

UNIVERSITYof **HOUSTON** | EDUCATION

**Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies
Ph.D. Program Student Handbook**

Fall 2015 Cohort

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Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies Ph.D. Program Student Handbook

I. Introduction

1. Purpose of this Handbook

This Handbook is intended for doctoral students in the Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies (HELPS) program in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Houston. It provides an overview of the program requirements and the rules and regulations governing the Ph.D. program in HELPS. We hope that the information included facilitates students' progress toward the attainment of their degree objectives.

This handbook is designed to supplement and clarify and not to supersede policies and procedures at the College or University level. The following resources also will assist you in following the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.

- a. Students are referred to the *University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Graduate Catalog* including those portions specifically for the College of Education. It is important for students to read these documents and be familiar with the requirements and policies in effect for all graduate students at the University and in the College of Education more specifically. These documents are available online at (www.uh.edu/grad_catalog).
- b. Students are referred to the *Thesis and Dissertation Guide* from the College of Education regarding college rules and requirements regarding the dissertation process. It is important for students to read these documents and be familiar with the College of Education doctoral program requirements. This guide is available online at the Graduate Student Resources page for College of Education students.
- c. *MyAdvisor* is the electronic interface for student services in the College of Education. Students use this online application primarily to submit forms required to get approvals or to document their progress toward the degree. Once students obtain their CougarOne card and enroll in courses, they can sign up to use *MyAdvisor*. (<https://www.coe.uh.edu/MyAdvisor/login.cfm>)
- d. Staff and advisors available through the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies office can also serve as a resource and provide guidance on where to go in order to get more information about particular University, College and Department policies and procedures. Information about these policies and procedures as well as Program Area requirements not described in this handbook can be discussed with your academic advisor.

2. Goals of the HELPS Program

The program is grounded in a philosophical belief in the transformational nature of higher education as an institution of social change. As such, the primary objectives of the PhD program in HELPS are to advance scholarship, research, and practice around issues of access, equity, affordability, student learning, degree completion, and excellence in higher education. Ultimately, these efforts are intended to strengthen education at the local, state, national, and international levels and further equity of opportunity for all students, but particularly those traditionally underserved by our current systems.

Specifically, the following educational objectives guide the program. Students completing the PhD will be able to competently:

- Discuss and critically evaluate relevant conceptual and theoretical literature;
- Analyze policies that have implications for student access and success;
- Review, in depth, the background and research advances in the field;
- Design and conduct an advanced, original research project in the field; and
- Disseminate original research findings through professional presentations and peer reviewed articles.

The program focuses on preparation for careers in a variety of settings, including:

- Academia, as university faculty members;
- Administrative leaders at universities and community colleges;
- Research settings and organizations;
- Program development and evaluation organizations; and
- Policy and advocacy settings.

3. Personal and Emotional Demands of Program

Successful progress in the HELPS requires academic, professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skill development. This process is both intellectually and personally demanding. The first year core requirements, in particular, entail a strong commitment to the program in terms of time that includes, but is not limited to, travel time for courses and meetings, time in class, and time devoted to coursework and research. Full participation in the doctoral program necessitates that students balance their personal commitments (e.g., family, self, personal health) with the professional commitments associated with the program.

II. Coursework Requirements

1. Basic Requirements by Category

The curriculum for the HELPS Ph.D. program involves the completion of specific coursework that includes foundations of psychological and educational theory, statistics, and research methodology. Completion of the program typically requires three years of full time study, inclusive of coursework, candidacy research project, comprehensive exam, and dissertation. Courses required for the degree are described below.

In the first two full years of studies (i.e., fall, spring and summer in each year), students in the HELPS doctoral program are required to complete at least 6 hours of coursework each semester (i.e., Fall, Spring, and Summer) to satisfy doctoral residency requirements. Students should reference the schedule of course offerings and, in consultation, identify the courses required for a given semester.

A. Program Core Requirements (30 hours)

Students in the HELPS doctoral program are required to complete a Program Core consisting of 10 courses (30 hours). The 10 required courses are listed below.

Course Number	Course Name
CUST 8378	Current Issues in Education
CUST 8375	History and Philosophy of Higher Education
ELCS 7371	Higher Education Law
ELCS 8331	Finance in Higher Education
ELCS 8332	Student Development in Postsecondary Institutions
ELCS 8335	Seminar in Adult Education
ELCS 8338	Administration of Higher Education in Multicultural Settings
ELCS 8355	Policy, Politics, and Governance of Education
ELCS 8360	Studies in Postsecondary Education
ELCS 8397	Economics of Education

B. Research Methods Core Requirements (15 hours)

Students in the HELPS program are required to complete a Program Area Core consisting of 5 courses (15 hours).

Course Number	Course Name
EDRS 8380	Research Methods in Education
EDRS 8382	Inferential Statistics
SAER 8320	Ethnographic Research
ELCS 8330	Statistical Analyses for Non-Experimental Research in Educational Settings
Ad. Eth. Methods or Other Course on with Advisor App.	

C. Independent Research Requirements (9 hours min)

Students in the HELPS program are required to satisfy two major research requirements: (1) the candidacy research paper, and (2) a doctoral dissertation. Both of these projects typically involve the collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and/or qualitative data.

a. SAER 8388 Residency Research Course (3 hours)

The Residency Research Course is designed to facilitate the development of the proposal of each student’s candidacy research paper under the guidance of the course instructor. The candidacy

paper requirement may be waived if students previously have completed a Master's thesis. Discuss this possibility with your advisor.

b. ELCS 8399 Dissertation (for a total of at least 6 hours)

As described in more detail below, students are required to complete at least 6 hours of Dissertation during the course of their studies. Three (ELCS 8399) of the six dissertation hours must be taken in the semester when students complete their Doctoral Dissertation (i.e., the semester of final defense of the dissertation). Students may register for additional dissertation hours, but only 6 hours may be listed on their degree plan. After first enrolling in dissertation hours, a student must be continually enrolled in dissertation hours (at least 3 hours) every Fall/Spring semester until he/she graduates.

D. Specialization Electives (minimum 12 hours)

Students in the program are required to pursue one of the four Areas of Specialization within the program. These areas include *Equity and Social Justice*, *International Perspectives*, *Policy and Politics*, and *Research Methods*. Although all students in the program gain some background in these areas through the Program Area Core courses, students within each area add to their expertise by selecting electives relevant to a particular area of specialization. For these electives, students are encouraged to pursue coursework pertinent to their individual career goals, including courses offered by faculty within the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department as well as courses offered by other departments in the College of Education, and those related to the fields of sociology, economics, political science, and other behavioral and social sciences. These electives should be identified in consultation with the student's academic advisor.

2. Sequence of Courses

A typical sequence of courses for a student in the HELPS program is listed below. This sample reflects the minimum 66 credit hours required to complete the degree. Any particular student's sequence of course-taking and the number of courses completed will depend on that student's academic background, area of specialization, and the courses that are offered in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and other departments during their matriculation.

Full-Time Example*

<i>Fall Year 1</i>	<i>Spring Year 1</i>	<i>Summer Year 1</i>
EDRS 8382	SAER 8320	CUST 8378
EDRS 8380	ELCS 8330	ELCS 8338
ELCS 8360	ELCS 8331	
<i>Fall Year 2</i>	<i>Spring Year 2</i>	<i>Summer Year 2</i>
CUST 8375	ELCS 8335	SAER 8388
(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	ELCS 7371
ELCS 8332	ELCS 8355	
<i>Fall Year 3</i>	<i>Spring Year 3</i>	
elective	elective	
ELCS 8397	6 hours dissertation	

Part-Time Example*

<i>Fall Year 1</i>	<i>Spring Year 1</i>	<i>Summer Year 1</i>
ELCS 8360	SAER 8320	CUST 8378
EDRS 8380	ELCS 8331	ELCS 8338
<i>Fall Year 2</i>	<i>Spring Year 2</i>	<i>Summer Year 2</i>
CUST 8375	ELCS 8335	EPSY 8382
EDRS 8382	EPSY 8322	ELCS 7371
<i>Fall Year 3</i>	<i>Spring Year 3</i>	<i>Summer Year 3</i>
(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	(5th METHODS or ELECTIVE)	elective
ELCS 8397	ELCS 8355	elective
<i>Fall Year 4</i>	<i>Spring Year 4</i>	
EPSY 8352	(6 hours dissertation)	
elective		

* At least one course must be taken in these (and all long) semesters to satisfy UH policies regarding continuous enrollment of graduate students. X Exact course number TBD.

3. Degree Plan

Students in the HELPS program are required to complete a **Doctoral Degree Plan** via *MyAdvisor* that lists the coursework a student will complete for the Ph.D. degree. The Degree Plan should be submitted in the early stage of a student's program, preferably before the end of the second year. A degree plan must be approved by the student's academic advisor, the Chair of the Department, and the Dean or his/her designee.

A change in a student's degree plan must be approved by the academic advisor. To make changes to an approved degree plan, students submit via *MyAdvisor* a **Submit/Change Degree Plan** form indicating the changes to the degree plan and the reason for such changes.

III. Doctoral Residency

The University of Houston requires that doctoral students complete a period of full-time residency consisting of one academic year of continuous full-time enrollment. That is, students must complete contiguous Fall and Spring semesters with an enrollment of at least nine hours of coursework each. Alternatively, students can establish residency through enrollment in six semester credit hours in 3 consecutive summers.

1. Professional Development Activities

In addition to full time enrollment, students in the HELPS program are required to satisfy a Professional Development requirement during their first year in the program.

Students are required to complete a separate **Residency Report** via *MyAdvisor* for the Fall and Spring semesters of their first year in the program that will serve to satisfy their doctoral residency/professional development requirement. Copies of this form are available online at *MyAdvisor*. These forms must be approved by the student's academic advisor, the chair of the department, and the Dean or his/her designee.

Within the residency *year* (Fall and Spring semesters of the first year), the following professional development activities are required for doctoral students in the HELPS program. Activities completed each semester should be listed on separate Residency Reports for each semester. At a minimum, students should complete activities and list them on the first page of the Residency Report for each semester (approximately 15 activities or hours each semester). Students should consult with their advisor regarding selection of additional activities that will augment their academic preparation in scholarship, teaching, and service, such as attending presentations of scholarly speakers at the University of Houston or elsewhere (e.g., Rice University, the Medical Center, in the community), assisting other doctoral students with data collection, etc.

1. Attendance at least one defense of a candidacy research proposal in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.
2. Attendance at least one defense of a candidacy research final paper in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.
3. Attendance at least one defense of a dissertation proposal in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.
4. Attendance at least one defense of a dissertation final paper in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.
5. Attendance at a local, state, or national conference that pertains to education or a relevant social science. The sessions attended may be listed as additional activities.
6. Attendance at the Houston Symposium for Research in Education, sponsored by the College of Education, when it is offered.
7. Membership in the Graduate Students Organization.
8. Student membership in a professional organization (e.g., American Educational Research Association, American Association for the Study of Higher Education).

IV. Candidacy Research Paper

HELPS doctoral students must complete a candidacy research paper before they are eligible to have their Comprehensive Examination Portfolio submission materials officially reviewed. Students are expected to conduct a research project within the general domain of higher education. The scope of this research project should be equivalent to what would be expected from a master's level thesis. Students who previously have completed a Master's Thesis may petition to have the thesis count for the candidacy research requirement. Consult with your academic advisor regarding this matter. The goal of the candidacy research paper is to help students acquire the necessary skills to conduct research. While research skills are taught in the context of research methods and statistics courses, the candidacy paper allows students to apply and practice their research skills under the mentorship and direct guidance of members of the faculty. The candidacy research paper may or may not be related to the topic area the student selects for his/her dissertation. The following are some guidelines for doctoral students regarding the completion of a candidacy research paper:

1. Forming a Candidacy Committee

- a. A student's Candidacy committee must consist of at least three members. The candidacy committee must be chaired by a core program faculty member (tenured or tenure-track) of the HELPS program. The faculty member who directs the student's candidacy research project becomes the student's research advisor. If the research area of a student is not matched by members of the HELPS core program faculty, the student should consult with his/her academic advisor in order to identify an outside person to co-direct the candidacy paper and serve as co-chair of a student's candidacy committee.
- b. The student and his/her candidacy chair identify individuals to serve on the student's committee based on the nature of the research questions and the methods adopted. It is important for the committee to consist of individuals who can provide conceptual and methodological support for the student's specific research area. In all cases the committee must have at least two core program faculty members with appointments in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. The candidacy committee must also include a designated methodologist. To this effect, the student must complete and submit a departmental ***Appointment of Candidacy Research Committee*** form online via *MyAdvisor* [attached to a *general petition*]. This form must be approved by the Chair of the candidacy committee.
- c. If there is a need to invite an outside member because of his/her special expertise, this outside person can serve as the third person of the committee. Outside committee members can be from outside the University of Houston but must hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree in a relevant field.¹

¹ Students must upload the CV and contact information for outside committee members in *MyAdvisor* (as an attachment to a *general petition* together with the *Appointment of Candidacy Research Committee* form).

2. Proposal Defense

- a. Students work closely with their Chair to identify a set of research questions, and write a proposal describing the research project. The proposal should include a title page (with signature lines), 100-200 word abstract, a review of relevant literature, a description of the research questions, and a description of the specific methodology to be employed.
- b. A formal oral defense of the proposal is required. A final defense draft of the proposal must be submitted to all the members at least 10 working days prior to the defense date. Following a successful defense, a copy of the abstract and a cover sheet that includes the title, student name, committee members (with signatures), and date of the oral defense of the proposal should be retained by the student and provided to each committee member. In addition, a copy of the cover page (with signatures & proposal defense date) and abstract should be uploaded in *MyAdvisor* as an attachment to a *general petition* after the student has successfully passed the candidacy research paper proposal defense.

3. Data Collection and Initial Drafts for Candidacy Paper

- a. Students' candidacy research papers involve data collection (quantitative or qualitative) or the use of archival data. **Students must obtain approval from the University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects before initiating their research work.** Information regarding human subjects approval is available from the *Office of Policies, Compliance, and Committees* (www.research.uh.edu).
- b. After data are collected and analyzed, the student is required to write a draft of the candidacy paper. The initial draft is typically written with input and guidance primarily from the student's chair and methodologist. The student should obtain feedback from other committee members when appropriate. All committee members must have an opportunity to provide feedback and suggest revisions before the final defense copy of the paper is completed.

4. Final Defense

- a. The final defense version of the paper must be presented and approved by the candidacy paper committee in a final oral defense meeting. A final defense draft of the candidacy paper must be submitted to all the members at least 10 working days prior to the defense date. The format, length, and style of the final candidacy paper should be consistent with those identified in the instruction to authors for a journal in which the paper might typically be published. The final version must also include a cover page and 100-200 word abstract.
- b. Upon successful completion of the final oral defense of the candidacy research paper, the student is required to submit a ***Departmental Candidacy Report*** form (available online at *MyAdvisor*). This form must be approved by the Chair of the candidacy committee. The student should also submit a copy of the cover page (with signatures & final defense

date) and abstract in *MyAdvisor* as an attachment to the *Departmental Candidacy Report* form.

- c. The quality of these projects must warrant submission for presentation at regional or national association meetings and/or publication in appropriate refereed journals.

5. Timelines and Candidacy Research Coursework

Students are advised to start planning their candidacy research paper early in their program of study. The progress of a student could be delayed significantly if a candidacy research paper is not completed before the Spring semester of the second year. Students who believe they have completed a Master's thesis that might allow this requirement to be waived should discuss the possibility and the procedures involved in this process with their advisor. **The candidacy research paper requirement must be successfully completed (or waived) before a student will be eligible to have their Comprehensive Examination Portfolio officially reviewed.**

V. Comprehensive Examination Portfolio

All students in the HELPS program are required to submit a Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio and pass the faculty review of this portfolio. This section describes the current requirements, policies, and procedures regarding this process.

1. Timeline

Students are advised to become familiar and initiate work on the components of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio in the first year of doctoral studies. **It may take two or more years to satisfy all requirements.** Students must have successfully defended their candidacy paper before they can submit materials or be reviewed for the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. Successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio must occur before the student will be permitted to form a committee and defend the proposal for his/her dissertation. Students are required to submit their portfolio for review at least one time no later than during the student's third year of doctoral studies. Students have three opportunities per year to submit their portfolio materials. Typically, these deadlines will occur at the beginning of Fall semester, the end of Fall semester, and the end of Spring semester. Exact dates for the application deadlines are available in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies office (Rm. 112 FH) or electronically from the Chair of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Evaluation Committee. In order to initiate a review of their portfolio, students should complete the ***Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Application*** forms available online through *MyAdvisor*.

2. Required Components and Supporting Evidence

The Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio requires students to gather and present evidence that they have successfully completed activities/requirements in each of six components that together make up the portfolio. The six components include 1) Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Submission Form, 2) Goal Statement and Curriculum Vita, 3)

Foundations of HELPS Program, 4) Scholarship, 5) Teaching, and 6) Professional Development. A more detailed description of the requirements of each component can be found in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies office (Rm. 112 FH) or obtained electronically from the Chair of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Evaluation Committee. Except where specifically noted in these policies or previously approved, accomplishments or experiences substantially completed *prior* to initial enrollment in the HELPS program can *not* be used to satisfy any of the portfolio components. It is in the best interest of the student to consult with his/her advisor from the beginning of the doctoral studies as to the best way to match portfolio components to the student's career goals. The importance of seeking faculty input on these matters cannot be overstated!

Students must provide specific supporting evidence to document that they have successfully completed each of the necessary components of the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. A description of evidence required for each component is available in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies office (Rm. 112 FH) or electronically from the Chair of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio Evaluation Committee. Materials must be submitted on-line via *MyAdvisor* (signed forms or other artifacts should be scanned and submitted as PDFs). In addition, faculty on the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Committee may request specific additional materials when necessary to better document the successful completion of any component.

3. Evaluation Procedures

Portfolio materials are reviewed by a Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Committee. Each member of the Evaluation Committee will consider independently all materials submitted by each student. Next, the Evaluation Committee will meet to complete a single *Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Form* for each portfolio. Using this form, the Evaluation Committee will assign a score of Pass or Fail to each of the individual aspects that comprise each component. A minimum of two committee members must agree that the student has fulfilled the necessary requirements for any particular aspect within each component in order for the student to be assigned a Pass and successfully complete that portion of the portfolio. In addition, each of the six components will be assigned a score of Pass/Fail and the portfolio as a whole will be given an overall score of Pass or Fail. Each aspect of each component must be rated as a Pass in order to get a Pass for that component, and all six components must receive a Pass in order for the overall portfolio to be given an overall score of Pass. The Evaluation Committee will indicate in writing some explanation as to why a student has failed to pass the doctoral comprehensive examination and identify any specific deficiencies needing improvement.

4. Remediation

If a majority of the Evaluation Committee determines that the student has not fulfilled the necessary requirements for any particular component of the portfolio, the student has failed that component and can not pass the overall Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. For any subsequent submission deadline, students can revise and resubmit their portfolio materials. Any specific portfolio components that were passed in the first doctoral comprehensive examination

submission will be considered passed for the second doctoral comprehensive examination submission and not be evaluated again. The student will only be required to resubmit supporting materials (i.e., revised doctoral comprehensive examination submission form, revised supporting evidence) for the doctoral comprehensive examination component(s) that he/she did not pass on a first attempt. Alternatively, the student may opt to submit supporting materials for a specific doctoral comprehensive examination component that was not previously reviewed by the doctoral comprehensive examination evaluation committee but also satisfies the requirements and in this sense replaces the originally reviewed component.

A doctoral student can apply and submit Comprehensive Examination Portfolio materials for review a maximum of two times. A student who fails to pass all components of the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio upon the second attempt will be terminated from the HELPS program and become ineligible for the degree.

VI. Doctoral Dissertation

The final milestone in the HELPS program is the completion of a doctoral dissertation. A student is expected to complete a major research study within the general domain of higher education independently but under the direction of a dissertation advisor. The dissertation committee must be chaired by a core program faculty member (tenured or tenure-track) of the HELPS program.

The college policies regarding the completion of a doctoral dissertation are presented in the *Doctoral Policies, Procedures, and Program Guide* and in the College of Education *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*. **It is the responsibility of students to be aware of college rules and regulations, including those concerning the doctoral dissertation.** The doctoral dissertation requires frequent communication between the faculty and the student. Students are permitted to do formal dissertation work after they have successfully completed the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio. The following is a step-by-step description of the dissertation process:

1. Forming a Dissertation Committee

- a. A student identifies a core program faculty member (tenured or tenure-track) of the HELPS program to serve as a dissertation chair and research advisor. If the research area of a student is not matched by members of the HELPS core program faculty, the student should consult with his/her academic advisor in order to identify an outside person to co-direct the dissertation and serve as co-chair of a student's dissertation committee.
- b. The student works with his/her dissertation advisor to identify a general research area, the literature base of this area, and the research questions to be addressed.
- c. The student and his/her dissertation chair identify individuals to serve on the student's dissertation committee based on the nature of the research questions and the method adopted. It is important for the committee to consist of individuals who can provide conceptual and methodological support for the student's specific research area.

- d. A student's dissertation committee must consist of at least four members. At least two of the members of the student's dissertation committee must be core program faculty of the HELPS program with appointments in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. One committee member must be designated as methodologist. One of the committee members may be an outside person.
- f. If there is a need to invite an outside member because of his/her special expertise, this outside person can serve as the fourth or fifth person of the committee. Outside committee members can be from outside the University of Houston but must hold a Ph.D. or other terminal degree in a relevant field.²
- g. Approval is needed to formalize the committee by submitting an *Appointment of Dissertation/Thesis Committee form* online via *MyAdvisor*. This form must be approved by the students' advisor, the Chair of the Department, and the Dean or his/her designee.
- h. Changes in a student's dissertation committee must be formally approved by the Dean or his/her designee.

2. Dissertation Proposal Defense

- a. Students are expected to develop a dissertation research proposal under the supervision of their dissertation chair.
- b. A preliminary draft of a student's dissertation proposal must be approved by all members of the dissertation committee. After the approval is obtained, the student is required to write an abstract of this proposal to be distributed electronically to all the faculty members of the College of Education at least 10 working days prior to the proposal's defense meeting. This abstract must be approved and signed by all members of a student's dissertation committee before it can be electronically posted.
- c. Students must bring a copy of the proposal's abstract signed by all members of their committee to the College of Education Records Office in order to obtain instructions and a password to post their dissertation abstracts in the University's computer system. As described in the College of Education *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*, the abstract for a dissertation should be no more than 600 words.
- d. The student must schedule an oral defense of the proposal when approval is received from the dissertation committee chair and members. The Dean or his/her designee must be notified of the date and time of the proposal defense at least 10 working days before the actual date of the oral defense. This is done by the student in *MyAdvisor* (upload abstract, signed abstract cover sheet, and defense date, time, and location in the **Dissertation Abstract Proposal** portal under **Upload My Student Products**). The student must have successfully completed the comprehensive examination portfolio prior to holding an oral defense of their dissertation proposal.

² Students must upload the CV and contact information for outside committee members in *MyAdvisor* (as an attachment together with the *Appointment of Dissertation Committee Request* form).

- e. During the scheduled oral defense, students are expected to present their research proposal to all the members of the dissertation committee. The members of the committee may approve the proposal as presented, suggest changes, or disapprove the proposal.
- f. The dissertation proposal must be approved by all the members of the dissertation committee. This approval is indicated by the signatures on the front page of the dissertation proposal. The dissertation chair must inform the Dean or his/her designee in writing of the outcome of the defense. In addition, a copy of the signed cover page and abstract should be uploaded in *MyAdvisor* as an attachment to a *general petition* after the student has successfully passed the dissertation proposal defense.

3. Data Collection and Initial Drafts for Dissertation

- a. Students are not permitted to carry out data collection for dissertation until the proposal is formally approved by all members of the dissertation committee after an oral defense. Data that are collected before the proposal is officially approved may or may not be considered acceptable by the dissertation committee. Students may be required to collect additional data.
- b. If data collection is required, the student must obtain approval from the University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects before starting data collection. Approval by this committee is also needed in cases where archival or public data is used. The approval process can take up to one to two months. A student may apply for this approval prior to taking the oral defense of the proposal if this application is approved by the members of the dissertation committee. Information regarding human subjects approval is available from the *Office of Policies, Compliance, and Committees* (www.research.uh.edu).
- c. Students are expected to carry out the research study described in the proposal under the supervision of the dissertation chair. Planning is important, and each student should meet and design a timeline with their research advisor. Students must take into consideration the time it takes to complete the data collection and analyses, and the time needed for faculty to review the paper.
- d. After data collection and analyses are completed, students write an initial draft of the dissertation. Feedback and comments based on the initial draft should be solicited primarily from the student's chair and methodologist. The student should obtain feedback from other committee members on subsequent drafts. All committee members must have an opportunity to provide feedback and suggest revisions before the final defense copy of the dissertation is completed.

4. Final Draft and Dissertation Defense

- a. A dissertation must be formally presented to the members of the student's dissertation committee. Prior to the scheduled defense, a student obtains approval from the chair and

members of the committee. A final defense draft of the dissertation must be submitted to all the members at least 10 working days prior to the defense date.

- b. Students must prepare an abstract of the dissertation (600 words or less) and have it signed by the committee members. Students must bring a signed copy of the abstract to the College of Education Records Office in order to obtain instructions and a password to post their dissertation abstract in the University's computer system. The abstract of the final defense draft of the dissertation must be distributed electronically to all the faculty members of the College of Education at least 10 working days prior to the final oral defense meeting.
- c. The student must schedule the final oral defense when approval is received from the dissertation committee chair and members. The Dean or his/her designee must be notified of the date and time of the final oral defense at least 10 working days before the actual date of the final oral defense. This is done by the student in *MyAdvisor* (upload abstract, signed abstract cover sheet, and defense date, time, and location in the **Dissertation Final Defense Abstract** portal under **Upload My Student Products**).
- d. During the final oral defense, the committee may approve, suggest changes, or disapprove the dissertation.
- e. Students must make an appointment in advance and meet with a graduate studies staff person in the College of Education Office of Graduate Studies to submit a final copy of their dissertation. Information concerning the formal requirements of the final copy of your dissertation (e.g., type of paper, number of copies, etc.) is described in the *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*. When students meet with the graduate studies staff person, the staff member will give them additional paperwork required by their office that is necessary to finalize the completion of the dissertation process.

5. Registration for Dissertation Credits (6 hours min.)

Once students sign up for dissertation credits **they must continuously enroll for a minimum of 3 credits** of dissertation every subsequent Fall and Spring semester until the Dissertation is completed. Students typically should be enrolled in 3 credits of dissertation the semester they defend the Proposal. The **semester of the final defense, students must enroll for 3 credits of Dissertation**. Summer enrollment is only required if the student is actively engaged in the Dissertation and using university resources (meeting with faculty, using library or computer resources, discussing content with faculty on the telephone or via email, requesting feedback, etc.).

VII. Student Issues

1. Advising

Students are assigned an academic advisor once they are admitted to the program. The assignment of an academic advisor takes into account current faculty advising loads, as well as the similarity in research interests between students and faculty. The intention is to maximize the match between the background of the students and the expertise of the faculty. If a match is achieved, the faculty advisor can also serve as the research advisor of the student.

Students who desire to change academic advisors inform their current advisor so that appropriate action can be taken. This is a relatively routine matter, and students need not worry about offending their current advisors. The faculty understands that students' interests may change and encourages student initiatives, which facilitate the students' academic progress and professional development. A *Request for Change of Advisor form* is submitted to formalize the change (online via *MyAdvisor*).

It is the goal of the HELPS program to maintain a close faculty-student relationship. Students are encouraged to talk to their academic advisors or other faculty members in educational leadership and policy studies on issues related to their progress, coursework and research training.

2. Student Evaluation

The overall progress of all doctoral students is evaluated annually by faculty associated with the HELPS program. Students are given written feedback each year concerning the outcome of this evaluation. Students are in good standing if they:

- a. register continuously at the University in courses consistent with the approved degree plan, or seek a formal leave of absence from the program if they must interrupt their enrollment;
- b. maintain close contact with their academic and research advisor(s) concerning progress toward the degree;
- c. make adequate progress in their research (e.g., candidacy paper, dissertation) in accordance with the length of time that the student has enrolled in the program; and,
- d. do not violate any standards of ethical conduct for psychologists as defined by the Ethical Guidelines of the American Educational Research Association;
- e. maintain adequate progress and performance in their coursework. Adequate progress includes formally resolving all Incompletes received in any course during the previous Spring, Fall, and Summer courses before the start of each Fall semester. Students in the HELPS program may not be permitted to enroll in Fall courses if they have an Incomplete in any coursework unless it is from the immediately prior summer.

3. Termination of Students

The following are conditions in which students may be terminated from the HELPS program:

- a. Failure to make the minimum academic requirement for doctoral students at the University of Houston, as described in the *Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog* (available online at www.uh.edu/gs/grad_catalog). Some examples of the University requirement are:
 - Students who fail to maintain a minimum graduate grade point average of 3.0 will be put on probation or be suspended from the University; and/or,
 - Students who receive 4 or more grades of “C” or lower in their programs of study will be terminated from the University.
- b. Violation of the ethical principles of educational researchers in their professional and academic work (e.g., coursework, research).
- c. Failure to meet one or more academic requirements (e.g., course work, candidacy paper and dissertation, comprehensive exams). In these cases, remedial actions will be identified to help the student. If remedial actions fail to correct the deficiencies, the student may be terminated from the Program.
- d. Failure to make sufficient progress in one’s program of study. Students who are not making sufficient progress are asked to meet with their advisors to identify remedial steps to assist them. Students who continue to lag behind after remediation may be terminated from the Program.

Student evaluations are conducted by the program faculty annually. Students are provided feedback based on these evaluations every year. Evaluations of specific students are conducted at other times as needed. Students found to be deficient in one or more areas described above may be terminated from the Program. Termination is generally considered after efforts to correct the identified deficiencies have failed. A student who is terminated from the Program is informed in writing by the Program Area Coordinator and by the Chair of the Department. The student may then follow the Departmental, College, and University grievance procedures if there is sufficient ground to initiate such a process.

4. Student Organizations

Students in the College of Education have formed an organization called the Graduate Students Organization (GSO). The GSO publishes a newsletter, organizes student information meetings and social activities, and promotes communication between students and faculty. Students are encouraged to participate actively in the events organized by the GSO.

Doctoral students are encouraged to apply for student membership in professional organizations such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and other appropriate professional organizations.

5. Grievance Procedures

Normally, when students have problems or disagreements, they should make every effort to resolve them with the individual faculty member involved and the Program Area Coordinator, using informal channels. If the problem is not resolved, discussion among the involved parties and the Departmental Chair is encouraged as the next step of action.

If the informal discussions do not result in resolution of the problem, the student may follow the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Grievance Procedure. Specific information and copies of the procedural steps involved in this process are available from the Department Chair in Rm. 112 FH.

6. Graduation

Students should file applications to graduate either the semester prior to or the semester in which they plan to graduate. Students must complete ALL requirements toward their degree before the end of the semester they intend to graduate. Graduation applications cannot be retracted. Once students submit a graduation application they must graduate if they meet the graduation requirements.

The application can be completed by logging in to Degree Progress/Graduation in *myUH* (<https://my.uh.edu>) or downloaded at http://www.uh.edu/academic/forms/graduation_appl.pdf. Applications are also available in the Graduation Office, 108 Ezekiel W. Cullen Building. The application should be turned in to the Office of Registration and Academic Records, 128 Welcome Center. Filing deadlines are listed in the class schedule and the academic calendar.

VIII. Faculty

Listed below are the University of Houston faculty associated with the HELPS doctoral program. Note that core (tenured or tenure track) program faculty with their primary appointment in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies are necessary to satisfy certain student-related requirements (e.g., composition of Candidacy Research Paper and Dissertation Committees).

Horn, Catherine, Ph.D.

Jones, Bruce, Ph.D.

McKinney, Lyle, Ph.D.

Rolle, Anthony, Ph.D.

Schilt, Alex, Ph.D.

Short, Paula, Ph.D.

Zou, Yali, Ph.D.

IX. List of Common Forms

These forms typically should be completed through *MyAdvisor*

Annual Report Form

Graduate Petition

Submit/Change Degree Plan

Candidacy Report

Residency Report

Application to take Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Portfolio

Appointment of Dissertation Committee

Request Change of Advisor

These forms must be completed in paper format or online at *myUH*

Graduation Application