

# EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY, PHD

Rooted in the social sciences and humanities, the doctoral program in Education, Culture, and Society focuses on the historical, political, philosophical and sociocultural foundations of education.

The Education, Culture, and Society Ph.D. program provides a rigorous theoretical and methodological framework for the study of education, focusing on social, cultural, political, and normative dimensions. Following a rich academic curriculum centered in social theory and qualitative research methods, the program invites students to interrogate and contribute to scholarship on the social and cultural contexts of learning, both inside and outside of schools. Most students supplement their educational studies with significant coursework in other disciplines of their choosing, including anthropology, sociology, history, urban studies, philosophy, and linguistics. Students may be eligible to pursue a joint Ph.D. degree with other departments such as: anthropology, sociology, Africana studies, or history.

**For more information:** <https://www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/programs/education-culture-society-phd> (<https://www.gse.upenn.edu/academics/programs/education-culture-society-phd/>)

## Required Courses

The total course units required for graduation is 16, in addition to whatever advisor and student agree for individualized program of study; doctoral exams; and an acceptable dissertation. A minimum of 12 courses must be taken at Penn, of which 10 must be taken in the field of education; a maximum of 4 courses can be transferred from another institution. Students should confer with their faculty advisor in choosing the most appropriate course for an area of specialization. All courses counted toward the degree must be level 5000 or higher.

Code	Title	Course Units
<b>Core Foundation Courses</b>		
EDUC 7132	Doctoral Proseminar on Education Research	1
<b>Theory Courses</b>		
Select 2 Theory courses <sup>1</sup>		2
<b>Research Methods Courses</b> <sup>2</sup>		
Qualitative Methods course: Attribute GDEL ( <a href="http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/gdel/">http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/gdel/</a> )		1
Advanced Qualitative Methods course: Attribute GDEQ ( <a href="http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/gdeq/">http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/gdeq/</a> )		1
Quantitative Methods course: GDEN ( <a href="http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/gden/">http://catalog.upenn.edu/attributes/gden/</a> )		1
<b>Electives</b>		
Select 10 electives <sup>3</sup>		10
<b>Additional Requirements</b> <sup>4</sup>		
Students must complete all University Milestones for Doctoral Candidates in addition to specific milestones for GSE. These include:		
A Qualifications Evaluation (also known as Program Candidacy)		

A Preliminary Examination (also known as Doctoral Candidacy)

An Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal

Final Defense of the Dissertation

**Total Course Units**

**16**

## University PhD Benchmarks

In addition to Program requirements, the following milestones must be completed:

Code	Title	Course Units
Qualifying Evaluation		
Candidacy Examination		
Dissertation Defense/Oral Exam		
Dissertation Deposit		

For more information view the University's Academic Rules for PhD Programs (<http://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/>).

- <sup>1</sup> Theory courses are centrally concerned with preparing students to draw on, understand and contrast theoretical frameworks within the context of seminal scholarly figures and traditions. They may focus on single frameworks, or compare across multiple ones; they may be either historical or contemporary. These courses may be in GSE, or taken in other schools. Students are encouraged to discuss options with their faculty advisors.
- <sup>2</sup> Methods courses prepare students in both the practical and theoretical implications of collecting, interpreting, analyzing and presenting data on the human condition broadly (and education/learning in particular). These courses may be in GSE, or taken in other schools.
- <sup>3</sup> Electives must be graduate level and taken for a letter grade. Students should determine elective courses in conference with their faculty advisors to ensure they align with the Planned Program of Study. With faculty advisor approval, electives may potentially be taken in Education, Culture, and Society (ECS), other GSE programs, or from graduate programs across the university.
- <sup>4</sup> **Required GSE Milestones**  
 Qualifications Evaluation (Also known as Program Candidacy): A Qualifications Evaluation of each student is conducted after the completion of 6 but not more than 8 course units. The evaluation is designed by the specialization faculty and may be based on an examination or on a review of a student's overall academic progress.  
 Preliminary Examination (Also known as Doctoral Candidacy): A Candidacy Examination on the major subject area is required. The candidacy examination is a test of knowledge in the student's area of specialization, requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and reasoning in the key content areas in their specialization as defined by their academic division. This examination is normally held after the candidate has completed all required courses.  
 Oral Proposal: All doctoral candidates must present their dissertation proposals orally and in person to the dissertation committee.  
 Final Defense of the Dissertation: The final dissertation defense is approximately two hours in length and is based upon the candidate's dissertation.

## **Required Milestones**

### **Qualifications Evaluation (Also known as Program Candidacy)**

A Qualifications Evaluation of each student is conducted after the completion of 6 but not more than 8 course units. The evaluation is designed by the specialization faculty and may be based on an examination or on a review of a student's overall academic progress.

### **Preliminary Examination (Also known as Doctoral Candidacy)**

A Candidacy Examination on the major subject area is required. The candidacy examination is a test of knowledge in the student's area of specialization, requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and reasoning in the key content areas in their specialization as defined by their academic division. This examination is normally held after the candidate has completed all required courses.

### **Oral Proposal**

All doctoral candidates must present their dissertation proposals orally and in person to the dissertation committee.

### **Final Defense of the Dissertation**

The final dissertation defense is approximately two hours in length and is based upon the candidate's dissertation.

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The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2025 and later. Students should consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.

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