

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Coursework Planning Document

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS)

Academic Year: 2026–2027

Name:	Student ID:
Degree Program:	Start Term:

Program Overview

The PhD is a 90-credit doctoral program designed for practicing leaders and future researchers. This planning document outlines program requirements and supports ongoing advising, progress monitoring, and course sequencing. Course offerings and schedules are subject to change. This coursework planning document must be submitted to ELPS Canvas by the end of the first academic quarter and should be reviewed and updated annually, or as needed, in consultation with faculty advisor or designee.

Year One Coursework

Quarter	Course Title	Course Number & Credits	Focus Area	QTR/YR Taken (ex. Win '27)	Approved Substitution Course, QTR, YR
Fall	Foundations of Ed. History & Philosophy	ADMN 4827 4 credits	Leadership		
Fall	Introduction to Doctoral Research	ADMN 5800 4 credits	Research		
Winter	Organizational Theory & Behavior	ADMN 4819 4 credits	Leadership		
Winter	Introduction to Qualitative Research	RMS 4941 4 credits	Research		
Spring	Intro to Critical Policy Analysis	ADMN 4823 4 credits	Leadership		
Spring	Advanced Inquiry and Analysis	ADMN 4900 4 credits	Research		
Summer	Leadership Lab: Applied Inquiry and Practice	ADMN 5710 4 credits	Leadership		

Year One Subtotal: 28 credits

Year Two Coursework

Quarter	Course Title	Course Number & Credits	Focus Area	QTR/YR Taken (ex. Win '27)	Approved Substitution Course, QTR, YR
Fall	Leading Teaching and Learning	ADMN 4835 4 credits	Leadership		
Fall	Introductory Statistics ¹	RMS 4910 4 credits	Research		
Winter	Perspectives in District Leadership	ADMN 4812 4 credits	Leadership		
Winter	Critical Policy Analysis for Educational Systems	ADMN 4844 4 credits	Research		
Spring	Improving Organizational Culture	ADMN 4836 4 credits	Leadership		
Spring	Action Research for Systems Leadership	ADMN 4822 4 credits	Research		

¹ Research course a student may test out of or have waived; consult your advisor.

Year Two Coursework Subtotal: 24 credits | Foundational Core Total (Years One & Two): 52 credits

Year Three – Intermediate/Advanced Research and Cognate Area

Students design the third year of study in consultation with their advisor. The Graduate Bulletin requires a minimum of 28 combined credits across two components: (1) three or more intermediate/advanced research methods courses (e.g., RMS 4911, 4912, 4914, 4915, or other approved RMS Special Topics courses), and (2) a required cognate area of study, which may be completed within ELPS, across the Morgridge College of Education, or in other University of Denver programs (approved DU leadership-preparation coursework may apply in some circumstances). This year may begin as early as Summer Year Two, in consultation with the advisor.

Intermediate/Advanced Research Methods

QTR	Course Title	Credits	Level / Requirement
Total Research Credits			

Cognate Area

QTR	Course Title	Credits	Level / Requirement
Total Cognate Credits			

Year Three Combined Total (Research + Cognate): minimum 28 credits

Administrative Internship (Optional – Superintendent/Administrator Licensure Pathway)

Students seeking Colorado Superintendent/Administrator licensure may complete an administrative internship through ADMN 5710 (Leadership Lab: Applied Inquiry and Practice), taken twice, for a total of 8 credits (50 clock hours per credit; 400 total hours), aligned with Colorado Department of Education standards. Students should consult with their advisor to determine eligibility and alignment with licensure requirements.

Requirement	Course Number	QTR Taken	Credit Hours
Administrative Internship (Leadership Lab, 1st enrollment)	ADMN 5710		4
Administrative Internship (Leadership Lab, 2nd enrollment)	ADMN 5710		4

Year Four – Doctoral Research (Dissertation)

Dissertation credit requirements include ADMN 5910 (Dissertation Seminar) and ADMN 5995 (Independent Research), taken in combination. Per the Graduate Bulletin, students complete a minimum of 10 total dissertation credits, with at least 6 credits in ADMN 5910. Dissertation credits may begin as early as Summer Year Three and continue through Fall, Winter, and Spring of Year Four, and beyond if needed. Students must maintain continuous enrollment each Fall, Winter, and Spring quarter in consultation with their advisor.

QTR	Course (ADMN 5910 or ADMN 5995 — select in consultation with advisor)	Credits
Summer Year 3		
Fall Year 4		
Winter Year 4		
Spring Year 4		
(if needed)		
(if needed)		
Total Dissertation Credits		10 (minimum)

Program Milestones and Benchmarks

Requirement Area	Date Completed
Comprehensive Examination	
Dissertation Proposal Defense	
Official Advancement to Candidacy	
IRB Approval Number	
Final Dissertation Defense	

Program Credit Summary

Requirement Area	Credit Hours
Leadership Coursework	28
Research Coursework	24
Intermediate/Advanced Research + Cognate (Year Three)	28
Dissertation (minimum)	10
Total Required for PhD Degree	90 credits

Signatures

Student	
Graduate Program Advisor	
Dissertation Advisor	