



Acacia
University
ARIZONA



ACACIA UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Education in
Educational Leadership
Catalog Addendum
2025-2026

Aug. 31, 2025 - Aug. 30, 2026

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Degree Programs Offered

- Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Program Prerequisites

- At least three years teaching or administrative experience in education
- Ongoing access to a K-12 school or educational institution

Program Overview

The Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership is a 60-credit program designed for graduate level educators who are presently teachers or administrators in a school setting or have regular weekly access to a school and classrooms. The Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership will provide opportunities for educators to learn and develop skills and strategies in the areas of school management, education law, education finance, and instructional supervision to be an effective leader.

The goal of the program is to develop scholars-practitioners who will learn and practice advanced skills in designing, implementing, and analyzing effective research-based strategies in school/district leadership so they can provide active, positive, and effective leadership in the school environment. All students enrolled in the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership degree program will demonstrate and apply knowledge and skills related to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards.

Program Outcomes

The Ed.D. prepares educators for advanced professional responsibility and leadership in effectively organizing, planning, implementing, and evaluating staff and programs, addressing diverse school environments, and building and fostering effective learning communities. This course will prepare educators to apply the PSEL and NELP standards in educational leadership practices.

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) are organized around the domains, qualities, and values of leadership work that research and practice indicate contribute to students' academic success and well-being. The National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Building Standards, which are aligned to the PSEL, provide specificity around performance expectations for beginning-level building leaders. The NELP standards, formerly known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC standards), specify what novice leaders and program graduates should know and be able to do as a result of completing high-quality educational leadership programs. The NELP program standards include seven content standards and an eighth internship standard.

Based on research and effective leadership practices, the NELP standards provide a guide for preparing, supporting, and evaluating educational leaders so all students may reach their fullest potential.

The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership will prepare graduates to:

Program Learning Outcome	NELP Standards	PSEL Standards
Promoting the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult		
Articulate and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities and models the guiding principles of the profession	Standard 1 Standard 2	Standard 1 Standard 2
Generate and use research data to inform decisions to ensure coherent curriculum systems, instruction, support, and assessment within an inclusive school culture of family, community, and school personnel	Standard 3 Standard 4	Standard 4 Standard 8

Program Learning Outcome	NELP Standards	PSEL Standards
Promoting the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult		
Develop and refine educational leadership skills and responsibilities that engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning	Standard 5 Standard 7	Standard 6 Standard 7
Apply skills to initiate and implement sound educational policy, data-based school improvement plans, and operation systems that include fiscal management as well as implementing laws, rights, policies, and regulations	Standard 6	Standard 9
Demonstrate educational leadership knowledge and skills in an administrative internship within the school and online educational environments that afford opportunities to interact with stakeholders	Standard 8	Demonstrating All Standards
Write, present, and defend a clear and coherent action research dissertation that contributes to understanding and solving problems of practice in education	Demonstrating All Standards	Demonstrating All Standards

Licensing

Disclosure: Acacia University offers graduate degrees for educators to achieve their professional goals. Completion of a degree program in itself does not constitute having a professional credential. Professional certifications and licenses are governed by boards empowered via State laws and/or professional organizations and commissions. Therefore, Acacia programs are NOT a pathway to teacher licensures in the US.

This information is provided per U.S. Federal Regulations, 34 CFR § 668.50 (2016 Rules), 34 CFR § 668.43 (2019 Rules), and in compliance with the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) Manual version 19.2.

Acacia University is an approved institution of the [National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements](#) (NC-SARA) which allows the university to provide distance learning programs and coursework to students located in states other than Arizona. NC-SARA approval does not grant reciprocity or exemption from state professional licensing requirements.

All the courses in the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership are based on the PSEL and NELP standards. Links to standards resources are provided in each course.

Admission Eligibility and Requirements

- Master's degree from an accredited university. The degree must be verified on original transcripts sent to Acacia University. **Applicants from Institutions Outside the United States:** applicants submitting transcripts from non-US institutions may be required to have their transcript evaluated by a [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#) (NACES) member agency.
- Verifiable work experience as a teacher or administrator in an educational setting for three or more years is preferred
- Essay - A personal statement, not to exceed five hundred (500) words that discusses: your reasons for pursuing the Ed.D., your career goals, how the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership would help you meet career goals, and prior experiences which relate to your interest in, and aptitude for this program.
- Applicants whose first language is not English and who do not have a
- master's degree from a university in which instruction is conducted in English must provide

evidence of English proficiency. The following are accepted exams and minimum scores required for admission:

- 65 on the paper-delivered Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL PBT), or 80 on the Internet Based Test (iBT)
- 6.5 on the International English Language Test (IELTS)
- 58 on the Pearson Test of English Academic Score Report
- 105 on the Duolingo English Test
- 55 on the 4-skill Michigan English Test (MET)
- 650/LP on the Michigan Examination for the Certificate of Competency in English (ECCE)
- 650/LP on the Michigan Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE)
- An online interview with the doctoral committee

Provisional Admission

Provisional admission may be granted to an applicant who **does not meet** one or more of the admission criteria:

1. Transcripts for previous coursework were not received by Acacia University by the application deadline but otherwise meets the admission requirements
2. Any other application components were not received by Acacia University by the application deadline but otherwise meet the admission requirements

Provisional Admission stays in place for the first two courses. If the student earns less than a B in either of the first two courses or Acacia University does not receive all required application documents, the student will be administratively withdrawn.

Step 1: Application Process

- Complete the application form
- Provide transcripts for both a completed bachelor's degree and master's degree from an accredited university.
- Write a 500-word essay describing your background, experience, professional career goals, and reasons for pursuing a doctoral degree in educational leadership. The doctoral admissions personal essay aims to evaluate your writing skills and ability to reflect on career goals and reasons for applying. Students must be authored and create all work themselves. Originality and authenticity are two key academic integrity principles expected from Acacia University students. AI-generated essays are not acceptable if the detection rate is above 40%.
- If applicable, submit the score received on an approved English language proficiency exam

By email: registraroffice@acacia.edu

When all components have been submitted and received by Acacia University, the Doctoral Review Committee will invite and schedule qualifying applicants to participate in an online interview with a doctoral program faculty member of the selection committee. All doctoral students will be selected following the online interview and recommendations from faculty. Note: All paperwork must be completed and received by the due date for consideration of acceptance for the next term.

Notifications of acceptance will be sent within two weeks following the interview. If accepted, the student will proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Admission to Acacia University

After notification of initial acceptance into the doctoral program, students will be assigned an Academic Program Advisor who will schedule an appointment to plan the course of study and recommend courses. Following the meeting with the Academic Program Advisor, the student will advance to the course enrollment process for the upcoming term. Login information for the course site and the student information site will be provided in your letter of acceptance. This will allow you access to the Introduction to Doctoral Studies site orientation. It will also open the enrollment and tuition payment

process. All these processes will be completed prior to the start of the course. No one will be allowed to enter a course unless tuition payments have been cleared.

No student is allowed to enroll in courses until officially notified of acceptance by the Admissions Office.

Graduation Requirements

To be eligible to graduate with the Ed.D. degree, learners must have been admitted to candidacy and must meet the following requirements:

- Pass a proctored Comprehensive Exam covering the coursework in the degree program.
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. based on all required doctoral coursework listed in the program of study totaling at least 60 credits.
- Enroll in continuation courses each eight-week session while working on their internships, proposals, or dissertations. This is in addition to the required 60 credits.
- Ensure that doctoral program enrollment is no less than 2 years and no more than 10 years.
- Pass a dissertation defense and complete all editing, copywriting, and publication requirements.

Transfer Credits

Acacia University recognizes the previous coursework of an admitted student by awarding credit for courses that have been earned at another accredited institution and that are documented through a transcript from that institution. Transfer credits must be applicable to the student's degree program at Acacia. Acacia University may award transfer credits amounting to no more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the credits required for the student's program at Acacia. Courses accepted for transfer credit must be relevant to the Acacia program of study, equivalent in both content and degree level, and not more than ten years old. A student may appeal the ten-year limit by demonstrating that the content, relevance, rigor, and currency of the courses in question are comparable to courses within the current Acacia program of study. Appellants must present the transcript showing the courses and submit a written appeal to the Dean, who will review the case and make a recommendation to the Provost. The decision of the Provost is final. Credits from a course of study pursued at another institution can be considered for transfer at Acacia if the above criteria are met. Credits earned for one degree at Acacia University can be used for an additional degree at Acacia only with the approval by the Dean and the Provost. The maximum number of prior Acacia credits is nine, and the courses must correspond in content and rigor to the level of the second degree.

The Registrar of the University has discretion over the granting of transfer credits, with oversight by the respective Dean and the Provost. Acacia University has full discretion to accept or reject transfer credits from other institutions. Students should be aware that credits earned at Acacia University may or may not be accepted by another institution, depending upon its own programs, policies, and regulations. Students planning to use credits from Acacia University as transfer credits for a degree in another institution should contact the Admissions Office of that institution in advance of applying.

Financial Information

Tuition

Acacia University is committed to offering very affordable tuition while maintaining a high-quality academic experience.

Tuition for doctoral program is \$ 200.00 per credit.

Fees

Mandatory fees:

Application Fee / Registration Fee (one-time)	\$75 (<i>non-refundable</i>)
Graduation Fee	\$100

Discretionary fees:

Official Transcript Fee	\$10
Continuation Courses	see below*

Dissertation Publishing: Students are responsible for obtaining publication and copyright services for their dissertation, as well as all costs related to these services.

* If the Comprehensive Exam is not completed and passed in the term in which the student initially enrolled, the doctoral student must enroll in the extension each eight-week term until completed. The Comprehensive Exam Extension is .5 credit at the doctoral tuition rate.

*If the Online Internship is not completed and passed in the term in which the student initially enrolled, the doctoral student must enroll in the continuation course each eight-week term until completed. The Online Internship Continuation is .5 credit at the doctoral tuition rate.

If the Onsite Internship is not completed and passed in the term in which the student initially enrolled, the doctoral student must enroll in the continuation course each eight-week term until completed. The Onsite Internship Continuation is 1 credit at the doctoral tuition rate.

If the Action Research Proposal is not completed and passed in the term in which the student initially enrolled, the doctoral student must enroll in the continuation course each eight-week term until completed. The Action Research Proposal Continuation is 1 credit at the doctoral tuition rate.

If the Action Research Dissertation is not completed and passed in the term in which the student initially enrolled, the doctoral student must enroll in the continuation course each eight-week term until completed. The Action Research Dissertation Continuation is 1 credit at the doctoral tuition rate.

Textbooks and Materials

Most Acacia courses require no textbooks. For those courses that do require a textbook/s, it is the responsibility of the student to purchase or rent the textbook/s prior to the start of the course (E-textbooks may have limited time access. Be sure to check the listing before you complete your transaction). Acacia does not sell or lease textbooks. Students may purchase or rent in any format (hardback, e- textbook, new, used, etc.) but must use the assigned edition. Current prices at the time of this handbook publication are listed below but are subject to change. Prices listed are from the publisher, however, students may purchase from any source.

Since courses are updated to meet changing standards, legislation, state requirements, etc., textbooks may change during the course of the program.

Course	Author/s	Title/Edition	Print ISBN/Cost	E-Text ISBN/Cost
EDA549D	Ubben, Hughes, & Norris	The Principal: Creative Leadership for Excellence in Schools, 8e	9780134606989 \$191.99	9780137561834 \$89.94 (rental)
EDA569D	Brimley, Versteegen, & Knoeppel	Financing Education in a Climate of Change, 13e	9780135180068 \$143.99	9780137524990 \$89.94 (rental)
EDA679D	Webb & Metha	Foundations of American Education, 8e	9780134027661 \$133.32	9780137524990 \$89.94 (rental)
EDA718D	Creswell & Guetterman	Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, 7e	9780138161194 \$146.86	9780138173784 \$89.94 (rental)

Attention: Doctoral students are required to maintain membership in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) at the **Select Digital + Print** level which grants access to the online articles, online books, and resource materials. For current membership pricing, visit <https://www.ascd.org/memberships>.

Program of Study

Courses Category	Course Code	Course Title	Course Type	Credit	Duration
Category A Technical Courses	EDA509D	Essential Instructional Skills for Administrators	Elective	3	8 weeks
	EDA519D	Understanding Child and Adolescent Development	Elective	3	8 weeks
	EDA529D	Curriculum Design and Assessment Development	Elective	3	8 weeks
	EDA539D	Introduction to Special Needs	Elective	3	8 weeks
	EDA589D	Human Resources Issues in Education	Elective	3	8 weeks
	EDA599D	Principles of Continuous Improvement	Elective	3	8 weeks
Total Category (A) Credits				9	
Category B General Courses	EDA549D	Principles of School Leadership and Management	Core	3	8 weeks
	EDA559D	Legal Issues in Education	Core	3	8 weeks
	EDA569D	Understanding Education Finance	Core	3	8 weeks
	EDA600D	International Virtual Leadership Residency	Core	1	One Week
	EDA601D	Virtual Residency #1	Core	.25	One Day
	EDA602D	Virtual Residency #2	Core	.25	One Day
	EDA603D	Virtual Residency #3	Core	.25	One Day
	EDA604D	Virtual Residency #4	Core	.25	One Day
	EDA649D	Advanced Leadership and Effective Decision-Making	Core	6	16 weeks
EDA679D	Foundations of American Education	Core	6	16 weeks	
Total Category (B) Credits				23	
Category C Applied General Education	EDA709D	Online Internship for Educational Leaders	Capstone	6	16 weeks
	EDA710D	Onsite Internship for Educational Leaders	Capstone	6	21 weeks
	EDA718D	Advanced Research Methods	Capstone	6	16 weeks
	EDA605D	Comprehensive Exam – Proctored	Capstone	1	16 weeks
	EDA719D	Action Research Proposal	Capstone	6	16 weeks
	EDA720D	Action Research Dissertation	Capstone	6	16 weeks
Total Category (C) Credits				28	
Total Program Credits (A+B+C)				60	
* As needed until course	EDA6051D	Comprehensive Exam Extension*	-	.5*	8 weeks

Courses Category	Course Code	Course Title	Course Type	Credit	Duration
requirements are completed	EDA7091D	Online Internship for Educational Leaders Continuation*	-	1*	8 weeks
	EDA7101D	Onsite Internship for Educational Leaders Continuation*	-	1*	8 weeks
	EDA7191D	Action Research Proposal Continuation*	-	1*	8 weeks
	EDA7201D	Action Research Dissertation Continuation*	-	1*	8 weeks

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

C, D, and F grades are not acceptable in the doctoral program. If a grade of C or lower is earned, the course must be retaken the next time it is offered and completed with a grade of B or higher. A retake of a course must occur prior to registering for a new course.

If two C or lower grades are earned, the student is placed on academic probation and both courses must be retaken with satisfactory grades earned before registering for another course in the program of study.

If a third grade of C or lower is earned in any future doctoral course (even if two prior courses are retaken and higher grades are earned), the student will be ineligible to continue in the doctoral program and will be officially dismissed for unsatisfactory academic progress.

Each course can be retaken only once. If a grade of B or higher is not achieved upon completion of a retake, the student will be officially dismissed for unsatisfactory academic progress. Retake courses are subject to the normal doctoral tuition rate.

Note: Retake courses will be indicated with an “(R)” on transcripts.

Satisfactory academic progress in the doctoral program is monitored by faculty program advisors, who meet with advisees two times each academic year to discuss the pace of courses, grades, and academic progress.

Online participation, effort, and timeliness are reviewed and discussed with each student. Program goals and outcomes are reviewed and discussed so that the program advisor can determine student progress in the program. Notes of insufficiencies are recorded in the comments section of the student’s records. Program advisors indicate areas of support needed and regularly check the transcript to monitor GPA. If a student maintains a 3.0 GPA or higher and has not expressed academic concerns, it is assumed that there is satisfactory academic progress.

Quantitative Criteria

Students must earn at least a B grade in each course taken to meet program requirements. If two or more courses are taken simultaneously, no more than one course can receive a grade lower than a B. A grade lower than a B will automatically initiate probationary status and require course retake. Students will maintain a program GPA of 3.0 (grade of B) or higher on a 4.0 grade scale.

Qualitative Criteria

Each course has a qualitative component based on timeliness, professionalism, progress, and effort

based on a Participation and Effort Rubric that contributes 10% to their final course grade. Satisfactory progress (good standing) is maintained when doctoral students earn a program GPA of 3.0 (grade of B) or higher on a 4.0 grade scale. Students who do not earn at least a B in every course during an academic session will be placed on academic probation the following session and be required to repeat the course.

Academic probation will not exceed two sessions. If, during the following two sessions, the student's grade average is still unsatisfactory, the student will be promptly notified by the Dean, School of Education of the recommendation for academic dismissal. At that time, the student may appeal by submitting a letter of grievance to the Dean, School of Education, who will convene an independent hearing to determine the status of SAP.

Faculty

Faculty Roles

Professors

All Professors in the University have doctorate degrees (Ed.D. or Ph.D.). Each professor at Acacia is qualified to provide excellence in instruction and leadership. Professors are assigned to and responsible for all graduate courses. They also supervise any assigned Doctoral Interns and/or Doctoral Candidates performing their online or onsite internships by providing ongoing support, communication, and meaningful feedback throughout the course term. Professors, in collaboration with assigned interns or candidates, utilize the Rubrics and Scoring Guides for all assignments throughout the course. Professors assign all final course grades.

Program Advisors

While the student is responsible for his/her academic decisions and education, Acacia provides support and advising assistance throughout the program. Program Advisors are assigned to students upon enrollment based on his/her chosen degree program. Program advisors communicate to plan, provide assistance, address any course or program concerns, and provide mentorship throughout the program.

Doctoral Interns

Doctoral Interns are students performing their online responsibilities for the Online Internship course. Each intern is placed in a course previously completed during year one or two of his/her course of study. They shadow the professor and may assist with instructional responsibilities, with the guidance and oversight of the professor.

Doctoral Candidates

Doctoral Candidates have completed all 500 and 600 level courses of their program and successfully passed their comprehensive written and oral exams. They may be placed in a course to perform research pertaining to their dissertation topic and/or continue to perform their online responsibilities for the Online Internship course. They shadow the professor and may assist with instructional responsibilities, with the guidance and oversight of the professor.

Faculty List

Dr. Ryan Buck, Ph.D. Public Policy, The New School

Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership

Dr. Aliko Constantinou, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership, Secondary Education

Dr. Mary Donohue, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership, Elementary Education, English as a Second Language

Dr. Pamela Felder-Small, Ph.D. Higher Education, University of Pennsylvania
Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership

Dr. Khadija Gaber, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University
Subject Matter Expertise: Secondary Education

Dr. Cynthia Lopez, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, University of Texas
Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership, Educational Administration, Secondary Education

Dr. Essra Mahmoud, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University
Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership, Educational Administration, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, English as a Second Language

Dr. Toby McChesney, Ed.D. Higher Education Leadership, Nova Southeastern University
Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership

Dr. Lisa Oliphant, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University
Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership, Educational Administration, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Special Education

Dr. Farah Zannad, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University
Subject Matter Expertise: Educational Leadership, Secondary Education

Hours of Operation

General office hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Mountain Standard Time, Monday through Friday. However, students may communicate asynchronously with university personnel via the online course forums, the online messaging system, email, and the help desk when the university is closed. Instructors maintain scheduled hours of availability and are available for online discussion at posted times. The help desk is available for technical support. Help desk requests may be submitted at any time and are addressed within 24 hours.

Acacia University is closed on all U.S. federal and state holidays and weekends. The offices will be closed on the following observed holidays:

- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (December 31 and January 1)
- President's Day (the third Monday in February)
- Memorial Day (the last Monday of May)
- Independence Day - July 4
- Labor Day (the first Monday of September)
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday (the fourth Thursday and Friday in November)
- Christmas Day and the day prior and after (December 24, 25, and 26)

Course Scheduling

Courses begin on predetermined dates and last 8 weeks, 16 weeks or 21 weeks. Check course descriptions for course length. Start and end dates for each session are listed in the academic calendar.

Academic Calendar

Students may enroll and begin their program at Acacia University six times a year:

- Fall Session 1
- Fall Session 2
- Spring Session 1
- Spring Session 2
- Summer Session 1
- Summer Session 2

Term	Classes begin	Classes end
2025 Fall Session 1	August 31, 2025	October 25, 2025
2025 Fall Session 2	October 26, 2025	December 20, 2025
2026 Spring Session 1	January 4, 2026	February 28, 2026
2026 Spring Session 2	March 1, 2026	April 25, 2026
2026 Summer Session 1	May 3, 2026	June 27, 2026
2026 Summer Session 2	June 28, 2026	August 22, 2026
Doctoral Residencies	Date/s of residency	
One-Day Virtual Residency #1	Sept. 6, 2025 Oct. 4, 2025 Nov. 15, 2025 Nov. 22, 2025 March 21, 2026 April 11, 2026	
One-Day Virtual Residency #2	Sept. 13, 2025 Dec. 6, 2026 Feb. 7, 2026 March 14, 2026	
One-Day Virtual Residency #3	Oct. 11, 2025 Jan. 24, 2026 April 4, 2026	
One-Day Virtual Residency #4	To be announced	
International Virtual Leadership Residency	Jan. 11-17, 2026	

Course Descriptions

[EDA509D: Essential Instructional Skills for Administrators](#)

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: 3

Course Length: 8 weeks

This course emphasizes methods of teaching and learning proven to be effective in all classrooms. Emphasizing visual representations, engaging students, assessing learning, and teaching comprehension, these strategies build skills that are essential for learning any content, expressing ideas, and for the transference of knowledge.

Strategy examples are provided for students in various grade levels and content areas. The strategies are effective for all students (pre-K to 12th grade), including special education students and English language learners. Many classroom examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in learning and implementing these strategies in the classroom.

[EDA519D: Understanding Child and Adolescent Development](#)

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: 3

Course Length: 8 weeks

This course focuses on effective implementation of developmentally appropriate strategies in the classroom and school. Participants explore domains and stages of development within ranges from birth to age 18. The role of culture in the learning process is explored in relationships of impacting development. Stages related to cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development are addressed with strategies to facilitate student growth in each area. Many examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher and administrator in understanding and providing developmentally appropriate environments.

EDA529D: Curriculum Design and Assessment Development**Prerequisite/s: none****Credits: 3****Course Length: 8 weeks**

This course builds teachers understanding academic curriculum design, delivery, and assessments. Development of curriculum will address research-based practices, technology integration and developing content assessments that align to the curriculum. Types of assessments are explored and strategies for developing content assessments that align to the curriculum are presented. The course will also explore current trends, issues, and policies and their impact on curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Teachers learn how to relate the curriculum and assessments to state, provincial, or country standards and adjust for diverse populations such as special education or English language learners. Many examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the teacher in learning and implementing effective curriculum and assessment strategies in the classroom.

EDA539D: Introduction to Special Needs**Prerequisite/s: none****Credits: 3****Course Length: 8 weeks**

This course focuses on special populations of students with special needs, including English language learners, gifted, and various handicapping disabilities. An overview of assessing needs, methods of teaching, and meeting needs of diverse students is presented. Many examples are provided for all grade levels and for special populations to assist the administrator and teacher in planning and implementing effective programs in the classroom and school.

EDA549D: Principles of School Leadership and Management**Prerequisite/s: none****Credits: 3****Course Length: 8 weeks****Required Textbook: The Principal: Creative Leadership for Excellence in Schools, 8e**

This course presents a survey of research in leadership, management, and strategic planning. It also focuses on an in-depth study of knowledge and skills required to be an effective educational leader. The roles of the principal, district leaders, and school administrators are explored.

This course highlights the role of the school principal as an instructional leader, with an emphasis on leadership skills and management abilities necessary to create a vibrant and successful school and educational community. Students will develop a knowledge base on the principal's role and responsibility in the areas of school and community relations, supervision of instruction, curriculum assessment and evaluation, administration of special services, human resource management, school facilities and fiscal management, and ethical and legal issues. Students will also learn how to apply strategies toward building positive school culture through stakeholder collaboration, working with

diverse populations, and drawing from evidence-based strategic planning. Learning activities include reflective practice, activities and exercises, and analysis of case studies.

EDA559D: Legal Issues in Education

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: 3

Course Length: 8 weeks

This is a seminar course in legal issues focusing on readings, research, discussions, and classroom/school observations that acquaint doctoral students with some of the current issues in the principles of school law. Independently and with a seminar group each student will engage in a seminar process to share, analyze, and gain understanding of current issues and research in legal foundations of public and non-public schools. This seminar will enrich professional experiences, through collaboration with other professionals, administrators, and peers. The experiences gained will give students a perspective on a range of services provided by schools in the areas of general education law, public laws influencing the administration of schools, and current issues in law related to classrooms, schools, districts, and individuals.

Students will learn how to interpret the U.S. judicial and legislative systems and the formation of laws relating to public education. Students will also analyze current school practices from the standpoint of potential legal controversies. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze school legal problems by considering legal and ethical implications.

Traditionally a seminar structure assumes collegial exploration and discussion of theory as it relates to practical applications. Successful seminar courses are dependent upon the participants having read and reflected upon shared readings prior to VLC discussions and online meetings. A seminar is made useful by students' willingness to share reactions to related readings which individuals have found useful, and most importantly, by their openness to collaboratively constructing new knowledge. Therefore, prepared and enthusiastic participation is essential, whether discussions take place in online meetings or in online VLC discussions. Class time will be spent discussing analysis and critiques of the readings and applying the assigned readings to individual settings.

EDA569D: Understanding Education Finance

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: 3

Course Length: 8 weeks

Required Textbook: *Financing Education in a Climate of Change*, 13e

In this course, education funding, financial management, and the economics of education are addressed. Sources of revenue and the administering of a school budget are explored and compared among a variety of educational institutions.

Students will develop an understanding of the fundamental issues of education finance by examining sources of revenue on federal, state, and local levels, and weigh the economic, social, and legal considerations necessary for allocating and managing funding. Students will also learn about approaches and procedures for budgeting, forecasting budgets, managing business operations, the reporting and auditing of funds, and issues specific to funding special education and school choice.

EDA589D: Human Resources Issues in Education

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: 3

Course Length: 8 weeks

This course is a survey of personnel management, coupled with a detailed study of supervision of faculty and staff in school settings. Staffing options are explored in the context of school goals and student needs. The provision of professional development, supervision, and teacher evaluation are presented with applied projects provided to build understanding of personnel administration.

This graduate level course introduces leadership standards, theories, critical success factors, and practices that educational leaders need to be effective supervisors. The course addresses the components of effective school and teaching theories that lead to school improvement. Students will develop leadership and supervisory platforms and professional development plans for individuals and schools. Various supervisory styles studied will include clinical supervision, the Charlotte Danielson model, and differentiated supervision. Special issues include hiring, mentoring, tenure, dismissal, and remediation plans. By the end of this course, students will be able to distinguish between supervision, evaluation, and professional development.

[EDA599D: Principles of Continuous Improvement](#)

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: 3

Course Length: 8 weeks

This course covers the knowledge and skills needed to provide systematic and systemic planning and implementation of strategic initiatives. Principles of school improvement, strategic planning, organizing for effectiveness, and on-going involvement of stakeholders related to the educational institution are explored through individual and collaborative projects. The course focuses on the process of continuous review and evaluation of activities, which lead to improved results.

The goal of this course is to learn action research methods and practice the process of continuous school improvement. Students will experience designing, conducting, analyzing, and presenting an action research project that demonstrates aspects of the school improvement process.

[EDA600D: International Virtual Leadership Residency](#)

Prerequisite/s: All 500D-level courses

Credits: 2

Course Length: 1 week

The International Virtual Leadership Residency will occur online during a one-week period. This residency will allow students to meet with faculty members; enhance writing, research, and critical-thinking skills; share experiences and insights with students with similar interests; and work directly with cohort members.

[EDA601D: One-Day Virtual Residency #1](#)

Prerequisite/s: None

Credits: .25

Course Length: 1 day

The One-Day Virtual Residency #1 is designed to ensure that all doctoral students complete the Human Research Protection Training offered by the Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). This training is required by federal law and must be completed by all doctoral students conducting human research. The five sessions constitute foundational information on research that includes human subjects, and the processes and procedures involved in attaining approval for such research. Other residency topics include principal leadership and professional learning communities. Pre-Residency Activities/Assignments are emailed one week before the residency.

[EDA602D: One-Day Virtual Residency #2](#)

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: .25

Course Length: 1 day

The One-Day Virtual Residency #2 focuses on data analysis and continuous improvement. Activities include reading vetted articles and a case study about the processes of data analysis, data usage, and continuous improvement. The historical evolution of continuous improvement is contrasted with current practices of improvement in different settings. Videos based on the continuous improvement cycle and definition are presented in terms of how leaders navigate the process.

Deliverables include writing reflective summaries and online discussions. Pre-Residency Activities/Assignments are emailed one week before residency.

[EDA603D: One-Day Virtual Residency #3](#)

Prerequisite/s: none

Credits: .25

Course Length: 1 day

The One-Day Virtual Residency #3 focuses on advanced research statistics. Doctoral students will learn common statistical terminology, develop understandings of statistical measures, and begin the important journey of selecting their research interest by defining the topic and determining the “action” of action research. After the presentations on possible research topics, doctoral students will review the important aspects of writing good research questions and write three research questions about their proposed topic. Pre-Residency Activities/Assignments are emailed one week before the residency.

[EDA604D: One-Day Virtual Residency #4](#)

Prerequisite/s: Passed EDA605D: Comprehensive Exam and Enrollment in EDA719D: Action Research Proposal or EDA720D: Action Research Dissertation

Credits: .25

Course Length: 1 day

The topic for One-Day Virtual Residency #4 is Using Data for School Improvement. This is the last of the one-day residencies and must be completed before graduation. Doctoral candidates will have opportunities to build their understanding and skills in determining how to revise improvement plans into statistically relevant data to support new programs, teacher training, student engagement, or other initiatives supported by the data. This one-day residency will clarify how collected data is used to justify school improvement and action research studies. Pre-Residency Activities/Assignments are emailed one week before the residency.

[EDA605D: Comprehensive Exam](#)

Prerequisite/s: All 500D level electives, 600D Required General Courses, EDA709D, EDA710D, EDA718D, and Virtual Residencies 1-3

Credits: 1 (Requirement for Doctoral Candidacy)

Course Length: 16 weeks

This course is designed for students to complete their dissertation journey's written and oral exam phases. This is a requirement for students who have completed 48 or more credits and the first three virtual residencies. The goal of this proctored exam process is for doctoral students to demonstrate their mastery of leadership concepts, essential academic knowledge, and methods of inquiry necessary to proceed to dissertation writing. In this course, doctoral students work individually with the course professor to complete both exam components. All written exam content and oral exam questions stem from the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership program learning outcomes which are aligned to the NELP and PSEL standards.

Students must maintain continuous enrollment on this course until they have passed both the oral and exam components. A grade of P for Passing is recorded for students who pass both components. If the components are not completed and passed at the end of the 16-week session, the student must enroll in the 8-week continuation term until both components are assessed as passing. An incomplete (INC) grade will be given to those enrolled in the continuation course which is one credit at the doctoral tuition grade.

[EDA6051D: Comprehensive Exam Extension](#)

Prerequisite/s: EDA605D

Credits: .5

Course Length: 8 weeks

This course is designed for students to complete their dissertation journey's written and oral exam phases. This is a requirement for students who have completed 48 or more credits and the first three virtual residencies. The goal of this proctored exam process is for doctoral students to demonstrate their mastery of leadership concepts, essential academic knowledge, and methods of inquiry necessary to proceed to dissertation writing. In this course, doctoral students work individually with the course professor to complete both exam components. All written exam content and oral exam questions stem from the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership program learning outcomes which are aligned to the NELP standards.

Students must maintain continuous enrollment in this course until they have passed both the oral and exam components. A grade of P for Passing is recorded for students who pass both components. If the components are not completed and passed at the end of the 16-week session, the student must enroll in the 8-week extension term until both components are assessed as passing. An incomplete (INC) grade will be given to those enrolled in the extension course which is .5 credit at the doctoral tuition grade.

[EDA649D: Advanced Leadership and Effective Decision Making](#)

Prerequisite/s: All 500D-level courses

Credits: 6

Course Length: 16 weeks

This course is designed to provide an in-depth study of leadership theories and research beginning with a historical overview of traditional approaches and showing how they have evolved over time, not only in education, but also surveying the science of administration and management as a profession in other fields, such as business, political and military and volunteer organizations.

Students will learn about the philosophical and historical foundations of various approaches. Particular attention will be given to current leadership and administrative practices in educational settings, such as visionary leadership, servant leadership, inclusive and collaborative leadership, empowerment, and leadership in an increasingly diverse environment both within, and external to, educational organizations.

[EDA679D: Foundations of American Education](#)

Prerequisite/s: All 500D-level courses

Credits: 6

Course Length: 16 weeks

Required Textbook: Foundations of American Education, 8e

This course explores the influences on education within the larger social, political, economic, legal and cultural environment – from the local community to the global settings. A brief overview is included of the historical, philosophical and social foundations of education and the role of schooling in a democratic society.

Most candidates will have familiarity with such foundational theories from prior degree programs. Familiarity with school structures and governance at various levels provides understanding of the context in which education takes place. This includes school site and local communities; the role of elected school boards, superintendents and other administrators; the functions of intermediary agencies, such as county or regional offices of education; education as a constitutional state responsibility, including development of laws and policies; the evolving role of the federal government; and a perspective on education in our world, our global community.

[EDA709D: Online Internship for Educational Leaders](#)

Prerequisite/s: All 500D-level courses

Credits: 3

Course Length: 16 weeks

The Online Internship class involves learning and implementing mentoring skills online to students in educational administration classes. This online internship is arranged by the course professor with other instructors/professors in the master's or doctoral administration courses. The Doctoral Program Advisor oversees the Online Internship and oversees the supervision of the Doctoral Intern.

The internship encompasses classroom and/or online observations and mentoring, demonstrations, modeling, feedback, and practice applying prior learned skills and knowledge in educational leadership. Application of the PSEL and NELP standards is required. The experience also includes research, analysis, surveys, interviews, discussions with others, and the maintenance of an e-portfolio. Regularly scheduled online meetings with the professor are scheduled at mutually agreed upon times.

Experience gained in the Online Internship, as recorded in the e-portfolio, will be summarized and presented in a final report.

[EDA7091D: Online Internship for Educational Leaders Continuation](#)

Prerequisite/s: EDA709D

Credits: .5

Course Length: 8 weeks

If the Online Internship is not completed during EDA709D, the doctoral student must enroll in this continuation course each eight-week term until completed.

[EDA710D: Onsite Internship for Educational Leaders](#)

Prerequisite/s: All 500D-level courses

Credits: 6

Course Length: 21 weeks/270 clock hours

The Onsite Internship involves an administrative Internship of 21 weeks. The Internship is arranged by Acacia University in cooperation with a school administrator where the internship will occur. The internship focuses on an individualized applied project determined by the Graduate Intern, the cooperating school principal and/or district administrator, and the Doctoral Program Advisor. The Onsite Internship requires 270 clock hours of experience under the supervision of a certified school or district administrator.

The internship encompasses classroom observations and mentoring, demonstrations, modeling, feedback, and practice applying prior learned skills. Application of the PSEL and NELP standards is required. The experience also includes research, analysis, surveys, interviews, discussions with others, and the maintenance of an e-portfolio. The onsite experience will involve school or district related administrative projects planned cooperatively with the principal/administrator and the online professors. Regularly scheduled online meetings with the professor and with the onsite administrator

will be scheduled at mutually agreed upon times. Experience gained in the Onsite Internship will be summarized and presented in a final Internship report.

[EDA7101D: Onsite Internship for Educational Leaders Continuation](#)

Prerequisite/s: EDA710D

Credits: 1

Course Length: 8 weeks or completion of 270 clock hours

If the Onsite Internship is not completed during EDA710D, the doctoral student must enroll in this continuation course each eight-week term until completed.

[EDA718D: Advanced Research Methods](#)

Prerequisite/s: All 500D-level courses

Credits: 6

Course Length: 16 weeks

Required Textbook: Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, 7e

This course will include foundational elements for conducting independent, original research. Candidates will learn about methods of formative and summative evaluation for continuous improvement of practices in the educational environment. Candidates will also apply concepts and practice skills in research design, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of results.

Students will also be presented with topics in Evaluation Research, Data Analysis and Interpretation, Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods, Approaches to Research Design and Data Analysis, and Statistical treatment of data.

[EDA719D: Action Research Proposal](#)

Prerequisite/s: EDA718D

Credits: 6

Course Length: 16 weeks

The purpose of this seminar is to provide information and support for students as they develop dissertation proposals for the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program. Students will also apply concepts and practice skills in research design. Students will develop and refine their action research topics and ideas, write drafts of their proposals, and establish a doctoral committee of four committee members.

This course refreshes doctoral candidates on the basic concepts of action research, focusing on conducting literature reviews, understanding theory, defining research problems and methods, collecting and analyzing data, communicating findings, and applying research to solving educational problems. In addition, students should be able to understand the purposes, assumptions, and logic inherent in research methodologies.

[EDA7191D: Action Research Proposal Continuation](#)

Prerequisite/s: EDA719D

Credits: 1

Course Length: 8 weeks

If the Action Research Proposal is not completed during EDA719D, the doctoral candidate must enroll in this continuation course each eight-week term until completed.

[EDA720D: Action Research Dissertation](#)

Prerequisite/s: EDA719D

Credits: 6

Course Length: 16 weeks

Action Research Dissertation is intended to assist the Doctoral Candidate (DC) in the transition from course work to dissertation. This course will review proposal components, with particular emphasis on research design and developing the literature review and will also focus on key issues such as dissertation format standards, psychological and time management demands, HSIRB topics, and project management.

The outcome of this course is the completion of a dissertation that contributes to educational knowledge. The doctoral candidate will select a topic of interest based on an educational issue or problem and critically analyze and evaluate existing knowledge. Action research will be conducted to examine the problem. Conclusions based on findings should include implications for better educational practice.

EDA7201D: Action Research Dissertation Continuation

Prerequisite/s: EDA720D

Credits: 1

Course Length: 8 weeks

Action Research Dissertation Completion is intended to assist the doctoral candidate in the completion and defense of the dissertation. This course will focus on key issues such as dissertation format standards, psychological and time management demands, HSIRB topics, and project management.

Note: Students may end up taking more units of dissertation (EDA7201D) credit than they can count toward their degree because students must register for the dissertation continuation course each eight-week session while working on their dissertation. Students must complete their dissertation within 5 years of completing 600-level courses.

Cheating

Cheating includes any conduct that involves unauthorized use of written or oral information, electronic or mechanical devices, generative AI tools, or other aids to complete a test, examination, or assignment. Examples of cheating include the following:

- Buying or selling information related to a test or examination.
- Unauthorized collaboration with another person
- Submitting the same work for multiple assignments
- Plagiarism (See Plagiarism Section)
- Unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence

When you use any text generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT-3, it is essential to ensure that it is properly documented and credited. You can do this by including a citation that mentions the name of the tool, the date of your query, and the source of the material. For instance, you can use the following citation format:

“Chat-GPT 3. (YYYY, Month DD of query). “Text of your query.” Generated using OpenAI.
<https://chat.openai.com/>”

If you use any other tools to generate the material, you should follow a similar citation convention. Failure to acknowledge the use of AI models will be penalized as plagiarism and cheating. Please note that AI models tend to include incorrect information, fake citations, and inaccurate outputs. You are responsible for any inaccurate, biased, offensive, or otherwise unethical content submitted regardless of whether it originally comes from you or an AI model.

Students must author and create all work themselves. Originality and authenticity are two key academic integrity principles expected from Acacia University students. Coursework should not be created by someone or something else. Professors will be using AI detectors such as the following:

- <https://copyleaks.com/ai-content-detector>
- <https://turnitin.com>
- <https://gptzero.me>
- <https://writer.com/ai-content-detector>

A student suspected of cheating will receive notification from his/her instructor citing the evidence used to document the offense. A copy of the notification will also be submitted to the Program Advisor and Provost. A student has 48 hours to respond in writing to the instructor regarding the allegation. Instructors will apply consequences to the student assignment and/or course grades according to suggested guidelines, which can range from resubmitting an assignment for half points possible to failing the course.

If it is determined that cheating has occurred, the student will not receive full credit for that assignment. If cheating reoccurs, the student will not earn credit for that course. A third incident of cheating will result in expulsion or suspension from Acacia University.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Acacia University uses current technology to identify possible instances of plagiarism by comparing student submissions against internet sites, academic journals, and previously submitted student assignments. Submissions that are flagged as possible plagiarism are reviewed by the instructor to verify if plagiarism occurred and what action needs to be taken.

If it is determined by the instructor that plagiarism by a student has occurred, the student will not receive full credit for that assignment. If plagiarism reoccurs, the student will not earn credit for that course. A third incident of detected plagiarism will result in expulsion or suspension from Acacia University.

The expectation is that the work you submit will be your own and not that of others. Copying others' work without giving them credit is called plagiarism and is a serious offense in the US. Copyright laws protect the ideas of authors from being copied without citing reference. This includes any work that is written or recorded in any way. Books, magazines, and online articles are protected in this way. Professor(s) will be using comprehensive plagiarism detection with the Turnitin Similarity tool.

There are three ways that plagiarism can exist in an online course.

The first is answering a question by copying directly from the content text. It is appropriate to reference a statement or section from the content, but the reference has to be stated in your words and not just copied from the text. This demonstrates your understanding. Phrases such as "according to the text" or "as found in section" can be used to present the idea, but the explanation has to be in your words.

The second is copying from other students. For example, one of the other students in your course may submit a VLC or discussion forum post to be reviewed. If you read the post and then write a post that is almost identical, that is plagiarism.

The most common way plagiarism occurs in online courses is by using the ideas from resources (books, articles, websites, etc.) and not providing citations for them. The citation can be for a section that uses the ideas of others or can be for an exact quote that is shown in quotation marks with proper APA citation.

Finally, copying complete sections or articles from other sources is plagiarism because you are presenting it as your work. Even if cited, this is not appropriate. Use notes from articles and include the

ideas in your own words. This will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the sources you have researched. Information about plagiarism is provided in the Resource Library section of each course.

Literature Reviews

Literature reviews are part of most doctoral courses. The reviews serve two main purposes: 1) to perform in-depth reading and study on content topics/questions related to the course; and 2) to build skills in researching current literature and writing reviews in preparation for the dissertation.

In all Acacia doctoral courses, literature review topics must be approved by the course instructor. Prior approval for the topic and subsequent review of literature for the Action Research Dissertation is also required and is guided by the doctoral advisor and professor of the Research Methods and Dissertation Proposal courses.

Virtual Conferences

Virtual conferences are internet-based, collaborative meetings between two or more people and allows for participants in multiple locations to interact using audio, video, and screen and file sharing.

Virtual conferences occur at regular intervals throughout courses and last between one and three hours each depending upon the course. Virtual conferences include pre-work and post-work activities which require application and reflection. Virtual conferences are intended to assess student understanding of course content and concepts, discuss progress towards course completion, as well as to verify student identity. Specific requirements for virtual conferences can be found in the syllabi.

Residencies

Students will complete two types of residencies during the doctoral program. The International Virtual Leadership Residency is a three-credit, one-week long course offered two times each year. Additionally, four One-Day Virtual Residencies are required throughout the doctoral program and occur multiple times throughout each year. All virtual residencies must be completed by the end of the doctoral program. The International Virtual Leadership Residency may be completed following the completion of all 500 level courses and must be completed prior to the oral comprehensive examination. The Doctoral Program Advisor assists the student in determining appropriate times for residencies. It is a requirement, and all residency outcomes must be met within guidelines, directions, and timelines provided. Failure to perform assignment tasks will result in the repeating of the residency. All doctoral residencies must be completed prior to graduation.

The general purpose of all residencies is to provide the doctoral student with an important opportunity to enhance leadership, communication, and research skills in an educational setting. Each doctoral student will:

- Analyze and determine leadership strengths and weaknesses related to her/his style of leadership
- Communicate and reflect with faculty members related to her/his individualized program of study
- Enhance and demonstrate writing, speaking, research, and critical-thinking skills
- Share experiences and insights with other students through discussion, presentations, and debates

International Virtual Leadership Residency (IVLR)

The International Virtual Leadership Residency is an online residency lasting one week. Biannual sessions are held in January and July. This three-credit course occurs over a one-week period and includes assignments and work to be completed prior to the IVLR, during the IVLR, and following the IVLR.

IVLR Requirement

The International Virtual Leadership Residency must be completed before taking the 600 level courses, specifically EDA649D: Advanced Leadership and Effective Decision Making.

The IVLR requires that all doctoral students dedicate their full attention to this residency and plan to attend all sessions. This includes ensuring that you have a reliable internet connection, video and audio capabilities, and a dedicated work area free of distractions and ambient noise that may disrupt other attendees throughout.

IVLR doctoral students must schedule time off work to ensure full attention to residency requirements. To earn full credit for the course, students are required to attend each daily session and participate in all activities.

IVLR Procedures for Participation

- Authorization/approval by the Program Advisor is obtained by the student prior to IVLR course registration. Approval is based on the number of 500 level courses completed and grade point average.
- Enroll in EDA600D: International Virtual Leadership Residency (3 credits).
- Some assignments and topical materials to read/study are sent to each student one month prior to IVLR.
- The IVLR begins on a Sunday with a video conference meeting to verify attendance and readiness (a choice of appointed times is offered) and ends on Saturday at 12:00 PM.
- Following the IVLR, the student will complete follow-up assignments and submit to the Doctoral Program Advisor or designee within three weeks of IVLR.

IVLR Topics

Topics will include previously taken coursework, leadership inventories, analysis of style of leadership, problem solving simulations, and evaluations of leadership skills (self and others).

One-Day Virtual Residencies (VR)

Four one-day virtual residency sessions will be scheduled throughout the year to provide discussions and critical skills seminars for small groups and individuals.

Note: While no credit is given for this residency, it is a requirement and all VR outcomes must be met within guidelines, directions, and timelines provided. Failure to perform assignment tasks will result in the repeating of the residency.

VR Requirement

All virtual residency sessions must be completed by the end of the program. Each VR session consists of eight consecutive hours online.

VR Procedures for Participation

- Authorization/approval by the Program Advisor is obtained by the student prior to registration.
- Assignments and topical materials to read/study are sent to each student two weeks prior to VR.
- The student will arrange a place suitable for an 8-hour conference with a reliable computer, dependable internet, and privacy with minimal background noise; all materials and preparation of assignments will be accessible to view/share on the computer.
- On the day prior to the VR, the participation link will be sent for access during the conference.
- Each VR will address two or three topics and will be led by a professor with expertise in the topic.
- Following the VR, the student will complete assignments and submit to the VR professor/s within two weeks of the VR.

VR Technical Requirements

In addition to the technical requirements for the program, students will need a webcam to participate in the Virtual Residencies.

Note: Virtual Residencies #1 and #2 can be taken in any order but must be completed before VR #3, which must be completed before EDA718D: Advanced Research Methods. VR #4 may be taken any time after approval of the Dissertation Proposal.

Doctoral Residency Outcomes

- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on what it means to be a doctoral student and action researcher
- Engage students within their academic and professional disciplines
- Provide a range of technical, academic advising, and faculty advising support services using virtual best practices
- Demonstrate skills required for professionalism and educational leadership
- Build capacity to design and carry out scholarly research to solve problems in school settings
- Present research and project study findings to enable students to prepare and present such findings to multiple audiences
- Build relationships and networks that foster academic and professional success
- Engage faculty members and students in peer review and scholarly discourse that reflects critical thinking
- Model appropriate professional behavior used in scholarly discourse

Student Outcomes

As a result of fulfilling the residency requirements, students will be able to:

- Engage faculty members and peers in discussions that contribute to the collective advancement of educational research
- Design doctoral project studies that reflect doctoral-level thinking within school settings
- Articulate how to implement the program's scope and sequence to meet the particular program's requirements and expectations
- Demonstrate skills to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of professional contexts

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Institutional Review Boards review research studies to ensure that they comply with applicable regulations, meet ethical standards, follow institutional policies, and protect research participants. Acacia's Institutional Review Board reviews each study conducted by Acacia doctoral candidates to determine if the anticipated benefits of the study outweigh risks associated with participation in it.

IRB Training Requirement

Institutional Review Board (IRB) training is a requirement for all students beginning with the 2023 cohort and thereafter. The Five-lesson training satisfies the National Institutes of Health (NIH) educational requirement for training on human research protections for investigators and key personnel. The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) offers comprehensive training on human research protections based on the requirements of the revised Common Rule (or 2018 Requirements). Lesson topics follow:

1. When HHS Regulations Apply
2. What is Human Subjects Research
3. What are IRBs
4. IRB Review of Research
5. Institutional Oversight of Human Research

The IRB - Human Research Protection Foundational Five-Lesson Training has been integrated into Virtual Residency #1.

Doctoral Internship

The doctoral internship is comprised of nine credits/405 clock hours of online and onsite supervised work focused on meeting the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). Those specializing in higher education/teacher training are given extensive experiences in mentoring and assisting students in doctoral and master's level courses. Doctoral interns/candidates may work in schools, school districts, organizations, or universities to fulfill their onsite internship responsibilities.

All internship hours must be documented on internship logs. The doctoral intern/candidate will:

- Have the opportunity to observe, over time, a variety of leadership styles practiced by experienced administrators in various situations at multiple levels in the organization.
- Gain self-confidence in administrative decision making through progressive opportunities to test knowledge and skills in diverse settings.
- Interface with diverse publics in carrying out the day-to-day responsibilities inherent in school administration.
- Help the educational agency (school, school district, organization, or university) inspire dynamic and effective staff as part of ongoing professional development.
- Design and develop cooperative training experiences (mini-courses, tutorials, professional development, etc.) that demonstrate their leadership abilities and contribute to the educational program.
- Explore and receive authentic work experience to position them for the next stage of their professional development.
- Support the course professor by conducting formative assessments and provide feedback to course participants.
- Collaborate with course professor throughout the course session to learn methods for scoring and analyzing student work.

In addition to meeting internship responsibilities listed above, the intern/candidate will also address the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.

Comprehensive Exam

The Comprehensive Exam is required after completing 27 or more course credits, including the International Virtual Leadership Residency, and prior to starting the dissertation research. The Comprehensive Exam includes both written and oral components. A Doctoral Examination Committee is comprised of three Acacia University professors. A professor from another university and/or a current Doctoral Candidate may be invited. Once a date has been determined, the doctoral student will complete the written portion of the exam and submit it to the Doctoral Examination Committee no later than one week prior to the oral exam.

Written Portfolio Criteria

The written exam component will include a collection of written documents demonstrating knowledge and understanding of each doctoral course completed. Each course may be represented by a project, prior assignment, essay, or presentation that demonstrates knowledge of content and understanding of concepts from the course. These may be selected from submissions made during the course, if desired. If a prior course assignment is not representative of course understanding, a one-page essay may be substituted for a past course assignment. The one-page essay is to reveal important concepts learned and the significance of the concepts to you, as an educational leader. All written work will be compiled in a portfolio format organized by titles/course numbers. APA format will be used for all written work submitted.

A PowerPoint presentation may also be utilized as one or more of the submissions as long as it represents leadership skills learned and contains a “note” section for each slide. A “Core Values” essay/statement is also required as the first entry in the Table of Contents. The essay should be about 1000 words and clearly state core values from which you do not stray.

Make sure that all sections include the essence and reflective analysis. All passing grades will achieve an 84% or higher.

1. Essence or Reflective Analysis (valued at 67% of total passing score)
 - a. Convey deep meaning – provide detailed examples demonstrating the essence of what you learned
 - b. Explain how the learning is reflected in your current practices as a trainer/leader by giving examples of how your training has been enhanced
 - c. Reflect on how this course or experience inspired you to continue learning as a leader in your current training role? How has this learning experience inspired you for completing your internship and contributed to your research interest?
 - d. What questions do you still have about this learning experience?
2. Format and Structure (valued at 33% of total passing score)
 - a. Mechanics – punctuation, capitalization, spacing, and sentence structure
 - b. Paragraphing – topic sentence, content or details, transition statement to next paragraph (no one sentence paragraphs)
 - c. APA format – headers, citations, pagination (either top or bottom)
 - d. References listed in APA format and as the last entry in the Table of Contents

Oral Exam Component

The oral exam will be conducted via a video conferencing system during a two-hour session. Questions will be related to previous doctoral courses completed, leadership styles and skills, and problem-solving capabilities. It will also assess effective communication. Questions related to written submissions may also be included.

Once concluded, the Doctoral Examination Committee will determine the status of the doctoral student. The student will be notified via email within 24 hours after the exam if other documentation or another oral session is required. If the student passes the comprehensive exam, no other documentation or meeting is required.

Once passed, the student becomes a “Doctoral Candidate” and can progress through the research and dissertation phase of the doctoral degree. Doctoral Candidates are eligible to participate in other Comprehensive Exams for other doctoral students at Acacia University.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee

Those who accept the duty of serving on a doctoral dissertation committee assume responsibility of great importance. Doctoral dissertation committee members provide the highest quality service to doctoral candidates and to the academic practice, discipline, and professional field to which the dissertation is related. Expectations concerning these services are determined by candidates’ needs and by university academic policy pertaining to how these needs are addressed.

Acacia intends that doctoral dissertation committee members work as a team, directly guiding candidates through the prospectus, proposal, research and analysis, and ultimately the final oral presentation. Although the committee members are expected to support and facilitate candidates’ progress through their doctoral project, candidates are ultimately responsible for preparing a doctoral dissertation that meets the rigors of academic excellence.

Any written dialogue between a candidate and a committee member is shared within the committee. Committee members recognize that issues may be controversial, divide opinions, or otherwise cause

disagreement. When conflicts arise, the committee members are obligated to restrict the discussion to only other committee members and the committee chairperson, to avoid involving candidates in disputes or disagreements among themselves. The committee chairperson will act as an arbitrator to resolve the situation and obtain a consensus.

Note: Specific office hours will be designated by each doctoral committee member. Conferences will be scheduled as needed, not to exceed 4 hours per term. If additional time is needed with a committee member/s, you may contract with them on an individual basis at your cost.

Required Roles in Acacia Doctoral Dissertation Committees

Acacia doctoral dissertation committees will be comprised of four members: a chair, who is a current professor at Acacia and three members who possess appropriate credentials, scholarship, experience, and practice in the field of study. At least two of the doctoral committee members have earned doctoral degrees from an accredited university and not the awarding university.

It is essential that the members of the committee have not only the requisite professional credentials, but that they are also free of conflicts of interest or commitment that could bias or have the appearance of biasing their judgment about the best interests of the candidate and the scholarly merit of the dissertation.

Committee Chair Responsibilities

The committee chairperson leads the committee members as they work with candidates on their action research proposal and dissertation. As a result, they are primarily responsible for ensuring that such projects meet all of Acacia's requirements including those pertaining to theoretical foundations, methodology, research ethics, and form and style. Moreover, they are responsible for making sure that the work of committee fulfills expectations of service to the candidate, the academic discipline, and professional field of practice involved. Chairs must lead, monitor, coordinate, and assess the progress of the research from start to finish.

Committee Member Responsibilities

Collaborates with the chair throughout the completion process to provide overall guidance about the acceptability of the project taking into account:

- Acacia procedures and requirements for prospectus, proposal, and dissertation
- Norms of the educational leadership program and profession
- Form and style requirements

In addition, between the chair and other committee members, the following functions must be fulfilled. The functions may be split between members and the chair.

University Research Reviewer/Specialist in the Field of Study

Provides expertise in the specific area of research (k-12 education administration, curriculum and instruction, or higher education/teacher training). The university research review process is the quality control

mechanism for research at Acacia University. The goal of university research review is to facilitate quality research.

The specific role of the university research reviewer/specialist in the field of study will be to collaborate with the doctoral candidate and committee members prior to presentation of the prospectus, approval of the proposal, and prior to the final oral defense. The goals for these collaborative sessions are to:

- Ensure a high level of integrity in the research produced
- Facilitate a level of consistency in university research standards
- Provide feedback that is within the defined scope of the university research reviewer role:
 - The defined scope includes feedback related to theoretical, methodological, analytical, and organization content. University research reviewers use the dissertation

- checklist/rubric as their means for providing feedback on submissions.
- The defined scope does not include minor form and style and ethical issues; however, university research reviewers are instructed to alert doctoral candidates to such issues when they come across them.
- Determine if the research is ready for advancement to the next milestone in the process. University research reviewer will verify approval for all research processes.

Methodology Expert

Provides feedback and constructive criticism to the doctoral candidate on the following:

- Research design
- Research methodology
- Sampling procedures
- Research plan implementation
- Data collection procedures
- Presentation of results

Content Expert

Assists doctoral candidates with and provides feedback on the following:

- Theoretical basis and foundation
- Research question development
- Literature Review
- Significance of research findings

Doctoral Dissertation Completion Process

All doctoral candidates enrolled in an Acacia University doctoral program will proceed through the following steps as they complete their research:

Steps	Items to be Completed	Milestone Date
Premise	The premise is a short document that is used to identify a preliminary topic and approach for the doctoral research, and to help align the doctoral candidate with the faculty member who will guide continued development of the prospectus, as chair and/or instructor of a doctoral course.	Due in week 4 of EDA719D
Prospectus	The prospectus is a brief document that describes an agreed upon plan for developing the proposal. A doctoral committee meets to evaluate the prospectus to assure a doctoral-level action research dissertation. An approved prospectus formalizes the structure of the dissertation committee that will work with the candidate on completing the doctoral action research and must be approved prior to initiating the proposal.	Due prior to completion of EDA719D
Proposal	The proposal is comprised of the first three chapters of a dissertation and includes the reference list. These chapters establish the theoretical basis and rationale for conducting the study and describe the design and methodology it will utilize.	Due within six months of completion of EDA719D
Proposal Conference and Approval	Once the chair and at least one other committee member are satisfied that the first three chapters of the action research dissertation meet specified requirements, the chair will submit the proposal for oral review and approval by the dissertation committee via	Due prior to enrollment in EDA720D

Steps	Items to be Completed	Milestone Date
	video conference. This video conference must be held within six months of following the semester of the proposal course. Upon approval, the chair, with the approval of the Dean of Education, will submit the proposal and completed IRB form to the IRB Committee and Provost for approval.	
IRB Approval	Acacia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews each study conducted by Acacia doctoral candidates to determine if the anticipated benefits of the study outweigh risks associated with participation in it. The IRB form must be signed by the Provost prior to the collection of data and action research.	Due prior to enrollment in EDA720D
Completion of Doctoral Study	<p>Following the IRB approval, the candidate collects consent forms, conducts pre-tests, performs the action research, collects and analyzes data, reports findings, and completes the remaining chapters and sections of the action research dissertation.</p> <p>The final step before submission to the committee includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all references have been cited and are in APA format Ensure the dissertation is free of plagiarism as documented by the accompanying report or document from a verifiable plagiarism checker software Ensure all edits from committee members have been corrected or addressed Ensure all sections, including level headings, follow APA format 	Due upon completion of EDA720D
Dissertation Review	Once the chair and committee members are satisfied that the dissertation meets all requirements in terms of content, APA format, and style, the chair will submit the complete document to the dissertation committee and Dean, School of Education for their review.	Due upon completion of EDA720D
Dissertation Oral Defense	<p>Following chair approval, the candidate will present the complete research project to the Dean of Education and dissertation committee via a scheduled video conference. This conference is a formal presentation by the candidate. It will include a narrated slide presentation followed by discussion of the scholarly content. Following the presentation, the committee will discuss and evaluate the entire action research dissertation. Following the committee discussion, the candidate is notified of approval or is given guidance for any changes needed.</p> <p>Additional professors may be invited to the dissertation oral defense.</p>	Due upon completion of EDA720D

Steps	Items to be Completed	Milestone Date
Final Review	After completing the oral defense and committee approval of any corrections or additions to the final dissertation, the chair forwards the document to the University Provost. The Provost conducts a final review to reaffirm that all methodological, content, and writing issues have been addressed. Upon the Provost's approval, the dissertation is officially completed.	Due upon completion of EDA720D
Dissertation Publication	Students are responsible for obtaining publication and copyright services as well as all costs related to these services. Student must register for a copyright with the U.S. Copyright Office before digital publication. Doing so will make it easier for you to defend your copyright against copyright infringement. This is recommended for anyone intending to market, license, or sell your dissertation to others. After approval from the copyright office, your digital publication will be submitted to the doctoral committee chair in PDF format.	

Doctoral Dissertation Learning Outcomes

EDA720D Action Research Dissertation		
Program Learning Outcome (PLO)	Course Learning Outcome (CLO)	Course Assessments
PLO1: Articulate and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities and models the guiding principles of the profession	CLO1: Conduct action research that focuses on solving an educational problem, improves practice, and helps to make decisions at current educational sites	All dissertation chapter content that addresses the gap in research as stated in the background of the problem
PLO2: Generate and use research data to inform decisions to ensure coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, support, and assessment within an inclusive school culture of family, community, and school personnel	CLO2: Use research findings to inform decisions or propose solutions in the presentation of conclusions, implications, and recommendations	Chapter V: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations
PLO3: Develop and refine educational leadership skills and responsibilities that engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning	CLO3: Implement action research intervention or training presented in the proposal and gather data for continuous improvement	Data gathered from the implementation of the research study as described in Chapter III: Design, Methodology, and Procedures
PLO4: Apply skills to initiate and implement sound educational policy, data-based school improvement plans, and	CLO4: Apply research methodology skills using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods procedures	Implementation of action research study, and collection and analysis of data presented

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operation systems that include fiscal management as well as implementing laws, rights, policies, and regulations	for data collection and analysis	in Chapter IV: Findings and Presentation of Data
PLO5: Demonstrate educational leadership knowledge and skills in an administrative internship within the school and online educational environments that afford opportunities to interact with stakeholders	CLO5: Demonstrate written and oral communication skills via video conferencing during scheduled meetings and the final oral defense	Oral Dissertation Defense Presentation and Slides Scholarly responses based on action research during questioning by committee members
PLO6: Write, present, and defend a clear and coherent action research dissertation that contributes to understanding and solving problems of practice in education	CLO6: Write and defend the dissertation before a selected committee and ensure that the dissertation is finalized and copyrighted	After-Defense Committee Approval pending any recommendations Copyrighted Dissertation

Dissertation Guide

Refer to the Dissertation Guide for detailed information and instructions for the dissertation process, expectations, and requirements.