Student Handbook
The Concurrent Master of Science and Doctoral Degree Program in Educational Psychology
Department of Learning Sciences
College of Education and Human Development
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This document has been prepared as an overview for the convenience of the student. It is not intended, nor should it be used, as a substitute for the careful reading of the Graduate Catalog and the College of Education and Human Development requirements for degree completion. It is the student’s responsibility to stay informed of changes to their program. The official document for your program is the College of Education and Human Development Graduate Catalog for the academic year in which you were admitted.

Introduction
Educational psychology involves the application of the principles of psychology to the systematic study of education. A major in educational psychology allows a student to emphasize content areas such as learning, instruction, life-span development, applied behavior analysis, cognition, and socialization. The Concurrent Master’s/Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology (EPY) in the GSU College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) develops a substantial knowledge base in the principles of psychology applied to education, broadly defined. The program prepares a student to pursue a variety of career paths, including careers as faculty members in colleges and universities, as researchers in departments of education in government and business, and as professionals in training and research programs in government and industry. Those students who are currently certified or licensed in such fields as teaching, speech language pathology, nursing, counseling, or school psychology can further develop their expertise in these fields by studying the psychological principles of development and learning.

When students first enter the Concurrent program, they are expected to comply with all the requirements of Master’s-level students. In addition, concurrent students are encouraged to begin work on their doctoral residency requirements as soon as possible (see description under the Doctoral Program of Study section in this document), and, with guidance from their advisor, students may decide to start accumulating doctoral credit hours before the Master’s degree is received. The time clock for the Ph.D. begins once the student begins to accrue doctoral credit hours.

In addition to the requirements in this handbook, additional procedures and forms for graduate students are available at the Office of Graduate Student Services. Because these procedures can change, it is best for students to check this website periodically.

Section I: Master’s Advisory Committee
Upon admission, students will be assigned an advisor. The student must contact their advisor about initial course work and continue to do so every semester. After completing nine semester hours of work, the student must select two faculty members to be on their advisory committee, typically the advisor and one other. These two faculty members must approve the student’s planned program of study. The Master’s program plan form can be found here. A third faculty member must be added before the student begins work on the master’s thesis. Two of the three committee members (including the chair) must be from the Educational Psychology program.

Section II: Master’s Program of Study
A program of study includes the sequence of courses that must be completed prior to the oral defense of the thesis. These courses are necessary for fulfilling the CEHD degree requirements:

A minimum of 36 hours of coursework is required for the Master’s program. This coursework is divided into three areas: (1) 15 hours of professional studies that includes coursework in educational research, social foundations, and a Master’s capstone; (2) 15 hours of EPY major courses; and (3) 6 hours of elective courses that are related to the student’s research interests. The student’s program plan must be approved by the Advisory Committee.

A. Professional Studies (15 hours)
Educational Research (6 hours):
  - EPRS 7900 Methods of Research in Education (3 hours) and
  - An additional course with the EPRS prefix or EPY 885 (3 hours)
Social Foundations of Education (3 hours):
  - Select one course with the EPSF prefix (3 hours)
EPY 7990 Master’s Capstone (6 hours)

B. Major (15 Hours)
The student selects a minimum of 15 hours of coursework in the field of Educational Psychology. At least 12 hours must be with the EPY prefix, with the remaining coursework highly related to Educational Psychology. In their first semester, students are required to enroll in EPY 8961 (Professional Development Seminar in Educational Psychology - 3 hours). Concurrent students may take EPY 8010 (Professional Studies in Educational Psychology – 3 hours) as part of their Master’s Program of Study or as part of their Doctoral Program of Study. If they select to take it as part of their Master’s Program of Study, they should enroll in the course prior to working on their thesis. Students should note that prerequisites for this course include two graduate methodology courses or consent of instructor.

C. Electives (6 hours)
The student selects six semester hours of program-related coursework with the consent of their advisor. The purpose of the elective hours is to enable a student to create a program of study to fit their individual intellectual interests.

Continuous Enrollment Policy
Graduate students must register for at least a total of six semester hours of course work during any period of three consecutive semesters (fall, spring, and summer) until completion of degree.
In order to graduate, students must be actively enrolled in course work in the program of study during the semester they finish degree requirements. For the most up-to-date continuous enrollment policy, go to: [Graduate Student Resources - Policies and Procedures](#).

**Transfer Credit**

Students must take a minimum of 27 semester hours of coursework at Georgia State University. This means that a maximum of 9 hours of transfer credit may be applied to a 36-hour M.S. program. Occasionally, a student may be in a position to request that non-degree credit taken at Georgia State University or transfer credit from another institution be applied to the Master of Science planned program in Educational Psychology. All non-degree and transfer credit that a student wishes to apply to the M.S. program in Educational Psychology must be approved by the student’s advisory committee in advance. A College of Education and Human Development Petition to Transfer Graduate Credit form needs to be completed and is available from the Office of Graduate Student Services.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation of a student’s performance is continuous and involves considerations of a student’s performance in all academic settings. Only courses in which the student earns a grade of “B” or higher will be counted toward degree fulfillment. Failure to make progress in a timely manner or inappropriate or unprofessional conduct may result in the student’s removal from a course or the program. If such removal from a course is necessary, the student will receive the grade of “F” for the course and may be judged ineligible to re-enroll in the course.

**Section III: Master’s Comprehensive Examination**

Students in Educational Psychology fulfill the College’s Comprehensive Examination requirement by (1) completing a thesis and (2) completing an oral defense.

Concurrently enrolled students must complete a thesis. The master’s thesis is a basic or applied empirical research project conducted by the student under the supervision of the chair of their advisory committee. A written prospectus describing in detail the proposed project must be submitted to and approved by the chair of the committee before being submitted to the full committee. A meeting of the full committee must be conducted for the student to defend the prospectus. In this meeting students are required to fully detail their plans for data collection, including the timeline, method, people involved, and potential use of previously collected data. The committee may request revisions to the prospectus or may approve it at the first meeting. Students must pass the prospectus defense and receive approval from the Georgia State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before any work on the project can begin.

All research involving human subjects requires appropriate certification of the student (CITI) and a protocol review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Certification requirements are available at [here](#), IRB forms and instructions are available at the [IRB website](#). Students cannot begin recruitment of participants until IRB approval is given.

As the thesis nears completion, the chair of the committee must approve the written document before it is submitted to the entire committee. This process often involves multiple drafts; it is wise to plan accordingly.
On completion of the thesis, each student must complete an oral examination (defense) of approximately two hours. The examination will focus on the thesis and be administered by the student’s advisory committee. The committee will vote on whether the student passes the defense. During this discussion, the committee will determine whether the concurrent student’s thesis also meets the requirements and expectations of the doctoral program residency requirement for the conduct of original research.

When all required work is successfully completed, the student is qualified to receive the Master of Science degree. The student must submit an application for graduation with the Office of the Registrar at least two semesters prior to the expected date of graduation. After completing the requirements for the M.S., the concurrent student begins or continues work toward the doctoral degree.

Section IV: Ph.D. Advisory Committees
During the course of doctoral study, there are two advisory committees: (1) the Doctoral Advisory Committee, and (2) the Dissertation Advisory Committee. The Doctoral Committee’s purpose is to assist the student in all predissertation decisions, including coursework, residency plans, and comprehensive exam. The Dissertation Committee’s purpose is to assist the student in the preparation of and the completion of their dissertation, including the approval of the dissertation prospectus, dissertation defense, and final documentation.

Doctoral Advisory Committee
The Doctoral Advisory Committee assists the student in planning and approving an appropriate program of study (see below) and in preparing for completion of non-course work requirements, including the residency plan (see below) and comprehensive exam (see below). Members of the Doctoral Advisory Committee should be chosen by the accrual of 27 semester hours of coursework. Typically (but not always) the student’s initial advisory committee (created at the master’s level) constitutes the Doctoral Advisory Committee which consists of a minimum of three members. The major advisor serves as chair of the Doctoral Advisory Committee. The Chair is also a full-time tenure track member of the CEHD faculty and has a primary appointment with the EPY faculty. Also, the Chair has been a faculty member at GSU for at least one academic year and meets the requirements of the CEHD for graduate research faculty status. A second member of the Doctoral Advisory Committee also must be a member of the EPY faculty. A third member of the Doctoral Advisory Committee must be a faculty member outside of the EPY faculty. This third member can be faculty within the Department of Learning Sciences (i.e., the Special Education Program or the Learning Technologies program) or outside of the department (e.g., another department in the CEHD or outside of CEHD). The CEHD requires that at least three members of the Doctoral Advisory Committee hold doctorate degrees. All committee members but one must hold graduate research faculty status.

Once the Doctoral Advisory Committee is selected, the student will work with their major advisor to prepare for the program of study planning meeting. The student is responsible for scheduling this meeting. During the preparation, the student and major advisor will create an agenda for the meeting. This agenda may include a brief background the student is willing to share about themselves, such as why the student decided to pursue a doctoral degree,
professional goals, and topics the student is interested in studying (including courses, potential research interests for the residency plan, comprehensive exam, and the dissertation, knowing that these interests may be adjusted as the student moves through the program). At the completion of this meeting, the Doctoral Committee will approve and sign the planned program of study form which is available here. The planned program form should then be submitted to the department’s chair for signature and then forwarded to Office of Graduate Student Services.

All appointments to the Doctoral Advisory Committee, including its chair, are subject to approval by the student, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the CEHD. After the initial Doctoral Advisory Committee has been established, should a student’s research interests change, membership can be revised prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

**Dissertation Advisory Committee**

After completion of the comprehensive examination and before submission of the dissertation prospectus (see below), the Doctoral Advisory Committee must be expanded by at least one additional member. This new member can be a faculty member either in EPY or outside of EPY. Exceptions can be made to include members that are from outside of the College; this needs to be discussed with the Doctoral Advisory Committee on a case-by-case basis. In addition, changes in membership from the Doctoral Advisory Committee to the Dissertation Advisory Committee, including the committee chair, may be made. Similar to the Doctoral Advisory Committee, the CEHD requires that the committee chair and all but one of the committee members must hold graduate research faculty status with the CEHD. The resulting committee will represent expertise in the research topic and the proposed research methodology and includes no fewer than four members. All appointments to the Dissertation Advisory Committee, including the chair, are subject to approval by the student, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the CEHD.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee aids the student in developing the dissertation prospectus and later the dissertation. The Dissertation Advisory Committee is responsible for judging the significance and acceptability of the dissertation prospectus and defense, and based on that judgment, they may recommend that the student advance to candidacy. The Dissertation Advisory Committee judges the soundness and acceptability of the dissertation and the competence and acceptability of the student’s oral defense of the dissertation.

**Section V: Doctoral Program of Study**

A program of study includes the sequence of courses required to be completed prior to completing a comprehensive examination and dissertation. These courses are necessary for fulfilling the CEHD degree requirements. The doctoral program of study form can be found here.

A minimum of 51-57 hours of coursework is required for the Ph.D. program. This coursework is divided into three areas: (1) 18-hour CEHD Core that includes courses in research methodology, social foundations of education, and psychology of learning; (2) 18-24-hour EPY Major; and (3) 15-hour EPY dissertation. The details of the requirements in these areas are described below.
NOTE: With the guidance and approval of the major advisor and Doctoral Advisory Committee, the student can select additional courses from the Graduate Student Catalog that are relevant to the program of study.

CEHD CORE AREA (MINIMUM OF 18 SEMESTER HOURS)
The purpose of the CEHD core is to develop general research competence, including expertise in at least one particular research paradigm appropriate to the major field, and ultimately to dissertation research. The research area includes five courses in research methodology (15 hours). In addition, the core is intended to develop an awareness of the context in which educational issues can be understood and interpreted by taking a course in social foundations of education (3 hours) or one in psychology of learning (3 hours). Core course selection is specified in the Graduate Student Catalog under the section for the CEHD General Core Area Requirements.

Research Methodology Courses (15 hours)
NOTE: Two of the four research methodology core requirement courses must be completed within the first two calendar years following admission to the doctoral program.

Choose one course (3):
• ERS 8500 Qualitative/Interpretive Research in Education I (3)
• EPRS 8530 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education I (3)

Other requirements (12):
• □ A two course sequence (6 hours) in research methodology (see below for specific tracks/courses)
• □ Two courses (6 hours) in advanced research methods as identified by the Doctoral Advisory Committee

Quantitative Methodology
• EPRS 8540 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education II (3)
• EPRS 8550 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education III (3)
• EPRS 8820 Institutional Research (3)
• EPRS 8830 Survey Research, Sampling Principles and Questionnaire Design (3)
• EPRS 8840 Meta-Analysis (3)
• EPRS 8860 Bayesian Statistics (3)
• EPRS 9550 Multivariate Analysis (3)
• EPRS 9560 Structural Equation Modeling (3)
• EPRS 9570 Hierarchical Linear Modeling I (3)
• EPRS 9571 Hierarchical Linear Modeling II (3)
• EPRS 9900 Advanced Research (3)

Qualitative Methodology
• ANTH 8510 Qualitative Methods in Anthropology (3)
• EPRS 8510 Qualitative Research in Education II (3)
• EPRS 8520 Qualitative Research in Education III (3)
• EPRS 8640 Case Study Methods (3)
• EPRS 8700 Visual Research Methods (3)
o EPRS 9120 Poststructural Inquiry (3)
o EPRS 9400 Writing Qualitative Research Manuscripts (3)
o EPSF 9280 Interpretive Inquiry in Education (3)

Single-Case Methodology
o EPY 8850 Introduction to Single-Case Methodology (3)
o EPY 8860 Applications of Single-Case Methodology (3)

Historical/Philosophical Methodology
o EPSF 9850 Historical Research in Twentieth Century American Education (3)
o EPSF 9930 Philosophical Analysis and Method (3)

Measurement Methodology
o EPRS 7920 Classroom Testing, Grading, and Assessment (3)
o EPRS 8920 Educational Measurement (3)
o EPRS 9350 Introduction to Item Response Theory (3)
o EPRS 9360 Advanced Item Response Theory (3)

**Social Foundations of Education and Psychology of Learning Core (3 hours)**

In addition to highly specialized research in specific areas, doctoral students in the CEHD must possess a deep understanding of comprehensive, theoretical principles and broad ideological conceptualizations.

Through historical, philosophical, sociological, and anthropological inquiry, knowledge of social foundations fosters the types of speculative investigations essential for thorough understanding of those theoretical principles and ideological conceptualizations necessary to uphold the integrity of the Ph.D. degree.

The psychology of learning component is based on the following guiding principles: (1) educational leaders make judgments that affect learning, and (2) doctoral students should have a substantial understanding of the psychology of learning.

**Select one (3):**
- □ EPSF 8270 Philosophy of Education (3)
- □ EPSF 8280 Anthropology of Education (3)
- □ EPSF 8310 Sociology of Education (3)
- □ EPSF 8320 Politics and Policy in Education (3)
- □ EPSF 8340 History of American Education (3)
- □ EPSF 9260 Epistemology and Learning (3)
- □ EPY 8030 Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis (3)
- □ EPY 8050 The Psychology of Instruction (3)
- □ EPY 8070 Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning (3)
- □ EPY 8080 Memory and Cognition (3)
- □ EPY 8180 Development During School Age (5 to 18 Years) (3)
- □ EPY 8200 Advanced Developmental Psychology: Cognition and Intellect (3)
EPY MAJOR AREA (MINIMUM OF 18 - 24 SEMESTER HOURS)
Required (9):
• □ EPY 8010 Professional Studies in Educational Psychology (3)
• □ EPY 8961 Professional Development Seminar in Educational Psychology (3)
• □ EPY 9000 Facilitating College Teaching (3)

Select additional courses (9-15):
Students must select 9-15 hours of additional credit hours of elective coursework, a majority of which must be in EPY. Students who have previously earned a Master’s degree in EPY from GSU may select a minimum of 9 additional credit hours to complete the PhD program of study because they already completed GSU EPY elective courses during their Master’s program. To see a full listing of EPY courses, visit the course catalog: EPY Graduate Course Catalog.

EPY DISSERTATION (15 SEMESTER HOURS)
Required (15):
□ EPY 9990 Dissertation (15)

Program total: Minimum of 51-57 semester hours

NOTE: EPY 8010 should be taken no later than the second year of doctoral studies. Students should note that prerequisites for EPY 8010 include two graduate methodological courses or consent of instructor. EPY 9000 should be taken in the middle or toward the end of the program of study.

Upon completion of EPY 8010, it is expected that students will enroll in a minimum of two directed reading courses (EPY 8810). During these courses, students will meet with a cohort of students and/or their advisor on a monthly basis. The first expected enrollment in EPY 8810 is the semester following completion of EPY 8010. The purpose of this first directed reading is to work on the residency study. Completion of this course is the residency study submission. Upon successful completion of comprehensive exams, it is expected that students enroll in another EPY 8810 course to work on their dissertation prospectus. Completion of this course is the successful defense of the dissertation prospectus. Each month, students will provide their advisor with an update on their directed reading progress. Progress should also be described in the annual review documentation (see below for annual review information). It is the responsibility of the students, with the help of their advisors, to find a cohort of students, and to organize student and/or advisor directed reading meetings.

Continuous Enrollment Policy
Graduate students must register for at least a total of six semester hours of course work during any period of three consecutive semesters (fall, spring, and summer) until completion of degree. In order to graduate, students must be actively enrolled in course work in the program of study during the semester they finish degree requirements for graduation. For the most up-to-date continuous enrollment policy, go to: Graduate Student Resources - Policies and Procedures.

Residency Requirements
As indicated in the CEHD Graduate Bulletin, the purpose of the residency is to provide close and continuous involvement with faculty, professional colleagues, and other graduate students. The residency provides supervised opportunities for development in teaching, research, and service. It also provides time for concentrated study and course work, and opportunities to read, reflect, and do research for the advanced degree.

Each doctoral student must have a DLS Ph.D. Residency Program Plan that is reviewed with and approved by the Doctoral Advisory Committee. The departmental residency requirements assure each doctoral student is involved in professional activities beyond completed course work. Some examples of activities include assisting a faculty member in teaching a course, submitting a data-based article to a refereed journal as senior author, attending conferences, and participating in professional organizations. Some of the residency activities are mandatory while others are optional. The list of residency requirements is available at DLS - Ph.D. Residency Program Plan Form.

**Teaching Residency**
One required activity is the teaching residency. To complete the teaching residency, doctoral students will serve as teaching interns. Interns are required to assist faculty in the teaching of a course. Assisting in teaching a course will include attending the classes. Interns will teach at least one unit in that course. They will design, implement, and assess one learning activity for the unit taught. They also will assess students on the material taught in that unit and provide feedback to the students on the assessment. In addition, interns will make a meaningful contribution to the course (e.g., assisting with assessment, offering office hours, providing review sessions, running small groups), and they will collect student feedback on their performance. Students should consult with their advisor regarding whether to enroll in EPY 9660 Internship in Educational Psychology when completing their teaching internship. With the approval of the advisor, the teaching internship may meet the requirement of teaching a college level course (Area I Residency Requirement). When this option is approved for students, they must complete an additional residency activity under Area III.

If an intern chooses to complete the teaching component of the teaching residency in a course outside the EPY Program, their advisor must approve the course and instructor and must observe at least one of the classes when the intern is teaching. The instructor of the course outside of the EPY Program must be present when the intern teaches and must meet with the intern’s advisor at least once. Assisting in teaching a course outside of EPY will include attending the classes. Interns will teach a unit in that course. They will design, implement, and assess one learning activity for the unit taught. They also will assess students on the material taught in that unit and provide feedback to the students on the assessment. In addition, interns will make a meaningful contribution to the course (e.g., assisting with assessment, offering office hours, providing review sessions, running small groups), and they will collect student feedback on their performance.

**Teaching Opportunities**
Completion of the teaching residency (outlined above) with evidence of competency is a prerequisite for teaching EPY courses. As part of their graduate training, students are encouraged to teach in the EPY Program. In general, students are hired to teach undergraduate courses (EPY
The Science of Learning, EPY 2050 Human Growth and Development, EDUC 2120 Sociocultural Perspectives on Diversity, EDUC 2130 Exploring Learning and Teaching). While the teaching residency should take place in a face-to-face class, students are also encouraged to obtain online teaching experiences. Students should confer with their advisor regarding the course format for their teaching internship.

* Students who are the instructor of record of a college or university course are not required to assist a professor in a course. Instead, these students can fulfill the teaching residency by successfully completing EPY 9000 and preparing a teaching portfolio that documents effective college teaching practices. Specifics about what is included in a teaching portfolio are available from the student’s advisor or the program coordinator.

Section VI: The Doctoral Comprehensive Examination
The comprehensive examination requires students to demonstrate their ability to critically discuss theory and research in the field of Educational Psychology. The comprehensive examination consists of two written papers. The topics of the written papers are determined by the student, advisor, and doctoral committee with the intent that the papers will lay the foundation for the student’s dissertation. Students should view the comprehensive examination as an opportunity to develop and refine the mastery of theory and methodology that will be involved in their dissertation research.

Eligibility for the Comprehensive Examination
A student is eligible to take the comprehensive examination when the advisor has reviewed with the student their progress and agrees that all courses have been completed, or nearly completed, all incomplete grades have been removed, and the residency paper is submitted to a journal or is ready to be submitted to a journal, except for feedback from a coauthor.

The Overall Structure of the Exam
The comprehensive examination consists of two parts: a written portion and an oral portion. The comprehensive examination requirement is considered complete once a student passes both parts.

The Written Portion of the Exam
Students will submit two papers. The papers are meant to represent the best papers that a student can produce.

The first paper will consist of a structured literature review. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate mastery of the area of research interest. The paper may be revised after the exam to serve as a stand-alone publication and/or as an introduction to the dissertation. Ideally, the content will be associated with the dissertation topic. The typical range of a literature review will be 30-50 pages, with the length dictated by the scope of the literature review as determined by the student, their advisor, and their doctoral advisory committee.

The second paper will consist of an exploration and evaluation of the research methodologies that can be used to address specific research question(s) that the student identifies. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the student’s ability to identify and critique the methodologies needed to answer the specific question(s). Ideally, this paper will be associated with the topic
covered in the review paper described above (i.e., Paper 1). This exploration could take different forms. Here are some examples: (1) an evaluation of existing approaches to measure constructs relevant to the proposed question(s), (2) an exploration and evaluation of different research paradigms or study designs that could be used to address the research question(s), or (3) a research proposal that could be a precursor to the dissertation prospectus. The typical length of this paper would be 20-30 pages. The student, advisor, and doctoral committee will determine which of these approaches is most appropriate.

Paper topics and/or questions will be co-developed by the advisor and student and then vetted by the doctoral committee. Once the topics and/or questions are approved by the advisor, the student should send the topics and/or questions to the doctoral committee members. Within 2-3 weeks of the committee receiving the topics and/or questions, the committee and student meet to discuss and finalize them. Once finalized, the student has 15 weeks to write and submit the two papers to the committee. The papers will be submitted electronically to the committee members by 5 pm on the day that the papers are due. If committee members want a hard copy, the student will be responsible to provide it.

Although a student can seek general guidance for the papers from faculty members or peers, neither faculty members nor peers can read or give specific feedback on drafts of the papers. In addition, professional help (editor, proof-reader, writing center assistance) cannot be used. The majority of references need to be drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles. Some references citing books and chapters in edited books are acceptable, as well as a few references from conference papers, Psych Info, ERIC manuscripts, and Dissertation Abstracts. Website references are strongly discouraged, although in some instances may be justified. The papers must follow guidelines outlined in the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Papers should be in the same final format as a manuscript to be submitted for publication.

**After Submission of the Written Portion of the Exam**

Within 2 weeks of submission, the doctoral advisory committee will evaluate the papers to determine if they are complete enough to be defended. Each paper will receive one of two assessments: (a) Revise and Resubmit or (b) Ready for Oral Defense. If both papers are assessed as ready for the oral defense, an oral exam will be scheduled within 3 weeks of submission of papers to the committee, or within a timeframe that is conducive to the doctoral advisory committee.

If any paper receives a Revise and Resubmit, the committee will provide the student with specific feedback regarding how to improve the paper. Students will have 7 or 15 weeks to prepare the revisions, depending on the scope of the revisions required and/or number of papers that require revision.

Students will have only one opportunity to revise the paper(s) that receive Revise and Resubmit decisions.

**The Oral Portion of the Exam**
It is the responsibility of the student to schedule the oral defense room and to notify committee members of the location. Students should plan for a 2-hour meeting for this portion of the exam. The oral defense includes a presentation of papers (15 minutes per paper). The presentation is followed with question-and-answer time led by the faculty committee members. This is good practice for the dissertation and for the professional world.

During the oral defense, students are permitted to bring notes and OCCASIONALLY refer to them if needed. After the oral defense is completed, the student will leave the room. The student’s committee will then determine if they passed or failed the examination. Students who fail the oral exam will have one opportunity to re-take it.

**General Scheduling Note and Reminder**

Students should work closely with their advisor and committee members to ensure their oral defense date falls at a time when faculty are available to meet and will be scheduled 18 weeks from finalization of questions (15 weeks for the drafting of the papers; 2 weeks for the committee to read the papers; an additional week to work on scheduling the oral defense). Faculty availability excludes winter break and may exclude the May and summer sessions.

**Outcomes of the Exam**

All written papers must be defendable for the student to advance to oral defense. A student has no more than two opportunities to pass each part of the exam. At both the written and oral stage of the exam, 2/3 of the committee members must agree on determining pass/fail. Failure to pass any one or more parts of the comprehensive exam on the second attempt is considered a failure of the entire comprehensive exam and will result in dismissal from the program.

The following are possible outcomes of the examination:

1. After 17 weeks (15 weeks to complete the papers; 2 weeks for the committee to finish reading the papers), the first submission of the papers is ready to defend orally. At the first attempt, the oral defense is passed. The student has passed the comprehensive examination.

2. After 17 weeks (15 weeks to complete the papers; 2 weeks for the committee to finish reading the papers), the first submission of the papers is not ready to defend orally. The committee will inform the student of the Revise and Resubmit decision. The student submits revisions in 7 or 15 weeks (determined by the committee). The revised written portion is ready to defend. At the first attempt, the oral defense is passed. The student has passed the comprehensive examination.

3. After 17 weeks (15 weeks to complete the papers; 2 weeks for the committee to finish reading the papers), the first submission of the papers is ready to defend orally. At the first attempt, the oral defense is not passed. The student gets remediation on how to make the presentation, and/or orally answer questions, and they do orals again. If the student fails the second oral defense attempt, the student fails the exam.

4. After 17 weeks (15 weeks to complete the papers; 2 weeks for the committee to finish reading the papers), the first submission of the papers is not ready to defend orally. The committee will inform the student of the Revise and Resubmit decision. The student submits revisions in 7 or 15 weeks (determined by the committee). The revised written portion is ready to defend.
At the first attempt, the oral defense is not passed. The student gets remediation on how to make the presentation, and/or orally answer questions, and they do orals again. If the student fails the second oral defense attempt, the student fails the exam.

5. After 17 weeks (15 weeks to complete the papers; 2 weeks for the committee to finish reading the papers), the first submission of the papers is not ready to defend orally. The committee will inform the student of the Revise and Resubmit decision. The student submits revisions in 7-15 weeks (determined by the committee). The revised written portion is not ready to defend. The student fails the exam.

Section VII: The Dissertation Process

The Dissertation Prospectus
The dissertation prospectus is written following successful completion of the comprehensive examination. Prior to beginning the prospectus, the student should obtain a copy of the CEHD Guide to Creating Your Dissertation. The prospectus is orally presented at a publicly announced open meeting of the Dissertation Advisory Committee attended by no fewer than four members of the Committee. The prospectus announcement form can be found here. This form must be submitted at least 15 calendar days prior to the date of the scheduled prospectus presentation. Note that signatures on the form must be attained before submission, so advanced planning is required. Calendar days include weekends and Spring Break. Additionally, the prospectus must be presented between the first day of classes and the last day of final examinations. It cannot be presented between academic terms or during term breaks. Candidates should expect a minimum two-week turn-around time for review of drafts of the prospectus. The CEHD stipulates that approval and acceptance of the dissertation prospectus requires a favorable vote of most of the Dissertation Advisory Committee, but the majority for this vote must include no fewer than four members regardless of the size of the Committee.

Human Subjects Review
All research involving human subjects requires appropriate certification of the student (CITI) and a protocol review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Certification requirements are available at here. IRB forms and instructions are available at the IRB website. Students cannot begin recruitment of participants until IRB approval is given. A copy of the appropriate human subjects review form showing that all necessary department approvals have been obtained, together with all required supporting documents specified in the IRB application, must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Student Services.

Advancement to Candidacy
The Dissertation Advisory Committee recommends to the dean of the CEHD that the student be admitted to candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree when the student has completed all requirements for the degree except the dissertation. This includes satisfactory completion of all course work required in the program of study within seven years of first matriculation, fulfillment of the Educational Psychology residency requirement, successful completion of all required examinations including the comprehensive examination, and submission and presentation of an approved dissertation prospectus. First matriculation takes place when a student takes the first course to be counted toward the Ph.D. degree.
Preparing for the Dissertation Defense
All dissertations must conform to the CEHD Guide to Creating Your Dissertation. The CEHD recognizes three formats for the dissertation: the traditional format usually consisting of five chapters, the research article format, and the qualitative model format. The Chair will direct the student to use a specific format. Candidates should expect a minimum two-week turn-around time for review of drafts of the dissertation.

When the dissertation is completed, an oral defense should be scheduled with the Dissertation Committee. A public announcement of the defense is disseminated via the Office of Graduate Student Services to the CEHD Faculty. The defense announcement form can be found here. The announcement must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Student Services at least 15 calendar days prior to the scheduled defense. Calendar days include weekends and Spring Break. Students must also submit an electronic copy of the dissertation to the Office of Graduate Student Services general email account at coedissertations@gsu.edu at least fifteen calendar days prior to date of defense. The oral defense is scheduled on the main campus of the University and must be attended by no fewer than four members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee.

Consult with the Office of Graduate Student Services and use their resources for completing paperwork related to the completion of the dissertation: Common Doctoral Forms and Policies

The dissertation cannot be defended between academic terms or during term breaks. Acceptance of the doctoral dissertation requires a favorable vote of most of the Dissertation Advisory Committee, but the majority for this vote must include no fewer than four members of the Committee.

SECTION IX: Other Important Expectations and Opportunities
The following information details other important requirements and opportunities for EPY graduate students including information regarding the Program of Study, degree completion requirements, certificate opportunities, expectations for annual student reviews, and engagement in the DLS Graduate Student Association (DLS-GSA).

Additional Information Pertaining to Program of Study
Students who have not previously taken EPY 7080 and EPRS 7900 (or their equivalents) must take these courses prior to beginning their doctoral course work. These courses may not be included in their planned program.

The minimum grade acceptable for all course work is B-. An overall cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 is required to be eligible to take the comprehensive examination and for graduation. No coursework (transferred to or from Georgia State University) that has been completed more than seven years prior to admission to candidacy may be used in the EPY doctoral program. All degree requirements must be successfully completed within nine years of a student’s first matriculation into the Ph.D. program.

Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct by a student may result in the student being dropped from a course with a grade of F and/or being dismissed from the program. If such removal is
necessary, the student will receive a grade of F for the course and may be judged ineligible to continue in the EPY doctoral program.

**Degree Completion**
The student must file an application for graduation with the Office of the Registrar at least two semesters prior to the expected date of graduation. The dissertation must be concluded within two years of admission to candidacy. The student must be enrolled during the academic term in which all degree requirements are completed. The last day to defend is typically 3-4 weeks before the semester ends. Three semester hours of credit is required during at least two out of each three-term period following successful completion of the comprehension examination until graduation. Students should plan on graduation during Fall or Spring semesters. Many faculty members are not under contract in the Summer. For more information regarding the CEHD dissertation requirements check this link: [Common Doctoral Forms and Policies](#).

**Certificate Opportunities**
Each student and advisor should discuss the student’s career goals. Depending on the outcome of this discussion, students are strongly encouraged to pursue one or more of the following: A Certificate of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, a Certificate in Quantitative Research in Education, a Certificate in Qualitative Research in Education, and/or a Certificate in Health Literacy.

Students who select to earn a Certificate of Excellence in Teaching and Learning are required to complete EPY 9660 (Internship in Educational Psychology), which is taken after EPY 9000. In this internship, students are required to assist faculty in the teaching of a course. Following successful completion of the internship, students are encouraged to teach in the EPY Program. In general, students are hired to teach undergraduate courses (EPY 2040 The Science of Learning, EPY 2050 Human Growth and Development, EDUC 2120 Exploring Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Diversity in Educational Contexts, EDUC 2130 Exploring Learning and Teaching). Follow the requirements as listed at: [Certificate of Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#).

Students who elect to earn a Certificate in Quantitative and/or Qualitative Research need to meet the requirements listed at: [Quantitative Research in Education](#) and/or [Qualitative Research in Education](#). Students who elect to earn a Certificate in Health Literacy need to meet the requirements listed at: [Health Literacy Certificate](#).

**Annual Review**
The Annual Review of Ph.D. students in the Educational Psychology Program by the Educational Psychology Program faculty occurs each year in April. Ph.D. students must submit the required documentation to their advisor by March 15th of each year. Failure to submit the report of progress may result in dismissal from the program.

**Students Who Have Not Completed Their Comprehensive Examination or Residency Requirements**
The student should refer to the [EPY Ph.D. Program of Study](#) and the [DLS - Ph.D. Residency Program Plan Form](#) to obtain information.
The student submits the following four items to their advisor:

1. Electronic copy Ph.D. Program of Study Form that includes any course changes.
2. Course grades.
3. Copy of DLS Ph.D. Residency Program Plan completed to date.
4. A written report of progress of coursework and residency including activities from the previous year, professional goals, and plans for the coming year. For students who received an unsatisfactory evaluation the previous year their remediation plan and a summary of how the goals in the remediation plan were accomplished must be submitted.

**Students Who Have Completed Their Comprehensive Examination and Residency Requirements**

Students who have completed their examination and have met all residency requirements must submit a written summary of progress toward the completion of the dissertation to their advisor. Students who received an unsatisfactory evaluation the previous year must submit their remediation plan and a summary of how the goals in the remediation plan were accomplished.

**Review Procedures**

The EPY Program Faculty meets to review student progress. Major advisors present information for their students. The evaluation includes (a) academic progress, (b) residency progress, (c) professional growth, and (d) professionalism. Evaluation involves consideration of a student’s performance in all academic settings. The Review Committee rates student progress as outstanding, excellent, good, or unsatisfactory. The student receives the Committee’s report by the middle of May.

Any student receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation must meet with their Doctoral Advisor to devise a remediation plan. Failure to do so by September 15th is grounds for termination from the program. This written plan will include specific activities that will be accomplished prior to the next annual review. A copy of the plan, signed by both the student and the advisor, will be kept by the advisor and be part of the student’s next annual review. In that next review, students must include how they have accomplished the goals in the remediation plan. Two unsatisfactory annual evaluations are grounds for dismissal from the program. Prior to termination, students are notified that their academic standing is in jeopardy and that the EPY program will review their status for possible exclusion from the program.

**The DLS GSA**

To enrich the academic and professional experience for doctoral students in the DLS department, the DLS Graduate Student Association (DLS-GSA) was developed in 2010. The aims of DLS-GSA are to provide student-centered programs, services, and opportunities that foster equity and inclusion; promote recruitment and retention; and foster leadership and development. The specific goals of DLS-GSA are: (1) to support students through their graduate school experience, (2) to provide fellowship opportunities among students, and (3) to provide a forum for the presentation of ideas and information that benefit graduate students. To accomplish these goals, the DLS-GSA executive board holds monthly meetings to discuss services, programs and opportunities needed. Decisions about what to sponsor are determined by feedback from active DLS-GSA members. Two times each semester, DLS-GSA sponsors topical events. Examples of
event topics include conferences and presenting, research designs, IRB, vita writing, studying for and practicing written comprehensive exams, writing for publication, editing, and the prospectus and dissertation processes. In addition to topical events, DLS-GSA provides a monthly meeting time and place for members to collaborate and discuss current issues. We encourage all graduate students to participate. Students should check their GSU email for updates and information related to GSA-sponsored activities.