Doctor of Education

The primary purpose of the Doctor of Education degree program is to provide experienced educators with a broad and systematic understanding of professional education, a definite knowledge of selected aspects of educational theory and practice, and an ability to conduct research and evaluation and to apply research findings in an informed and critical manner. Candidates for this degree are recognized for their commitment to the application of knowledge on behalf of improved educational practice. The typical Ed.D. program consists of practicum credit, dissertation credit, and at least 72 credits of course work, including up to 24 credits from a master’s degree and non-topical research or dissertation credit.

Admission Requirements In addition to the admission requirements described for the M.Ed., an applicant to the Ed.D. program must: hold a master’s degree or its equivalent, have an outstanding record as a student, and have previous professional experience in an area related to the proposed major. Professional qualifications and experience are weighted heavily.

Residence Requirement Each Ed.D. student must complete a minimum of 24 credits of course work taught by resident faculty, exclusive of internship, practicum, independent study, and dissertation credit. This requirement must be completed after admission to the Ed.D. program. Individual program areas may have additional requirements.

Enrollment Requirements A student must be continuously enrolled at the University while working toward the degree and must reapply for admission into the Ed.D. program if no credit toward the degree is earned for one year (12 months).

Time Limit All requirements must be completed within four years after passing the Ed.D. comprehensive examination. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by all members of the doctoral committee, the department chair, and the associate dean, and is granted only when some emergency, such as illness, interrupts the student’s work. In such cases, the student may be required to validate out-of-date work by examination. Program committees must determine the appropriateness and currency of all course work, especially if it is eight or more years old.

Program Requirements

To earn a Doctor of Education degree, students must:

1. Successfully complete a program of studies established by their doctoral committee which includes 24 hours of coursework outside major area of study.
2. Successfully complete written comprehensive examinations, or, in some areas a project prepared by the doctoral committee. Comprehensives must be completed...
before the dissertation proposal. Oral comprehensives may also be required by some program areas;
3. Pass a minimum of six credits of research courses at the University of Virginia;
4. Pass six credits of supervised practicum or internship work (as judged by the doctoral committee and approved by the associate dean). These experiences must be completed after admission to the Ed.D. program and supervised by University of Virginia faculty or other approved professionals.
5. Successfully complete all dissertation requirements, including (a) defending a dissertation proposal as determined by the doctoral committee; (b) planning the dissertation, obtaining appropriate human subjects approval, and carrying out a research study appropriate to the field of specialization; and (c) passing an oral examination on the conduct and conclusions of the dissertation. (All other requirements must be completed before this defense. Guidelines for dissertation work can be found on the Curry website.)
6. Complete all additional requirements as specified by the student’s department, program area, doctoral committee, and/or advisor.

Doctoral Committees

Depending on the program area, the Ed.D. program of study is directed by the student’s doctoral program committee or by program area faculty. After approximately twelve credits of study approved by the student’s advisor, a doctoral committee is formed; this committee is responsible for the design of the program of study and supervises the student until the comprehensive examination is completed. The committee must consist of a minimum of three faculty members of the University, appointed to the rank of assistant professor or higher, with at least one faculty member representing the major. One faculty member on the committee must be from outside the student’s major program area and two members must be from the Curry School, including the committee chair or co-chair who is from the major area.

When all program requirements are met, including the successful completion of the doctoral comprehensive examination, the student must appoint a Doctoral Dissertation Committee. This committee will be responsible for the approval of a dissertation proposal; the supervision of the dissertation; the final approval of the dissertation, based on its written form; and the student’s oral defense of the dissertation. The dissertation committee must include at least three University of Virginia faculty members, including one from the major, and one from outside the student’s major program area. It is the student’s responsibility to find appropriate members of the University faculty who will agree to serve on the dissertation committee.

All doctoral committee actions, except doctoral committee membership changes, require concurrence of all committee members. Any committee appointment or change must be approved by the associate dean on the recommendation of the student’s advisor and departmental chair. Students who are ready to have a committee appointed must seek faculty who agree to serve on the committee and have them sign an advisory committee card which is available in the Office of Admission, and Record of Progress form.

All parties involved should be notified of any changes in the committee structure. After approval of the dissertation proposal, all committee members must remain on the committee through the final oral defense of the dissertation, unless otherwise approved by the department and associate dean in the case of vacancies. All actions of doctoral committees must be approved by all members of the committee. There may be more than three members of any committee, but there must be at least three University of Virginia members (including the chair and outside member) present for any presentation or oral defense, and all members must agree to the outcome.
Program Area Specializations

The student must select a program area specialization and complete the course requirements specified for the major area. Master’s degree work completed by the student may be applied to the program or specialization when approved by the doctoral program committee. All requirements for the doctoral program area must be approved by all doctoral program committee members.

Record of Progress

Students must complete and keep current their official Record of Progress Form. This form may be obtained online at: http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/admission/rop.html. The Record of Progress should be started upon initial registration and kept up to date throughout the doctoral program.

Preliminary Examinations

Preliminary examinations may be required by some program areas. If exams are taken, all committee members must verify that the examinations have been successfully completed.

Comprehensive Examinations

When nearing completion of the program of study, and with the approval of the major advisor, the student requests a written examination, or, in some areas, a comprehensive project in all areas appropriate to the student’s planned program. The time, place, content, specific format, and evaluation of the examination shall be determined by the doctoral committee. All committee members must judge the student’s performance to be satisfactory and must verify successful completion of the exams by signing the student’s Record of Progress form. If the student performs unsatisfactorily on the written exam, the committee may be petitioned for one re-examination. Subsequent failure on the written exam precludes further doctoral study in the Curry School of Education.

Practicum Requirements

Each student must complete at least six credits of supervised practicum or internship credit. Practicum requirements must be completed after enrollment in a doctoral program in the Curry School and before the defense of the dissertation proposal. Experiences must be supervised by a Curry School faculty member or approved supervisor.

Research Requirements

Each student must pass at least six credits of research courses at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville (additional requirements may be specified by program areas). Research requirements must be completed after admission to the doctoral program and
before the defense of the dissertation proposal.

Dissertation Proposal

The student must prepare and orally defend a written dissertation proposal. The student is responsible for scheduling all committee meetings and distributing copies of the proposal and any revisions. At least three University faculty must be present for the defense and all committee members must approve it. The committee chair or co-chair, who must be from the student’s major, will conduct all sessions. The acceptance of the dissertation proposal will be verified on the Record of Progress Form by the committee chair after all revisions of the dissertation proposal have been approved. A copy of the signed proposal must be attached to the student’s official Doctoral Degree Record of Progress. All committee members must approve the dissertation proposal. After approval of the dissertation proposal, all committee members must remain on the committee through the final oral defense of the dissertation. Clearance by the IRB for the protection of human subjects must be secured before any data is collected.

Dissertation Requirements

A minimum of 12 credits of dissertation must be earned, including registration during each semester when working with faculty or using University resources. A student may receive satisfactory grades (S) for one or more semesters. These grades do not mean the dissertation has been successfully completed or defended.

Students are urged to fully consult with all dissertation committee members while planning, conducting research, and writing of their dissertation, although the work will be directly supervised by the committee chair. The Guidelines for Doctoral Dissertations (http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/admissions/dissertations/home.html) describe procedures and expectations that will make the process easier, more predictable, and more successful. Results of the dissertation defense must be verified on the Record of Progress Form by all members of the committee. A minimum of 12 credits of dissertation must be earned, including registration during each semester when working with faculty or using University resources.

Oral Defense of Dissertation

All requirements for the degree must be completed before scheduling the dissertation defense. The dissertation defense is an open, public examination of the doctoral research project. The defense date, time, and place must be announced at least 14 days in advance. A dissertation abstract and announcement must be filed with the doctoral secretary in the Office of Admissions, 104 Ruffner Hall, from which it will be directed to each department of the Curry School.

April 1 is the deadline for the successful defense by students planning to graduate in May, July 1 for summer graduation, and November 1 for fall graduation.

At least three University faculty members from the doctoral dissertation committee, including one from outside the student’s major program, must be present for the oral defense. All members must attest to the successful completion of the defense and final examination.
Approval and Inspection of Dissertation

A copy of the dissertation must be approved in the Office of Admission of the Curry School by the following deadlines: December 1 for January graduation, May 1 for May graduation, and August 1 for August graduation.

Application and Registration for Degree

Application for the Ed.D. degree must be submitted by the following deadlines: February 1 for May graduation, June 1 for August graduation, and October 1 for January graduation. Forms and instructions are available from the Office of Admission and Student Affairs of the Curry School of Education or online at: http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/admissions/rop.html Students must be registered on grounds during the semester in which the degree is to be awarded.

Candidates who do not receive degrees in the session for which their applications have been approved must renew their applications in proper form at the beginning of the session in which candidacy for the degree is desired.

Non-resident degree applicants must be registered for the semester in which the degree is to be awarded. More details related to this requirement and to application deadlines are stated in the General Academic Requirements section of this chapter.

The student’s completed record of progress along with an official transcript of all applicable course work from the University of Virginia or elsewhere must accompany this application for final review by the dean’s office.