

# EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND POLICY

<b>Graduate Program Head</b>	Adrienne Dixson
<b>Program Code</b>	EDTHP
<b>Campus(es)</b>	University Park (Ph.D., M.A.)
<b>Degrees Conferred</b>	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Master of Arts (M.A.) Dual-Title M.A. and Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Policy and Comparative and International Education Dual-Title M.A. and Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Policy and Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society Integrated B.S. in Education and Public Policy and M.A. in Educational Theory and Policy Joint J.D. / Ph.D. or M.A. with Penn State Law
<b>The Graduate Faculty</b>	View ( <a href="https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/?searchType=fac&amp;prog=EDTHP">https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/?searchType=fac&amp;prog=EDTHP</a> )

## Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/>). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Scores from the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) are required for admission. The best-qualified applicants will be accepted up to the number of spaces that are available for new students. Students with a 2.75 grade-point average will be considered for admission to the master's program, and with a 3.00 grade-point average at the master's level for the Ph.D. program. Exceptions to the minimum grade-point average may be made for students with special backgrounds, abilities, and interests, at the discretion of the program.

## Degree Requirements

### Master of Arts (M.A.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Candidates who seek an M.A. in Educational Theory and Policy shall complete programs that will include studies in social theory, policy, and planning or in the social sciences or humanities.

A minimum of 36 credits is required, with at least 18 credits in the 500 and 600 series combined, and a minimum of 6 credits of thesis research (EDTHP 600 or EDTHP 610).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required Courses</b>		
EDTHP 500	Proseminar in Educational Theory and Policy	3
<i>Research Methods</i>		
EDTHP 585	Research Design: Implications for Decisions in Higher Education	3
EDPSY 406	Applied Statistical Inference for the Behavioral Sciences (or another approved statistics course)	3
EDTHP 586	Qualitative Methods in Educational Research	3
<b>Electives</b> <sup>1</sup>		<b>18</b>
<b>Culminating Experience</b>		
EDTHP 600	Thesis Research	6
	or EDTHP 610 Thesis Research Off Campus	
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36</b>

<sup>1</sup> The elective credits may be chosen from a list of approved electives maintained by the program office.

Only 3 credits of EDTHP 596 may be counted toward the M.A.

A thesis is required. The thesis must be accepted by the advisers and/or committee members, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

### Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Candidates who seek a Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Policy shall complete programs that will include studies in social theory, policy, and planning, or in the social sciences or humanities.

A minimum of 57 credits is required:

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required Courses</b>		
EDTHP 500	Proseminar in Educational Theory and Policy	3
<i>Research Methods</i>		
EDTHP 585	Research Design: Implications for Decisions in Higher Education	3
EDTHP 586	Qualitative Methods in Educational Research	3
6 additional credits approved by the program		6
<i>Theory Foundations</i>		
A minimum of 9 credits in 500-level EDTHP courses approved by the program		9
<i>Policy Foundations</i>		
EDTHP 587	Education Policy and Politics	3
6 additional credits approved by the program		6
<i>Focused Program of Study</i>		
A minimum of 9 credits in consultation with the adviser to prepare for dissertation research <sup>1</sup>		9
<b>Electives</b>		
The remaining 15 elective credits may be chosen from a list of approved electives maintained by the program office.		15
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>57</b>

<sup>1</sup> Students will need to explain how the three chosen courses will have prepared them for their dissertation research. This justification will become a part of the qualifying examination materials routed to all EDTHP faculty for approval. The course work must have a unifying theme. It does not have to be taken in the EDTHP program.

Doctoral students must pass a qualifying examination, a comprehensive written and oral examination, and a final oral examination (the dissertation defense). To earn the Ph.D. degree, doctoral students must also write a dissertation that is accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

## Dual-Titles

### Dual-Title M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative and International Education

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-titles/>).

#### Admission Requirements

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Educational Theory and Policy and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Comparative and International Education dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Comparative and International Education Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/comparative-international-education/>). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Comparative and International Education prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

#### Degree Requirements

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Educational Theory and Policy. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in Comparative and International Education, listed on the Comparative and International Education Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/comparative-international-education/>). Some courses may satisfy both Educational Theory and Policy and Comparative and International Education degree requirements. Final course selection must be approved by the student's Ph.D. committee.

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Educational Theory and Policy and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Comparative and International Education program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Educational Theory and Policy and Comparative and International Education. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>

[gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/](https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/)), the Ph.D. committee of an Educational Theory and Policy and Comparative and International Education dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the Comparative and International Education Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Comparative and International Education, the member of the committee representing Comparative and International Education must be appointed as co-chair. The Comparative and International Education representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their Ph.D. committee and reflects their original research and education in Educational Theory and Policy and Comparative and International Education. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

### DUAL-TITLE M.A. AND PH.D. IN TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY (TREES)

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-titles/>).

#### Admission Requirements

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Educational Theory and Policy and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the TREES dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the TREES Bulletin page (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/transdisciplinary-research-environment-society/>). Doctoral students should enroll in a dual-title graduate degree program early in their training, and no later than the end of the fourth semester (not counting summer semesters) of entry into the graduate major program.

#### Degree Requirements

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Educational Theory and Policy, listed in the Degree Requirements section. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual title in TREES, listed on the TREES Bulletin page (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/transdisciplinary-research-environment-society/>).

The qualifying examination for Educational Theory and Policy will satisfy the qualifying exam requirement for the dual-title degree program in TREES. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-602-phd-committee-formation/>), the Ph.D. committee of an Educational Theory and Policy and TREES dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the TREES Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs'

Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in TREES, the member of the committee representing TREES must be appointed as co-chair. The TREES representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their Ph.D. committee and reflects their original research and education in Educational Theory and Policy and TREES. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

## Integrated Undergrad-Grad Programs

### Integrated B.S. in Education and Public Policy and M.A. in Educational Theory and Policy

This Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate (IUG) degree program combines the B.S. in Education and Public Policy with the M.A. in Educational Theory and Policy offered at the following campuses:

#### Undergraduate Degree

- University Park

#### Graduate Degree

- University Park

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-210 Integrated Undergraduate-Graduate (IUG) Degree Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-210-integrated-undergraduate-graduate-degree-programs/>).

The Education and Public Policy (EPP) undergraduate program and the Education Theory and Policy (EDTHP) Master's program offer an integrated B.S./M.A. program that is designed for academically strong baccalaureate students in the EPP major to obtain both a B.S. in EPP and M.A. in EDTHP within five years of study. The first two years of undergraduate coursework include the University General Education requirements and prescribed lower level courses for EPP. In the third year, students focus on developing the self-selected portion of the EPP curriculum based on academic areas and themes of interest. The fourth year continues this self-selected undergraduate coursework in combination with graduate-level EDTHP courses, including the required pro-seminar (EDTHP 500). The fifth and final year of the program typically consists of graduate coursework in EDTHP and thesis research (6 credits) in consultation with the Master's thesis adviser. This interdisciplinary IUG allows students to define interests in the field of Education Policy and ultimately long-term academic and professional goals. For most students, the total time required for the Master's degree will be shortened by a year. The student will develop connections with graduate faculty and engage in the rigors of graduate study early on. The resources of the Graduate School are available for students accepted into the IUG program.

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-admissions/how-to-apply/>). Requirements listed here are in addition to

Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Students must apply to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (<http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/>), and must meet all the admission requirements of the Graduate School and the EDTHP graduate program for the Master of Arts degree, listed in the Admission Requirements section. Before applying to the Graduate School, students must have completed entrance to their undergraduate major and have completed no less than 60 credits. Students must be admitted no later than the end of the second week of the semester preceding the semester of expected conferral of the undergraduate degree. Transfer students must have completed at least 15 credits at Penn State to enroll in an IUG. In consultation with an adviser, students must prepare a plan of study appropriate to this integrated program and must present their plan of study to the head of the graduate program or the appropriate committee overseeing the integrated program prior to being admitted to the program. The plan should cover the entire time period of the integrated program, and it should be reviewed periodically with an adviser as the student advances through the program.

Students must fulfill all degree requirements for each degree in order to be awarded that degree, subject to the double-counting of credits as outlined below. Degree requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Education and Public Policy are listed in the Undergraduate Bulletin (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/>). Degree requirements for the Master of Arts in EDTHP are listed on the Degree Requirements tab. Students are expected to sequence their courses so all undergraduate degree requirements are fulfilled before taking courses to count solely towards the graduate degree. Students must complete the undergraduate degree requirements within the typical time to degree for the undergraduate major. In the semester in which the undergraduate degree requirements will be completed, IUG students must apply to graduate, and the undergraduate degree should be conferred at the next appropriate Commencement. If students accepted into the IUG program are unable to complete the M.A. degree, they are still eligible to receive their undergraduate degree if all the undergraduate degree requirements have been satisfied.

Up to 12 credits may be double-counted towards the degree requirements for both the graduate and undergraduate degrees; a minimum of 50% of the double-counted credits must be at the 500 or 800 level. Independent study courses and credits associated with the culminating experience for the graduate degree cannot be double-counted.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Courses Eligible to Double Count for Both Degrees</b>		
EDPSY 406	Applied Statistical Inference for the Behavioral Sciences	3
EDTHP 500	Proseminar in Educational Theory and Policy	3
EDTHP 585	Research Design: Implications for Decisions in Higher Education	3
EDTHP 586	Qualitative Methods in Educational Research	3

## Joint Degrees

### Joint J.D. / M.A. or Ph.D. with Penn State Law

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-211 Joint Degree Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-211-joint-degree-programs/>).

Penn State Law (PSL) and the Educational Theory and Policy (EDTHP) Program offer a joint degree program leading to a Juris Doctor (J.D.); and either a Master of Arts (M.A.) or a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Educational Theory and Policy.

### Admission Requirements

Applicants to the joint degree program must apply and be admitted first to Penn State Law, and subsequently to the Educational Theory and Policy graduate program. Admissions requirements and applications for admission for Penn State Law are listed in the J.D. Admissions (<https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/penn-state-law-jd-admissions/>) section of the Penn State Law website. The admission requirements for the Educational Theory and Policy graduate program are listed on the Admissions Requirement tab. When applying to the Educational Theory and Policy graduate program, applicants must include two letters of recommendation from Penn State Law faculty members and a career statement. Applicants to the joint degree program may submit LSAT scores instead of GRE scores. Students must be admitted to the program prior to taking the first course they intend to count towards the graduate degree.

### Residency

Students will normally spend four semesters in residence at PSL and as many additional semesters in residence as needed to complete the additional requirements for the pertinent EDTHP degree. Ph.D. candidates must arrange the sequence of semesters to ensure that they are in residence as full-time students in the EDTHP program for at least two consecutive semesters (Fall-Spring or Spring-Fall) excluding summer in a single twelve-month period.

### Degree Requirements

Students must fulfill all requirements for each degree in order to be awarded that degree, subject to the double-counting of credits as outlined below. Degree requirements for the J.D. program are listed on the Penn State Law website (<https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/jd-degree-requirements/>). Degree requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees are listed in the Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree Requirements section.

**PSL:** A maximum of twelve credits for EDTHP course work may be double-counted for credit toward the J.D. degree at PSL. Students must obtain a grade satisfactory to PSL for the course work to be credited toward the J.D. degree. The following EDTHP courses may qualify for credit in PSL:

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Courses Eligible to Double Count for Both Degrees</b>		
EDTHP 518	Analysis of U. S. Educational Policy	3
EDTHP 520	Perspectives on Contemporary School Reform	3
EDTHP 533	Social History and Education Policy	3
EDTHP 541	Contemporary Philosophies of Education	3
EDTHP 587	Education Policy and Politics	3

**EDTHP:** The courses that may be double-counted will be determined by the student's degree program. Normally a maximum of twelve credits of PSL course work will be double-counted for credit for the minimum requirements for a master's or doctoral degree, subject to approval by the student's advisory committee.

### Sequence

The sequence of courses will be determined by the students and their advisers.

### Recommended Program of Study and Advising

All students in the program will have two advisers, one from PSL and one from EDTHP. Periodic interaction between the two advisers is encouraged.

### Tuition

Students will be charged the applicable PSL tuition to cover the J.D. program and the applicable graduate tuition to cover the EDTHP degree program. PSL tuition will be paid for the semesters in which the student is registered for PSL courses, and graduate tuition will be paid for the semesters in which the student is registered for graduate courses. A student may take up to one course (3 credits) per semester in the program where the student is not primarily registered without any change in tuition, but must pay additional tuition to the program that the student is not primarily registered if he or she wishes to take additional course work pursuant to that program during the semester.

### Financial Aid and Assistantships

Decisions on financial aid and assistantships will be made by each school according to that school's procedures.

### Fulfillment of Degree Requirements and Graduation

All courses in one program that will count toward meeting the requirements of the other program must be completed before the awarding of either degree. If students accepted into the joint degree program are unable to complete the J.D. degree, they are still eligible to receive the EDTHP degree if all EDTHP degree requirements have been satisfied.

### Minor

A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policy GCAC-218 Minors (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-218-minors/>).

### Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/funding/>) section of the J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/>) set by the Fox Graduate School.

### Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Educational Theory and Policy (EDTHP) Course List (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/edthp/>)

### Learning Outcomes

#### Master of Arts (M.A.)

1. Demonstrate mastery of the student's specific program emphasis area, which includes knowledge of primary and secondary literature related to research methodologies, programmatic research priorities,

and implications of that research for professional practice. Assessed through methods and theory coursework.

2. Students will design and carry out a research project that includes articulating an important and original question, analyzing appropriate literature, demonstrating conceptual and methodological creativity, and carrying out an original inquiry. Assessed through master's paper.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking about selected recent research in the program emphasis area through the description of an emerging scholarly theme/area, identification of specific publications that reflect it, and assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. Assessed through coursework and masters paper.
4. Demonstrate standards of field in written and oral communication by requiring research presentations in several courses.
5. Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of research ethics issues including knowledge of ethical principles related to authorship, research reporting, data fabrication, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, peer review, data sharing and other areas of misconduct. Assessed through SARI examinations and participation in EDTHP 500.
6. Participate in conducting research with faculty, working on the boards of professional journals, or other significant professional engagement as identified by the master's adviser. Assessed through faculty written evaluation and/or other appropriate and clearly defined means.

## Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

1. Demonstrate mastery of the student's specific program emphasis area, which includes knowledge of primary and secondary literature related to research methodologies, programmatic research priorities, and implications of that research for professional practice. Assessed through qualifying and comprehensive exams (rubric).
2. Students will design and carry out a research project that includes articulating an important and original question, analyzing appropriate literature, demonstrating conceptual and methodological creativity, and carrying out an original inquiry. Assessed through dissertation proposal and defense (rubric).
3. Demonstrate critical thinking about selected recent research in the program emphasis area through the description of an emerging scholarly theme/area, identification of specific publications that reflect it, and assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. Assessed through written and oral candidacy assessment (rubric).
4. Demonstrate standards of field in written and oral communication by (a) preparing a research grant proposal for an award competition or an internal or external funding opportunity, and (b) presenting the results of dissertation research in clear, concise oral presentations to an audience of peers. Assessed through research/award proposal and dissertation defense.
5. Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of research ethics issues including knowledge of ethical principles related to authorship, research reporting, data fabrication, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, peer review, data sharing and other areas of misconduct. Assessed through SARI examinations and participation in EDTHP 500.
6. Participate in conducting research with faculty, working on the boards of professional journals, teaching an undergraduate or graduate course, or other significant professional engagement as identified by the doctoral adviser. Assessed through faculty written evaluation, standardized assessment instruments, and/or other appropriate and clearly defined means.

## Contact

### Campus

University Park

### Graduate Program Head

Adrienne Denise Dixon

### Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)

Adrienne Denise Dixon

### Program Contact

Cassie Joyce Vomero  
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### Program Website

View (<https://ed.psu.edu/academics/departments/department-education-policy-studies/educational-theory-and-policy-program/>)