Ed.D. Program FAQs & Answers

Program Information

What is an educational doctorate (Ed.D.)?
The Ed.D. is an applied professional doctorate designed with full-time K-12 practitioners (who have an Ed.S. or equivalent) in mind. The Ed.D. Program prepares scholarly practitioners to solve complex problems of practice through the development of theoretical and practical knowledge as well as research skills. The Program has three themes including race, place (rurality), and poverty. Students build a strong background in leadership, ethics, diversity, research, and educational improvement science. Improvement Science is a method of inquiry that helps scholarly practitioners define problems, implement changes, and determine whether the changes result in improvement.

What is the difference between an Ed.D. and a Ph.D.?
The Ed.D. is designed for K-12 practitioners currently serving in school and district leadership roles. Through their coursework and as part of their dissertation in practice, students examine and work to solve educational problems, most often identified in their school or district setting. In this way, earning an Ed.D. is intended to help prepare students to be educational leaders who will act as change agents in South Carolina and beyond. The Ph.D. is designed to prepare education scholars, practitioners, and leaders across P-20 contexts who often work in school districts, community and state agencies, and institutions of higher education providing research-based educational policies and services.

What is the format of the Ed.D. Program?
All courses are online but vary between synchronous and asynchronous sessions. Program milestones such as the comprehensive examination, proposal defense, and dissertation defense will be completed in person. Students are encouraged to attend the annual “College of Education Summer Educational Leadership Summit” on Clemson University’s Main Campus.

Do the students in the Ed.D. Program typically keep their full-time jobs?
Yes, students are typically employed full time in educational roles in K-12 school districts. Students are not expected to leave their full-time jobs, as this is a degree for practitioners.

What is the average time it takes someone to earn their Ed.D.?
Students begin and complete their coursework in a cohort model. All cohorts begin in the summer semester. Students complete four semesters of coursework and at least three semesters of dissertations credit hours as part of their program of study. The program in its entirety can be completed in just approximately two years and three months, at a minimum.
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What is the average cost of the Ed.D. Program in its entirety?
The cost of the Ed.D. Program may vary from year to year. You can find more information about tuition and fees on the Clemson University Graduate School’s website: https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/finance-tuition/

Do you offer Graduate Assistantships with stipend and tuition waiver?
No, Graduate Assistantships are generally not available for Ed.D. students as they are practitioners who are employed full-time in K-12 school districts.

Admissions Requirements

What are the Ed.D. Program admissions requirements?
The admissions requirements are provided on the Ed.D. Program website: https://www.clemson.edu/education/academics/doctoral-programs/edd-education-systems-improvement-science/index.html

Is the GRE required for all applicants?
No, GRE scores are not required. Applicants are encouraged to submit GRE exam scores (taken within the past five years). Alternatives to the GRE include an equivalent academic admissions exam score (e.g., GMAT, LSAT, MCAT) taken within the past five years, a GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the most recent graduate degree, OR at least five years of classroom teaching experience AND at least two years in an educational leadership position (building or district level).

Is there a minimum number of years of classroom or educational leadership experience required?
There is not a required minimum number of years of experience in a teaching or leadership role, but an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) degree (or equivalent) is required (minimum of a 3.0 GPA).

How are applications evaluated?
All applications are reviewed holistically by an Admissions Committee comprised of program faculty. Applicants are encouraged to include information in their application about their professional background (e.g., leadership experience, especially in high-need schools and/or serving diverse populations), academic preparation, and research interests (e.g., alignment with program themes of race, rurality, poverty, and improvement science).

Application Process

How do I apply to the Ed.D. Program?
All applications are submitted online at the Graduate School’s website: https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/admissions/apply/
How many applicants are typically admitted to the Ed.D. Program each year?

The number of applicants and admitted students varies each year; there is no predetermined number or percentage for admittance to the program. The number of applicants accepted into the program depends on the qualifications of the individual applicants.

I submitted my application in advance of the January 15th priority application deadline and was wondering will the decision be made in advance of the March 1st traditional application deadline?

All completed applications submitted by the January 15th priority application deadline will be collectively reviewed by the admissions committee, and notifications will generally be sent by the Graduate School no later than the end of February. Completed applications submitted after the priority application deadline but by the March 1st traditional application deadline will be collectively reviewed by the admissions committee, and notifications will generally be sent by the Graduate School no later than the end of April. If an application is incomplete (e.g., one or more documents such as reference letter[s], transcript[s], etc.) have not been received by the Graduate School), applicants will not receive notification until after all documents have been received.