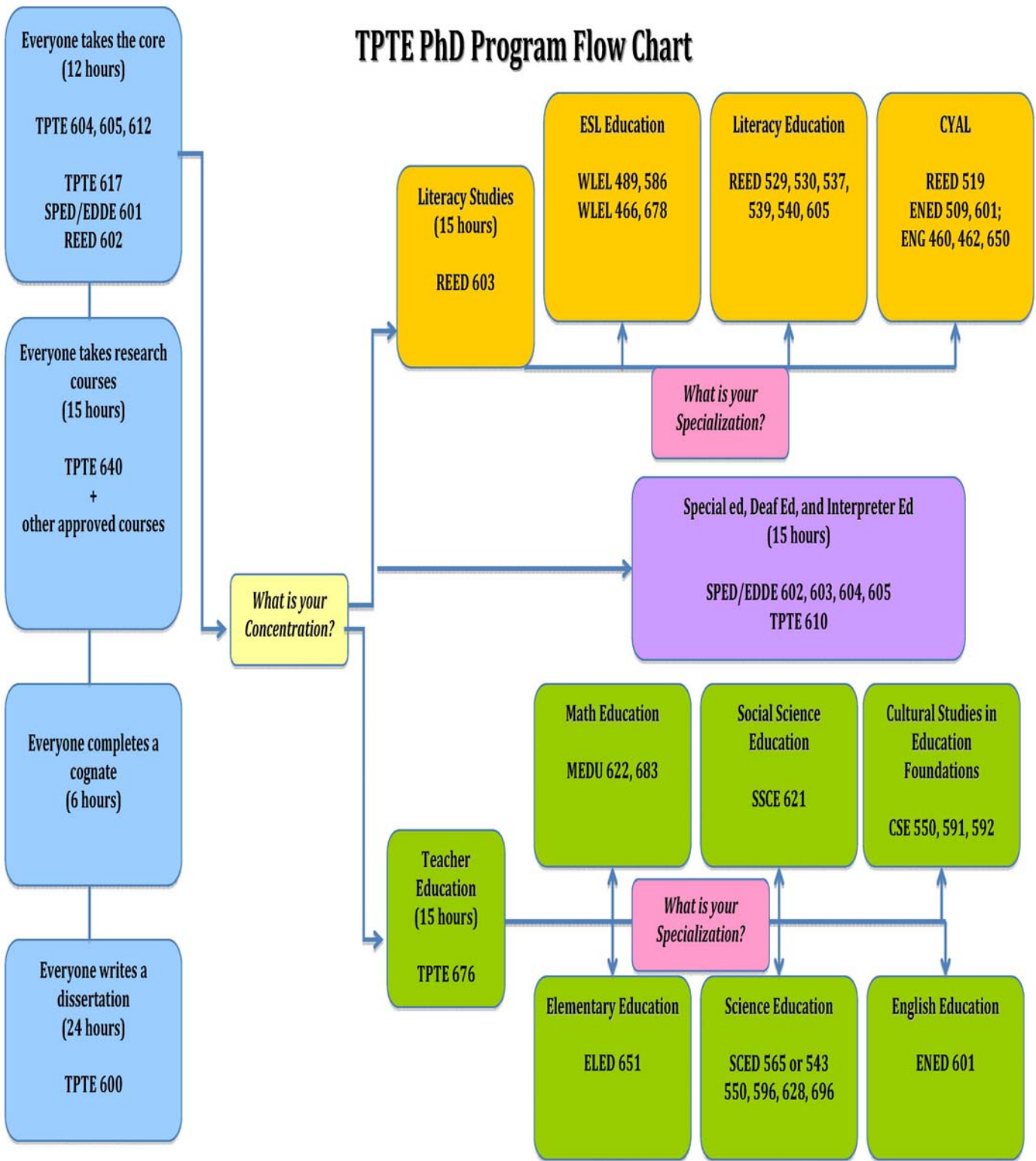
*Note:* Please contact the academic program area for additional information on course requirements in each of these areas.

### Research Competency Requirement (15 hours minimum)

The program for the TPTE PhD degree requires exposure to at least two (2) types of research techniques (i.e., quantitative and qualitative); however, the primary function of the research competency requirement is to prepare doctoral students to conduct dissertation research with skill and care. Thus, while 15 hours is the minimum number of hours needed to meet the competency requirement, it may be the case that students need to take more than 15 hours in order to be adequately prepared. The individual student’s doctoral committee shall determine the research techniques to be included in his or her program.

Courses chosen from the list shown on page 7 of this handbook may be used to satisfy the research requirement. *In some cases there may be logical course substitutions, specific requirements for particular concentrations or special topics courses not listed. Approval of these is at the discretion of the individual student's doctoral committee.*

# TPTE PhD Program Flow Chart



## Approved Research Courses

### **Anthropology (ANTH)**

- 510 Methods and Theory in Cultural Anthropology
- 531 Ethnographic Research Methods

### **Child and Family Studies (CFS)**

- 570 Research Methods in Child and Family Studies
- 650 Adv Qual Research in Human Sciences
- 660 Experimental Design and Obs Methods

### **Communication & Information (CCI)**

- 631 Qualitative Comm & Info Research
- 635 Quantitative Comm & Info Research

### **Cultural Studies in Education (CSE)**

- 526 Philosophy of Education: Theory Writing
- 607 Advanced Seminar in Educational Studies
- 609 Feminist Theory and Education

### **Educational Administration (EDAM)**

- 516 Research Methods

### **Ed Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS)**

- ELPS 615 Research Design
- ELPS 617 Case Study Methods in Ed Research
- ELPS 618 Advanced Qualitative Research

### **Educational Psychology (EDPY)**

- 505 Quasi-Experimental and Single-Subject Design Research
- 533 Program Evaluation I
- 534 Program Evaluation II
- 550 Applied Statistical Concepts
- 559 Intro to Qualitative Research in Education  
*formerly CSE 560 and EP 555*
- 577 Statistics in Applied Fields I
- 583 Survey Research
- 631 Discourse Analysis of Educ Environments
- 659 Advanced Qualitative Research in Educ  
*formerly CSE 661 and EP 661*
- 677 Statistics in Applied Fields II

- 678 Statistics in Applied Fields III
- 682 Educational Research Methods

### **Higher Education Administration (HEAM)**

- 516 (see Educ Admin above)

### **Math**

- 423 Probability I
- 425 Statistics

### **Psychology (PSYC)**

- 505 Research Design
- 515 Colloquium in Experimental Psychology
- 580 Research Questions and Designs
- 607 Seminar in Applied Psychometrics
- 613 Seminar in Existential-Phenomenological Psychology
- 623 Seminar and Methods in Naturalistic Research

### **Sociology (SOCl)**

- 531 Research Methods in Sociology
- 631 Advanced Quantitative Methods
- 633 Survey Design and Analysis

### **Statistics (STAT)**

- 531 Survey of Statistical Methods I
- 532 Survey of Statistical Methods II
- 537 Statistics for Research I
- 538 Statistics for Research II
- 560 Introduction to Mathematical Statistics
- 563 Probability and Mathematical Statistics
- 567 Survival Analysis
- 573 Design of Experiments
- 574 Data Mining Methods and Applications
- 575 Applied Time Series
- 579 Applied Multivariate Methods

### **Theory and Practice in Teacher Education**

- 640 Theoretical Analysis and Theory Construction



**DEPARTMENT OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION  
PH D IN EDUCATION**

Core Course Offerings <i>(admission to TPTE doctoral program constitutes consent of instructor)</i>	Offering Schedule <i>(subject to change)</i>	
	semester	day/time
<b>TPTE 604- Trans Departmental Seminar I (1)</b> – “Introduction to doctoral programs in education: Research requirements, academic integrity, the meaning of scholarship in academe and issues/problems in education” Letter Grade	Every Fall	Monday 4:40 – 5:30
<b>TPTE 605 - Trans Departmental Seminar I (1)</b> - “Seminar to prepare doctoral students for the final steps in completing a terminal degree including preparing for and completing qualifying exams, preparing a prospectus, and completing a dissertation.” Letter grade	Every Spring	Monday 4:40 – 5:30
<b>TPTE 612 – Internship in Educational Research. (1)</b> Data analyses, collection, and interpretation. This course is available to students who want experience as part of a research team. It <b>cannot</b> be substituted for one of the “approved research courses.”	Spring Even	Monday 4:40 - 5:30
<b>REED 602 Seminar in Reading Education (3)</b> <b>Topic: Federal Education Policy</b>	Spring Odd	Thursday 5:05-7:45
<b>REED 602 Seminar in Reading Education (3)</b> <b>Topic: Reading Disabilities</b>	Spring Even	Thursday 5:05-7:45
<b>SPED 601/EDDE 601: Seminar in Education of Exceptional, Diverse and At-risk Learners.</b> <i>“The purpose of this course is becoming an informed researcher, teacher educator, and/or leader in the field of education. The goals of this course are: (1) to ensure students’ awareness and understanding of content that is grounded in the literature of special education (including deaf education and interpreter education); b) develop awareness of the historical, legal, and philosophical underpinnings of special education and its current status within the United States and internationally; c) develop awareness of the intersection of special education with poverty, race, culture, and language; and d) become cognizant of foundational and current research and evidence-based instructional and assessment practices that characterize special education.”</i>	Fall Odd	Tuesday evening*  *May change
<b>TPTE 617 (3)</b>	Every Fall	Monday 5:45 pm
<b>TPTE 640 - Theoretical Analysis and Theory Construction (3)</b> - “Critical analysis of paradigms and theories relevant to educational research. Principles of theory construction with grounded, inductive and deductive modes. Construction of mid-range theories.”	Every Spring	Monday 5:45 pm

## **Residence**

Two (2) *consecutive* semesters of full time enrollment on the Knoxville campus are required (summer may be included). Full time enrollment is defined as being registered for a minimum of 9 hours of graduate credit. Part time enrollment does *not* count toward this requirement.

## **600 Level Courses**

A minimum of six (6) semester hours of coursework must be taken in UT courses at the 600 level, exclusive of dissertation and TPTE doctoral seminar. In addition, 24 hours of TPTE 600 are required. Students may not take more than 99 hours of TPTE 600.

## **Time Limits**

Comprehensive examinations must be taken *within five years*, and all requirements must be completed *within eight years*, from the time of a student's first enrollment in a doctoral degree program.

## **Comprehensive Examinations**

At a point when most course work is completed the doctoral student should plan with his or her advisor and committee to take written and oral comprehensive examinations. In order to be prepared for the comprehensive examination, it is recommended that a student consult with each of his or her committee members several months in advance. This will allow sufficient time for preparation. Committee members may vary a great deal in the suggestions and help for preparation that they offer the student.

After the committee members have had sufficient time to read the answers, usually a week to 10 days after the last written examination question is completed, the committee and student meet for an oral examination. The oral portion of the comprehensive examination may, at the individual discretion of each committee member, be limited to following up the student's written answers or branch into any area related to the student's program. (Please refer to the *TPTE Graduate Student Handbook* for policies in the event a student fails to perform satisfactorily on the comprehensive exam.)

At or just after Comprehensive Final defense, each committee member (including the chair) should evaluate the student's work on the comprehensive exam using the *TPTE PhD Comps SACS Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric* (see page 21).

## **Admission to Candidacy**

Doctoral students should have obtained admission to candidacy papers from the graduate office (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/admission-to-candidacy-doctoral-degree/>) *prior to the oral comprehensive examination*. These should be completed, listing all courses which are to count as part of the program, and brought to the oral examination itself. When the committee is satisfied with the progress of the student, a pass is indicated on the form and committee members sign off indicating their approval. The form is then turned in to Ms. Lori Daniels in Bailey Education Complex A228, who will log it, obtain the Department Head signature, and forward it to the Graduate School.

## **Dissertation Prospectus**

A dissertation is a major research study undertaken by a student as the capstone experience in the doctoral program. Before a student begins work on a dissertation, he or she must write a detailed

description of what will be done. A prospectus meeting is then held in which the student's committee makes suggestions and gives approval to the prospectus. Upon approval, the signed *\*Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form* is filed in the office of the department's Graduate Admissions Secretary, Ms. Lori Daniels (BEC A228), and an electronic copy of the approved prospectus is emailed to her ([lfielde1@utk.edu](mailto:lfielde1@utk.edu)) as well in addition to the candidate's major professor. \*Link for approval form: [http://tpte.utdev3.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2015/12/prospectus\\_approval.docx](http://tpte.utdev3.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2015/12/prospectus_approval.docx)

### **Human Subjects Approval**

If the dissertation involves any human subjects, approval must be obtained in advance from the Institutional Review Board of the University (<https://irb.utk.edu/>) Two to three months should be allowed for this approval after submitting the form.

### **Dissertation** (A *minimum* of 24 semester hours, *maximum* of 99 hours)

The Graduate School requires that the student must enroll continuously for dissertation hours once the student enrolls for dissertation credit until the dissertation is completed and accepted by the Graduate School. *Students are advised to be particularly conscientious about this, as failure to register continuously will result in needing to begin again with 0 hours.* A defense of the dissertation which is open to the public must be scheduled two weeks in advance, and the *Scheduling Defense of Dissertation* form (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>) must be filed with the Graduate School at least one week in advance. Though anyone may attend the defense, it is up to the doctoral candidate's chair to determine if and how audience members other than the committee may participate.

## **Graduate Certificate Programs**

In addition to its graduate degrees, the Department offers three graduate certificate programs which are showcased in the graduate catalog.

([https://catalog.utk.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=27&poid=11824&returnto=3513](https://catalog.utk.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=27&poid=11824&returnto=3513))

*The Cultural Studies in Education Graduate Certificate* is a 15 credit hour program intended for currently admitted graduate students seeking to develop skills necessary when working with diverse populations, especially targeted, minority populations.

*The Rehabilitation Counseling for the Deaf Graduate Certificate* is a 12-credit hour distance education program available to graduate students whose career interests relate to working with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

*The Urban Education Graduate Certificate* is a 12-credit hour program that offers aspiring and experienced educators an opportunity to serve diverse urban communities by strengthening their knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to educational equity.

## **TPTE CODE OF ETHICS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

The Department of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education (TPTE) strives to be an education community where faculty and doctoral students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning through research and service. As such, all must act with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards. The TPTE doctoral student adheres to all \*TPTE Teacher Professional Dispositions and the University of Tennessee's Code of Conduct.

### **PRINCIPLE: ETHICAL CONDUCT TOWARD STUDENTS AND INTERNS**

*As a TPTE doctoral student and potential member of the professoriate, the TPTE doctoral student accepts personal responsibility for teaching and modeling character qualities that evaluate the consequences of and accept the responsibility for actions and choices. The TPTE doctoral student:*

1. is aware of and respects cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.
2. deals considerately and justly with students and peers.
3. does not intentionally expose anyone to disparagement.
4. does not reveal confidential information concerning students, unless required by law.
5. endeavors to present information with fairness and that honors multiple perspectives.
6. commits to developing the highest educational opportunities for students.
7. seeks to safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally and other affected persons.
8. is alert to and on guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of influence.
9. consults with, refers to, and/or cooperates with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of students and others.

### **PRINCIPLE: ETHICAL CONDUCT TOWARD PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE**

*The TPTE doctoral student assumes responsibility and accountability for his or her performance and continually strives to demonstrate competence. The TPTE doctoral student endeavors to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, and by demonstrating personal integrity. The TPTE doctoral student:*

1. promotes and maintains a high level of competence and integrity in practicing the profession.
2. applies for, accepts, or assigns a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications, and adheres to the terms of a contract or appointment.
3. takes responsibility for knowing the requirements for the degree, the relevant deadlines, and for making adequate progress.
4. strives to be aware of personal assumptions and be open to examining those critically.
5. continues personal growth through reflection, seeking and accepting constructive feedback, and pursuing beyond-course experiences.
6. follows all institutional, professional and legal requirements for research and maintains a full commitment to academic honesty.

## **TPTE CODE OF ETHICS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS** (continued)

7. does not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
8. is aware of and respects the rules and norms of individual schools and communities.

### **PRINCIPLE: ETHICAL CONDUCT TOWARD PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES**

*The TPTE doctoral student, in exemplifying ethical relations with peers and faculty, accords just and equitable treatment to everyone. The TPTE doctoral student:*

1. understands and accepts the role of his/her advisor and committee members and maintains appropriate contact.
2. does not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues unless required by law.
3. does not willfully make false statements about a colleague or the university.
4. does not interfere with a colleague's freedom of choice, and works to eliminate coercion that forces educators to support actions and ideologies that violate individual professional integrity.  
(continued)
5. is willing to change his/her mind based on argument or evidence.
6. demonstrates intellectual honesty and integrity respecting setting, colleagues, and faculty.
7. attempts to resolve conflicts in a responsible fashion.

*\*Note:*

The following sources were considered in developing this code: Carnegie Foundation's *The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the Twenty-First Century*, *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* by Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, The American Historical Association's *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*; *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* by Boyer, *Principles to Guide the Design and Implementation of Doctoral Programs in Mathematics Education* by the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators; *What Every Special Educator Should Know: Ethics, Standards, and Guidelines for Special Educators* by the Council for Exceptional Children; *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* by The American Psychological Association; *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing Stewards of the Discipline* edited by Golde and Walker, and The American Association of Educators' *Code of Ethics for Educators*.

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE PROSPECTUS

*Requirements for writing the prospectus will vary, and doctoral students will need to follow whatever guidelines their advisors require. However, these overall guidelines should be helpful in getting started.*

### **A. What IS a Research Prospectus?**

A prospectus is a plan for writing your dissertation. It is the document which you present to your doctoral committee when you seek their approval to prepare a dissertation. *In some cases, the committee may want the prospectus to be an early draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation itself.* Both the prospectus and the dissertation go through many drafts before a final version is reached. Approval of the prospectus is like a contract. What the contract says is that if you complete all that you say you are going to do in the prospectus and write it up well, you will then have an acceptable dissertation. In the case of any dissertation, the more complete and specific the prospectus, the less likely it is that your committee will later on tell you that you need to do additional things.

It works to your advantage to spell out an exact and full plan in the prospectus. You may think that it restricts your flexibility, and in a way it does. However, if your proposed procedure is loosely defined in the prospectus, the committee might assume that you are going to do things that you had not planned to do. In fact, each committee member may have a different view. This may mean that the committee will send you back to do things over and over after you think that you have completed your study, even up to and through the defense. Thus, it is well worth being precise and detailed in the prospectus, even if you have to go through several prospectus revisions.

### **B. What to Look for in a Research Prospectus**

1. Does the proposed study address an issue or question that can and should be dealt with through research?
2. Is the research worth doing? Is it something that needs to be done?
3. Does the study deal with a topic that is of sufficient interest to the community of scholars in the field?
4. Is the proposed research
  - Something that can be done?
  - Something that can be done in a reasonable amount of time?
  - Something that can be done with obtainable resources?
  - Something that the schools and school personnel will allow done?
  - Something that will be acceptable to the human subjects committee of the university?
5. Does the proposed study have sufficient focus and is its focus well defined?
6. Does the study attempt to answer a significant question?
7. Could this study have impact upon the field?
8. In what way, if at all, does the study break new ground?
9. Is the study well designed?
  - Has a clear research procedure been planned?
  - Are specific, well-defined steps identified?
  - Have measurement questions been considered and thoroughly dealt with?
  - Have quality instruments been chosen or has a careful design plan been delineated?
10. Does the researcher have sufficient background, expertise, and ability to carry out the study?
11. Is the proposal written in clear, precise language?

### C. Organizing a Research Prospectus: Common Headings

(Headings, sequence, and length will differ depending on the advisor and the type of research)

1. **INTRODUCTION** – In the introduction present general background information first so that the reader can understand the broad dimensions of the study and your point of view. This should show that there is literature related to your study and a trend of concern. In some cases, this will be all the review of literature that exists in the prospectus, so between this section and the statement of the problem section that comes next, you have your main opportunity to show the committee that there is a community of scholars who do research related to this area of concern. You must establish this briefly. This section should move to a point where it allows a natural transition to the statement of the problem.
2. **ISSUES/ PROBLEM STATEMENT** - After introducing the topic and providing related background, you need to narrow your focus, and present the circumstances which bring you to this investigation. What is the situation on which you want to focus? What concerns do you have? What do you want to evaluate or assess? For example, your introduction may begin by describing the general breakdown of society, the growing violence by school age children, the growing problems of positive character development in our society. The issues/problem then may move to the issue of character education in schools and the various programs which purport to develop character. Both of these descriptions will contain a number of references, providing both research and theoretical information related to character education. A focused description of the issue, at this point, should lead you directly to the most specific statement of all, the purpose statement.
3. **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY** - You should now be no more than five or six pages into the prospectus. This brings us to a concise, precise, focused statement of the specific intent of this particular study. This statement speaks to the “so what?” question of what will you know that you did not know before the study is completed. It points out what you specifically want to find out. Often, the clearest way to do this is to begin by saying, “The purpose of this study is...” This is followed by a brief specific description of what you want to do. Your purpose statement may include one or more research questions. Simply stated, a research question is a clear and significant inquiry for which you can design a way of gathering evidence in order to find an answer. Quantitative studies sometimes include research hypotheses. Research hypotheses are based on logical reasoning from previous research, and/or experience, and/or some theoretical construct. A statistical hypothesis is always stated in a “null” or negative form as the reverse of what is actually expected. The reason is that we cannot statistically prove that something is true, only that something is untrue. If, statisticians argue, we can eliminate what is untrue, what remains then is true.
4. **NEED FOR THE STUDY** - Next you need to explain why this study might be important or useful and to whom. Here you have to establish that your study is a contribution to the field and that it is dealing with important issues and ideas. How you are dealing with the all powerful “So what?” question in detail. What will your study show? How will it influence educational practice? Why do you think that you ought to do this study and why and how will education, and especially your own effectiveness as an educator be helped? Your arguments must be presented convincingly.

5. **LIMITATIONS** - What conditions exist within the study which may influence its outcome and its generalizability but over which you have no control? These may have to do with the grouping procedures of the school, its curriculum, the backgrounds of the students, the preparation of teachers involved in your study. It may also have to do with time restrictions related to school calendar, events that come up in the school day over which you have no control, and any other factors. To identify limitations ask yourself if there are factors which may influence the outcomes and results of the study other than the ones examined and are these identified factors ones over which I, the researcher, have no control.
6. **DELIMITATIONS** - What conditions are you imposing for logical or practical reasons that may influence the outcome of the study? You may be, by your choice, doing some things in your study that may relate to the outcomes. These will be different for different types of research. Your choice of schools or school systems may be one such factor as may your sampling procedure, the time you spend doing the study itself, the time of day in which you do the study or a host of other factors. Delimitations are important considerations when thinking about the application of your findings.
7. **ASSUMPTIONS** - What beliefs are you taking into the study? Are there ideas on which you base your observations or the questions you ask? Is part or all of your study based on your own experiences, common knowledge, or prevailing opinions rather than research evidence? These assumptions need to be carefully spelled out.
8. **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS** - The definition of terms are one of the most important parts of your prospectus. In it you ascribe particular meanings to words and phrases that you are using in unique and particular ways. These may be uncommon words or terms that your readers will need to know in order to follow your write up. They may be fairly common words that you are using with narrow specific meanings in this study. All words, terms, etc. that might not be commonly understood and/or perceived in the same way by all readers need to be here. This saves you from having to explain or clarify the meanings of these words every time you use them. It also helps all readers understand the study in about the same way.
9. **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK** - A description of the theory or theories on which the researcher is basing the study is part of dissertation proposals. Usually this section includes referenced citations and descriptions of one or more major theorists' ideas upon which the study is based. Your theoretical framework reinforces the section on the need for the study. It also shows that your study relates to a school of thought or a body of research-based knowledge in the literature.
10. **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE** - Some advisors ask for a complete review of the literature. This becomes a draft of chapter two of the dissertation itself. Though such a draft will require expansion and revision as the study progresses, it does show that you have an organized description of what the educational research community has published on your topic. It lessens the likelihood of your doing unplanned replication of research that has already been done. Whether you do a complete review or a relatively short one, the review shows that you know what literature is germane to this study. This part of the prospectus requires that you identify the significant headings you will need to include in your review of the literature and how you will organize the headings.



11. **PROCEDURE** - The procedure is another critical part of the prospectus. In this section you describe exactly what you are going to do in the study, how you are going to do it, and in what order and when. This needs to be a step by step description. It has to be done with painstaking care, so specific and detailed that your study could be replicated exactly by someone other than yourself.
12. **ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY** - In this section of the prospectus, which will become the last paragraph of chapter one of the dissertations, you need to identify the overall plan for the study itself, literally chapter by chapter.

## **WRITING THE DISSERTATION**

Requirements for preparing the dissertation will vary, and doctoral students will need to follow whatever guidelines their advisors require. Many dissertations will have five chapters; others (particularly those supported by qualitative research) may have more. However, the UT Graduate School has specific formatting requirements that must be followed.

Many valuable online resources are available for doctoral students and include the *Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertation* which specifically details required formatting and organization information (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/formatting/>) that must be followed by all UT graduate students when preparing their theses and dissertations.

Doctoral students are urged to visit the above link early on the PhD journey but at least by the time they complete their comprehensive examinations.

## **SUGGESTED SEQUENCE OF STEPS IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM FOR TPTE DOCTORAL CANDIDATES**

***Note: Though these steps are listed in their approximate sequential order, variations in sequence are going to occur.***

- Admission into the Graduate School
- Application to the program (This is usually concurrent with admission but is a separate process.)
- Acceptance into the program
- Assignment of an advisor
- Completion of the first semester of the doctoral seminar -TPTE 604\* (*offered only in the Fall Semester*)
- Selection of a permanent doctoral advisor
- Selection of doctoral committee and the filing of the PhD committee form with the Graduate School
- Completion and approval of a preliminary course of study by the doctoral committee
- Completion of the second semester of the doctoral seminar - TPTE 605\*\* (*offered only in the Spring Semester*)
- Completion of course work
- Successful completion of comprehensive written examinations
- Successful completion of comprehensive oral examinations
- Filing of TPTE PhD Comps SACS Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric
- Completion of residence requirements
- Filing of signed Admission to Candidacy form with the Graduate School
- Approval of dissertation prospectus by the committee
- Filing of signed Completion of Approved Prospectus form with the TPTE Graduate Admissions Office
- Electronic *pdf* copy of approved prospectus emailed to TPTE Graduate Admissions Office and major professor
- Completion of the dissertation
- Registration for graduation online (and December or Spring Graduation Hooding Ceremony if desired)
- Checking with the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Consultant
- Scheduling of dissertation defense with the Graduate School
- Successful dissertation defense
- Acceptance of the completed dissertation by the Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Consultant
- Filing of pass-fail form with the Graduate School and submission of dissertation

*\* TPTE 604 should be taken as early as possible, ideally in the first semester of course work.*

*\*\*TPTE 605 should ideally be taken during the last semester of course work or as close to it as possible.*

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION**  
**PH D IN EDUCATION**  
*With concentrations in*

**Literacy Studies**

*Children's and Young Adult Literature, ESL Education, Literacy Education*

**Special education, Deaf Education and Interpreter Education**

**Teacher Education**

*Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations, Elementary Education, English Education, Mathematics Education, Science Education, Social Science Education*

**Program of Study for:**

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<i>Semester</i>	<i>Course #</i>	<i>Course Name</i>	<i>hours</i>	<i>grade</i>
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<b>Research Area (15 hours <i>minimum</i>)</b>				
	TPTE 640	Theoretical Analysis and Theory Construction	3	

<b>Core Requirements (12 hours)</b>				
	TPTE 617	Advanced Studies in Education	3	
	TPTE 604	Trans-Departmental Seminar I	1	
	TPTE 605	Trans-Departmental Seminar II	1	
	REED 602*	Seminar in Reading Education	3	
	SPED/EDDE 601*	Seminar in Special Education	3	
	TPTE 612**	Internship in Educational Research	1	
*or other courses from this concentration approved by the student's advisor/committee				
**should be taken the same term as TPTE 640				

<b>Concentration/Specialization (15 hours <i>minimum</i>)</b>				

<b>Cognate (6 hours minimum)</b>				

Date:	<b>Comprehensive Examination Passed</b>
Date:	<b>Prospectus Defense Passed</b>

<b>Dissertation (24 hours <i>minimum</i>)</b> (TPTE 600 hours must be taken continuously)				

**TPTE PhD Comps SACS Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric**

**Dear PhD Committee Chair, please ensure that the following steps are completed:**

- At or just after Comprehensive Final defense, each committee member (including the chair) should evaluate the student's work on the comprehensive exam using the rubric provided.
- Print/distribute a score sheet (below) to each committee member.
- Please show the student the rubric well in advance (i.e., before the comprehensive final)
- Collect all completed score sheets.
- Share committee scores with the student.
- Submit all completed score sheets to the Director of Graduate Studies at the same time the signed Admission to Candidacy Form is submitted to the Director.

Information on intent and how to use this assessment are provided on each copy of the score sheet below.

## TPTE PhD Comps SACS Student Learner Outcomes Assessment Rubric

**Dear Committee Member**, please evaluate the TPTE PhD student's performance on the comprehensive exam. Your evaluation should be on the questions or problems you administered. Print and complete this score sheet and submit it to the committee chair at or just after the comprehensive final defense.

This assessment is for TPTE to evaluate our PhD programs, in general, and to help us assess our programs over time per SACS accreditation. Similar to other accreditation assessments we conduct in our department, scores on this rubric may not necessarily and directly align with the committee's determination if the student passed or failed the comprehensive final. We expect that not all students will receive all 3s. The goal is to track mean ratings by our targeted learner outcomes (i.e., Demonstrates Breadth of Knowledge, Demonstrates Depth of Knowledge, and Presents Information in an Organized Manner) over time. Students will not be identified in our summary reports.

PhD Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Comprehensive Final Defended: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Category	<b>Instructions: Circle or mark column to score student's work for each category below.</b>		
	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Demonstrates Breadth of Knowledge</b>	Demonstrates a broad-based understanding of all key topics immediately relevant to the question(s) Incorporates other supporting concepts to illustrate understanding of integrated nature of disciplinary knowledge.	Demonstrates a broad-based understanding of all key topics immediately relevant to the question(s)	Fails to adequately demonstrate a broad-based understanding of all key topics immediately relevant to the key topics related to the question(s)
<b>2. Demonstrates Depth of Knowledge</b>	Demonstrates detailed knowledge of disciplinary concepts central to the question(s).	Demonstrates adequate knowledge of disciplinary concepts central to the question(s).	Fails to demonstrate adequately detailed knowledge of disciplinary concepts central to the question(s).
<b>3. Presents information in an organized manner.</b>	Presents information in an organized fashion that effectively illustrates an understanding of the integrated nature of key topics. Writing adheres to disciplinary conventions for spelling, grammar, and style. Very few errors of spelling and grammar. For computations: Presents information in ways that adhere to the highest disciplinary standards for clarity and completeness.	Presents information in an organized fashion. Writing adheres to accepted conventions for spelling and grammar. Errors of spelling and grammar do not undermine effective communication. For computations: Presents information according to minimum disciplinary standards for clarity and completeness.	Information is not adequately organized. Writing does not adhere to accepted conventions for spelling and grammar. Extensive spelling and grammar errors. For computations: Does not present information clearly or completely.