

Frequently Asked Questions WIU Doctorate in Educational Leadership

How long has WIU had a Doctorate in Education Leadership?

The first doctoral cohort began in 2001 with 22 students. Twenty-one of those students completed the program and earned their Ed.D.

What are the options for WIU's Doctorate in Educational Leadership?

Beginning with the Fall 2016 semester, there are two options for the Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Upon applying to the Ed.D program students will work with the doctoral coordinator to determine which is the most appropriate option based upon the candidate's career goals.

Option 1: PreK-12 (see attached "Doctor of Education PreK-12 option)

This option is designed for our traditional PreK-12 students (those desiring to remain in PreK-12 education as principals, superintendents, curriculum directors, special education directors, literacy coaches, or teachers who want to continue their education). The PreK-12 option is also appropriate to those individuals desiring to focus on a content area in their electives (e.g. as reading, special education, or another area).

Option 2: Post-Secondary (see attached "Doctor of Education Post-secondary option)

This option is designed for students who intend to work in higher education institutions as 1) higher education faculty in a variety of departments or 2) potentially as department chairs. The electives in the program allow the student to work with his/her advisor to design a program that meets the student's specific career goals.

How often are cohorts started?

Generally, the Educational Leadership program generally starts a cohort once a year. By cohort, we are referring to when students begin the "doctoral core" and "research core." The location for the cohort varies from year to year. Before taking the "doctoral core" and "research core" students complete the 21 s.h. in their option area (see below).

How many students are accepted into a cohort?

This depends on the year, the quality of the applicants, and the location where the cohort is being offered. Cohort sizes have ranged from 22 students to 5 students. Typically, we admit an average of 10-15 students in a cohort. We generally do not admit more than 22 students.

What is the application process?

We have developed a document that outlines the application process. Refer to that document for specific details about applying for the Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

Are admissions rolling or on a fixed timeframe?

We review applications on a rolling basis so it is prudent to apply to the program early.

What is the completion percentage for students who enroll in the Educational Leadership Doctorate in Education?

The national completion rate for doctorates is under 50%. Currently, we have an 85% completion.

Are students limited to taking Educational Leadership courses?

No. Although the degree is in Educational Leadership, students can utilize the electives (9 s.h.) to customize the degree to meet their career goals. Additionally, students in the post-secondary option take courses in areas outside of educational leadership.

I only have a Master's degree. Am I eligible to apply to the WIU Doctorate in Educational Leadership?

Yes. Students can apply to the WIU Doctorate in Education Leadership as long as they have a Master's degree in an applicable field.

Do I need the GRE to be accepted in the program?

Yes. The GRE is a requirement of the Graduate School for students enrolling in the doctoral program.

I took the GRE previously, do I need to take it again?

That depends on when you took the GRE. If you took the GRE within five years of beginning the doctoral program, you do not have to retake the GRE. You'd have those scores sent directly from GRE to the graduate school. If your scores are older than five years, you will need to retake the GRE.

How many courses can I take a semester?

Students who are not full-time graduate students, generally take two courses a semester. Full-time graduate students could take more than two courses and part-time graduate students could take one course a semester.

Who will be my advisor and when will I get an advisor?

You will work with the doctoral coordinator and EDL graduate coordinator when you first inquire about the doctoral program. Once you are accepted to the program, you will be assigned to an advising team consisting of the doctoral coordinator and a faculty member with expertise in your area of study (PreK-12, curriculum & instruction, or higher education).

I'll be in the post-secondary option. What happens if I've already taken the post-secondary courses (e.g. CSP 550: Legal Issues in Higher Education)?

You would work with your advising team and substitute another course or courses.

What does the research core consist of?

In the research core you will take three courses: one qualitative course and two quantitative courses. These courses will provide you the background to determine the methodology for your study. In these courses you will read and analyze qualitative and quantitative studies and learn about the methods related to each type of research. During this time you'll continue to hone your thinking about the research you plan to conduct.

When do I take comprehensive exams?

Comprehensive exams (EDL 770) are taken in the final semester of coursework. Currently, the comprehensive exam consists of three areas. Students write a response to each area. Two faculty members with each area scored Pass/Fail score the exams blindly. Students must pass all three areas to "Pass" the comprehensive exam.

When will I start working on my research and my dissertation?

You formally begin working on your research and dissertation after passing your comprehensive exams. However, throughout the doctoral core (12 s.h.) and research core (9 s.h.), you will begin the initial work on your research and dissertation. The courses are designed to move your thinking forward related to your research and dissertation while learning about the various types of research methods. You will begin collecting and reading research on your topic in preparation for writing your review of literature which you will begin drafting in the "Introduction to Dissertation Studies II" course. You will also begin framing your methodology for your study and drafting that in "Introduction to Dissertation Studies I" course.

When will I get my dissertation chair assigned?

In one of your last courses, the doctoral coordinator will meet with you to discuss your research. You will indicate your preference for a dissertation chair. Once all students in a cohort have completed this step, the doctoral coordinator will work with faculty to assign chairs. In the past students have gotten their first and second choices for a chair. When students do not get their first choice, it is generally because of 1)the workload of the faculty member (we try to distribute the number of students each faculty member works with), 2)the type of research the student

intends to do and the area of expertise of the chair, and 3) the topic of the research the student intends to do and the area of expertise of the chair. The goal is to get the best possible match between the student and the chair.

When and how will I form my dissertation committee?

After being assigned a chair, you will work with your chair to form your committee. The committee consists of your chair plus three additional faculty members. Your committee should bring expertise to your dissertation and can consist of faculty members outside the Educational Leadership program. Your goal is to have committee members that expertise in your methodology (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods) and your topic.

What assistance is there once I begin my research?

You will receive a dissertation handbook along with a doctoral handbook in the doctoral program orientation. This is usually connected to your first course. The orientation and these materials will be helpful as you begin your research. You will work closely with your chair as you prepare your proposal (Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Review of Literature, and Chapter 3: Methodology). Additionally, you are likely to try out your ideas for your study on faculty members to get their ideas. The educational leadership program also holds a “Dissertation Bootcamp” that provides intensive assistance to students as they embark on their research.

I’m not a good writer. What assistance is there for me?

Throughout the coursework, you will write and revise extensively. In fact, in the qualitative research course, writing is a major component. The professor that typically teaches that course has a background in English education. Part of the rationale for the extensive writing and revising is to hone the writing skills necessary to complete a dissertation prior to beginning the proposal writing. In the coursework, you will get writing tips that will assist in developing the skills necessary to write your dissertation. Your chair will also provide you assistance in your writing. Some students utilize the Writing Center (available at both the Macomb and Moline campuses). The Writing Center is available at no charge to you. If writing is a struggle for you, you might consider including a faculty member on your committee or requesting a chair with expertise in writing. Finally, students often use an outside editor at some point in their dissertation to assist them. You work with your chair to determine if it would be helpful to utilize an editor. Please note that students are responsible for any fees associated with an editor.

How many semester hours of dissertation research do I have to have?

You will take a minimum of 12 s.h. of EDL 790. During this course you work individually with your chair. There are no required course meetings although we do have optional help sessions. Typically, students take 3 s.h. of EDL 790 per semester. However, students can take more than 3 s.h. in a semester.

What happens if I've registered for the required 12 s.h. of EDL 790 and I'm still not finished with my dissertation?

You must stay continuously enrolled (fall and spring semesters). You must continue to register for EDL 790 from the time you complete your comprehensive exams (excluding summers) until you graduate. Once you have taken 12 s.h. of EDL 790, you may register for 1 s.h. at a time.

How long do I have to complete my doctoral degree?

You have eight years from your matriculation (start) of coursework. Typically, you will have three years of coursework plus a year to work on your dissertation. Most students take 1 ½ years to do their research and writing. However, students have done this in a shorter amount of time and some students take longer. The key is to remember you have a maximum of eight years.

What are the major milestones in the dissertation process?

1. Complete coursework
2. Pass the comprehensive exams
3. Begin working your chair
4. Draft your proposal (Front matter, Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and back matter)
5. Propose your research to your committee
6. Seek approval for your IRB (Institutional Review Board)
7. Conduct your research
8. Revise Chapters 1-2-3 based on the actual research you conducted
9. Write Chapter 4 which focuses on your findings
10. Write Chapter 5 on a summary of your research, your conclusions, and your recommendations
11. Defend your dissertation
12. Submit to ProQuest
13. Graduate

Who are the important contact people for the Doctorate in Educational Leadership?

Doctoral Coordinator: Dr. Stuart Yager

School of Education Director: Dr. Eric Sheffield