

EDUCATION, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN CURRICULUM, CULTURE AND CHANGE

Program goal

The curriculum, culture and change concentration offers a rigorous doctoral-level learning experience in curriculum and instruction with a strong emphasis on advocacy and social justice. The concentration prepares curriculum and instruction leaders for positions in school systems at the building level and above, as well as scholars with a wide range of curricular interests — urban education, rural education, linguistically diverse groups, oppressed groups, critical pedagogy, philosophical and sociocultural foundations of education, etc. In addition to a deep grounding in theoretical, practical and methodological approaches to curriculum and instruction, the concentration prepares instructional leaders to advocate for change across a wide range of institutions, systems and contexts. The concentration offers challenging learning experiences in the field of curriculum and instruction. Its expressed social justice values allow framing of courses in ways that provide critical analyses of contemporary schooling and ground students in the philosophical and historical roots of school change. The program welcomes students with interests in all institutional settings serving students across the life span (early childhood through adulthood) as well as informal and nonformal contexts. It also allows for discipline-specific cohorts in fields such as STEM and literacy.

The concentration distinguishes itself by preparing curriculum and instruction leaders to be change agents capable of working in school systems, higher education and advocacy organizations. It reflects an activist stance toward the education profession — one that views schooling as not only shaped by society but also as an active force for equity and meaningful societal change. It will appeal to a wide range of students: those who are seeking to become instructional leaders in school systems, those preparing to teach in the academy and all those desiring a strong foundation in educational reform.

Student learning outcomes

1. Develop research knowledge and skills (research component): Students will acquire the prerequisite skills essential to designing, conducting and interpreting qualitative and quantitative design research. Students will demonstrate this knowledge and skill set on a qualifying examination, which is independently evaluated by at least two faculty members. To address inter-rater reliability, if the two faculty members disagree on the student's level of knowledge, a third faculty member is called in to evaluate the student's responses on the qualifying examination.
2. Develop in-depth knowledge in one area of study (concentration component): Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge and skills in an area of study that is congruent with their current or projected career goals. Content will differ according to chosen concentration.
3. Apply skills in external setting (externship component): Students will demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a professional placement in a school, agency or corporate setting. The faculty adviser and the externship site supervisor work together to evaluate the student.

4. Complete an original research study (dissertation component): Student will design, implement, analyze and defend an original research study. Once a student passes the prospectus hearing, he or she will collect and analyze the data and finish writing the last two chapters of their dissertation. Students have a committee of a minimum of four faculty members. Typically, this consists of a chair, a methodologist, a subject-matter expert and an expert outside of the School of Education. Each committee member independently reviews the student's work. Once the dissertation defense has occurred, the committee discusses their thoughts on the quality of the student work. Once members agree, the student is granted a Ph.D.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu>) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the [academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students](http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs). (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs>)

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the [academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements](http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy). (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy>)

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the **academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements**. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>)

Other information

For additional information about the Ph.D. in Education program, please see the doctoral student handbook. (<http://www.soe.vcu.edu/files/2016/01/Ph.DHandbook2017.pdf>)

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (<http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu>).

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
Ph.D.	Summer or fall	Dec 15	GRE

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements>), the following represent the minimum requirements for admission:

1. Master's degree in curriculum and instruction, teaching and learning, educational philosophy or related discipline
2. Three letters of recommendation addressing the student's potential for graduate study in education
3. Student's written statement concerning career interests and goals
4. Transcripts of all previous college work
5. A personal interview and writing sample (may be requested)
6. Professional vitae/resume
7. Satisfactory scores on the GRE

Please see doctoral admissions information on the School of Education website for details.

Degree requirements

In addition to the VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>), students are required to complete course work in core and elective courses.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students are required to complete a minimum of 48-54 credit hours depending on concentration.
2. Grade requirements: Receipt of a grade of C or below in three courses constitutes automatic dismissal from the program. Courses with a grade below C cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
3. Externship requirement: Students must complete an approved externship.
4. Examination requirements: Students must pass both a qualifying examination early in the program and a comprehensive examination near the end of the program.
5. Dissertation requirements: Students must complete and defend a research dissertation.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
Foundation		
EDUS 702	Foundations of Educational Research and Doctoral Scholarship I	3
EDUS 703	Foundations of Educational Research and Doctoral Scholarship II	3
Research		
EDUS 608	Educational Statistics	3
EDUS 710	Quantitative Research Design	3
EDUS 711	Qualitative Methods and Analysis	3
Research elective		3
Externship		
EDUC 700	Externship	3
Dissertation		
EDUC 899	Dissertation Research (minimum of six credit hours)	6
EDUS 890	Dissertation Seminar	3
Concentration courses		
EDUS 706	Educational Theory and Praxis in Historical and Contemporary Contexts	3
EDUS 707	Socio-cultural Perspectives on Schooling, Society and Change	3
TEDU 617	Instructional Models and the Curriculum	3
TEDU 730	Professional Development for Changing Schools	3
TEDU 731	Instructional Theories and Strategies	3
TEDU 732	Advanced Seminar in Curriculum Studies	3
Electives chosen in consultation with adviser		6
Total Hours		54

Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 54

Graduate program coordinator

Joan Rhodes, Ph.D.

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Program website: [soe.vcu.edu](http://www.soe.vcu.edu) (<http://www.soe.vcu.edu>)