Degree Requirements: Higher Education PhD

A Ph.D. student will demonstrate knowledge of theory and research. Ph.D. students will gain expertise in their chosen specialization and expertise over the course of their studies. Using these specializations as a basis, they will learn how to develop testable research questions or hypotheses, construct corresponding literature reviews, and develop strengths in methodologies that will allow them to devise a policy-relevant original research study that meets the requirements of the students’ discipline of inquiry. Ultimately, students will graduate with the ability to conduct independent research of a quality required by the field’s major associations and academic publications (2013 Doctoral Handbook). Our Ph.D. program has two specializations:

**Student Affairs Specialization:**
The Student Affairs specialty emphasizes the individual, institutional, and sociocultural factors that contribute to student success in higher education. Working with faculty, students will apply theory and practice to drive cutting edge research on students, student development, and student affairs.

**Public Policy in Higher Education Specialization:**
A Public Policy specialty provides education in major policy issues and responses; policy development, implementation, and evaluation; the politics and foundations of higher education; disciplinary approaches and rigorous methods. The goal of this specialization is to prepare graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to become leaders in the area public policy for higher education, as faculty, researchers and policy leaders.

Together the two specializations share the common goal of addressing the need for better institutional performance in educating and graduating large numbers of students. Ultimately they serve the same purpose while adopting somewhat separate, yet overlapping, perspectives.

**The Ph.D. requires:**
- Minimum of 57 semester hours of coursework beyond the master’s degree and 24 hours of dissertation credit.
- The minimum of 57 semester hours must include:
  - 9 hours of core courses
  - 21 hours of research courses
  - 18 hours of specialization courses
  - 9 hours of disciplinary courses
  - + 24 dissertation hours
  - 3.00 minimum GPA
- Doctoral Residency
  - Residency credits must be earned by each student after being admitted to a doctoral program. Residency is a University requirement; it is enforced by the Dean of Graduate Studies without exception. A Ph.D. student must accumulate 24 credits in 12 consecutive months. A majority of the course credit earned as part of meeting residency must be graded credit.