DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (EDUCATIONAL STUDIES)

Program Values

The PhD (Educational Studies) Program furthers the development of leaders already serving in organizations such as higher education institutions, mission agencies, congregations, parachurch agencies, and relief and development agencies. The PhD/EDS supports an interdependent learning community comprised of leaders from a variety of cultures, countries, and backgrounds.

Program Outcomes

Students graduating with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in *Educational Studies* will be able to:

- Cconduct research as an educational leader.
- Collaborate as an educational colleague.
- Reflect theologically as a practitioner.
- Engage complex cultural frameworks as a global Christian.

Core Competencies

Three foundational areas of professional competency provide the academic focus of the program: developing a research mindset and skill base, thinking as an educational leader, and theologically reflecting about educational issues against a broadly cultural and missiological framework. The intentional linkages between the PhD (Educational Studies) and the PhD (Intercultural Studies) provide opportunity to relate principles from theology and the social sciences to education, mission, and leadership.

Program Values

The PhD/EDS program is built on a commitment to biblical truth, Christ-centered leadership, and academic excellence. Our learning community values collaboration over competition, fostering mutual respect among students and faculty from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. The program integrates theology and social sciences, encouraging scholarly inquiry that is both theologically grounded and practically relevant.

Participants are expected to engage fully in the academic and faith community: sharing ideas, contributing to discussions, and supporting one another's research and ministry goals. The program cultivates sustainable habits of thought, reflection, and service, equipping leaders for lifelong impact in education and ministry.

Learning Culture

The PhD/EDS program fosters a collaborative and immersive learning culture, where scholarship and ministry practice intersect. Students engage in rigorous research, deep theological reflection, and cross-disciplinary dialogue, all within a supportive academic community. Faculty and peers challenge one another to integrate faith, learning, and leadership, ensuring that academic pursuits contribute to real-world educational and ministry settings. Participants are encouraged to view their research as a contribution to the broader Christian intellectual tradition, equipping them to serve as thought leaders in education and ministry

Program Design

The PhD/EDS is a usually a 4-5 year program (45 units). Admission requirements assume that prospective students have completed one or more graduate degrees and have recent experience in educational ministry. Many PhD/EDS participants remain in their places of employment during the program experience. Some participants are in the midst of career transitions. All participants are encouraged to move through the program at their own pace.

Coursework can be completed in two years of full-time study, followed by comprehensive exams, research proposal development, and dissertation work. The program offers Modular Courses in Two-week intensive seminars, Week-long and Weekend seminars, and Guided Research Options.

Coursework: Intensive Doctoral Seminars

At the heart of the PhD/EDS program is the Doctoral Seminar, a dynamic space for scholarly dialogue and collaborative learning. Seminars are designed to refine students' critical thinking, research, and teaching skills. Participants are expected to engage deeply with readings, contribute to discussions, and present their own research. Faculty guide conversations, ensuring a balance of theoretical depth and practical application.

Through the seminar experience, students develop their academic voice, integrate faith and scholarship, and prepare to make meaningful contributions to educational leadership and Christian ministry.

In core courses, participants examine educational issues through theological, historical, and social science frameworks to gain foundational perspectives on the contemporary tasks of educational leadership. Through theology, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, adult education, and organizational development participants engage educational concerns at fundamental levels of perspective and analysis, always with a view toward contemporary practice in a variety of cultural settings.

For elective courses, participants have freedom, in consultation with the program director, to configure their electives to best cultivate their interests as educational leaders. Participants select from a wide variety of options including: educational ministry in the local church; teaching and learning; leadership and organizational development; higher education, and contemporary issues.

A teaching or ministry practicum is available to provide hands-on experience with emphases such as course design, instruction, and systems leadership under supervision in context, preparing students for roles in higher education and ministry leadership.

Nonformal experiences

Opportunities to engage in experiences that are outside the normal program are frequently possible. For example, professional conferences, *ad hoc* meetings with visiting scholars, and interdepartmental consultations are often part of the participants' learning and professional development. These experiences may become a for-credit wrap-around option when they can be related to a seminar.

Residency Requirement

Courses, seminars, and colloquia for the PhD/EDS degree are normally completed on campus. Students must complete at least half of their coursework in residency.

The residency requirement in academic research doctoral programs allows participants to:

- Conduct in-depth research and engage with literature relevant to their dissertation.
- Focus on developing and refining their research problem and design through faculty and peer interaction.
- Benefit from an intellectual community that fosters professional growth and scholarly collaboration.

Admission Requirements

Students interested in this program should apply via Trinity Western University (https://www.twu.ca/apply-twu/), see TWU (https://www.twu.ca/academics/trinity-evangelical-divinity-school/) for more information.

Advanced Standing and Transfer Credit

Advanced standing and transfer credit is not normally given for PhD doctoral study except as planned in advance in consultation with the director of the program.

Candidacy Requirements

Admission to the PhD/EDS program does not guarantee acceptance into candidacy for the degree. One of the primary tasks in the doctoral program is to assess the development of competencies and sustainable habits so the participant achieves candidacy and completes the program. This assessment takes place through the successful completion of courses, a comprehensive examination and the dissertation. See the *EDS Handbook for Participants* for further details on the comprehensive examinations and the dissertation.

To achieve candidacy, the following requirements must be met:

- Fulfillment of all deficiencies and prerequisites indicated as conditions for admission
- Completion of 44 units, including all seminars, comprehensive exams, and dissertation proposal preparation, with a grade of "B-" or higher in each seminar
- A cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or better
- Satisfactory completion of Comprehensive Examinations and the Dissertation Proposal, along with any conditions
- Acceptance of the *Protection of Human Rights in Research Protocol*

The Dissertation

The dissertation is a major research work investigating a well-defined, significant problem. It includes a thorough literature review and employs appropriate research methodologies in theology, social sciences, or related fields. The research must address a specific issue in human development, education, or institutional contexts.

Its purpose is to demonstrate research competency and contribute original knowledge to educational ministry. The participant's approach should be positive and constructive. The proposal must be approved by the Dissertation Advisory Committee and all procedures used with human subjects approved by the Human Rights in Research Committee before data collection may begin.

A final oral examination of the dissertation is conducted by the participant's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is in the form of an open hearing, which includes faculty and peers.

The dissertation research design in the PhD/EDS program is normally executed through qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is a good fit for our participants' dissertations because of the types of studies participants engage in and the desired lifelong learning skills participants acquire during the process. Participants produce excellent dissertations that often are published as entire books or peer-reviewed journal articles that serve the academy and the church.

Graduation Requirements

Candidates for the PhD/EDS degree are required to satisfy the following graduation requirements:

- Recommendation by the faculty of eligibility for the degree on the basis of academic stature and evidence of Christian life and character during their time in the program.
- Successful completion of a minimum of 45 units of approved coursework with a minimum cumulative grade point average for program coursework of 3.2 (on a 4.0 scale), with no grade below "B-" applicable to the degree. A maximum of 15 percent of the coursework for the degree may be done through guided research or reading courses.
- Successful completion of the comprehensive written and oral examinations and dissertation proposal.
- Successful acquisition of candidacy.
- Submission of the Application for Graduation form to the Records Office.
- Successful completion and defense of an approved dissertation that exhibits the candidate's ability to do competent research, to think critically, and to communicate effectively.
- Completion of all requirements for the degree within seven years from matriculation, or completion of additional program requirements as outlined under Statute of Limitations and Program Continuation.
- Settlement of all financial obligations to Trinity with the Office of Student Financial Services.

Leave of Absence

For extraordinary reasons (prolonged illness, serious family crisis, unusual work situation), a doctoral participant may be granted a leave of absence from the program. Request for a leave of absence is to be submitted in writing to the program director and the Academic Doctoral Committee for consideration. The letter must include the reason(s) for the requested leave of absence and be submitted during the circumstance, or as soon as possible after the event. A leave of absence may be granted on more than one occasion but not to exceed two years in total. Once approved, the leave of absence will not be counted against the program statute of limitations (seven years). Similarly, the leave of absence will suspend the time related to continuation fees.

Statute of Limitations and Continuation Fees

All program requirements (coursework and dissertation) for the degree are to be completed within seven years from matriculation. As long as the candidate is registered in each succeeding semester until the seventh year, continuation fees are not assessed. Since an approved proposal is one of the requirements for achieving candidacy, even if all other

work is completed, continuous enrollment in the dissertation proposal preparation "course" qualifies for continuous enrollment.

If a PhD participant completes the fifth year of his or her program without achieving candidacy, continuation fees are assessed. As soon as the participant completes all requirements, applies for and is granted candidacy, continuation fees cease. The continuation fee is assessed for each successive semester not enrolled for courses, excluding summer. It is the responsibility of the participant to apply for candidacy once all conditions have been satisfied.

Participants who are convinced that they will be unable to finish in seven years may apply in writing prior to the end of the seventh year for a program extension, which will give up to a maximum of three further years for degree completion. Ordinarily, program extensions will be granted only to students who have completed the comprehensive examination. The application must include a timetable which will serve as the contract for completion of all work required for the degree. An extension will be granted only in exceptional circumstances and at the recommendation of the program director. Continuation fees are assessed until the dissertation is accepted. If the work for the degree is not completed within the contracted period, the participant will be dismissed from the program and must reapply. There is no guarantee that the participant will be readmitted—and if he or she is readmitted, further coursework may be required.

Program Withdrawal

In the rare occurrence that a doctoral participant may find it necessary to withdraw from the degree program, he or she must notify both the Academic Doctoral Office and the Records Office in writing of the desired change in program status. All fees accrued prior to program withdrawal are still payable in full.

PhD/EDS Program Minors

Qualified participants in the PhD/EDS program may take a 8-unit minor in either the PhD/ICS or PHD/THS programs. Qualified participants should:

- Demonstrate strong master's-level preparation in their primary field of study.
- Secure permission for the minor and the courses to be applied toward the minor from their Program Director and from the director of the program in which they wish to do a minor.

The 8-unit minor is completed in the Primary Elective Focus Area component of the degree. For more information, consult the *EDS Handbook* or contact the program director.

Code	Title	Units
Concentration		**15**
EMS 911	Leadership and Organizations	3
EMS 912	Adult Learning Foundations	3
EMS 913	Foundations: Social Sciences	3
EMS 914	Christian Formation of the Educator	3
EMS 915	Foundations: History and Philosophy	3
Research Methods		**6**
EMS 941	Research 1: Literature and Design	3
EMS 942	Research 2: Qualitative Research	3
Electives [1]		**14-17**
Electives	Select from upper-level master's courses of doctoral elective courses. [2]	14-17
Orientation		**0**
EMS 910	Orientation to EMS Doctoral Studies	0
Comps Proposal Dissertation		**6-10**
EMS 975	Comprehensive Exam Prep [2]	2
EMS 990	Dissertation Proposal Prep [2]	2
EMS 991 & 991	Dissertation Research and Dissertation Research	6
Total Units		**45**

[1] Up to 3 units of electives can be completed with 800+-level THC courses; or, with approval from the program director, with BNT/BOT/HIS/THS courses.

[2] Students may substitute elective units for EMS 975 and EMS 990 units.