



School of Education

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL AND
ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Student Handbook

2025 – 2026

Table of Contents

School of Education Doctor of Education in Educational and Organizational Leadership Student Handbook

1.0 Mission Statement	4
2.0 School of Education	4
3.0 Process of Applicant Admission to Doctoral Studies	4
4.0 Full-time Status and Continued Enrollment	5
5.0 Policy for Visiting Students Who Want to Enroll in Doctoral Courses	6
6.0 University Grading Policy	7
7.0 Doctoral Course Work	8
8.0 Transfer of Credits.....	9
9.0 Waiver of Courses	9
10.0 Assignment of Advisor	10
11.0 First Semester Progress Meeting	10
12.0 Dissertation Policies and Procedures	10
13.0 Application for Graduation	13

About Holy Family University

Holy Family University is a private Catholic institution located in Philadelphia, PA. Founded in 1954, the University's mission is informed by its core values of family, respect, integrity, service and responsibility, learning, and vision. The University embraces diversity and inclusion, ensuring a welcoming and accessible learning community for all. The University is composed of four schools: Arts & Sciences, Business & Professional Studies, Education, and Nursing & Health Sciences. Nestled in the heart of a historic residential neighborhood in the Northeast, the University is just minutes from the excitement of Center City. Holy Family enrolls more than 3100 students at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels at its Philadelphia and Newtown campus locations. Holy Family University is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

1.0 Mission Statement

The Mission of the Holy Family University Doctoral Program is to facilitate the development of effective and ethical leaders for schools and communities who can make significant contributions to their fields of knowledge through applied research.

1.1 Goals of the EdD Program

- To provide a research-based education program that facilitates the development of innovative and ethical school and community leaders.
- To offer a program that is flexible and is designed for working practitioners allowing them to expand their practice and leadership skills through concentrated interdisciplinary coursework and research.
- To develop a deep professional commitment to an interdisciplinary approach to leadership through the application of practical research skills and ethical decision making in service to others.
- To enable candidates to make significant contributions to their field of knowledge through applied research.
- To offer a supportive and collaborative learning environment that encourages candidates to become scholars and researchers.

1.2. Program Learning Outcomes

1. Interpret research for practical purposes
2. Design and evaluate working and learning environments for diverse audiences
3. Conduct scholarly research to address practical problems in a wide variety of educational context
4. Apply ethical and legal standards to one's practice as a scholar and leader.

2.0 School of Education

2.1. Overview

The faculty of the School of Education at Holy Family University has designed the Doctor of Education in Educational and Organizational Leadership as a research-based educational program that seeks to develop innovative, effective, and ethical school and community leaders. The program is designed for working professionals with a cohort model delivered online in both synchronous and asynchronous formats that provides a supportive and collaborative learning environment.

2.2. Contact Information

Helen Hoffner, Ed.D.
 Chair of the Doctoral Committee
 Professor of Education
 Office: ETC 427
 Phone: 267-341-3372
 Email: hhoffner@holyfamily.edu

3.0 Process of Applicant Admission to Doctoral Studies

Applicants for admission to the Doctor of Education program are expected to demonstrate strong academic skills and a deep commitment to improving schools and organizations. Applicants are expected to have an earned Master's degree from a regionally accredited institution. They must be computer literate and able to demonstrate effective communication skills as well as strong reasoning ability.

3.1 Required Application Materials

Applicants for admission to the Doctor of Education program will submit the following materials:

1. an application for admission to the doctoral program along with a \$50.00 non-refundable fee (waived for graduates of Holy Family University). The application is available online at the Holy Family University website;
2. official undergraduate and graduate transcripts of all previous and current college-level and graduate-level coursework;
3. three letters of recommendation from professionals familiar with the applicant's academic or work experience;
4. a current resume that includes all professional experience, certification, professional memberships, and professional activities. Copies of certifications should be attached;
5. a personal essay that describes the applicant's academic and professional goals and the role that the doctoral program at Holy Family will play in the achievement of those goals (1500-word maximum);
6. a current score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) if English is not the applicant's first language. Minimum score of 600 (written) or 250 (computer-based) required for admission.

Note: Applicants may be asked to complete an interview with doctoral program faculty members and/or submit GRE or MAT scores.

3.2 Application Review Process

Only applicants who have submitted all of the required admissions materials will be reviewed.

- Initial Screening: The Doctoral Program Committee will screen applications to ascertain whether or not an applicant meets the program's basic admission standards.
- Interview: Applicants who pass the initial screening may be interviewed by members of the doctoral program faculty.
- Final Assessment: Information gathered from the application and the interview is reviewed and recommendations for admission are formalized.
- Notification: Acceptance or non-acceptance notices will be mailed to the applicants.
- Applicants are admitted as cohorts when minimum enrollment requirements are met.

4.0 Full-time Status and Continued Enrollment

After an applicant is admitted to the program, the student is required to maintain continuous enrollment during the Fall, Spring and Summer terms. To remain in their cohorts and maintain full-time status, students must take six credits per semester including summer. To ensure timely completion of the program students are recommended to remain with their cohorts and to follow their cohorts' established course sequences.

If candidates require more time to complete the dissertation beyond EDDC 903, they must continuously enroll through graduation in the course entitled EDDC 998: Dissertation Continuation I, for a minimum of three credits each Fall and Spring semester. After receiving final Written Doctoral Dissertation Approval (i.e., all signatures on the appropriate form), students who need one additional semester to complete all remaining graduation requirements (i.e., APA compliance review, uploading dissertation to ProQuest) may satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement by registering for EDDC 999 (Dissertation Continuation II) for one credit.

Students are expected to complete their programs within their respective cohorts' completion timeline.

4.1 Leave of Absence

If a student cannot maintain continuous enrollment, the student must request a leave of absence from the program. To request a leave of absence, the student must petition the Chair of the Doctoral Committee who will take the petition to the Doctoral Committee for review. If the request is approved by the committee, the student must petition for a planned educational leave of absence through the Registrar's Office.

4.2 Timeline for Completion of Program

Students have a maximum of seven years from the initial semester of coursework to complete the entire program including the successful defense of the dissertation. Requests for extensions of that time must be justified in writing and approved by the Doctoral Committee. No extensions will be granted after ten years.

5.0 Policy for Visiting Students Who Want to Enroll in Doctoral Courses

Students who are enrolled in a *doctoral degree program* at another university may want to take certain doctoral courses in the School of Education's doctoral program with the intention of transferring credits from these courses to the doctoral program in which they are matriculated. In order to help these students, the policies stated below will be followed:

1. Students must submit official undergraduate and graduate transcripts;
2. Students must complete the appropriate Holy Family University application;
3. Students must submit a letter stating the reasons they want to enroll in specific doctoral level course(s) at Holy Family University;
4. Students must submit a letter from the advisor in their program of matriculation stating that they have approval to transfer the identified coursework from Holy Family University into their program;
5. No more than 6 credits of doctoral courses may be completed by each visiting student;

The Associate Dean (or designee) of the School of Education will review all requests made by visiting students and make the final decision regarding their enrollment in doctoral courses. The Associate Dean (or designee) will communicate the final decision to the Graduate Admissions Office and the Registrar's Office.

Under no circumstances will an individual who applied to the doctoral program at Holy Family University and who was rejected by the Doctoral Faculty Admissions Committee be allowed to enroll in doctoral courses.

6.0 University Grading Policy

The Holy Family University grading policy is published in the *Graduate Catalog*. All students are expected to maintain a GPA of B (3.0) to remain in good academic standing. A student may graduate from a program with one grade of C+. A second grade of less than B earned in any course must be repeated the next time the course is offered. If a third grade less than a B is earned in any course, the student may be dismissed from the program. The grade appeal process is described in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Any courses in which a grade below a B is earned may be repeated only once. When a course is repeated, both grades will appear on the transcript, but only the most recent grade will be used in calculating the student's GPA.

6.1 Remediation Plan

The EdD curriculum was designed to ensure that each of the discipline specific and program wide competences are part of the sequence of courses that each student must take. Each student is expected to meet the minimum levels of achievement (MLA) for each course by receiving an overall grade of B- or better and meeting the MLA for each required course competency. Any student that does not receive an overall grade of B- or better or meet the MLA's for the course is expected to complete a remediation plan. The remediation plan is designed based on the individual student needs and provides an assessment upon completion to ensure that the student has demonstrated the minimum level of achievement for that area. If a student believes these difficulties stem from a circumstance that would allow them to receive an accommodation, as outlined above, it is the student's obligation to coordinate the program's receiving said accommodation with the Disabilities Office.

Academic remediation (other than violations of academic honesty/integrity) may involve students retaking courses, utilizing the services of the Center of Academic Enhancement, or other means as determined by the student's unique academic difficulty. Remediation regarding the failure to pass the dissertation proposal/Comprehensive Examinations will be addressed first by the Doctoral Program director to determine additional assistance. Remediation related to student progress on the dissertation will first be addressed by the Dissertation Chair and/or Dissertation Coordinator, and when appropriate with the Dissertation Committee in advisement with the Program Director.

Remediation plans will include scheduled monitoring meetings with any of the following parties: academic advisor, professor(s), Program Director, and or Doctoral Committee. In certain cases, a leave of absence with return to program contingent on remediation of the student's impairment, consistent with university policy, may be required. Other actions as seen necessary by the Program Director and/or Doctoral Committee may be determined as positive facets of a student's Remediation Plan.

If after one semester, the student has not demonstrated concrete, measurable improvement as outlined on the Remediation Plan, a decision will be rendered by the Doctoral Committee as to the merits of extending the timeframe of a student's Remediation Plan. If a student fails to participate in the outlined Remediation Plan, or fails to fully meet the expectations of the Remediation Plan, grounds for program dismissal may be determined. Student dismissal will be based on the formal dismissal policies found in the Graduate Catalog. A student has the right to appeal and/or grieve the conclusions and/or decisions made by the Program Committee as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.

7.0 Doctoral Course Work

The Doctor of Education in Educational and Organizational Leadership is a fifty-one or fifty-four (51-54) credit program, as outlined below.

Leadership Core Requirements (15 credits)

- EDDC 801 Ethical Leadership 3
- EDDC 802 Communication Theory, Practice, and Technology 3
- EDDC 803 Organizational Development and Change Theory 3
- EDDC 850 Program Assessment and Evaluation 3
- EDDC 880 Theoretical Foundations of Leadership 3

Research Core Requirements (21 credits)

- EDDC 805 Statistics for Doctoral Students 3
- EDDC 806 Introduction to Applied Research 3
- EDDC 811 Research I: Quantitative Research 3
- EDDC 812 Research II: Qualitative Research 3
- EDDC 813 Advanced Research 3
- EDDC 901 Dissertation I 3
- EDDC 902a Dissertation IIa 1.5
- EDDC 902b Dissertation IIb 1.5
- EDDC 903a Dissertation IIIa 1.5
- EDDC 903b Dissertation IIIb 1.5

Additional Dissertation Credits, if needed

- EDDC 998a Dissertation Continuation Ia 1.5
- EDDC 998b Dissertation Continuation Ib 1.5
- EDDC 999 Dissertation Continuation II 1

Concentrations (15-18 credits)

Curriculum & Instruction: Leads to PA Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction PK – 12 (15 credits)

- EDDC 820 Curriculum Theory and Development 3
- EDDC 882 Supervision and Performance Evaluation 3
- EDDC 834 Leadership in Ling & Culturally Diverse Society 3
- EDDC 841 Leadership in an Inclusive Society 3
- Leadership Internships 3

Organizational Leadership (15 credits)

- EDDC 834 Leadership in Ling & Culturally Diverse Society 3
- EDDC 841 Leadership in an Inclusive Society 3
- EDDC 861 Themes for Success in the Organization 3
- EDDC 862 Financial Decision Making 3
- EDDC 864 Organizational Development and Design 3

School Leadership and Administration: Leads to PA Principal Certification (18 credits)

- EDDC 834 Leadership in Ling & Culturally Diverse Society 3
- EDDC 841 Leadership in an Inclusive Society 3
- EDDC 882 Supervision and Performance Evaluation 3
- EDDC 883 The Principalship 3
- EDDC 888 School Finance 3
- EDDC 884 Practicum I: Principal K-6 1
- EDDC 885 Practicum II: Principal 7-12 1
- EDDC 891 Practicum III: Principal K-12 1

School Leadership and Administration: Leads to PA Superintendent Letter of Eligibility (15 credits)

EDDC 821 Building Community Relations 3

EDDC 834 Leadership in Ling & Culturally Diverse Society 3

EDDC 841 Leadership in an Inclusive Society 3

EDDC 823 Leadership Internship I 3

EDDC 824 Leadership Internship II 3

Professional Studies (15 credits)

EDDC 834 Leadership in Ling & Culturally Diverse Society 3

EDDC 841 Leadership in an Inclusive Society 3

Nine elective graduate-level credits 9

Professional Studies Elective Courses: Students are permitted to select their nine elective credits from the established fields of study at Holy Family University. Consistent with current policy, up to six credits of graduate courses may be transferred from other accredited institutions, with approval by the School of Education Doctoral Committee, as long as they were not used to earn a previous degree. Doctoral students may select from graduate courses currently offered at Holy Family University in consultation with their program advisor. Students may select courses that meet the following criteria:

- The course represents an academic discipline or area of inquiry that has the potential to deepen and extend the doctoral student's knowledge and skills.
- The course has a demonstrable relationship to one or more fields of interest or professional aspirations held by the doctoral student.
- Course activities and assignments provide opportunities for all students to analyze research findings, apply theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and synthesize new ideas.
- The course is open only to graduate students (i.e., not cross-listed or stacked with an undergraduate level course).

8.0 Transfer of Credits

A student may present for evaluation up to six equivalent graduate credits from an accredited college or university which were completed within the last seven years and not applied toward completion of a degree. A student should submit the course syllabi to the Associate Dean (or designee) of the School of Education for a formal review. Doctoral program faculty will review the course syllabi. Acceptance of such credits will depend upon whether or not the courses are related to the program, whether the student has obtained a grade of B or higher in the course(s), and whether or not the college giving credit for the course would consider the course as acceptable for application to their doctoral degree program. Transfer credits are not posted on a student's record until the student successfully earns six doctoral credits at Holy Family University. After admission, all courses taken at other institutions for transfer credit require prior approval from the Associate Dean (or designee) of the School of Education and Holy Family University's Vice President for Academic Affairs. Maximum allowable transfer is six graduate credits.

9.0 Waiver of Courses

Doctoral students who have reached the maximum number of six graduate transfer credits can request that additional graduate courses be waived. Such waivers may occur if the graduate courses completed at another college or university are very similar in content to individual courses required within the doctoral program and students have received a letter grade of B or higher as demonstrated on their official graduate transcript. Students who

seek waivers for certain courses should provide course syllabi to the Associate Dean (or designee) who, along with the doctoral program faculty, will formally review the information. If a particular required doctoral course is waived, students in consultation with their advisors will replace the course with a suitable alternative.

10.0 Assignment of Advisor

All accepted students will be assigned an advisor who will be a doctoral faculty member in the School of Education. Advisors will help students with any questions concerning their academic program and progress. Students may request a change of advisor by scheduling an appointment with the Associate Dean of the School of Education.

11.0 First Semester Progress Meeting

At the conclusion of the first semester in the program, students will meet individually with the Chair of the Doctoral Committee and the Associate Dean or designee for the *First Semester Progress Meeting*. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and evaluate the student's academic progress and adjustment to the program.

12.0 Dissertation Policies and Procedures

The dissertation provides students with the opportunity to apply appropriate research methodologies to practical and theoretical problems in the field of education. Early in their programs, students begin conceptualizing a focus for their dissertation research under the guidance of Doctoral Program Faculty members. In EDDC 813, *Research Seminar*, while working closely with their dissertation chairs, students develop a formal dissertation proposal. The dissertation process culminates as students conduct their research and write their dissertations through three dissertation courses taken at the end of their programs: EDDC 901, *Dissertation I*; EDDC 902, *Dissertation IIa & Dissertation IIb*; and EDDC 903, *Dissertation IIIa & Dissertation IIIb*. The following policies and procedures guide the dissertation process.

12.1 Dissertation Focus and the Dissertation Committee

To facilitate completion of the dissertation within the established program timeline, it is recommended that students select a dissertation focus from the following six general areas:

1. Disabilities
2. Educational Leadership
3. Language and Literacy
4. Organizational Leadership
5. Post-secondary Education
6. Program Assessment

Doctoral dissertation committees are composed of three members, one who serves as the chair, and two additional members. A designated Holy Family University School of Education Faculty member who possesses expertise in the student's selected focus area serves as the committee chair. However, under certain circumstances, any full-time Holy Family University faculty member may be considered for chair of the dissertation committee.

Two committee members in addition to the chair are selected to complete the committee. Both additional committee members are selected in consultation with the dissertation chair and Doctoral Program Committee according to their interest, expertise, and dissertation committee workload. The *Dissertation Committee Approval Form* is submitted to the

Associate Dean for final approval of committee membership.

12.2 The Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a formal presentation of a carefully planned investigation of a research problem. The dissertation proposal should clearly indicate why the study is of value in extending theory or practice. The proposal should make clear what is already known about the question(s) to be investigated and what needs to be studied. It should make clear how the proposed study will add to present knowledge. The proposal consists of a description of the research problem, specific research questions, a literature review that pertains to the research problem and research questions, data collection and analysis methodologies, and references. Students develop their dissertation proposals through the *Advanced Research Seminar* (EDDC 813) and *Dissertation I* (EDDC 901) courses. Toward the conclusion of EDDC 813, students must submit an abstract of their proposed study that conforms to APA guidelines for committee approval. At the conclusion of EDDC 901, after a successful defense of the proposal, an approved abstract of the proposal is attached to the signed *Proposal Approval Form*, and these documents are submitted for inclusion in the student's official record. The oral defense of the proposal also functions as the student's comprehensive exam.

To grant approval of the proposal, the committee must be satisfied that the proposed study warrants substantive research and that the student has a clear sense of direction for conducting the research and completing the study. Furthermore, the committee will determine if the dissertation proposal topic is compatible with the goals and objectives of Holy Family University's doctoral program and those of the University as a whole.

No data collection involving human subjects may begin until the research study has been formally approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Holy Family University. If the IRB does not approve, the dissertation research cannot move forward. The original IRB research proposal must be revised until it receives signed approval from the IRB and the dissertation committee.

12.3 Comprehensive Exam

The oral defense of the written dissertation proposal constitutes the comprehensive examination. Students should be prepared to respond to questions regarding their application of course material to the preparation of their dissertation proposals. Passing the comprehensive exam occurs in tandem with approval of the dissertation proposal.

12.4 Dissertation Development

The chair of the dissertation committee will coordinate the work of the committee. The dissertation committee examines the student's work and provides guidance during the implementation of the research project and the writing of the dissertation during the courses *Dissertation II* (EDDC 902) and *Dissertation III* (EDDC 903). If needed, *Dissertation Continuation I* (EDDC 998) and *Dissertation Continuation II* (EDDC 999) may be taken to complete the dissertation. Committee members are responsible for reviewing dissertation drafts and providing feedback to the student in a timely manner. Students are expected to communicate regularly with their dissertation chairs and committee members regarding the dissertation process.

The chair and members of the dissertation committee are not responsible for editing the dissertation for mechanical errors and APA style. Instead, committee members focus on the

clarity of the presentation of ideas, the soundness of the logic inherent in the document's conclusions, and the extent to which ideas are made accessible to the reader. If a student experiences difficulty in writing, it is the student's responsibility to acquire editing assistance. The Holy Family library provides assistance with APA style.

12.5 Dissertation Defense

During the course, *Dissertation III* (EDDC 903), students work with their committee members to complete the written dissertation. Upon completion of the written dissertation, the committee chair arranges for the student and committee members to meet for the defense of the dissertation. The student is required to deliver a public oral presentation of the dissertation. This presentation serves as the oral defense of the dissertation. All members of the University community and surrounding community are invited to attend. The student is expected to provide a clear, organized presentation of 20 to 30 minutes in length with appropriate visual supports and is expected to respond meaningfully and thoughtfully to questions posed by presentation attendees. The presentation is evaluated by Doctoral Program Faculty members or additional designated faculty members. A student who does not pass the oral defense is required to revise and schedule a second oral defense presentation with their committee members. The student will continue to revise and deliver the presentation until full committee approval is obtained, at which time the *Oral Defense of Doctoral Dissertation Form* is submitted by the committee chair. Students submit revisions to their written dissertations based on feedback received at the defense meeting. The full dissertation committee must approve all subsequent revisions to obtain final approval for the written dissertation. When final approval is obtained, the committee chair completes and submits the *Written Doctoral Dissertation Approval Form*.

12.6 APA and Writing Review

Upon approval of the written dissertation, the dissertation is reviewed by a University faculty or staff member designated by the Associate Dean for consistency with American Psychological Association (APA) style and format guidelines. This formal review may take up to two weeks and the student may be required to make revisions for compliance with APA format. If revisions are needed, the reviewer will provide the student with specific information about the APA issues that need to be addressed. To ensure completion of the dissertation within the established timeline, students are strongly advised to attend carefully to APA formatting and writing mechanics throughout the entire dissertation process rather than waiting until the time of the APA review. When the student's doctoral dissertation is compliant with APA format, the reviewer will give approval on the *Doctoral APA Compliance Review Form*. At this point, the doctoral student is now ready to submit the dissertation document to ProQuest.

12.7 Submission of Dissertation to ProQuest

University policy requires that all dissertations be made available to the public through submission to ProQuest. The student is solely responsible to know and adhere to established deadlines for the submission of final and publication copies of the dissertation to ProQuest.

ProQuest offers a variety of access and formatting options, including traditional or open access publishing. Open access means the dissertation is freely available for viewing or downloading by anyone with access to the Internet. Dissertations that are submitted as open access are available at no charge for viewing or downloading by anyone with access to the Internet, indefinitely. For open access electronic publishing, there is a fee required from the doctoral student. For traditional electronic publishing, there is no cost. Doctoral

students may order hard copies of their dissertations through ProQuest.

13.0 Application for Graduation

The candidate must file an application for graduation via Self Service and pay the necessary graduation fees during the final semester in which the dissertation defense is completed and on or before the published deadline for doctoral students to petition to graduate. Candidates should refer to Holy Family University's calendar and the School of Education calendar to verify deadlines for scheduling necessary reviews, completing all degree requirements, the dissertation defense, and filing for graduation.