

# HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

*2017-2018*



**DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATIONAL  
POLICY,  
RESEARCH  
AND  
ADMINISTRATION**

**COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF  
MASSACHUSETTS  
AMHERST**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Higher Education graduate program is geared toward people who are interested in pursuing careers as administrators, faculty, researchers, policy analysts, and student affairs professionals in colleges, universities, and state or federal agencies devoted to post-secondary education.

The program offers the M.Ed. and Ph.D. degrees, and each program of study has structured course offerings as well as the flexibility to choose electives and design a plan of study that incorporates your personal interests while satisfying the program requirements. The M.Ed. program emphasizes preparation for a career as an administrator in student affairs or academic affairs, while the Ph.D. program stresses preparation for a career as an administrator, researcher or faculty member.

There is also MPPA/M.Ed. dual degree program is designed for students interested in a range of policy issues that affect higher and postsecondary education, such as state governance and coordination, financial aid funding, and affirmative action in admissions and hiring. Graduates will be ready for research, policy analysis and management positions in federal and state governmental agencies, consulting organizations, education research groups and nonprofit organizations working on education issues. For more information about this program, see the [School of Public Policy website](#).

We also offer a graduate certificate in Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM). The HELM graduate certificate is a 15-credit academic program focused on the study of leadership, management, and organization in higher education with an emphasis on the intersection of theory and practice. This graduate certificate is aimed at the many current and future leaders in higher education who would benefit from leadership training, but who do not need another advanced degree. The program is taught online making it convenient for busy professionals from a wide geographic area.

This handbook is intended to lay out program requirements and provide information to assist you throughout your graduate program. If you have any questions, please consult with your academic adviser. Information is also available on the [Higher Ed program Web site](#).

## INFORMATION FOR NEWCOMERS

Many UMass Web sites have information that will help you get adjusted to life at UMass. These Web sites will help you to complete the [New Student To-Do List](#). The To-Do List contains information about transportation, housing, ID cards, parking, health benefits, registering for classes, finances, and more.

**Higher Ed Program** Info for [current students](#), including projected course schedules, links to forms, and electronic versions of handbooks.

**UMass College of Education** Information related to being a graduate student in the [College of Education](#) and the Educational Policy, Research, and Administration Department (EPRA). Information for current students specifically, can be found [here](#).

**UMass Graduate School** Policies, procedures, and deadlines of the [Graduate School](#) as well as information on graduate student services. On the Graduate School home page, the “current student” link has helpful links with several important .pdf documents, one of which is a page specifically for new students (the new student checklist). Much of the new student checklist has been reproduced below. You should check out this site as soon as possible to learn about such things as obtaining your university ID card (UCard), which is necessary to gain swipe card access to Furcolo Hall, and your email account.

**UMass Student Life** Information about [student life](#) on campus, including links to [parking services](#) and the regional free public transportation system, [UMass Transit](#).

**Graduate Students in Higher Education “GSHE”** [Graduate Students of Higher Education \(GSHE\)](#) is the Graduate Student Organization for master’s and doctoral students in the Higher Education program. They also welcome members from other departments and programs within the College of Education. GSHE provides regular opportunities for collaboration between master’s and doctoral students through social events as well as professional and academic development.

Graduate students are also encouraged to get involved with the [Graduate Student Senate](#) (GSS) and the [Graduate Employee Organization](#) (GEO).

# HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

The eight competencies represent the basis of professional knowledge our students must master in order to complete their M.Ed. or Ph.D. degree. Knowledge of these competencies is gained through both in-class and out-of-class experiences. The mastery of these competencies will be shown in the Integrative Seminar's capstone project for M.Ed. students and serve as the basis for Ph.D. students' comprehensive examinations.

1. **History** – knowledge of key events, developments, and trends that have shaped American higher education over time and an understanding of how such events, developments and trends relate to current realities and future possibilities for higher education. Some of the important trends include the changes in and development of the curriculum, the evolution of different types of institutions, changes in the various roles of stakeholders, and the changing role of the student affairs profession.
2. **Leadership, Management, and Organization** – knowledge and ability to use skills necessary for establishing, prioritizing and achieving organizational goals; knowledge about the ways in which economic resources are developed and used by higher education systems, institutions, groups, and individuals; knowledge about the impact of emerging technologies in the classroom, in administration, and in social networking; an understanding of the ways in which enduring intentional change and development can be cultivated as a means for transforming higher education policy and practice. Students will learn the principles and practices of effective management in higher education, and they will study the transformation that has taken place in the definition of leadership and how this will help them to become better administrators and leaders.
3. **Law and Ethics** – knowledge of fundamental legal structures, concepts and issues as they relate to American higher education; knowledge of ethical principles of practice within academics and administration. Some of the issues surrounding higher education include affirmative action, speech codes, privatization, academic freedom, sexual harassment, FERPA etc. Students also will explore the basics of legal research and case analysis.
4. **Student Learning and Development** – an understanding of how postsecondary education impacts student learning and development. Students will be exposed to different student development theories including, psychosocial, cognitive-structural, typology, and college impact theories, and how these theories can be used to enhance the role of an administrator. Also, students will study current trends in pedagogy.

5. **Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Methods** – an understanding of the range of qualitative and quantitative methods and designs used to increase knowledge about educational practice and policy in higher education. Students will learn about research and evaluation design; when it is appropriate to use qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches; and the strengths and weaknesses of various methods. Students also have opportunities to develop skills and knowledge related to academic assessment as well as program evaluation relevant for higher education.
6. **Academic Affairs** – an understanding of the academic side of higher education including the evolution and history of the academic profession, stages of the academic career, faculty roles and rewards, academic culture, the process of teaching and curriculum development, research and outreach, faculty professional development, academic advising, and pedagogical issues (including critical theory).
7. **Social Justice, Oppression, and Diversity** – a critical understanding of justice and oppression and how these concepts relate to higher education, as well as an appreciation for the multiple aspects of human diversity and how such diversity contributes to higher education. By introducing many perspectives on different issues, from larger societal issues such as the economy, to higher education specific issues, such as students' rights on campus, students will learn to question their previously held perspectives.
8. **Policy, Politics, and Economics** - an understanding of how higher education functions within the larger context of public policy, and how political processes, structures and systems influence and are influenced by higher education.



# **M.Ed. PROGRAM**

## M.Ed. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

This master's degree in higher education prepares professionals for careers in the administration of colleges and universities. You complete a core of required foundation courses, a series of specialization courses, at least 120 hours of supervised practice, and a final integrative project. All coursework should help students develop an understanding of the **HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPETENCIES**, which represent the basis of the higher education master's program. A minimum of 36 credit hours is required for the master's program.

You are required to take five core courses: Master's Seminar in Higher Education, History of Higher Education, Student Life Research, "Practicum" course (a post-practicum course focused on professional practice), and Integrative Seminar (the capstone course).

### Grading

All coursework for higher education students must be taken for a letter grade. If a particular faculty member's general policy is to grade only on a Pass/Fail basis, you should request a letter grade. You should note that NO Incompletes are permitted in the five core courses without permission from the faculty as a whole.

### Required Courses

All master's students are required to take the following courses...

- Master's Seminar
- Student Life Research
- History
- Practicum
- Integrative Seminar

### Master's Seminar (EDUC 643)

The Master's Seminar course is the first course for students in the master's degree program in Higher Education. There are several goals for the semester.

- As a survey course it is designed to introduce you to different areas of study within higher education. Hopefully you'll discover topics that you'll be inspired to delve in to in greater depth during your time as a master's student.
- You'll become familiar with the eight competencies in which you are expected to develop expertise during your time in the program.
- We'll focus on your writing, particularly how to write an academic paper using scholarly resources, how to develop and support an argument, and the various aspects of APA style.

- We'll discuss the importance of good nutrition, adequate sleep, exercise and self-care in your life and develop strategies to maintain balance in your life, both while you are a student and during your professional career.

We'll take time at the beginning of every class for "group advising." You can ask questions about program requirements, strategies for thinking about your practicum, or your experience as a master's student.

### **Student Life Research (EDUC 641)**

This course provides an introduction to research from a higher education perspective. Students in this course engage in activities that support learning to understand the process of systematically researching a problem in the field of higher education and how to evaluate and interpret higher education scholarship. This seminar is designed to examine how the field of higher education applies research designs and methods to generate new knowledge. In other words, we read and discuss issues of higher education, but through the lens of research design and methods. Although we introduce and discuss many research methods, this is not a methods course. It is intended to be a design course primarily, with an introduction to methods and some methods application. The aim of this course is to help students link knowledge about higher education with the analytic, research, and communication skills necessary for informing and improving research, policy, and practice.

Students interested in pursuing additional research methods coursework should consult with their advisor, including whether the course, Research in Higher Education, is appropriate to achieve their academic goals.

### **History (EDUC 844)**

This course analyzes the development of postsecondary education in the United States. It traces, over four centuries, the evolution of higher education from a small enclave for privileged white males to a ubiquitous (but highly stratified) system that serves a wide variety of students. While this course also provides a broad overview of the history of higher education, each time it is taught it focuses specifically on deconstructing one or more ideas that have been utilized to produce the systemic oppression of historically underrepresented, minoritized, or otherwise marginalized student populations on college campuses. By doing so through a historical lens, we are able to create a badly needed cultural distance and see the contemporary conditions of higher education differently. That new view, in turn, allows us to ask why things are the way they are and whether there are different ways that we might do them.

### **"Practicum" Course (EDUC 698-ED)**

A minimum of 120 hours of approved practicum experience is required and provides an opportunity for you to obtain more experiential-based learning related to higher education. Most students choose to do their practicum during the summer months between the first and second year of the

program, although for some it is more convenient to do it at a different time. The practicum includes at least 120 hours, and there is considerable flexibility in terms of sites and job descriptions, based on the interests of each student. You are responsible for locating your own practicum site – you should work closely with your academic advisers during this process.

After the actual practicum has been completed, there is a required “Practicum” class in the fall that provides an opportunity to reflect upon your experiences with your classmates and an instructor. The Practicum Handbook describes the process in more detail and can be found on the [Current Students](#) page.

Students who have had at least five years of full-time professional experience in higher education may request to waive the 120 hours of practicum experience (but not the course). To request a waiver, you must write a one-page statement describing your prior professional experience. This statement should be submitted to your adviser who will present the request to the faculty for approval.

### **Integrative Seminar (EDUC 675)**

During the spring semester prior to graduation, master’s students must take this capstone course. The course is the capstone experience for students completing their masters’ degrees in Higher Education Administration. It is intended to allow you an opportunity to reflect upon your educational experience in the master’s program and to demonstrate your knowledge of the higher education program’s core competencies. In the integrative paper you will investigate a real life challenge that stems from your professional practice (this could be your assistantship, practicum, or other work experience). The course culminates in a formal presentation.

The goal for this course is for each of you to develop a deeper understanding of the eight competencies associated with the higher education program. With two or more years of coursework and many more years of experience in higher education, you possess a great deal of knowledge from many different sources—including your own experiences as a student and administrator, informal theories that you have developed, formal theories that you have read about, and information synthesized from these and other sources. Your goal is to figure out how all of these things fit together to offer creative solutions to the many complex problems we face as higher education professionals.

Students with outstanding incomplete grades are not eligible for enrollment in this class. All outstanding work for courses with incompletes must be handed in to the instructor prior to the beginning of the semester when you plan to take Integrative. As part of this course, students will demonstrate their proficiency with the **HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPETENCIES** through a capstone project and an oral defense, as designed by the course instructor.

### **Independent Studies & Supervised Practice**

Independent work may receive credit as an Independent Study provided that the work is performed under the guidance of a graduate faculty member and the course is properly recorded as part of the student's registration.

Students who are interested in doing an Independent Study must draw up a contract at the time of registration and have it approved by the faculty member supervising the study. Supervised Practice is also an option for those who would like another experiential component in their curriculum. These must have a faculty member sign off on the plan of study, but an external person typically jointly supervises. You can think of this opportunity as a second practicum experience, which is how the College technically considers it.

Generally the maximum number of independent study or additional practicum credits is three; if you have a compelling reason to take additional independent credits you must submit a written request to the faculty as a whole for approval. The Independent Study Contract and Individualized Practicum Contract can be found [here](#).

### **Adviser and Advising Forms (College of Education)**

The Higher Education Program assigns an adviser to each student during the admissions process, but each student should talk to the faculty during the first semester in order to select an adviser of choice. A Change of Adviser form should be filled out during the first semester. The College of Education requires students to complete a series of forms in pursuit of the M.Ed. degree. The first form (M-1) details an intended program of study and should be filed during the first semester. Information pertaining to these forms can be found under "Advising Guidelines" on the [College of Education web site](#).

## Sample Full Time Program Plan

### First Year Courses (18 credits)

#### *Fall Semester*

Master's Seminar in Higher Education (3 credits)<sup>a</sup>

Specialization Course (3 credits)<sup>b</sup>

Specialization Course (3 credits)<sup>b</sup>

#### *Spring Semester*

Student Life Research (3 credits)<sup>a</sup>

History of Higher Education (3 credits)<sup>a</sup>

Specialization Course (3 credits)<sup>b</sup>

### Second Year Courses (18 credits)

#### *Fall Semester*

Practicum Course (3 credits)<sup>a</sup>

Specialization Course (3 credits)<sup>b</sup>

Specialization Course (3 credits)<sup>b</sup>

#### *Spring Semester*

Master's Integrative Seminar (3 credits)<sup>a</sup>

Specialization Course (3 credits)<sup>b</sup>

Specialization Course (3 credits)<sup>b</sup>

- <sup>a</sup> Course must be taken during the indicated semester unless permission is granted from the faculty as a whole.
- <sup>b</sup> Seven specialization courses are required and five out of the seven courses should be taken from a list of possible specialization courses, typically taught by higher education faculty, that can be found on our [Higher Education website](#).

## Summary of Requirements

To summarize, all master's students must complete the following:

<b>FOUNDATION (CORE)</b>	<b>15 credits</b>
<i>Master's Seminar</i>	<i>(3 credits)</i>
<i>History</i>	<i>(3 credits)</i>
<i>Student Life Research</i>	<i>(3 credits)</i>
<i>Practicum Course</i>	<i>(3 credits)</i>
<i>Master's Integrative Seminar</i>	<i>(3 credits)</i>
<b>SPECIALIZATION COURSES</b>	<b>21 credits</b>
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>36 credits</b>

# Ph.D. PROGRAM

## Ph.D. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

A Ph.D. in higher education prepares students to become scholar-practitioners, researchers, policy analysts, or faculty members. Our doctoral students often become active members of the higher education research community. Students often present at professional conferences individually, with other students, and in collaboration with faculty members. Common national conferences attended include NASPA, ACPA, ASHE, AERA, and CIES. Doctoral students are also often active in publishing their work individually or in collaboration with others. Many of these publications are in some of our most prestigious academic journals in the field of higher education. After completion of coursework, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation, our graduates go on to a variety of distinguished careers.

Although admitted students develop their own unique program of study, they do enter with a doctoral cohort that serves as a source of support throughout the doctoral process.

### Required Courses:

During the first two years of the doctoral program, students are required to take the following courses: Introduction to Inquiry and Research in Higher Education (taken each of the first four semesters). Students should note that NO incompletes are permitted in these core courses without permission from the faculty as a whole.

#### **Introduction to Inquiry** (EDUC 739)

This course provides a forum to engage in sustained discussion about and reflection on the assumptions, theories, and practice of inquiry relevant for policy and leadership studies. It is structured as a seminar in which participants are exposed to selected genres of inquiry so that they become intelligently conversant with a variety of approaches to research; and so that they have the opportunity to examine research conducted through differing methods in the four concentrations within the department – Educational Leadership, Higher Education, International Education, and Research, Educational Measurement, and Psychometrics (REMP).

#### **Research in Higher Education** (EDUC 717)

This course is an applied research course, required for higher education doctoral students in their first four semesters. The goals for the course are twofold. First, students will take part in a research team on a project underway through the Center for Student Success Research. In their first year, students will learn the basics of research design and methods in a team, and will contribute to the literature review, data collection, and/or data analysis. In their second year, students will serve as mentors to the first year students in the group, and will have more responsibility for project management, data collection, data analysis, and completion of a research paper for presentation and/or publication.



In addition, students will work on their own individual research papers over the course of the four semesters. This paper is likely to be used as a required paper for the Comprehensive Exam process

Other students may also take this course at times. Doctoral students beyond their second year may re-take it to work on a project, or a master's student may take it to be involved in a research project, as approved by the instructor.

At the end of the required coursework, each student should have made progress in developing the analytic, research, and communication skills necessary for informing and improving research, policy, and practice in higher education. The courses will help students understand the existing sources of knowledge in the area of higher education and how to access them. Students will have reflected on the process and form of scholarly writing, and each of their strengths and areas for development as writers. Students will also develop a foundational understanding of research designs appropriate for the study of higher education. Finally these courses are a place for students to consider the areas of higher education research where they might be able to make their greatest contributions.

Doctoral students should make sure they develop basic understanding of each of the **HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPETENCIES** as a foundation for the more specific area of expertise they are building and as the basis for their comprehensive examination and dissertation

## Research Requirements

The College of Education requires doctoral students to have at least four research methods courses, at least two of which must be quantitative and at least one of which must be qualitative methods.

Students considering writing a *qualitative* dissertation should take **Qualitative Research Methods** (EDUC 619) as early during their doctoral studies as possible, followed by **Quantitative Data Analysis** (797A), or the equivalent. In addition, we strongly recommend that students arrange to take courses covering qualitative data management and advanced methods (interviewing, ethnography, etc.) appropriate to their area of greatest interest.

Students considering writing a quantitative dissertation should take **Statistics I** (EDUC 555) and **Statistics II** (EDUC 656), as early during their doctoral studies as possible, if they have not already taken the equivalent of these courses in prior graduate work. Beyond these courses, most students would be well served to take **Regression Analysis** (EDUC 660). In addition, we strongly recommend that students arrange to take courses covering the following areas: survey research methods, secondary data analysis, and/or advanced statistical courses such as Structural Equation Modeling.

## **Your Program of Study**

In addition to your adviser, you will be assigned a second faculty member who, with your adviser, will be on your Program of Study Committee. Students should meet with this committee once prior to the end of the first semester. An important part of this process is developing a set of goals for the program of study, and a set of courses and experiences to meet those goals. The committee will provide advice around this process, and students will be expected to have a well-designed program of study (subject to change, of course) by the end of their first year.

## **Annual Review of Doctoral Students**

Doctoral students will be reviewed annually to reflect on strengths and areas for improvement, and to gauge adequate academic progress. This review will include a written reflection by the student of their progress toward goals set in the prior year, and statement of goals for the subsequent year. The student's advisor will respond to this review in writing. The annual review meeting, to occur near the end of the spring semester each year, will take place with the Program of Study committee, which typically consists of the adviser, and one other assigned faculty member. Prior to taking Comprehensive Exams, often at the end of the second year, this will be part of a review with faculty focused on a paper or research project that exemplifies the students' direction toward comprehensive exams and the dissertation.

## **First Year Portfolio Assessment**

At the end of the first year, students complete a portfolio as part of their annual review process. This portfolio consists of copies of the original papers with instructors' comments from each of the three core courses of the first year. The portfolio is prepared by the student and read by the student's Program of Study committee (adviser and one other faculty member). Students will meet with this group in late May/early June to receive feedback on the portfolio and discuss their progress in the doctoral program.

## **Comprehensive Exams**

The comprehensive examination is designed to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the knowledge, skills and expertise necessary for conducting dissertation research as a doctoral candidate in this multi-disciplinary applied field. You are required to demonstrate knowledge about the key issues and concepts within at least two of the **HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPETENCIES** while also demonstrating knowledge of the research design process. You also need to show the ability to apply theory in a rigorous and coherent manner that informs significant challenges in higher education.

While this examination assumes some common knowledge within Higher Education as a field of study, we understand that you, and each student in

the program, bring a unique set of perspectives, theories, concepts, and skills that have been developed through the core Higher Education courses and a unique broader program of study that you have developed with help from your adviser.

The examination consists of two components:

- An applied research paper (this paper will typically be developed as a required assignment in EDUC 717 and may be further embellished for the comprehensive exam) that includes an 8-10 page substantive review of literature. (The paper should be a maximum of 40 pages total.)
- Two applied analysis papers that respond to questions prepared by your committee. These questions will be created based on at least 3 potential questions per paper that you develop and submit to your adviser. (12-15 pages each)

Once you have completed all of the coursework (with no incompletes), you should inform your adviser that you are ready to take the comprehensive exam. This may occur at any time during the academic year. First you meet with your adviser to finalize the composition of the committee and discuss the timing for the exam. You and your adviser then discuss possible questions for the two applied analysis papers. Based on this conversation, you will submit via email at least three questions in each of two distinct areas of study. You will propose the three-week exam period that will be approved in advance by the committee. At this time, you and your adviser will establish a date for the defense with the committee. The adviser will then share the questions with the other committee members.

Collectively, the committee will select one of the questions from each of the two sets (the committee may refine or enhance one or both of the questions) and will then send you the questions. Once you receive the two comprehensive exam questions from your adviser, you will have three weeks to write the two analytic papers and submit all final versions of all three of the papers (including the research paper) to the committee. The date of the defense will have already been set, and you must ensure that there are two weeks for the committee to read the papers.

All students taking the comprehensive exam must sign a formal statement declaring that the applied analysis papers were written totally independently. Students are not allowed to discuss or work on these two papers with any other individuals (including spouses/partners). They are not allowed to have *anyone* edit or read and give them feedback on their exam prior to handing it in (including spouses/partners). This is different from most assignments and exams completed for coursework - it is important to understand this facet of comprehensive exams. Although students' answers should be informed by coursework, students are also not allowed to include in their answers any verbatim material extracted from papers that they have previously submitted as course work. Comprehensive exam answers should be completely original writing. Students are provided

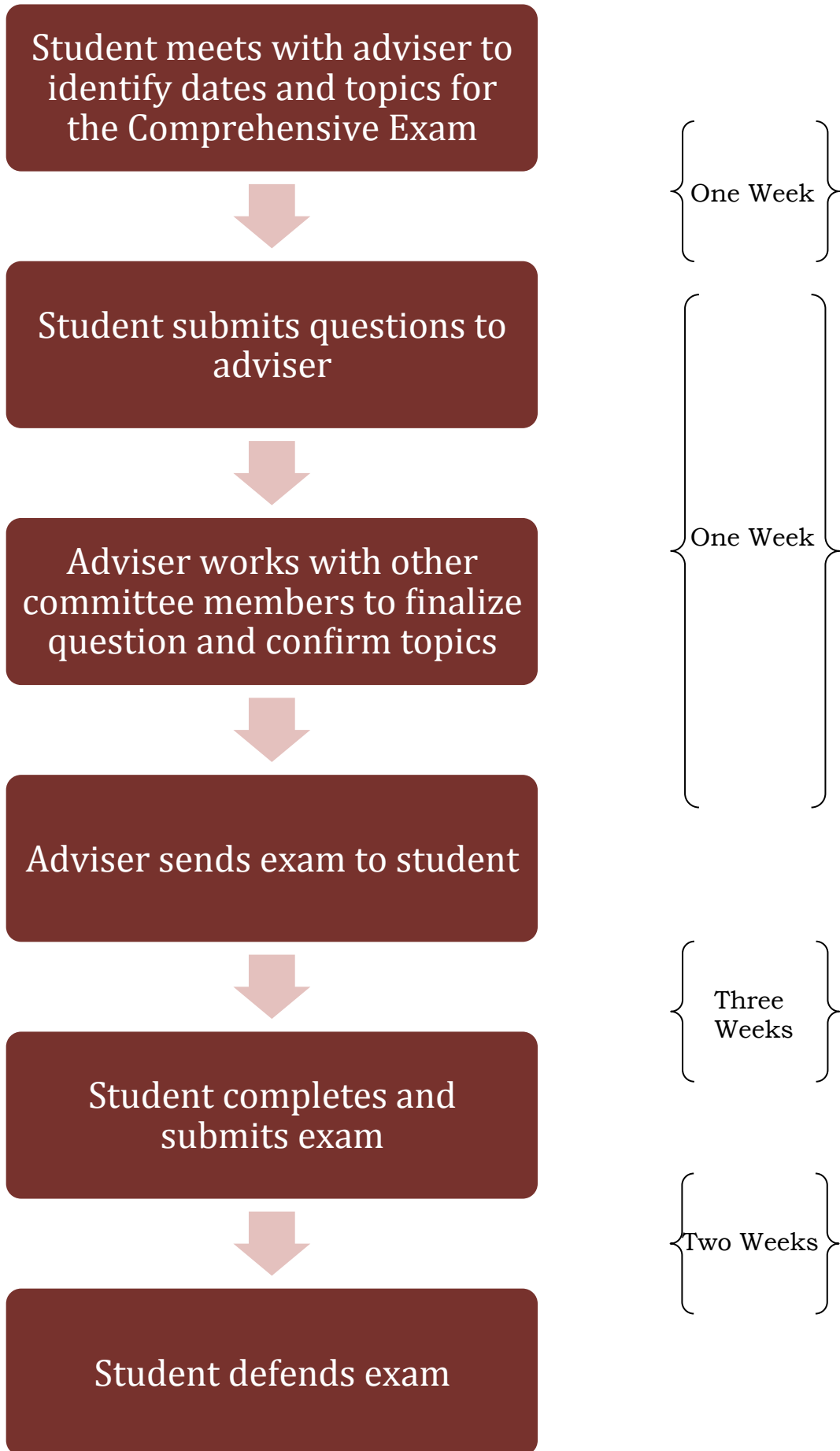
with guidelines (see below) to help them understand the expectations for the written papers.

Approximately two weeks after the submission of all three papers, you will meet with the committee for a formal defense of the examination. You will be expected to make a presentation on the applied analysis papers and respond to questions from the committee about any of the three papers. The committee will then make a decision about the results of the exam.

### Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Expectation Guidelines

(\*see also writing tips and example writing rubric found [here](#))

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>In an ideal response...</b>
<b>Command and use of literature</b>	Writer includes many appropriate resources from various disciplinary perspectives that are appropriate to the topic.
<b>Synthesis &amp; Analytic Skills</b>	Writer integrates resources seamlessly and uses them to build and support a coherent argument.
<b>Conceptual coherence</b>	Writer applies appropriate conceptual and/or theoretical perspectives that add substantially to the argument.
<b>Writing organization, flow, and style</b>	Writing is very well organized with a logical flow, clear linking transitions, and a sophisticated yet understandable presentation throughout.
<b>APA style and basic writing mechanics</b>	Writing is very clear with no grammatical or APA formatting errors.



## Dissertation Proposal: Committee, Defense, and Credits

In preparing the dissertation proposal, the student registers for dissertation credits the semester following the passing of the Comprehensive Exam. Each student works on developing a dissertation proposal (usually three chapters), which they defend before a dissertation committee of three or more faculty (the committee is declared on the D-6 form). At this time, each student must have one person from outside the College of Education serve as one of the three members. Each student must sign up for a total of 18 dissertation credits (usually nine credits in each of two consecutive semesters) and maintain continuous enrollment (pay student fees) from the time they complete comps to the point at which they defend their dissertation and graduate. It is each student's responsibility to sign up for dissertation credits through their adviser each semester and to decide how many credits they want to take in each semester.

## Summary of Credit Requirements

To summarize, all doctoral students must complete the following:

<b>FOUNDATION</b> <i>Introduction To Inquiry</i>	<b>3 credits</b> <i>(3 credits)</i>
<b>METHODS COURSES</b> <i>Quantitative Research Methods</i> <i>Qualitative Research Methods</i> <i>Additional Research Methods</i>	<b>12 credits</b> <i>(6 credits)</i> <i>(3 credits)</i> <i>(3 credits)</i>
<b>APPLIED RESEARCH</b> <i>Research in Higher Education (first 4 semesters)</i>	<b>12 credits</b> <i>(3 credits each)</i>
<b>SPECIALIZATION COURSES</b> (5 electives)	<b>15 credits</b>
<b>DISSERTATION</b>	<b>18 credits</b>
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>60 credits</b>

# **HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (HELM) GRADUATE CERTIFICATE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

The HELM program is taught in an online format making it convenient for busy professionals from a wide geographic area. It can be completed in one year by taking two classes in each of the fall and spring semesters, and the final course in the summer. Alternatively courses can be spread out over more semesters. Contact Kate Hudson ([khudson@educ.umass.edu](mailto:khudson@educ.umass.edu)), Coordinator of the HELM program, with any questions about the HELM graduate certificate, and see the [HELM website](#) for more information.

When you have completed all the courses for the HELM program, submit the HELM completion form (C-1) to Kate Hudson.

# ASSISTANTSHIPS

Assistantships are available in a variety of areas that change from year to year, and include a full tuition waiver as well as great health benefits. Pay for graduate students is in the \$25/hour range, with assistantships running from 10 to 30 hours per week.

The application process for assistantships is separate from the program admission process. Assistantship opportunities continue to be posted throughout the spring, summer, and into the first weeks of the fall semester, so we encourage you to be patient even if you do not have an assistantship lined up immediately.

If you are accepted into the Higher Education program, keep an eye on the Graduate School's [Graduate Assistantship Job Opportunities](#) Web page and the [Beacon](#) to learn about opportunities. We also recommend directly contacting any departments of interest to ask about assistantship opportunities. Use the [UMass Organizational Chart](#) as a reference.

If you receive an assistantship of at least 10 hours after the start of the fall semester, your tuition waiver will be retroactive to the beginning of the semester.

The process for doctoral students is similar to master's students. Each year, a limited number of teaching- or research-focused assistantships are available to doctoral students through the Higher Education program and the College of Education.

Once you have secured an assistantship, we recommend that you decide with your supervisor what your expectations for the position are and what will be expected of you, including professional development. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Graduate Employee contract.

## Graduate Employee Organization

All graduate students with assistantships are eligible for membership in the [Graduate Employee Organization \(GEO\)](#). Working under the GEO contract (see GEO-UAW Resources on [GEO website](#)) provides you with tuition reimbursement, a stipend, and eligibility for health, dental, and vision benefits in addition to union representation. Should you ever have concerns about your assistantship or your contract, get in touch with the [EPRA Steward](#), a current graduate student who represents graduate employees in EPRA.