Doctoral Handbook

Department of Learning Technologies

Guidelines for Doctoral Students

College of Information
University of North Texas

(Updated Fall 2009)
The GRADUATE FACULTY

Jeff Allen, Professor, Interim Chair
Demetria Ennis-Cole, Associate Professor
Judith Enriquez, Assistant Professor
Greg Jones, Associate Professor
Gerald Knezek, Regents Professor
Jessica Li, Assistant Professor
Lin Lin, Assistant Professor
Kim Nimon, Assistant Professor
Cathie Norris, Regents Professor
Jim Poirot, Regents Professor Emeritus
Scott Warren, Assistant Professor
Jerry Wircenski, Regents Professor
Michelle Wircenski, Professor

Additional contact information can be obtained at: lt.unt.edu/faculty.html

NATURE OF THE DOCTORATE

Doctoral degrees in the Department of Learning Technologies are offered through the College of Information and the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies at The University of North Texas. The programs of study leading to a doctoral degree are designed to reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the fields of learning technologies, performance technologies, and computing technologies. Requirements are flexible enough to allow for a wide range of professional interests and experience. Building upon a framework of core knowledge, students may design a doctoral program of study that reflects their professional interest area.

The program assumes a proactive stance on the part of the learner, and further assumes that the student is capable of planning a graduate degree program suitable for their own professional goals and objectives. Students are expected to demonstrate a high level of personal initiative and academic inquiry. Assistance, information, and encouragement in designing the doctoral program are available from the student's major professor, committee, and other members of the graduate faculty. The doctoral programs have been established as an interactive model that allows interaction between the student and the graduate faculty, but places primary responsibility for success in completing the program directly on the student.
The Department of Learning Technologies Doctoral Handbook policies and procedures are written within the framework and guidelines provided by the University of North Texas Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the College of Information. In cases where the program has identified more stringent, or specific, policies and procedures than the Graduate School and College of Information, the department's doctoral handbook is to be followed. In the absence of information presented in the program's handbook, please refer to the University of North Texas Graduate Catalog.

Comments, suggestions, and clarifying language should be sent to the department chair. This is a living document that should be a tool for graduate students and faculty to use for successful and strong doctoral degree programs. The many past and future contributions to this handbook, from students and alumni, are appreciated and valued.

DEPARTMENT MISSION

The mission of the Department of Learning Technologies is to enhance learning and performance through innovative research, teaching and service in the three constructs of: learning technology, performance technology, and computing technology.

DEGREE OPTIONS

DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) is offered to prepare persons for high-level leadership roles in a variety of organizational settings. This degree program is oriented to the research-practitioner and the application of knowledge, theory, and research. These students examine problems of administrative practice in a workplace setting.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is offered to prepare persons for careers as a scholar/researcher. These programs are oriented toward developing research skills and encompass a variety of methodologies. They may be supported by a strong minor that emphasizes and expands a student's leadership perspectives.

Degree program requirements can be obtained at:

http://lt.unt.edu/doc_programs.html
It is the policy of the University of North Texas not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations, the university through its diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent with its mission and educational goals. Direct questions or concerns to the equal opportunity office, (940) 565-2456, or the dean of students, (940) 565-2648. TTY access is available through Relay Texas: (800) 735-2989 (http://www.unt.edu/ada.htm).

Other links:

Equity and diversity | Equal opportunity | Multicultural Center | Office of Disability Accommodation

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Acceptance into the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies does not guarantee acceptance into a Learning Technology doctoral program. Admission to a departmental degree program can only be initiated after the applicant meets or exceeds all graduate school requirements.

As noted in the section above, no applicant will be denied admission on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status. Each prospective student will be subjected to a competitive evaluation conducted by the graduate faculty.

The number of students admitted each year depends upon an assessment of the ability of the department’s graduate faculty to supervise previously admitted doctoral students, as well as the ability to supervise newly admitted students. Therefore, the number of doctoral students and doctoral candidates (dissertation stage) is monitored to help establish a level of admission for new students.

The Department of Learning Technologies graduate faculty determines the unconditional acceptance of individual students into departmental doctoral programs. This determination is made through an admissions portfolio. The application portfolio is that applicant’s opportunity to professionally present themselves to the department’s graduate faculty. The admissions portfolio process is utilized to determine a student’s readiness to enter and succeed in the department’s doctoral programs. Most importantly, it allows the
graduate faculty to determine if the department's degree programs are the best match for
the candidate's background, academic ability, and future career goals.

A detailed explanation of the department program portfolio admissions procedures is
available at:

http://lt.unt.edu/doc_programs.html

Note: Unconditional admission to a doctoral program must be approved by a majority of the
voting graduate faculty. This vote remains confidential.

_____________________________________________________________________________________

LEVELING COURSES

Doctoral students may be required to complete leveling courses to support the
philosophical and theoretical foundations needed to begin their doctoral program.
These leveling courses are based on the student's previous academic preparation and
work experience as judged by the department's graduate faculty.

Note: Leveling courses are assigned in consultation with the graduate faculty during the
admissions process.

_____________________________________________________________________________________

COURSEWORK

The approved doctoral degree plan is the official document that outlines the courses that a
student must take in order to obtain the degree sought. Upon unconditional acceptance
into the doctoral program, the student must select, in consultation with the department, a
major professor from the graduate faculty. The major professor, in consultation with the
doctoral committee, will develop an official degree plan to file with the graduate school. All
subsequent requests for degree plan changes must be approved in writing by the major
professor and submitted to the graduate school for approval. It is strongly recommended,
by the graduate school, that the degree plan be filed by the end of the first semester of
enrollment.

A student's major professor assists the student in choosing a doctoral committee and
completing course requirements. In many cases, the major professor will continue to serve
as the student's dissertation advisor.

Most full-time doctoral students complete their coursework in approximately 1 ½ - 2
years. This is, of course, dependent upon course availability and the student’s course load.
The following simple equation can be used for calculating the amount of time needed for course work completion:

\[
\frac{\text{(number of courses required by the degree plan) minus (number of doctoral dissertation hours))}}{\text{number of hours completed per semester}} = \text{number of semesters needed to complete doctoral coursework}
\]

The graduate faculty has assisted students in completing a quality doctoral program in as little as three years. The graduate faculty has also witnessed students struggle to meet the ten years time limit of the graduate school.

Three to five years is a typical doctoral completion time if a student is steadily working on their courses and dissertation. Candidates are expected to secure a copy of the graduate catalog (www.unt.edu/catalogs) and are responsible for following all the rules and regulations of the University of North Texas pertaining to the doctoral program.

**LANGUAGE OR RESEARCH TOOL REQUIREMENT**

Competency in a foreign language or in a tool subject is required for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and must be demonstrated prior to taking the written qualifying examinations. Further information can be obtained at: www.unt.edu/catalog/grad/doctoral.htm

**RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

From the graduate catalog: Every candidate for the doctoral degree must complete the appropriate residence requirement at UNT as prescribed by the individual departments and schools. The minimum residence requirement consists of two consecutive long terms/semesters at UNT (fall and the following spring, or spring and the following fall), or a fall or spring term/semester and one adjoining summer session/term at UNT. During the long terms/semesters, a minimum of 9 graduate hours must be taken. During the combined summer sessions/terms, a minimum load of 9 graduate semester hours must be taken. Enrolling in courses during the summer does not affect doctoral residence begun the previous spring and completed the following fall. Some departments have established more stringent residence requirements appropriate to their programs.
Satisfactory Progress

Doctoral students are expected to manage their own educational progress. The student’s major professor, committee, other members of the graduate faculty, and program coordinator are available to assist students in finding avenues of needed support. However, the student must be proactive in seeking this counsel and support.

**IMPORTANT:** Each student must be responsible for their progress toward the completion of their doctoral program. A student who fails to make satisfactory progress (as determined by the major professor in consultation with the program coordinator and department chair) will be removed from the doctoral program. The student will be notified in writing by the program coordinator of their removal from the program at the last address filed with the University. Such notification will cite the reason(s) for removal.

The following sections provide examples of unsatisfactory progress. This is not an inclusive list of all possible situations:

**Coursework**

- The department requires that doctoral students remove any incomplete grades within one year after receipt of the incomplete, and no later than 30 days after completion of the final semester of course work. **Additionally, if a student accumulates more than six semester hours of incompletes (without the major professor’s written approval), the student will be removed from the doctoral program.**

- Upon receipt of two grades of C or below, or three W or WF grades (without the major professor’s written approval), the student will be removed from the doctoral program.

**Dissertation**

Students must inform their major professor, in writing, of their progress on the dissertation on a semester basis.

- The dissertation proposal must be completed no more than four long semesters after successful completion of the qualifying/comprehensive exam. **If a longer period of time is necessary, the student must receive a written approval for an extension from their major professor.**

- The dissertation defense must be completed no more than eight long semesters after successful completion of the qualifying exams. **If a longer period of time is necessary, the student must receive written approval for an extension from their major professor.**
• Ten (10) years is the maximum amount of time allowed to complete a doctoral degree program at the University of North Texas. The College of Information Graduate Affairs committee makes final determination of a time-extension request and, if approved at the College level, forwards a recommendation to the Graduate School for final approval. The department will not support an extension of the student’s doctoral program without extreme educational or personal circumstances that are fully documented by the student and supported by the student’s major professor.

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

• It is expected that the student will exhibit high standards of professional behavior, fulfilling all responsibilities of a doctoral student, understanding and demonstrating collegial behavior toward faculty, support staff, and peers. Students are expected to meet all University expectations as presented in the guidelines provided by the Dean of the Graduate School and this handbook. Furthermore, doctoral students are expected to attend all activities deemed appropriate and part of a doctoral education by faculty of the department, and attendance will be considered in the evaluation of satisfactory progress. For further information on graduate school policies, refer to: http://www.unt.edu/catalog/grad/policies.htm

• From the UNT Catalog: “It is the responsibility of the student to provide correct permanent and local mailing address information at all times and on all documents at the university. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of the Code of Student Conduct. Students who change their mailing address must notify the Registrar’s Office by calling 940-565-2111 or update their address at my.unt.edu.”

APPEALS FOR PROGRAM REMOVAL

A student wishing to appeal their removal from a Learning Technologies doctoral program may petition the degree program coordinator within 30 days of the notification or attempted notification of the student’s removal at the last address filed with the University. Such notification will cite the reason(s) for removal.

The graduate faculty may:

1. Concur that removing the student is in the best interest of the student and the doctoral program.

2. Recommend that the decision to remove the student from the doctoral program be remitted. Re-admittance to the doctoral program must be approved by a majority of the voting graduate faculty and supported by the student’s major professor. This vote shall remain confidential.
**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

If, during any regular (Fall or Spring) semester, a doctoral student does not enroll in any approved course work or dissertation credits, he or she must provide written notice and receive *advanced* approval from their major professor. Otherwise, the student will be placed on inactive status. After two regular semesters in sequence of inactive status, the student will be removed from the doctoral program. Extenuating circumstances may be considered and must be approved in advance by the student’s major professor (e.g., military service).

**WITHDRAWAL**

Students who intend to withdraw from the program should provide written notification indicating their intent to withdraw to their major professor, the department chair, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

**DOCTORAL QUALIFYING EXAM**

During the final semester of course work and upon completion of all the previously stated requirements, the student must pass a qualifying examination. The examination covers the major, minor, research, statistics, measurement, and related fields.

A qualifying written and an oral examination or portfolios in lieu of a qualifying exam are given to qualified students for advancement to *candidacy for the doctoral degree*.

To be eligible to take the Written Qualifying Examination, a student must be in their final semester of coursework or have completed all coursework, as well as eliminated all incomplete grades prior to applying for the exam.

Qualifying Exams are held once during the spring semester and once during the fall semester. The department DOES NOT administer qualifying examinations or portfolios in lieu of the qualifying exam during the summer. After satisfactory completion of the Written Qualifying Examination, or portfolios in lieu of the qualifying exam, an Oral Qualifying Examination will be held within approximately 30 days after the written portion.

Further information about the exams can be obtained from the student’s major professor and the department staff.

If a student fails one or more portions of both the written and oral qualifying examination or portfolio in lieu of qualifying exam, they may be removed from the doctoral program through a majority vote of the doctoral committee. Under extenuating circumstances, supported by the student’s major professor, a student
may be allowed another opportunity to pass the qualifying process. The student must pass ALL portions on the second attempt or the student will be removed from the doctoral program.

QUALITY OF DISSERTATION RESEARCH

The following points should be used to guide dissertation research by students completing a doctoral degree in the Department of Learning Technologies. If each point is not met, the dissertation will be judged inappropriate for dissertation research. The dissertation should:

- follow a rigorous comprehensive process of scientific investigation;
- contribute original research to the broad fields of learning technology, computing technology or performance technology; and
- support, refute, or contribute new knowledge to existing research literature in the broad fields of learning technology, computing technology or performance technology.

The difference between the Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs of study is evident through formal coursework in the major, minor, statistics and research, and tool subject (Ph.D. only) areas. Specific statistical analysis methodology and data collection processes are not a means of differentiating between a Ph.D. and Ed.D. degrees. The research methodology to be employed in a research effort depends upon the nature of the problem and situational constraints. One kind of methodology is no better than another if used appropriately and correctly.

In evaluating the dissertation proposal, the “purpose of study”, “hypotheses or research questions”, “literature review”, and “methodology” sections of both the Ph.D. and Ed.D. research proposal should be examined by the student, committee chair, and committee members utilizing the above philosophical guidelines of rigor, originality, and contribution to the fields of career and technology education or training and development. In addition, at the dissertation defense, the “findings” and “discussion/recommendations” sections of the completed dissertation should encompass the above philosophical guidelines of rigor, originality, and contribution to the fields of career and technology education or training and development.
Doctoral Dissertation Enrollment

Doctoral Degree Candidates (i.e., those who have successfully passed the qualifying exams) must be continuously enrolled in dissertation studies (LTEC 6950) until the completion of their doctoral defense. Students are required by the department to enroll in a minimum of three semester credit hours in the Fall, and Spring semesters. Summer is optional and dependent on availability of faculty.

MENTORING

The graduate faculty is committed to providing positive mentoring experiences for all doctoral students. Mentoring can include supervised guidance in all phases of the student's coursework, dissertation, and professional development. The student's major professor typically serves as the student’s mentor. However, any graduate faculty can assist a student in this role.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Doctoral students are encouraged and are expected to participate in research and development activities conducted by the Department of Learning Technologies. Research is viewed as an integral part of the student's professional development and may include individual or group activities conducted in educational and/or corporate environments.

Contributions/Additional Information

UNT Office of Disability Accomodations (www.unt.edu/oda/)
UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies (tsgs.unt.edu/index.htm)
Notice of Doctoral Handbook Compliance

Send this page to:

Dr. Jeff M. Allen, Interim Chair (c/o Alica Panning)
Department of Learning Technologies
3940 N. Elm, Suite G150
Denton, Texas 76207

I, ________________________________, have read, understand, (Please Print) and agree to comply with the guidelines set by the Department of Learning Technologies in the College of Information at the University of North Texas.

I understand that should I not follow the guidelines contained in the Department of Learning Technologies doctoral handbook, I will be removed from the doctoral program.

Additionally, I understand that the handbook is a living document that is updated annually and I will be responsible for accessing, reading and understanding these updates.

______________________________
Date Student’s Signature

______________________________
Date Degree Program Coordinator’s Signature

Students are required to have this “Notice of Doctoral Handbook Compliance” page on file with the departmental office prior to filing their doctoral degree plan.