Overview

The Instructional Leadership Ph.D. with concentration in Social and Cultural Studies is dedicated to the improvement of professional practice within learning communities.  We develop future scholars, researchers, and instructional leaders for schools, colleges and other learning institutions.  Our work is guided by the principles of reflective practice, professional growth, democratic action, and individual responsibility. The overarching goal is the preparation of theoretically-informed leaders with the critical understanding of social and cultural issues necessary to enact organizational, curricular, and pedagogic reforms within their respective institutional settings.

Admission Requirements

To be considered for regular admission, students must have maintained an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or a 3.0 average for the last 60 semester hours in a degree program. No entrance exam is required for application to the Instructional Leadership PhD with concentration in Social and Cultural Studies. However, students who have already taken the GRE and scored at or above the 50th percentile are encouraged to submit their results to supplement their application. For admission, an applicant must apply through the [Graduate School.](https://web.archive.org/web/20230329065318/http:/graduate.ua.edu/) You will be asked to submit names for recommendations, a departmental information sheet, your curriculum vita or resume, a statement of purpose, and a writing sample.

Program Requirements

When admitted to the program you will be assigned a temporary advisor–you may continue to work with this person or select an another advisor when you get to know the faculty. One of the first projects, usually completed in the first or second semester, is to form a Program Advisory Committee and complete a Program of Study Form.

1. Copies of your [Program of Study Form](https://web.archive.org/web/20230329065318/https:/education.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BEF_POS_Form.pdf) must be submitted to the department and to the graduate school. Any changes to the program of study must be made by completing the Course Substitution Form.
2. Your Program of Study Form must indicate that you will meet the University Residency Requirement (see options below).
3. Up to 21 hours of required course work may be transferred if credit meets conditions stated in the Doctoral Degrees section of the Graduate Catalog. Use the Transfer Graduate Credit Form.
4. All requirements must be completed within seven years. Credit earned in the six years preceding enrollment in the doctoral program may be applied. See the checklist pertaining to each degree for any exceptions. (Some programs may be eight years if certain conditions prevail. See [Graduate Catalog](https://web.archive.org/web/20230329065318/https:/catalog.ua.edu/).)

A minimum of 66 credit hours beyond the master’s degree or 84 hours beyond the bachelor’s degree.  A typical 66-credit hour PhD is comprised of 48 hours of coursework, a comprehensive examination, 18 hours of dissertation credit, and the University residency requirement.

*Students must complete 33 hours of coursework relevant to the major, including, at a minimum, 18 hours of BEF coursework.  These 18 hours must include the following program core courses: BEF 644, AEL/BEF 667, AEL/BEF 681, and BEF 690. Students planning on working with or in K-12 schools or in teaching generally (even in higher ed) are encouraged to take curriculum theory (AEL 669). Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to complete at least one course in each of the constituent program disciplines: sociology, history, and philosophy. Preapproved courses are as follow:*

* Sociology: BEF 507, 641, 650
* History: BEF 503, 640, 653
* Philosophy: BEF 504, 642, 654

Remaining hours of coursework may come from the following elective courses: Any disciplinary course not taken from above and BEF 510, 534, 575, 581, 585, 607, 639, 695

In consultation with their advisor, students are encouraged to seek relevant courses outside the program and College to fulfill both disciplinary and elective needs according to their academic interests and professional goals.

A majority of courses in the program of study must be at the 600 level or higher.

***Research.***15 hours of coursework in quantitative and/or qualitative research methods must be included in the program of study.

***Dissertation****(AEL 699, 18 hours).* Continuous enrollment is required until the dissertation is complete. The number of hours will vary. Prior to beginning the dissertation, students will present a short prospectus to their committee. This is an informal meeting to help students work through their basic idea. Students then develop a proposal. The proposal normally constitutes the first three chapters of the dissertation study. After a successful defense of the proposal, a student should submit the application for admission to candidacy form to the Graduate School–and a photocopy to the department.

***Doctoral Residency.***The University of Alabama recognizes that doctoral students should be immersed in advanced study and inquiry, interact extensively and meaningfully with faculty and peers, engage with the academic community in their field, and have access to the educational resources of the university. To achieve these goals, a minimum of 50 percent of coursework hours to be counted in a student’s doctoral program must be from The University of Alabama (exclusive of dissertation research hours and subject to the Graduate Catalog’s Transfer of Credit policies). Additionally, 100 percent of dissertation credit hours must be from The University of Alabama. Diverse academic traditions, rapidly changing instructional modalities, and new student populations are acknowledged and accommodated with this policy.

Consult the Graduate School Catalog for student policies.

**Comprehensive Exams**

Students have two options to fulfill the comprehensive examination requirement: Traditional on-site exam or pursuit of publications, as explained below. In both cases, students should follow these guidelines:

1. Your completed PhD in Instructional Leadership with an emphasis in Social and Cultural Studies Program of Study Form must have been submitted to the department and the Graduate School;
2. To take or submit comprehensive examinations you must be in the final semester of your coursework;
3. Students must have completed all course requirements and, if necessary, remove all grades of “I” from their academic records before completing exams. If students are in the last semester of course work, they may complete their exams in the same semester.
4. Student should apply for comprehensive exams by completing the [Comprehensive Examination Application Form](https://web.archive.org/web/20230329065318/https:/education.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-ELPTS-SCS-comps-application.pdf) and send it to [lballard@ua.edu](https://web.archive.org/web/20230329065318/mailto:lballard@ua.edu). Students must apply by September 15 to complete exams in the fall and by February 1 to complete exams in the spring. There will be no summer exams.
5. After passing your comprehensive examinations complete a signed Doctoral Committee Appointment Form. This needs to be on file in the department and the Graduate School by the time of the prospectus.
6. Starting the following semester, you are required to maintain continuous registration for a minimum of three hours per term in dissertation research until the completion of the dissertation.

**Comprehensive Examination Options and Procedures**

*Traditional option.*Students admitted after March 1, 2017, will take an on-site, sit down exam. Students will complete four questions over a six hour period as follows: Two questions from 9:00-12:00 and two questions from 1:00-4:00. Students will be permitted to bring one page of notes, blank note paper, and writing utensils into the testing room. Program of Study committee has In consultation with your advisor, faculty will endeavour to construct an examination that reflects the individual needs of the doctoral student. In consultation with the student, the committee will develop a set questions that reflects both the foundational coursework and the individual needs/interests of the doctoral student.  The student’s advisor will also coordinate the evaluating and reporting of the results of the exam.

Students admitted prior to March 1, 2017 may choose between a take-home or a sit-down format of the comprehensive examination. Fro the former, the student will have 14 days to complete the examination and may choose any two-week period during the regular semester following the development of the exam. The examination will consist of 4 questions. Students are expected to write 12 to 15 pages on each question, giving full citations and using APA (6th edition). All exams must be typed, double-spaced, and 12 point font.

A minimum of three members of the faculty will independently read and evaluate each question. Each member will rate each question using the departmental [rubric](https://web.archive.org/web/20230329065318/https:/education.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BEF_Rubric.pdf). Students must achieve a combined average of 3 or higher on each question to pass the exam. Students will also have an oral defense of their examination within six weeks of taking the exam. An oral defense will be waived if the student has presented academic papers at a minimum of two professional conferences approved by his/her advisor. One of these presentations may be a co-presentation with a faculty member.

Working with the administrative assistant who coordinates the comprehensive examinations, the chair of the Program of Study committee will distribute pass or fail letters to the student, student records, Program of Study committee, and the Graduate School. Results of the examination will be reported in writing to the student within 4-6 weeks of completing the written exam or within 1-2 weeks after an oral defense. In the event that a person does not successfully meet the requirements for passing the exam, the student will be given the opportunity to re-take the examination in full or in part, as necessary,the following semester. If a student does not successfully pass the exam on the second try, he/she will be removed from the program.

*Publication option.*With the approval of their advisor, students may pursue the publication option for comprehensive exams. Students who choose this option will submit two publishable papers during the exam semester. Students must apply for comprehensive exams by the date indicated above. Papers will be due on the **final day of regular classes of the exam semester**.

Papers can be empirical or conceptual and the research questions or topics are at the discretion of the student. However, the questions or topics should reflect the field of SCS. Students are encouraged to consult with their advisor to make this determination. It is expected that papers would be in development over a much longer period of time than traditional exams.Prior to the exam semester, students are encouraged to present these papers at professional conferences to help develop and refine them, with the final manuscripts being refined and delivered during the exam period.

An important part of the exam is to research a number of journals in the field and determine a journal to which each paper might be submitted. Students will prepare a one page rationale for this determination to be submitted with the papers on the due date. Journals chosen must be relevant to the field of Social and Cultural Studies and/or its foundational disciplines (philosophy, history, sociology) and follow a blind, peer-reviewed review process.

*Students may not seek faculty feedback on written work during the exam semester*. [Note that the oral defense requirement/waiver explained in point 3 of the traditional exam procedure is still in effect.] Papers will typically be 20-30 pages in length, not including references, and follow the referencing style of the identified journal(s). After review by two program faculty members and a reviewer external to the program and revision by the student, it is expected, but not required, that each paper will be submitted for publication.

In consultation with program faculty, he external reviewer will be chosen by the student’s advisor.  The external advisor will be a tenure track faculty member external to the program, and a published scholar in the field. The external review will be a blind review.

The benchmark for standard of quality for review purposes will be the journal of the American Educational Studies Association: *Educational Studies*. Papers will be graded along the following standard levels of readiness for publication: Accept, no revision needed; Accept, with minor revision; Revise and resubmit, substantial revision required; Reject. Successful completion of this option for comprehensive exams will require a recommendation of “revise and resubmit” from each reviewer. Please see the rubric for specific criteria of review.

Frequently asked questions about the publication option:

* Can I develop a paper written in class?  Yes, the publication option is meant to provide students the opportunity to develop meaningful projects over a longer term which is part of the publication process.
* Can I seek feedback from professors outside the program in the semester I am completing the requirement?  No. As this is meant to be a longer term project, you should mainly be putting the finishing touches on your articles during the exam semester. The point is that you should be working toward becoming an independent scholar.
* Can I co-author an article with a faculty member to fulfill the comprehensive exam requirement?  No. Of course, you are encourage to seek out opportunities to publish with faculty members outside of the exam requirement.
* Can I get help on which journals I should target for my work?  No, not during the exam semester. You should be becoming familiar with journals in the field during your coursework and by attending conferences, noting where people with similar interests are publishing. Figuring out where the scholarly conversations that you want to participate in are taking place is part of the intellectual exercise.
* Does the paper I develop have to be a journal article or can it be a book chapter? If you have been invited to contribute a chapter based on a paper (presented at a conference, e.g.), you may develop the paper for that purpose.
* What happens if I fail? Students who fail comprehensive exams (either the traditional format or publication format) have one opportunity to retake the exam. Students who do not pass the publication optionmust complete the traditional option for their retake.
* Can I opt out of the publication option and complete the traditional option in the same semester?  Yes, but this is a decision that needs to be made in a timely manner in consultation with your advisor.
* Will the external reviewer be someone I have had class with? Not necessarily. Your exam committee will identify a tenure-track faculty member from outside the program. To ensure that you obtain a fair and valuable review, we interpret “outside” as broadly as possible, including faculty from other programs, departments, Colleges, and Universities. The external reviewer will have expertise in the questions you raise and will be a published scholar in SCS.

**Graduation**

1. Complete and submit the*Application for Degree* to the Graduate School during the first week of the semester in which you plan to defend your dissertation.
2. The dissertation defense must be announced to the College of Education.
3. Approved dissertation, defended and accepted, should be submitted to Graduate School Office (and a photocopy of the title page, abstract and signature page to the department) at least six weeks prior to the end of semester in which student will graduate. Contact Graduate School Office for exact date each term (See the Graduate School’s web site for required editorial guidelines.)