Frequently Asked Questions

Let’s start with the bottom line: What will my doctoral program cost?

Course fees are subject to change. Currently (2016-2017), doctoral students pay $831 a credit hour in tuition, plus a $65 registration fee each term of registration. A student entering with a master’s degree would enroll in a minimum of 63 credits during the required three years and four summers of study. This totals - at current rates - $52,353 for tuition. A student who already holds a sixth year or other credits beyond the master’s degree, and who is certified as a school administrator, is typically approved to apply as many as 15 credits from previous coursework toward the degree, reducing the cost of tuition to $39,888. Books, computer software and computer upgrades to meet your needs as a doctoral researcher, and research materials will add to the bottom line. Please expect annual increases in tuition.

Can I get financial aid?

Loans are available. Because our program is designed for mid-career educators who work full-time, we do not offer doctoral fellowships or assistantships. And, because our students are working, they do not qualify for government grants. If a student enters with outstanding student loans, she or he is able to defer repayment during the course of doctoral studies. The Graduate Student Association has funding for research grants (up to $500) and professional development/conference travel (up to $1000). These grants are competitively awarded. A student may receive one grant per year, and a maximum of three over the course of doctoral study.

And what about time commitments?

Our program is designed to require a minimum of three full years and an additional, fourth summer. Your first requirement will be a two-day orientation in April (typically scheduled on a Friday from 4-9 pm, and Saturday from 9-3:30). Summer classes during 2017 are scheduled to begin Monday, June 26, and continue through Tuesday, July 25. They meet all day. A similar schedule will be required during the second summer of study. During the first two years of study, a required course meets each Wednesday of the semester from 4:30-7:10. During the first year of study only, a course meets on two Saturdays each semester. An additional requirement during the second year is the preparation of an electronic leadership portfolio in lieu of a written comprehensive examination. Students needing to fulfill specialization requirements will enroll in additional courses. The third summer, third academic year, and fourth summer are devoted primarily to dissertation research and writing. There is one final course in the fourth summer which meets for three days total. And, some students do not finish in the minimum amount of time and must continue to register for one credit hour of dissertation each semester until they do finish.

A lot of work? Yes, but our current cohort members and graduates (numbering more than 115) are going to tell you that it is well worth the effort!

What is the difference between a Ph.D. and an Ed.D.?

Tough question and the answer will be different depending on who is answering.

CCSU’s doctor of education (Ed.D.) degree in educational leadership is oriented toward practice. All of our students also work full-time, and our most intense periods of on-campus study occur during the summer. We expect our students to apply what they are learning to improving their schools, and the bulk of our project
requirements are field-based. Dissertations also focus on questions of interest to practitioners in the field, and are intended to contribute directly to the improvement of teaching and learning.

Traditionally, the Ph.D. requires a period of full-time study (called “residency”) and emphasizes the development of knowledge and skills sufficient to support original research, with an orientation toward the development and validation of theories. Ed.D. programs are more likely to be oriented toward practice; like ours, they are typically designed to permit full-time educators to continue their employment while working toward their degrees.

**About those GREs: Why? What is expected of me? Where can I get more information?**

We ask you to submit a range of information about yourself: transcripts, recommendations, your résumé, an essay, and also scores from the GRE General Test (including the Writing Assessment) which must have been taken within the five years preceding your application. The GRE is the standardized test most typically used in the graduate admissions process. Finalists for admission also come to an interview. Be assured that we consider each piece of evidence. Ultimately, however, we make a holistic judgment about your ability to complete a doctoral program successfully and also your potential for making meaningful contributions to the doctoral cohort.

In terms of the GRE, all aspects of the General Test – verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing – can be linked to skills and abilities that are essential for success in doctoral study. Please note that you may submit scores that are up to five years old, but whatever you submit must include a writing assessment. For further information about the GREs, visit [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org).

**What is the best way to communicate with the doctoral program about my interests and needs?**

Because technology is such an important part of our program, we also emphasize communication using e-mail. For example, if you are asked to come in for an interview, we will notify you via email. Email is also how you will first learn if you have been selected for admission. Pre-admission “e-advising” is available from Dr. Penelope Lisi, Ed.D. Director (lisip@ccsu.edu); she can also meet with students who prefer to come to campus.

**How will I know if you received my application and that everything is in order?**

Our Graduate School will provide official communications about your application. However, you will also hear from Rouzan Kheranian, who is secretary to the doctoral program. She will be happy to assist you and answer your questions. Once students are admitted, she solves problems and assists with communications. Contact her at kheranianr@ccsu.edu or by calling 860-832-2152.

**Will I get admitted?**

The application deadline is December 1, so the first step is to have everything in by then. Our cohorts include 20 to 25 highly qualified doctoral candidates. Some are relatively new to education (perhaps just a few years of teaching experience); others are veterans. Some are teachers; others are administrators, mostly assistant principals, but also principals and district leaders including a superintendent, assistant superintendent, and curriculum leaders.

What will YOU contribute to a doctoral cohort? That is the question to ask yourself, because that is the question the admissions committee members will be thinking about as they review your file. Are you ready to make the commitment to doctoral study that requires full-time effort during four to five weeks in the summer, and on-going responsibilities (including courses and field-based projects) throughout the year? If you are, and you have clear goals, something to contribute to our learning community, and the capacity for leadership to improve Connecticut’s schools, then YOU are the doctoral student we seek.