Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies (HELPS)

#PHinisheD — A Guide for Your Journey Through the HELPS Ph.D. Program

Updated per 2026–2027 Handbook

STAGE 1 — Coursework

- Core Coursework (33 cr)
  ELPS 514, 517, 602–608, 610, 611
- → Research Requirements (15 cr)
  HUDE 400, 500, 501 · ELPS 524, 609
  Foundational research & statistics training
- → Electives (12 cr — choose 4)
  ELPS 612, 613, 614, 455

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STAGE 2 — Research Preparation Courses

- ELPS 615 — Research Practicum (3 cr)
  Required for Comps eligibility
- → ELPS 599 — Research Preparation Seminar (3 cr)
  Recommended before Comps (not required)
  No dissertation advisor needed · Offered Fall & Spring

Distinct from "Research Requirements" above: these two courses bridge coursework and the dissertation itself — both may be taken before, during, or after Comps.

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STAGE 3 — Comprehensive Examination

- Complete 51 Credits
  (Core + Research + ELPS 615)
- → Sit for & Pass the Comprehensive Examination
  (typically end of Fall, Year 3)

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STAGE 4 — Pre-Candidacy Advising & Proposal Development

- Identify a Dissertation Advisor
  & Ask Them to Serve as Chair
  (Your ELPS 599 instructor will guide timing)
- → Identify 3 Additional
  Committee Members
- → Develop & Revise Dissertation
  Proposal (Independent Study)

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STAGE 5 — Proposal Defense & IRB

- Chair Invites Committee to Review
  Proposal & Sets Defense Date
- → Defend Dissertation Proposal
  (Chapters 1–3)
- → Submit IRB Application
  & Obtain Approval

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STAGE 6 — Admission to Candidacy

- Candidacy Checklist:
  Candidacy Form · Comps Passed · Expository Writing · Proposal Approved
  Dept. Recommendation · RCR Training · IRB Approval · GSAS Approval
- → Apply for Candidacy
  ≥ 1 Semester Before Intended
  Graduation Term

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STAGE 7 — Candidacy Through Completion

- Enroll in ELPS 600
  (Dissertation Guidance)
  Now a Ph.D. Candidate
- → Collect Data, Conduct Study,
  Analyze & Write (Chapters 4–5)
- → Finalize Dissertation w/ Chair;
  Identify External Committee Member
- → Defend Dissertation → Pass →
  Revise → Apply for Graduation

Congratulations! Submit Your Final Dissertation Copy to the ProQuest/UMI Database