The Doctor of Philosophy degree is awarded for mastering a field of scholarship, for learning the methods of investigation appropriate to that field, and for completing original research.

Although the courses and the research leading to the Ph.D. are necessarily specialized, the attainment of this degree should not be an isolated event in the enterprise of learning. The aspirant for the Ph.D. is expected to be a well-educated person with a broad sense of general knowledge, not only as preparation for more advanced work, but also as a means of knowing how the chosen specialty is related to other fields of human thought.

Two semesters (which may include one summer session), usually consecutive, at any time beginning with the first semester of doctoral study, must be spent in resident study at KU. Residence is not merely a period measured in hour. During this period the doctoral aspirant must be involved full time in academic pursuits, which may include up to half-time on-campus teaching or research, or under certain circumstances, a greater percentage of research if it is directed specifically toward the student's degree objectives.

The doctoral aspirant specifies a program area in which classes and research work are to be done and in which she or he expects to become a scholar. This area of concentration is at least 36 graduate credit hours taken at the University of Kansas, exclusive of dissertation credits and research skills requirement. The doctoral aspirant, with the assistance of an advisor, constructs a doctoral program plan of coursework and research opportunities.

The Ph.D. research skills requirement includes completion of at least 12 graduate hours representing at least two of the following areas relevant to the aspirant's research area: statistics, measurement and assessment, qualitative methods, historical and philosophical methods and may include up to 6 hours of credit for a reading knowledge in one foreign language (excluding English or one's native language).

The doctoral aspirant must satisfactorily complete C&T 996 College Teaching Experience for two hours of graduate credit. In this course, the doctoral aspirant assists a professor for one semester or may be assigned to teach an undergraduate course under the supervision of faculty.

The comprehensive examination consists of both written and oral parts and covers the major area pursued by the student. The student passes the comprehensive examination if a majority of the official examining committee (including the chair) approves the student's performance.

The candidate must present a dissertation showing the planning, conduct, and results of original research and scholarly creativity. The purpose of the dissertation is to encourage and ensure the development of broad intellectual capabilities as well as to demonstrate an intensive focus on a problem or research area.
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

The Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction prepares graduates for faculty positions at research or teaching universities and for positions as research scientists and post-doctoral fellows at universities or research centers. The Ph.D. places an emphasis on preparing graduates whose primary interests are to engage in research and scholarship to advance the field of curriculum and instruction. Graduates are prepared to be leaders in the profession by effectively fulfilling responsibilities in the areas of research and scholarship, teaching, and service. Further, the Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction may include a concentration discipline such as curriculum studies, mathematics, science, social studies, English, literacy, or English to Speakers of Other Languages. Graduates work closely with their advisor and committee members to tailor a program based on their individual career goals.

Application Requirements

The application for admission to graduate studies and the Graduate Division of the School of Education for doctoral study has the following requirements:

1. Master's degree or equivalent with at least a 3.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.
2. A complete graduate application: apply online at the Office of Graduate Studies.
3. An official transcript (not student's copy) of all previous undergraduate and graduate credit sent from the institution directly to the Office of Graduate Studies (printed transcripts or official electronic versions are both acceptable).
4. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) official general test scores (required minimum scores of 153 for Verbal, 144 for Quantitative, and 4.0 for the General Analytical Writing section).
5. A statement of career goals describing an area of interest in curriculum and instruction and how this degree will help meet professional aspirations.
6. Letters of recommendation from three people who can comment on the applicant’s ability to complete a doctoral program of study; the master's advisor is appropriate to include.
7. A writing sample: an article, paper, or other composition originally written by the applicant. An appropriate length is eight to ten pages.
8. A vitae or resume.

* International applicants should check the department website for additional admission requirements.

Please note: Meeting minimum admission standards does not guarantee admission to the program.