



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HEALTH EDUCATION WITH SPECIALIZATIONS IN HEALTH PROMOTION OR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

(revised May, 2007)

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree prepares students for academic and research careers in health education with specializations in health promotion or behavioral health. Research in health promotion and behavioral health is conducted in a variety of settings (e.g., school, community, worksite, health care, university) and focuses on young children, adolescents, adults, and senior adults. Examples of health issues addressed in health education research include physical activity, nutrition education, stress management, smoking prevention and cessation, HIV risk reduction, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, and successful aging. A diverse faculty, along with research and clinical opportunities within and outside the university, provide an excellent milieu for professional development.

Admission Requirements

In addition to meeting the Graduate School requirements, the applicant must submit a letter of application to the health education faculty to include a statement of career goals and research interests. Three letters of recommendation from former professors are required, and when possible, a personal interview is recommended. Students applying to the Ph.D. program must have demonstrated capability of independent research by completing a thesis or publishing a research article(s). Students not meeting this requirement shall participate in a research project sponsored by a faculty member during the first year of study to demonstrate research ability.

Final acceptance and continuation in the program are contingent upon sponsorship by a member of the health education faculty who will serve as the student's advisor. The admission of a student into the program and the selection of an advisor is by mutual agreement.

The prerequisites for the doctoral program are the completion of a master's degree or the equivalent from an accredited college/university, and the completion of a minimum of three hours of course work from each of the following areas: psychology, biological sciences, theory and methods of health education and/or health promotion, and statistics.

Courses completed at another college or university may be used to satisfy part or all of the prerequisites, provided such courses were completed prior to beginning graduate study at the University of Texas at Austin. Individuals admitted without these prerequisite courses must fulfill this requirement in their first year by taking the appropriate courses either in residence or by advanced standing examination at the University of Texas at Austin. It is the policy of the Graduate Studies Committee that all courses taken within this department to fulfill prerequisite requirements be taken on a letter grade basis.

Establishment of Program of Study

Students are expected to complete the core course requirements during the first year of study if possible. The health education faculty will review the student's prior course work and research experience and in conjunction with the student establish a program of study including course work within and outside of the department. Under the leadership of the student's advisor, the health education faculty will monitor the student's progress. By the end of the second year in the program, the program of study will have been approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Student Evaluation

Students must make satisfactory progress and will be evaluated for satisfactory progress each year, especially regarding incompletes in course work, GPA, and research involvement. Ph.D. students are required to enroll in a minimum of nine hours of course work each long semester.

1. Incompletes. Graduate students are expected to complete courses within the time framework of the semester. In unusual cases where this semester framework is not in the best interest of the student, the professor may report the symbol X (incomplete) in place of a grade. The student must then complete the course requirements and the instructor must report a final grade by the end of the grade reporting period in the student's next long-session semester of enrollment. If this deadline is not met, the symbol X is converted to the symbol I (permanent incomplete). The symbol I cannot be converted to a grade. The GSC considers two or more grades of incomplete including permanent incompletes as unsatisfactory progress. (TAs, GRAs, etc., may acquire no more than two grades of X; or one grade of X and one I. They cannot have two or more grades of I.)
2. GPA. The student is expected to maintain the minimum GPA of 3.0 required by the Graduate School. This GPA pertains to course work within the major department, to course work outside of the department, and also to the overall combined GPA.

3. Research Involvement. It is the responsibility of the student to meet with the academic advisor to be certain that all research expectations are made clear. Students who are not actively involved in research will be considered as not making satisfactory progress.

Program Requirements

Students are required to demonstrate basic competence in health education, as well as their chosen specialization, health promotion or behavioral health. This competency can be demonstrated by obtaining an average grade of B or higher in all course work, successful completion of the doctoral comprehensive examination, and successful completion of the dissertation. Ph.D. students are required to enroll in a minimum of nine hours of course work each long semester.

Course requirements are indicated subsequently. Note that upon approval of the health education faculty, courses from other institutions may satisfy some of the course requirements indicated below.

- * Health Promotion - required coursework – see page 7
- * Health Promotion – Sample Curriculum (first two years) – see page 8
- * Behavioral Health - required coursework– see page 9
- * Behavioral Health – Sample Curriculum (first two years) – see page 10

Admission to Candidacy

Successful candidates are advanced to doctoral candidacy after completion of the following:

1. The student has passed the comprehensive examination. The examination consists of both written and oral sections. The written section will include a general component dealing with issues in health education or behavioral health, as well as a specialized component emphasizing the student's area of concentration. The written section of the examination must be successfully completed prior to the oral section. The oral section is scheduled one week after the written examination. The written and oral sections of the comprehensive examination, if not successfully completed, may be repeated only once.
2. Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the student can be advanced to doctoral candidacy. The student and the supervising professor should recommend to the graduate advisor the names of five faculty whom they would like to have appointed to the dissertation committee. The student should contact the graduate secretary for

assistance in completing the necessary paper work for advancement to candidacy. Only after the student has been advanced to candidacy and has the approval of the supervising professor, will the student be permitted to register for dissertation hours.

Dissertation

Under the supervision of the Supervising Professor and the Dissertation Committee, the student will prepare a written dissertation proposal and make an oral presentation of it to the GSC, the Dissertation Committee and other interested persons. Interested students, faculty and especially GSC members are encouraged to attend the proposal presentation; however, a quorum of the GSC is not required. The proposal will include an appropriate literature survey, extensive methodology, and preliminary results. The proposal should be presented toward the end of the student's third year of doctoral study.

The dissertation is required of all candidates and must be an original contribution to scholarship based on independent research in the major area. Examples include the development and testing of theory through intervention research, model specification, or epidemiologic investigation. Writing of the dissertation will be supervised by the Dissertation Committee, which is appointed by the Graduate Dean and will include the supervising professor and at least two other members from the health education faculty. At least one member must be from outside the Graduate Studies Committee. Students enrolled in the behavioral health specialization must also include one member outside the department consistent with the behavioral health emphasis.

Once the Dissertation Committee is appointed, the Graduate Studies Committee requires the committee to meet at least once a semester to review the student's progress. Following the meeting, a progress report must be filed with the graduate advisor. It is the responsibility of the supervising professor to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled.

Final Oral Examination

The candidate must present a formal seminar on the dissertation research as a part of the final oral examination. All interested faculty members and graduate students will be encouraged to attend the formal seminar and to ask questions about the candidate's research. Evaluation of the candidate's performance will be decided by members of the Dissertation Committee. It is the responsibility of the student and supervising professor to schedule the formal seminar through the office of the graduate advisor.

Time Limits

All course work to be included in the program of study must at the time of admission to candidacy have been taken within the previous six years. Once advanced to candidacy, the doctoral program must be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee if the degree has not been completed within three years from the date of admission to candidacy. At this time, the Graduate Studies Committee may recommend additional course work, further examinations, or termination of candidacy. The program of study is also subject to review by the Graduate Dean.

Proposed Program Schedule

1. The sequencing of course offerings favors admission in the Fall semester.
2. Prerequisites, if any, should be completed in the first year of study.
3. Toward the end of the first year of doctoral study, the program of study should be established and approved by the HED faculty. At the beginning of the second year, the program of study should be presented to the Graduate Studies Committee for approval.
4. By the end of the second year of post-master's study, organized course work in the program of study should be near completion, and the comprehensive examination should be taken.
5. Following successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the student may be advanced to candidacy.
6. Approximately six months following the successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the dissertation proposal should have been defined and presented to the Graduate Studies Committee.