



Student Handbook

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Transformative Education Program

AY 2026-27

Ed.D. in Transformative Education Program

Vision

Lead change, respond to change, and become the catalyst of change in education

Mission

Empower educational professionals to foster innovation and transformation, lead with courage and knowledge, and adapt to complexity

Facts

- 48-credit program
- Leads to a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree
- Online (a combination of synchronous & asynchronous online with low residency)
- Applied dissertation
- 3+ years
- All But Dissertation (ABD) Pathway
- Stackable Pennsylvania Letter of Eligibility (LOE)
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education accredited
- Act 48/45 credits of the Pennsylvania Department of Education

This online program is designed for professionals across diverse educational settings, including preK-12 schools, higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and education-related agencies and businesses. With its emphasis on innovation and transformative change, the Program prepares scholar-practitioners to navigate complex challenges of a rapidly evolving educational landscape and to improve their educational organizations.

The length of program completion varies depending on the number of credits taken each semester. With two courses per semester, the program may be completed in three years. The All But Dissertation (ABD) pathway is designed for applicants who have not completed the dissertation requirements of another Ed.D. program. The ABD pathway requires a minimum of 18 hours of coursework to be completed at Alvernia University. The Program is offered through the University accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Ed.D. Program in the Graduate Catalog:

https://catalog.alvernia.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=10&poid=1221&returnto=305

Program Competencies

Domain	Student Learning Outcomes
1. Research	1.1. Communicate research effectively and in accord with professional and disciplinary standards. 1.2. Employ data-driven approaches to evaluate educational initiatives, assess student learning outcomes, and advance equity and innovation. 1.3. Translate research-based knowledge into practical solutions. 1.4. Develop and execute research studies using appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods aligned with educational research questions.
2. Pedagogy	2.1. Employ theoretical and practical frameworks of transformative education to design and sustain initiatives that address issues of diversity, equity, social justice, and global citizenship. 2.2. Analyze and apply theories of teaching and learning to design educational environments that foster critical thinking, engagement, and inclusivity. 2.3. Analyze local, national, and global education policies, assess their implications for equity and justice, and advocate for policy reforms that advance transformative education. 2.4. Develop, adapt, and implement curriculum that responds to diverse learner needs and supports systemic change in educational organizations. 2.5. Critically assess and apply emerging technologies to enhance teaching, learning, and organizational transformation.
3. Professional Practice & Impact	3.1. Lead organizational change and apply principles of organizational development and change management to create inclusive, equitable, and innovative educational environments. 3.2. Demonstrate engagement in critical self-reflection that interrogates one's own assumptions, biases, and leadership style to advance transformative educational leadership. 3.3. Design, implement, and assess educational initiatives that advance equity, social justice, and community empowerment.

CURRICULUM

The 48-credit curriculum includes research, education, and concentration area elective courses, portfolio assessment, summer residency, and applied dissertation. All components of the Program, with the exception of the five-day summer residency, are delivered through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online learning.

Research Core (12 credits)

- [EDD 701 - Research Design](#)
- [EDD 702 - Research & Professional Communication](#)
- [EDD 703 - Qualitative Research](#)
- [EDD 704 - Quantitative Research](#)

Education Core (15 credits)

- [EDD 705 - Theories of Teaching & Learning](#)
- [EDD 706 - Education Policies](#)
- [EDD 707 - Curriculum \(re\) Design & Implementation of Transformative Change](#)
- [EDD 708 - Technology for Transforming Education](#)
- [EDD 709 - Frameworks of Transformative Education](#)

Concentration Area Electives (9 credits)

Students will create a concentration area based on professional and scholarly interests and career goals. Concentration coursework includes three elective courses selected from the approved EDD and PHD courses. The selected concentration area and electives shall be approved by the Program Director in advance of registration. Examples of concentration areas include, but are not limited to: educational leadership, higher education, innovation and entrepreneurship in education. Concentration electives may be used toward the Pennsylvania Superintendent Letter of Eligibility Program. The selected concentration area and electives shall be approved by the Program Director in advance of registration.

The following courses may be used as electives:

EDD 710: Innovation in Education: ____ (3 cr.)

EDD 805: Entrepreneurship in Education: _____ (3 cr.)

Note: These two colon courses shall be fulfilled with a variety of offerings with common objectives but varied content in each instance. In creating the concentration area, a student may enroll in multiple instances of either or both colon course electives.

PHD 731: Advanced Supervision and Leadership Theory (3 cr.)

PHD 830: Current Issues in Education (3 cr.)

PHD 821: Organizational Policy and Finance

PHD 885: Superintendent Leadership (3 cr.)

PHD 801: Negotiations and Conflict Resolution for Contemporary Leaders (3 cr.)

PHD 805: Development and Evaluation of Organizational Policies and Programs (3 cr.)

PHD 812: Leadership and Communication Theories (3 cr.)

PHD 724: Theories in Organizational Structure and Strategic Leadership (3 cr.)

PHD 725: Leadership: Diversity, and Social Justice in Complex and Global Organizations (3 cr.)

PHD 711: Moral and Ethical Foundations of Decision-Making (3 cr.)

PHD 740: Public Policy Leadership and Strategic Change (3 cr.)

PHD 840: Power, Institutions, and Leadership in a Globalized World (3 cr.)

PHD 842: Coalitions, Networks, and Leadership in Advocacy (3 cr.)

Portfolio Assessment (0 credits)

Upon completion of the 27 credits of research, education, and concentration courses and before the start of the 12-credit applied dissertation coursework, students shall earn a grade B or higher on the portfolio assessment, which signifies their readiness to begin their dissertation courses.

As an alternative to a qualifying examination, portfolio assessment includes a portfolio that illustrates a student's expertise in their inquiry area and participation in the Graduate Symposium & Networking Day. Earning a grade of B or higher on the portfolio assessment signifies a student's readiness to begin their applied dissertation.

For their portfolio, a student may select one of the following options:

- Option A: Revised papers from three completed courses related to the area of inquiry that will be pursued in the applied dissertation. This option demonstrates a student's general knowledge of their area of inquiry.
- Option B: A grant proposal. This option demonstrates a student's competencies associated with developing proposals for external funding to implement a transformative change. Submission of the grant proposal is not required; however, the proposal will be evaluated by the same or similar criteria.

The second component of the portfolio assessment includes delivering a presentation (excluding poster presentations) and participating in all sessions of the Graduate Symposium & Networking Day. Upon the approval of the Program Director, a presentation at a state, national, or international conference may count towards this requirement.

Summer Residency (0 credits)

Prior to the start of the applied dissertation courses, students shall complete a five-day residency that includes on-campus learning during the portfolio assessment's summer. Alternatively, the residency requirement may be met with an international residency course through the Total Experience Learning Institute.

Applied Dissertation (12 credits)

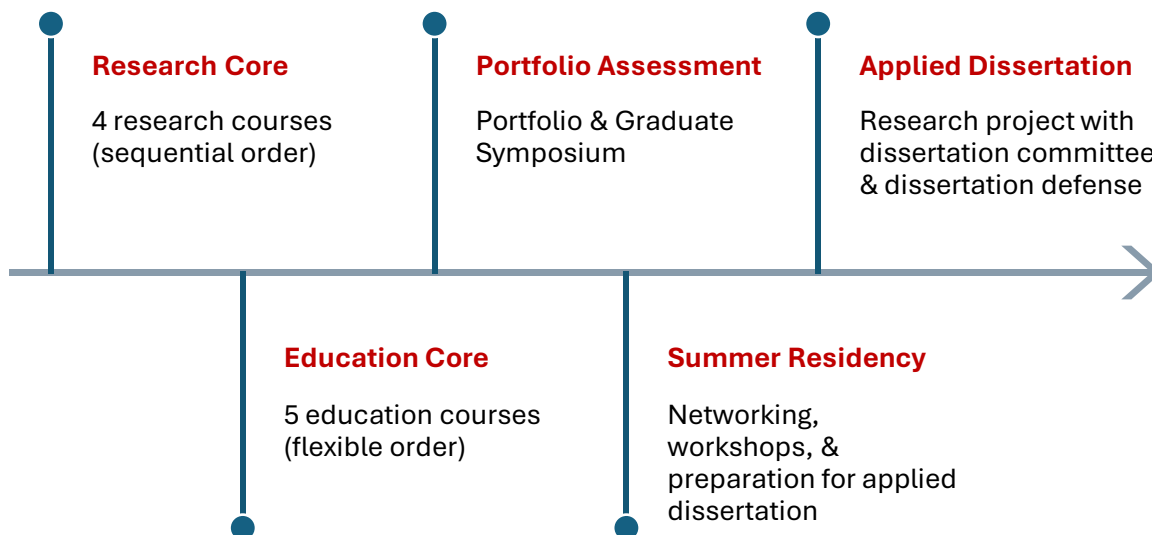
The applied dissertation is the culminating phase of the Ed.D. in Transformative Education Program and provides students with an opportunity to integrate and apply the knowledge, research skills, and professional perspectives developed throughout their doctoral studies. As a scholar-practitioner degree, the Ed.D. emphasizes the use of rigorous research to address meaningful problems of practice and contribute to improvement and transformative change in educational and professional contexts. Through the applied dissertation, students design and conduct an original research study that is grounded in relevant scholarship, methodologically sound, and responsive to the context in which the problem of practice occurs.

During this phase, students will form a respective dissertation committee, prepare and defend a dissertation proposal, (if required) obtain an Institutional Review Board's approval, conduct a research project, and prepare and defense a dissertation.

Completion of all courses, summer residency, and satisfactory portfolio assessment is required prior to the start of the applied dissertation. The Program Director's approval is required for registration for each of the dissertation courses.

- [EDD 801 - Dissertation I](#) : dissertation committee, proposal, & IRB approval
- [EDD 802 - Dissertation II](#): data collection
- [EDD 803 - Dissertation III](#): data analysis
- [EDD 804 - Dissertation IV](#): dissertation defense

PROGRAM COMPLETION PLAN



The table below represents the standard three-year program completion pathway. In consultation with the Program Director, students may establish an alternative completion timeline.

Semester	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
FALL	MOD 1: EDD 701, Research Design (3 cr.)	MOD 1: EDD 707, Curriculum (re)Design & Implementation of Transformative Change (3 cr.)	MOD 1: EDD 801, Dissertation 1 (3 cr.)
	MOD 2: EDD 702, Research and Professional Communication (3 cr.)	MOD 2: EDD 708, Technology for Transforming Education (3 cr.)	MOD 2: EDD 802, Dissertation 2 (3 cr.)
SPRING	MOD 3: EDD 704, Quantitative Research (3 cr.)	MOD 3: EDD 709, Frameworks of Transformative Education (3 cr.)	MOD 3: EDD 803, Dissertation 3 (3 cr.)
	MOD 4: EDD 703, Qualitative Research (3 cr.)	MOD 4: Elective (3 cr.)	MOD 4: EDD 804, Dissertation 4 (3 cr.)
SUMMER	MOD 5: EDD 705, Theories of Teaching & Learning (3 cr.)	MOD 5: Elective (3 cr.) & Summer Residency (0 cr.)	
	MOD 6: EDD 706, Education Policies (3 cr.)	MOD 6: Elective (3 cr.) Portfolio Assessment (0 cr.)	
Credits per year	18 cr.	18 cr.	12 cr.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES

Graduate Program Academic Policies

Students must comply with [Alvernia University's Graduate Program Academic Policies](#) outlined in the 2026-27 Graduate Catalog.

Ed.D. Program Requirements

- Attend a Program Orientation.
- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5.
- Follow the program completion plan. Any deviations require prior approval from the Program Director.
- Enroll in no more than one course per Mod and two courses per semester. Enrollment in more than one course per Mod requires Program Director approval.
- Obtain Program Director approval for the concentration area and registration for all dissertation courses.
- Complete all research, education, and elective coursework prior to the Portfolio Assessment and residency.
- Complete all coursework and summer residency and earn a grade of B or higher on the Portfolio Assessment before the start of the applied dissertation.
- Complete the graduate requirement in ethics, leadership and social responsibility.

Ed.D. Program Transfer Credit Policy

Up to 18 credits may be transferred. Transfer credit requests require approval by the Program Director.

- A maximum of 6 doctoral-level credits may be transferred from another accredited higher education institution. Requires a review of the graduate transcript and course syllabus.
- A maximum of 6 credits earned in Alvernia University's M.Ed. or Ph.D. courses in the period of 2020-present may be applied to research core, education core, or elective courses (concentration area). Requires a review of the graduate transcript.
- A maximum of 6 professional experience credits may be applied to the education core courses. Requires an application with a \$400 fee.