

Tips for Completing the Ed.D. Application

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Here are some suggestions to help you as you prepare your application and move through the application process for the Doctoral Program. It helps you to know what qualities the admissions committee is looking for in each step of the application process.

Step 1: Application

Application Form

This provides general contact information. Be sure that your email address is current and clearly written, as electronic communications are widely used during the application process. Be sure your current level of certification is clearly reported.

Recommendations

Please provide recommendations from three individuals who can speak to your work in school improvement. Avoid letters of recommendation provided by faculty members of West Georgia or other institutions; we prefer letters from the individuals who can speak to your involvement with schools. Use the form included in the application packet rather than separate letters of recommendation. Encourage your references to write comments on the form about your leadership skills, communication ability, commitment to school improvement, and persistence. The admissions committee looks for comments, not just ratings from the check boxes, that provide a clear understanding of each applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Score

Provide evidence of your GRE scores. We use the verbal score and either the quantitative or analytical score, whichever is higher. Newer GRE exams provide an analytical writing score; however, we do not use this rubric score. Other tests, such as the Miller's Analogy Test, cannot be substituted for the GRE. Note that the university does not have an expiration date for GRE scores.

If your GRE scores are below the required minimum, you will be notified that you cannot be considered for the program. When you receive this notification, you may appeal this decision by providing a letter explaining why you will be successful in the doctoral program in spite of your GRE scores. If your written appeal is accepted by the admissions committee, you will be asked to appear before an appeals board at a designated time for an interview. If your interview appeal is successful, your application will be added to the regular pool of applicants.

Vitae

On the vitae, the admissions committee looks for your years of experience in education and any activities and/or recognitions you have had related to school improvement. Your professional activities and involvements should also be listed.

Please limit your vitae to professional activities rather than providing a full accounting of your personal background.

Essay

On the application essay, provide information on your commitment to school improvement. Rather than telling the story of your life, talk about your involvement so far with school improvement efforts. Clearly present your professional goals related to how you currently are, or plan to be, involved with school improvement and how you think this doctoral program can help you accomplish those goals. Be sure to limit your essay to 750 words.

Mission Statement

It is vitally important that you understand the unique mission of this doctoral program and that the mission complements your personal and professional goals. By signing the mission statement enclosed in the application packet, you acknowledge that you agree with and support the mission of the doctoral program. Any reservations you have with the mission should be stated on this form.

School Support Statement

We have found that the active support of the principal or supervisor, colleagues, and school district are important to a student's success in this doctoral program. This statement enables you to apprise your supervisor of the kinds of support you will need in order to effectively pursue doctoral studies. We encourage you to talk through this with your supervisor, colleagues, and family members so they can begin to understand the impact that doctoral studies will have on your time and your ability to fulfill your responsibilities for the next two years. By signing this form, your supervisor is stating that he/she will support you throughout your doctoral program, making adjustments when necessary to enable you to fully participate in doctoral work.

Step 2: Orientation and On-campus Writing Sample

Orientation

A required, one-hour orientation session is held to provide you with specific details about the program, including when classes are scheduled, how much each semester will cost, deadlines throughout the application process, etc. A panel of doctoral students shares how they have benefited from the program, the challenges they have experienced, and how the program has impacted them personally and professionally. This orientation provides you with the opportunity to ask tough questions about the program. This is an important event in determining not only whether this is the right doctoral program for you, but also whether this is the right time for you to undertake doctoral studies.

On-campus Writing Sample

Immediately following the orientation, you will complete the on-campus writing sample. You may use our computer labs or write with pencil or pen. You will have one hour to complete the writing sample. Respond to the writing prompt(s) specifically

and clearly. The writing sample provides the admissions committee with insights into your involvement with school improvement, your ability to respond directly to a question, and your writing ability.

Step 3: On-campus Interview

Interview

After the admissions committee holistically examines the full application packet and writing samples for each applicant, many applicants will be invited to campus for a 20-30 minute interview with the committee. During the interview, a series of questions exploring your background, goals, and expectations of the program will be posed. While many strong applicants will be interviewed, the challenge for the admissions committee is to identify and recommend for admission those candidates with not only the ability, but also the dispositions to work effectively in collaborative, applied courses at the doctoral level. They seek applicants who are a good fit for the program.

Step 4: Orientation

Orientation

Up to 20 applicants are recommended for admission to the new cohort each year, pending their successful completion of an orientation session. Orientation provides information on the university, program, and procedures required to be effective in these settings. It is an opportunity to meet the instructional faculty, to begin a relationship with faculty mentors, and to accomplish those beginning-of-the-semester tasks such as having IDs made, securing parking stickers, and purchasing textbooks. It is an important time to begin to build a team spirit in the cohort. And, most important, it is also a time to decide, once and for all, that this is the program for you, and that you have the time and dispositions to begin and to complete the program at this point in your life.