



# Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Student Handbook 2019 – 2020

*College of Education  
Tennessee Tech University*

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## I. The Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Degree

The Exceptional Learning Ph.D. (ELPhD) degree in the College of Education at Tennessee Tech has been in existence since 2000. The degree takes approximately three years of full-time study beyond the Master's degree to complete.\* The Ph.D. degree program is coordinated as a college-wide degree. Most often, but not exclusively, in selecting the Ph.D. program, a student projects a career focused on **being engaged in research**. For the dissertation, a clear, well-defined research design and methodology are required. ELPhD students are expected to do original research for the dissertation.

The ELPhD program focuses on the characteristics, strengths, and educational needs of individuals and groups whose learning potential and opportunities for success are frequently unrealized. Exceptional populations include people for whom social, economic, and physical characteristics may serve as a barrier to development and learning.

The ELPhD will prepare leaders to work in schools, agencies, and universities to effect positive change in populations of diverse learners, addressing social, economic, and physical characteristics that may serve as barriers to learning, primarily through research and service activities. The program core develops an understanding of the characteristics of these populations. The research core provides a strong emphasis on research techniques and applications. The four concentrations include:

**Applied Behavior Analysis** prepares professionals who can develop and deliver behavioral interventions and supports for individuals in educational and habilitative settings. There are two strands in ABA:

**Young Children and Families** prepares professionals to provide support and interventions to young, at-risk children and families with emphasis on building relationships with and advocating for children and families.

**Applied Behavior Analysis School-Aged Children and Adult Populations** prepares professionals who will implement and provide empirical support for behavioral interventions for a range of populations and pursue board certification as a behavior analyst (BCBA). The ABAS course sequence is approved by the national Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB).

**Health Behaviors and Wellness Education** offers cutting-edge, hands-on experiential courses along with related pedagogical methods and theory. HBWE research courses supply additional opportunities to research and address discipline-specific concerns. This comprehensive and novel design supplies students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to succeed professionally and lead change in health sciences and wellness disciplines.

**Literacy** empowers educational innovators to develop cutting-edge, socially conscious approaches to multiliteracies and challenge narrow conceptions of learners, families, and worldviews.

**Program Planning and Evaluation** prepares professionals for leadership roles in the field of PPE. Program content includes the history of the field, influence of context and cultures on PPE design

and methodology, quantitative and qualitative methods, and practical application of PPE skills through practicum experiences.

**STEM Education** builds the capacity of innovative educational leaders to advance new ideas and to design/implement strategic innovations in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

\* Students have eight years from the point of enrollment to complete the doctoral degree.

## II. The Structure of the Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Program

	Concentration	Major Field/Core	Guided Electives	Research	Dissertation
<b>ABA: Young Children &amp; Families</b>	23 sh*	13 sh	6-7 sh	21 sh	15 sh
<b>ABA: School-Aged &amp; Adult Populations</b>	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
<b>Health Behaviors &amp; Wellness Education</b>	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
<b>Literacy</b>	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
<b>Program Planning &amp; Evaluation</b>	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh
<b>STEM Education</b>	24 sh	13 sh	6 sh	21 sh	15 sh

\*sh = semester hours, all which are minimums

### III. Description of the Degree Program

The Exceptional Learning Ph.D. curriculum includes 79 semester credit hours. ELPhD curriculum is organized around three areas of knowledge development—core knowledge, research knowledge, and concentration knowledge. Classes are held in the evening and weekends and are scheduled in a pattern to allow two to three courses to be completed each semester.

A student may elect to earn an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction once 33 semester credit hours have been completed as the student successfully advances toward completion of the Ph.D. These 33 hours must include completion of either the qualitative or quantitative portion of the program's research course sequence. Please see Section IV for more details.

All courses are 3 semester credit hours unless otherwise noted. Courses with a single asterisk (\*) are not restricted to Ph.D. students; students enrolled in MA or EdS degrees may also take the course.

#### Core

The purpose of the core is to provide an interdisciplinary framework for the Ph.D. program. The core is comprised of 13 sh prescribed courses and 6-7 sh guided electives.

EDU 7000 - Trans-Concentration Seminar (1 sh)  
EDU 7010 - Theoretical Foundations of Research  
EDU 7020 - At-Risk Populations: Research, Service, and Delivery  
EDU 7040 - Program Planning and Proposal Development  
CUED 7430\* - Specialized Applications of Technology to Education

Guided electives may be selected from the list below in addition to courses in the core and research components in consultation with your advisor. Other electives may be proposed by the student and are subject to approval by the advisor and/or the Director.

CUED 7030 - Rural Schools and Communities  
CUED 7803 - Field Experience in Education - Autoethnography  
EDU 7060 - Issues in Education  
EDU 7950 - Doctoral Seminar: Special Topics in Education  
EDUL 7200 - Equity Literacy  
EDUL 7300 - Multiliteracies  
EDUL 7400 - Literacies of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations  
EDUL 7500 - Linguistic Perceptions  
ENG 6010\* - Teaching Composition  
SPED 6120\* - ECSE Evaluation, Assessment, and Methods  
SPED 7110\* - Family Collaboration

## Research

The research coursework (21 sh minimum) includes basic preparation in research methodology and design, including both quantitative and qualitative research. Each student who completes the ELPhD program should have knowledge of various research inquiries for use in answering educationally related questions. In addition to possessing a well-developed expertise in at least one method of inquiry, each student should be familiar with other techniques. By the time ELPhD students complete their doctoral work, they should understand that the choice of methodology, or methodologies, is guided by the nature of the question(s) posed, rather than the preferred methodological or analytical techniques of the researcher.

Before beginning their doctoral dissertation, ELPhD students should become familiar with ethical standards associated with the conduct of educational research. Students must know how these ethical considerations apply to (a) any interventions used with human beings, (b) the collection and analysis of evidence, and (c) the dissemination of research.

### Quantitative sequence

- EDU 7420 – Quantitative Inquiry in Education I
- EDU 7430 – Quantitative Inquiry in Education II
- EDU 7300 – Research Design

### Qualitative sequence

- EDU 7330 – Qualitative Inquiry in Education
- EDU 7340 – Data Analysis and Representation in Qualitative Inquiry
- Note:** qualitative work begins in EDU 7010 – Theoretical Foundations of Research

### Additional research courses (choose 1)

- EDU 7320 – Single Subject Design (*required for ABAS students*)
- EDU 7350 – Advanced Regression

*Students may take a research course from another concentration or a research-based EDU 7950 with the approval of the course instructor, advisor, and Director of Graduate Programs.*

EDU 7920\*\* – Research Seminar in Education

\*\*The overriding goal of EDU 7920 is for students to develop their dissertation research proposals (called a dissertation prospectus) and present those proposals to their committees for approval. With the exception of dissertation credit, **all of the courses in a student's program of study should be completed prior to enrolling in EDU 7920** (including removing any grade of "I"). On rare occasions, and with permission from their entire committee and the Director of Graduate Programs, students may take EDU 7920 with one class in the core or concentration series that has not yet been completed.

There are, however, **no exceptions with regard to the research series**: EDU 7420, EDU 7430, EDU 7300, EDU 7330, EDU 7340, and the selected additional research course must have been successfully completed prior to enrolling in EDU 7920.

Students typically take their comprehensive written exams during the second half of the semester in which they are enrolled in EDU 7920.

## **Concentration**

Although the major is Exceptional Learning, a concentration (23–24 sh minimum) provides an area of specialization.

### Applied Behavior Analysis

#### Young Children and Families (YCF)

- ABAP 7120 – Positive Behavior Support and Families
- ABAP 7920 – Topics, Issues, Research in Early Childhood Special Education (2)
- ECED 7220\* – Early Childhood Instruction and Materials
- EDUC 7400 – Programs and Service Delivery Models
- EDUC 7450 – Doctoral Seminar: Young Children & Families
- HEC 6610\* – Families: Normative/Catastrophic Issues
- SPED 6120\* – Early Childhood SPED: Evaluation/Assessment/Methods
- SPED 7110\* – Family Collaboration

#### School-aged Children and Adult Populations (ABAS)

(see Section X for BCBA certification requirements)

- ABAP 7120 – Positive Behavior Support and Families
- EDU 7320 – Single Subject Design
- EDUB 7010 – Advanced Systematic Instruction
- EDUB 7030 – Functional Analysis of Behavior
- EDUB 7050 – Intervention and Treatment in Autism Spectrum Disorders
- EDUB 7060 – Ethics in ABA
- SPED 6000\* – Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- SPED 6050\* – Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis

**Note:** If students are interested taking their supervised practicum hours through Tech, they may enroll in EDUB 7810 – Practicum in Behavior Analysis.

### Health Behaviors and Wellness Education (HBWE)

- EDUH 7000 – Current Issues in Exercise Science, Health, and Human Behavior
- EDUH 7010 – Pedagogical Theory of Physical Education
- EDUH 7020 – Advanced Teaching in Exercise Science and Health-Related Fields
- EDUH 7100 – Biomechanics of Human Movement
- EDUH 7200 – Foundations of Health Promotion
- EDUH 7300 – Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity
- EDUH 7500 – Health and Human Behavior Research
- EDUH 7600 – Special Topics in Exercise Science
- EDUH 7610 – Independent Study in Exercise Science/Health & Human Behavior

### Literacy

- EDUL 7100 – Literacy History, Theory, & Policy
- EDUL 7200 – Equity Literacy
- EDUL 7300 – Multiliteracies
- EDUL 7400 – Literacies of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations
- EDUL 7500 – Linguistic Perceptions
- EDUL 7600 – The Literacy Professional
- EDUL 7700 – Theory, Methodology, & Trends in Literacy Research
- EDUL 7900 – Community Literacy

### Program Planning and Evaluation (PPE)

- EDUP 7410 – Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods I
- EDUP 7420 – Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods II
- EDUP 7810 – Practicum in Planning and Evaluation  
*(18 sh total; may be broken up into blocks of 3, 6, &/or 9 as appropriate)*

### STEM Education

- EDUS 7500 – STEM Education Foundations
- EDUS 7510 – STEM Curriculum and Assessment
- EDUS 7540 – STEM Education Pedagogy
- EDUS 7550 – STEM Education Trends and Issues
- EDUS 7530 – STEM Education Research
- EDUS 7560 – STEM Learners and Learning
- EDUS 7580 – STEM Education Field Study (2)
- EDUS 7570 – STEM Education Policy and Leadership
- EDUS 7515 – STEM Education Seminar (1) or EDUS 7520 – STEM Technology Seminar (1)

### Dissertation Coursework (15 sh minimum)

- EDU 7990\* – Research and Dissertation (*15 hours minimum; generally taken in 9 & 6 hour blocks*)

#### IV. En-route M.A. Degree in Curriculum and Instruction

A student pursuing a Ph.D. in Exceptional Learning may be awarded an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction as the student successfully advances toward completion of the Ph.D.

The MA degree may be awarded when the student successfully completes 33 semester credit hours and must include nine (9) credit hours of either quantitative (EDU 7420, EDU 7430, and EDU 7300) or qualitative (EDU 7010, EDU 7330, and EDU 7340) research.

The MA degree may be awarded at any point during the program, given that the student:

- meets both the M.A. C&I and Ph.D. research course requirements as listed above,
- has received approval from the student's advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Programs, and
- has satisfied all College of Graduate Studies General Degree Requirements policies.

Courses applied to the en-route M.A. must be completed within six years of enrollment.

Once the M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction has been awarded, the Ph.D. portion of the Program of Study must include a minimum of 46 semester credits of appropriate graduate-level coursework consisting of research, concentration, core, and elective credits at the 6000- and 7000-level, as approved by the student's advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Programs. A minimum of 15 semester credit hours of doctoral research and dissertation is required in no fewer than two (2) semesters.

Students who have already earned an MA before entering the ELPhD program may be eligible for a reduction in required credits for the MA portion of the ELPhD program.

## V. Admissions Procedures for Students

### Admissions Criteria\*

1. **GPA** – Consideration for admission to the program is based on the applicant’s grade point average (GPA) in the last graduate degree. If no graduate degree has been attained, the student’s GPA for the last 60 hours of undergraduate work will be used. If a student has successfully completed some graduate hours but not attained a graduate degree, the GPA for these courses may also be considered. An average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or above from a recognized baccalaureate, graduate, or professional degree from an accredited college or university, or an international equivalent based on a four-year curriculum is required for admission.
2. **GRE** – Exceed 153 on Verbal Reasoning and score 140 or above on Quantitative **OR** exceed 144 on Quantitative Reasoning and score 146 or above on Verbal Reasoning. A minimum of 4.0 is required on Analytical Writing.
3. **Scholarly Writing** – Students must demonstrate the ability to do scholarly writing by submitting a reference-based paper, thesis, or other written document in which information from various sources has been synthesized. The applicant must be the sole author.
4. **Statement of Intent** – One to two pages is sufficient to address intended enrollment, intended concentration, autobiographical statement, education and professional goals, and areas of interest for future research.
5. **Three Letters of Recommendation** – Letters should be from professors who are able to comment on your qualifications and academic ability for doctoral study. Consideration will be made based upon the content of these letters. Please make certain the recommenders know they must submit a letter as well as evaluate the applicant on a series of qualities (done when submitting the letter). Applications without three letters may not receive full consideration.
6. **Professional Curriculum Vitae (CV)/Resume**
7. **Interview** – Applicants who pass the initial evaluation will be required to have an interview with the Ph.D. program faculty and Director of Graduate Programs.
8. **International Students** must also meet the English Language Requirement by providing TOEFL test scores: a minimum of 550 on the paper test or 213 on the computer version is required.

Note: Applicants who have been awarded a degree from a university in one of the following countries are exempt from the TOEFL requirement: Australia, Belize, the British Caribbean and British West Indies, Canada (except Québec), England, Guyana, Ireland, Liberia, New Zealand, Scotland, the United States, and Wales.

**\*Please note the STEM Education concentration requires the following additional admission requirements:**

1. Three years of STEM teaching/outreach (P-16)
2. Master's Degree, and
3. **one** of the following:
  - a. A minimum of 18 semester hours of graduate credit in a STEM discipline,
  - b. Teacher Licensure in a STEM discipline (Grades 6-8, 6-12, or 7-12),
  - c. Teacher Licensure (K-5) with 24 semester hours in math/science, or
  - d. Teacher Licensure (K-5) with a passing score on the state-approved licensure exam for a STEM content area

### Application Process

Prospective students are encouraged to make application to the College of Graduate Studies in time for admission to be completed at least one full semester before expected entrance to the Ph.D. program. Admission is open for Fall semester only. Please see the College of Graduate Studies website for admissions application deadlines and to apply to the program:

<https://www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/admissions.php>

### Application Processing

Once application materials reach the Director of Graduate Programs, the file will be reviewed to see if the criteria for admission have been met. The file will then be sent to the appropriate concentration leader for further deliberation. Once reviewed by the admissions committee and the concentration leader, it will be returned to the Director's office with a recommendation about if the applicant should proceed to the interview. If the applicant continues to the interview, the interview will be scheduled with Ph.D. faculty and the Director of Graduate Programs. After the interview, a recommendation will be forwarded to Graduate Admissions. Graduate Admissions will notify each applicant of the final, official decision. The Director of Graduate Programs may also offer an informal notification to the student.

## VI. Student Responsibilities

### Forming a Committee

The student's Ph.D. committee includes a minimum of four members. Additional committee members are optional. The committee must include a chair who has been credentialed by the university and three or more members, who must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status at Tech. Doctoral students have the right to amend their committees by adding, omitting, or replacing members, during the process of their study and in response to their changing needs.

### Filing a Program of Study

In pursuing the ELPhD, students have primary responsibility for knowing and meeting the program requirements. Students are expected to take the initiative in planning and following their Program of Study.

The *Program of Study* must be turned in early in the program—during the semester the student reaches 15 completed semester hours (usually no later than the third semester after formal admission to the program).

This is developed in collaboration with the total committee. Each committee member must review and sign it before it is submitted to the Chair of Curriculum & Instruction and the Director of Graduate Programs. The committee and the Director of Graduate Programs must approve all changes made to the Program of Study (via *Substitution Form* or a revised *Program of Study*, as is appropriate).

**Please note:** if course substitutions are made without a *Substitution Form*, graduation can be delayed. A course must be on the Program of Study in order to be counted toward the ELPhD degree.

### Keeping Up with University Policies

In addition to the Exceptional Learning Ph.D. program guidelines (this document), students are to follow the Tech Graduate Student Handbook and the Graduate Catalog:

[https://www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/pdf/grad\\_student\\_info/Handbook-2018-19-web.pdf](https://www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/pdf/grad_student_info/Handbook-2018-19-web.pdf)

<https://www.tntech.edu/academics/catalog.php>

### Comprehensive Examination

The Comprehensive Examination (Comp Exam or Comps) are completed during the semester in which the student is enrolled in *Research Seminar in Education* (EDU 7920). All coursework, excluding *Research & Dissertation* (EDU 7990), should be completed before enrolling in EDU 7920

In the first 2-3 weeks of the EDU 7920, the student must contact his or her Chair to discuss exam timing and to select dates for the exam. The Chair will request that each committee member submit a number of exam questions to the Chair. The student will be assigned a location on campus where they will have a minimum of 4 to 8 hours per day over the course of four (4) days (consecutive or nearly consecutive) days in which to complete their comprehensive examination. The student will return each exam response to the Chair, who will send them to the appropriate committee member for evaluation. The Chair may elect to communicate the results of each individual response as they are received, or may choose to communicate the results of all responses at once. If a student passes the comprehensive exam, he or she will enter Ph.D. Candidacy (and is referred to as a Ph.D. candidate).

Students cannot retake a failed exam (or any failed portion) in the same semester as the original comprehensive exam. The retake comprehensive exam must take place in the following semester. The student may retake the comprehensive examination only once. If the student does not successfully pass the retake comprehensive exam, the result will be dismissal from the ELPhD program.

#### Coordinating the Dissertation Defense/Notifying Others About the Defense/Submitting Copies of the Dissertation

PhD candidates should work closely with their Chairs to determine an appropriate defense date. PhD candidates should review the Graduate Student Calendar for the semester they intend to graduate and work back from important milestones shared via the calendar. PhD candidates should apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which their defense is scheduled to take place.

A copy of the final dissertation draft must be submitted to all committee members and the Director of Graduate Programs no less than two weeks prior to the defense, though earlier is appreciated.

At the same time, the PhD candidate should notify the Director of the defense day, time, and location. The *Dissertation Defense Form* is available on the Graduate Studies website. This form should be completed and brought to the dissertation defense. If the PhD candidate passes the defense, the committee signs the paper and routes it to the Chair of Curriculum & Instruction and Director of Graduate Programs.

Upon approval of final revisions, the Certificate of Approval is signed by the committee and submitted to the College of Graduate Studies (a copy should also be sent to the Director of Graduate Programs). An electronic PDF copy of the dissertation is then submitted to the College of Graduate Studies. Bound copies for the Chair and each committee member are courtesies, but strongly encouraged.

#### Academic Requirements/Standards/Expectations

The student must maintain a cumulative point average of 3.25 and, in addition to adhering to the general regulations of the College of Graduate Studies, adhere to the specific regulations for the Ph.D. program. These regulations, standards, and expectations include:

1. A minimum of 78–79 semester hours of course work, including 36 semester hours in the research component and dissertation requirements and built upon the student’s course of study.
2. A residency requirement of three full-time semesters (at least 9 hours each) must be met following matriculation.
3. All requirements, including the dissertation, must be completed within a period of no more than eight consecutive years.
4. Following completion of all coursework, excluding EDU 7990, or during the last semester during which course work is to be completed; students should complete their Comprehensive Examinations.
5. Satisfactory completion of the dissertation requires an oral defense.
6. The fifteen hours required for the dissertation may be completed in no fewer than two semesters.
7. As and Bs are required in coursework. A grade of C and D is considered a failing grade in doctoral programs. The student is allowed to maintain a grade of C in only **one** course completed toward the Ph.D. degree. If a student receives two Cs, they will be **dismissed** from the program. If another grade of C is received, it may not be substituted or moved out of the student’s program of study.
8. Fs are not acceptable in the Ph.D. program. If a student receives a grade of F in a course, they will be **dismissed** from the program.
9. If an Incomplete (I) is granted, the student has one academic year to complete the requirements. The student is not allowed to carry more than one I at any time during the program. If the requirements have **not** been met in the allotted time period, the grade is converted to an F or IF and the student will be **dismissed** from the program.
10. Approval of the dissertation topic **and** a successful proposal to the entire Committee must precede any significant work on the dissertation. Approval from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects must be obtained for any research project initiated by a student (or faculty member).
11. A maximum of 12 credit hours may be taken in one semester. Written approval from the Director of Graduate Programs, the student’s concentration leader, and advisor is required to register and take more than 12 credit hours in one semester.
12. Courses repetition is not allowed in the Exceptional Learning Ph.D.program.
13. Course substitutions are allowed upon graduate advisory committee, department chair or director, and dean approval.

The faculty and staff at Tech are committed to the lifelong learning of students and thus provide an environment for learning that fosters the highest academic conduct. To this end, Tech and its faculty reserve the right to use electronic means to detect and help prevent the inappropriate use of intellectual property. Student agrees and understands that by taking this course, his or her work may be subject to originality check through Turnitin, and student thereby grants any necessary copyright permission required to do so. Personally identifiable information (e.g., student name, social security number, student ID number) should **NOT** be included in the work submitted to Turnitin. This work will be encoded and stored in the Turnitin database, where it will also be used for originality checks on other works submitted by the student or anyone else using the system. The faculty may require that the students submit their work through Turnitin or questionable text may be submitted by the faculty for the student. The terms that apply to Tech's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website.

Online educational resources that provide information for understanding plagiarism and proper ways to cite the work of others are available at:

<https://www.plagiarism.org>

<https://www.turnitin.com/solutions/plagiarism-prevention>

<https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/certificationTests/index.html>

Students **must** complete the online test available at <https://www.indiana.edu/~plag/test.html> and provide documentation that they understand what constitutes plagiarism and how they can avoid it and maintain academic integrity by providing a copy of the completed test certificate to the Director of Graduate Programs and appropriate faculty members as requested.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct such as submitting another student's work as your own or the falsification of data are grounds for immediate dismissal from the ELPhD program. ELPhD students are held to a higher standard of ethical conduct especially considering the central focus of this program. Working with and for exceptional learners, at-risk populations, and diverse underrepresented groups demands the utmost ethical conduct and any evidence of unethical behavior or actions in coursework or research, including plagiarism, will result in the student's dismissal from the ELPhD program.

There is no statute of limitations on plagiarism or academic misconduct. If a student's plagiarism or academic misconduct goes undetected until after completion of the course and/or project, the student can still be dismissed from the program. The procedure for dismissal is:

1. An incidence of plagiarism or academic misconduct is presented to the student's advisor/chair, concentration leader, and Director of Graduate Programs.
2. The Director of Graduate Programs will review the evidence in consultation with faculty members, the student's advisor/chair, and concentration leader, as well as the student accused of plagiarism or academic misconduct. After this discussion and evaluation, the

Director will decide if plagiarism or academic misconduct occurred and dismissal is warranted. A decision advocating dismissal will be forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies.

3. The College of Graduate Studies will inform the student in writing of the final, official decision.

Any substantiated incidence of plagiarism in the ELPhD program will result in the student's dismissal from the program. The student accused of plagiarism or academic misconduct may appeal the decision to the Ph.D. Admissions Committee.

### Definitions of Plagiarism

Plagiarism.org (2017) defines plagiarism as "The improper use, or failure to attribute, another person's writing or ideas (intellectual property)," and explains that "It can be as subtle as the inadvertent neglect to include quotes or references when citing another source or as blatantly unethical as knowingly copying an entire paper verbatim and claiming it as your own work."

According to Merriam-Webster Online (2019), to plagiarize is "1) to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own or to use (another's production) without crediting the source, or 2) to commit literary theft and/or present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source" (para. 1-2).

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## Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Required Procedure Checklist

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<i>Item</i>	<i>Due By</i>	<i>Completed</i>
Temporary advisor appointed by Director	end of 1 <sup>st</sup> semester enrolled	
Program of Study & Dissertation Committee designation submitted	no later than the semester 15 credit hours are earned	
Annual review (+ CV submission)	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of each Spring semester	
Residence semesters	anytime during the program	
Notify Director of intent to take EDU 7920	1 <sup>st</sup> half of the semester <b>prior</b> to enrolling in EDU 7920; all research courses <b>MUST</b> be completed before eligible to take EDU 7920	
Prospectus (EDU 7920)	after all coursework has been finished (~ 61 credit hours completed)	
Schedule written comprehensive exam	1 <sup>st</sup> half of EDU 7920--to be schedule with Dissertation Chair	
Written comprehensive exam	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of EDU 7920	
Dissertation prospectus defense	immediately after successful completion of EDU 7920-- schedule with Dissertation Chair ( <i>proposal must be submitted to committee 2 weeks before presentation</i> )	
Dissertation hours (15 credit hours minimum)	begins after successful prospectus defense & comprehensive examination; continues until completion	
Dissertation draft plan to committee	create, with Dissertation Chair, a schedule of dates when drafts & revisions will be sent to the committee (including final draft)	
Schedule dissertation defense	work with Dissertation Chair to schedule dissertation defense	
Final dissertation to committee & Director	<b><u>no later than 2 weeks prior</u></b> to defense (earlier is encouraged)	
Defense invitation	send dissertation title & defense date, time, & location to Director of Graduate Programs <b><u>no later than 2 weeks prior</u></b> to defense	
Defense announcement	immediately after dissertation defense	
Submit signed defense form and Certificate of Approval to Graduate Studies *	after completion of final revisions (*check the Graduate Studies calendar for more specific deadline dates)	

Submit final copy to committee & to  
Graduate Studies \*

after completion of final revisions (\*check the *Graduate Studies*  
*calendar for more specific deadline dates*)

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## VII. Transfer of Prior Credit

Upon approval from the student's advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Programs, up to nine (9) credit hours from a previously earned Master's or Specialist degree program, can be counted toward the ELPhD degree.

While coursework taken prior to admission to the ELPhD program may, in certain instances, be used toward the degree, there are specific regulations governing how the coursework can be used and what part of the program must be taken at Tech after being admitted into the ELPhD program.

There may be cases in which a student's doctoral committee feels that a waiver of part of a requirement for the Ph.D. is warranted, given that a similar course has been taken. The committee may recommend a waiver, which may reduce the number of required hours in this area if the waiver is approved. The concentration leader determines course substitutions in their specific area.

Sometimes a Master's-level student takes more graduate-level courses than are required for the degree because the student is expecting to continue on to a Ph.D. program, and hopes to use the extra courses to satisfy Ph.D. coursework requirements. In this case, the student may request when registering for the course(s) that the course(s) be "banked" for the ELPhD program. If the student lacks no more than 12 semester hours on the master's degree, he or she may accumulate a maximum of nine (9) semester hours that may be applied toward the ELPhD Program of Study. The student's advisory committee must initiate approval via memo with consensus of the departmental chairperson, Director of Graduate Programs, dean of the college, and the Director of Graduate Studies. Banked courses then show up on the student's transcript as courses taken for the Ph.D. rather than being shown as a part of the Master's program. Banking courses do not guarantee admission to the ELPhD program, or, if admitted, that the student's Ph.D. advisory committee will approve the course as part of the student's Ph.D. program of study.

Remember, **all requirements for the degree, including the dissertation and transfer credit, must be completed within a period of no more than eight (8) consecutive years** (Please refer to Policy 271 - General Graduate Degree Requirements <https://tntech.policytech.com/>).

## VIII. Assistantship and Financial Aid Information

Students may apply to be a Graduate Assistant (GA) as well as apply for various fellowships and scholarships. Applications for a Graduate Assistant position should be made at the time of application to the program. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for more specific information:

<https://www.tntech.edu/graduatestudies/stipend.php>

ELPhD GA positions are very limited. If you are interested in a GA position, let the Director of Graduate Programs know immediately – **prior to application is best**; assignments are generally full and a wait list is maintained. Please send the GA application to the Director of Graduate Programs, the Administrative Associate for the Associate Dean's Office, and Graduate Studies as soon as you apply.

## IX. Course Descriptions

**ABAP 7120. Positive Behavior Support & Families** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Issues and practices associated with partnering with families in designing, implementing and evaluating positive behavior support for their children with challenging behavior.

**ABAP 7910. Independent Study in Early Childhood Special Education** Lec. 2. Cr. 2.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and consent of instructor. Advanced study of an individual basis focusing on an area directly related to young children with special needs and their families.

**ABAP 7920. Topics, Issues & Research in Early Childhood Special Education** Lec. 2. Cr. 2.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and consent of instructor. Advanced study of a topic(s) relevant to research and/or practice in early childhood special education, early intervention or young children and positive behavior support.

**CUED 7030. Rural Schools and Communities** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. An in-depth study of the historical, cultural, and economic characteristics of rural places and the role of schools and agencies in shaping the destiny of those places and their citizens.

**CUED 7430. Specialized Applications of Technology to Education** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: CUED 6430. Application of current media technologies to maximize student learning with instructional design strategies appropriate for each technology.

**ECED 7220. Early Childhood Instruction and Materials** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Planning objectives, activities, and materials for children, teaching techniques, and evaluation of curricula.

**EDU 7000. Trans-Concentration Seminar** Lec. 1. Cr. 1.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. An introduction to the Ph.D. in Exceptional Learning familiarizing students with the procedures, requirements, and expectations of the program.

**EDU 7010. Theoretical Foundations of Research** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. A study of the impact of culture in society and its significance for formulating policy design to serve diverse groups effectively and equitably.

**EDU 7020. At-Risk Populations: Research, Service, and Delivery** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. A survey of at-risk and diverse populations, their common and unique characteristics, and the research base for designing and implementing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

**EDU 7040. Program Planning and Proposal Development** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Theoretical perspectives, models, and effective practices in the development, planning, and evaluation of programs and services in a variety of educational settings.

- EDU 7060. Issues in Education** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. An examination and analysis of contemporary trends and issues in education, including leadership, legal, and ethical issues.
- EDU 7300. Research Design** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7420. Overview of planning, designing, and conducting experimental and non-experimental research in order to maximize research validity.
- EDU 7320. Single Subject Design** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7300. An in-depth analysis of single-subject research design and the application of this research methodology in applied settings.
- EDU 7330. Qualitative Inquiry in Education** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7010. An analysis of assumptions and types of procedures and criteria for evaluation in qualitative and interpretive research methods.
- EDU 7340. Data Analysis and Representation in Qualitative Inquiry** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7330. An analysis of both theoretical and practical dimensions of conducting qualitative research.
- EDU 7350. Advanced Regression Analysis** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program, EDU 7420, and EDU 7430. Advanced applications of regression analysis techniques.
- EDU 7420. Quantitative Inquiry in Education I** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and introductory course in statistics. In-depth training and understanding of common descriptive and inferential statistical techniques for conducting research and engaging in scholarly activities.
- EDU 7430. Quantitative Inquiry in Education II** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program and EDU 7420. In-depth analysis that reinforces and expands common descriptive and inferential statistical techniques and includes advanced material appropriate for more complex research problems.
- EDU 7440. Technology Applications for Institutional Dissemination of Information**  
Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Analysis of creation, collection, and distribution of institutional information.
- EDU 7920. Research Seminar in Education** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; EDU 7010, EDU 7300, EDU 7330, EDU 7340, EDU 7420, and EDU 7430; EDU 7310 or EDU 7320. In-depth examination of experimental, quasi-experimental, and evaluation research as applied to dissertation research.
- EDU 7950. Doctoral Seminar: Special Topics in Education** Lec. 1-3. Cr. 1-6.  
Prerequisite: Consent of the student's doctoral chairperson required.

**EDU 7990. Research and Dissertation** Cr. 1, 3, 6, 9.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; EDU 7920.

**EDUB 7010. Advanced Systematic Instruction** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
An in-depth study of instructional methodologies for persons with moderate and severe disabilities.

**EDUB 7030. Functional Analysis of Behavior** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Instruction in the functional analysis of severe and challenging behaviors.

**EDUB 7050. Intervention and Treatment in Autism Spectrum Disorders** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; SPED 6050, and EDUB 7040. A comprehensive overview of research-based practices in the design and delivery of intervention and treatments to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

**EDUB 7060. Ethics in ABA** Lec. 3 Cr. 3  
Prerequisite: Admission to the Doctoral Program. An overview of the ethical concerns related to the practice of applied behavior analysis. Students enrolled in the 7000-level course will be required to complete additional work as stated in the syllabus.

**EDUB 7810. Practicum in Behavior Analysis** Cr. 1-3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program; EDUB 7010, 7030; SPED 6050. Supervised practice in development and application of behavioral intervention.

**EDUC 7400. Programs and Service Delivery Models** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Analysis and comparison of organizations, program design, leadership, administrative, and supervisory practices.

**EDUC 7450. Doctoral Seminar: Young Children and Families** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to Doctoral Program. Inquiry into social policy, theory, research, issues, and intervention practices and personnel preparation.

**EDUH 7000. Current Issues in Exercise Science, Health, and Human Behavior** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
The content of this course will vary according to current research and publications in areas of exercise science, health, and human behavior related to exercise and physical activity.

**EDUH 7010. Pedagogical Theory of Physical Education** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
This course will cover interpretation and critical analysis of research on selected topics related to teaching and instruction in physical education.

**EDUH 7020. Advanced Teaching in Exercise Science and Health Related Fields** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
This course is designed to provide knowledge, opportunity, and support for quality teaching in exercise science and related health fields. Methodology of teaching in higher education will be explored.

- EDUH 7100. Biomechanics of Human Movement** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. This course will cover kinetic and kinematic principles governing efficient human movement. Selected methods of analyzing human movement will be covered.
- EDUH 7200. Foundations of Health Promotion** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. This course is designed to provide focus on health promotion and behavior changing strategies. Individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy will be considered as potential factors that can inhibit or promote behavior change specifically related to health issues.
- EDUH 7300. Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. This course will include topics such as the effects exercise has on mental health, behavior change theories applied to mental health effects of exercise, behavior change theories applied to physical activity, and physical activity determinants and interventions.
- EDUH 7500. Health and Human Behavior Research** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. Students will read, interpret, and critique scientific research.
- EDUH 7520. Inquiry in Health and Human Behavior** Cr. 1-4.  
Pre-requisite: Admission to the PhD program. Can be repeated for up to 12 hours credit. Students will conduct research.
- EDUH 7600. Special Topics in Exercise Science** Cr. 1-3.  
This course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to review literature on topics they are interested in and to write a literature review. The intent is for the candidate to expand their knowledge base, gain factual information about topics of interest, and identify options for future research projects.
- EDUH 7610. Independent Study in Exercise Science/Health & Human Behavior** Cr. 1-3.  
Topics to be assigned and approved by instructor and advisor.
- EDUL 7100. Literacy History, Theory, and Policy** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Exploration of the history and theory related to reading and writing instruction. Policies influencing literacy instruction, past and present, will also be examined.
- EDUL 7200. Equity Literacy** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Promotes understanding of deficit thinking in education as it relates to students who are disadvantaged by poverty and guides students to develop language, skills, and competencies for countering deficit thinking in order to promote equity in education.
- EDUL 7300. Multiliteracies** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Explores multiple and new literacies, moving beyond traditional reading and writing to examine the multimodal ways of meaning making and communicating and their place in pedagogy and practice.

**EDUL 7400. Literacies of Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Literacies of culturally and linguistically diverse groups through a critical lens.

**EDUL 7500. Linguistic Perceptions** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Explores perceptions of the world through the language that we use and belief systems we create.

**EDUL 7600. The Literacy Professional** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Exploring the various roles of the literacy professional. Preparing for grant and article submission.

**EDUL 7700. Theory, Methodology, & Trends in Literacy Research** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Examines major theories and methodologies in literacy research and explores new trends in the field.

**EDUL 7900. Community Literacy** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Working to explore and participate in various literacy initiatives within the community.

**EDUP 7410. Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods I** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: EDPY 7310 and EDU 7040. Exploration of advanced quantitative methods used to evaluate programs and improvement initiatives.

**EDUP 7420. Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation Methods II** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: EDU 7040. Integration of assessment data into the strategic planning process.

**EDUP 7810. Supervised Practicum in Program Planning and Evaluation** Cr. 3-9.  
Prerequisite: Consent of the student's doctoral chairperson is required.

**EDUS 7500. STEM Education Foundations** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Introduction to the educational, political, economic, and socio-cultural foundations of the STEM and STEM education disciplines including the history and development of STEM education with attention to the STEM content in P-16 settings. Topics include: introduction to the nature of each of the STEM and STEM education disciplines; investigation of related political, economic, and socio-cultural foundations; and frameworks for constructing personal perspectives and philosophies of integrative STEM education.

**EDUS 7510. STEM Curriculum & Assessment** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Current trends in STEM curriculum development and assessment. Topics include: defining objectives; planning for improvement; organization of instructional materials; and STEM curriculum evaluation.

**EDUS 7540. STEM Education Pedagogy** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Signature pedagogies unique to the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education; strengths and limitations associated

with signature pedagogies; and insights into pedagogical strategies that can serve to enhance practices within chosen STEM fields.

**EDUS 7550. STEM Education Trends and Issues** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Introduction to contemporary P-16 STEM education trends and issues, including both integrative and within-discipline trends/issues. Topics such as STEM literacy, integrative STEM teaching/learning, purposeful design and inquiry, legislative initiatives, and change theory are among those addressed in this course.

**EDUS 7530. STEM Education Research** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program; EDU 7420 and EDU 7010. Survey of the educational research practices of STEM disciplines; investigates the approaches used in studying the teaching/learning processes within the context of each discipline; similarities, distinctions and overlaps among questions posed, research designs, and investigations into best practices with respect to improving teaching and learning among STEM disciplines.

**EDUS 7560. STEM Learners and Learning** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Designed to explore the theoretical bases for STEM learning. Topics will include the development of STEM learning environments; research on learning in STEM; and STEM learner exceptionalities.

**EDUS 7515. STEM Education Seminar** Lec. 1. Cr. 1.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Designed as a general exploration into the issues surrounding the development of a STEM literate populace through education. This exploration will be facilitated by a blend of readings, discussions, and personal reflections.

**EDUS 7520. STEM Technology Seminar** Lec. 1. Cr. 1.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Focused on STEM-specific technologies (e.g., Vernier probes, TI-Navigation systems, LoggerPro software, etc.), how to use them, and the issues surrounding their use in STEM education.

**EDUS 7580. STEM Education Field Study** Lec. 2. Cr. 2.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. Applied study in one or more educational institutions. Research, evaluation, curricular, and instructional STEM projects are examples of appropriate areas of study.

**EDUS 7570. STEM Education Policy & Leadership** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Prerequisite: Admission to doctoral program. The course explores topics in STEM education with attention to STEM education policy and leadership.

**ENGL 6010. Teaching Composition** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
Theories and pedagogies of teaching writing in the middle schools, secondary schools, and on the college level.

**HEC 6610. Families: Normative/Catastrophic Issues** Lec. 3. Cr. 3.  
In-depth study of family stress and effective coping mechanisms that relate to normative transitions and crisis events.

**SPED 6000. Behavioral Interventions and Supports**

Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

The design, implementation, and evaluation of behavioral interventions and individualized behavioral supports for children and youth with disabilities who display challenging behavior.

**SPED 6050. Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis**

Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

An introduction to the application of applied behavior analysis including the theoretical origins and development of behavioral supports for individuals with learning and behavioral challenges.

**SPED 6120. Early Childhood Special Education Assessment**

Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Prerequisite: CFS 2400 and CFS 2410 or SPED 5010 or consent of instructor. Assessment, planning, and intervention procedures specific to child, environment, and family. Design and evaluation of intervention plans.

**SPED 7110. Family Collaboration in Special Education**

Lec. 3. Cr. 3.

Concepts, intervention strategies, and issues related to working with parents of exceptional children.

## X. Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Certification

The Applied Behavior Analysis strand *School Aged and Adult Populations (ABAS)* prepares candidates to sit for the BCBA certification exam. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.® (BACB) has established multiple eligibility standards that must be met prior to sitting for the exam. For more information on these standards please visit [www.bacb.com](http://www.bacb.com).

The BACB has approved the following course sequence as meeting the coursework requirements for eligibility to take the Board Certified Behavior Analyst Examination®. Applicants must meet additional requirements to qualify.

1. **An Acceptable Graduate Degree.** BCBA applicants must have received, at minimum, a master's degree from an accredited university in behavior analysis, education, psychology, or a program with an approved BACB course sequence. All other degrees must be approved by the BACB.
2. **Completion of an Approved Course Sequence.** BCBA applicants are required to complete a sequence of graduate courses approved by the BACB. The course sequence at Tech has been approved by the BACB and aligns with the latest task standards (4<sup>th</sup> Edition).
3. **Supervised Experience.** BCBA applicants must complete 1,500 hours of supervised field experience. Supervision may not begin until the applicant (a) successfully completes one course from an approved BACB course sequence and (b) completes an online Supervision and Experience Training Program. No more than 50% of the experience can be in direct implementation of behavioral programs. The BACB maintains rigorous standards for supervision and requires documentation of experience hours on a weekly to biweekly basis. Tech offers a practicum in supervision, in which participants receive 1.5 hours of credit per hour of experience, beginning in the Fall semester of 2016.
4. **Certification Exam.** The final step in earning the BCBA credential is the completion of the nationally administered certification exam. Applicants may register for the exam at multiple sites throughout the United States.

### Transferring Credit from other Course Sequences

As all course sequences are individually approved by the BACB, you will need to consult with the ABAS strand leader before attempting to receive credit for BCBA courses taken outside of Tech.