“Whatever we believe about ourselves and our ability comes true for us.”
- Susan L. Taylor, journalist -

Navigating the Qualifying Exams
Tips on writing and defending your work.
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Emergent Student Leaders and UNC Charlotte Professors Participate at NCARE
Highlighting Ed.D. students, alumni, and faculty who participated at the conference February 16-17.
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Get Involved. Finish Your Dissertation. Graduate!
Upcoming activities, writing assistance, student resources, & tips for commencement day.
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Technology for Graduate Students
Four quick steps to access SPSS at home.
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Connect with your Educational Leadership Program
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Plan your course of study--Dr. Cathy Howell (chowel22@uncc.edu) can help determine the best path for taking courses to finish the program. She can also help with any academic petitions.

Qualifying Exams--Contact your advisor to set up qualifying exams. Here are the dates for those exams
- Summer/Fall: July 1 - July 31 (written) & August 15 - September 15 (orals)
- Spring: February 1 - February 28 (written) & March 15 - April 15 (orals)

Dissertation--Work with your chair to complete your dissertation. You should have your topic and most of the review of literature completed before taking the dissertation proposal class (ADMN 8699). The Center for Graduate Life has additional resources that are very helpful.

Please feel free to contact me for any questions or concerns.

Claudia Flowers cpflower@uncc.edu

“Expect anything worthwhile to take time and lots of effort.”
- Mothers around the world

Even in a culture where everyone expects instant gratification, you, as a doctoral student quickly realized there is no immediacy in this academic journey. From classes, to qualifying exams, proposal defense, and finally the dissertation defense, nothing is easy or fast and many aspects of the program are not within your control.

All your professors have made the same journey you are making and understand the challenges that you are facing. This is a journey you cannot do alone--You will need help. At UNC Charlotte, there are resources to help students complete their doctorate. Please use the following resources to help you complete the program. We want you to graduate!

Claudia Flowers has been at UNC Charlotte for 22 years as a research faculty member. She was named Chair of Educational Leadership in the 2015-2017 academic year. She teaches the statistics courses and has served on over 100 dissertation committees. Her research interest is assessment of students with disabilities.
Navigating the Qualifying Exams

Maria Marsella Leahy, Ed.D.

Who: All Ed Leadership students with 24 credit hours of coursework completed.

What: The qualifying exam is a student's opportunity to display knowledge in both a written and oral exam. It is the first major milestone in the doctoral program.

When: The exams are offered twice per year:

Summer/Fall: July 1 - July 31 (written) & August 15 - September 15 (orals)

Spring: February 1 - February 28 (written) & March 15 - April 15 (orals)

Where: The written portion of the QE can occur on campus or off-campus. Oral examination occurs with your committee at the Cato College of Education.

How: Students should take the written qualifying examination as soon as possible after completing 24 credit hours of coursework and not later than 36 credit hours of coursework. After the written portion is completed, an oral defense is scheduled. The student is responsible to initiate the process with his/her advisor.

The QE is assessed using a rubric which can be found on the website: QE Rubric

Why: This is the student’s first opportunity to engage in a written and oral synthesis of the content you are learning in the program.

Purpose: The written and oral qualifying examinations allow students to demonstrate:

- Understanding of the body of knowledge addressed in the Initial portion of the doctoral program;
- Ability to integrate and apply this knowledge;
- Understanding of the tools of academic scholarship;
- Skills of written and oral expression; and,
- Potential for success in the remaining coursework and on the dissertation.

For more information go to:

QE Doc Handbook

Helpful Tips: The following tips are taking from a list printed in The Graduate, a newsletter for University of California at Berkley in 1986. Some tips still hold true:

- Know what they are looking for—talk to your advisor and your colleagues.
- Use positive self-talk—you can do this. You are in a high level program; if you prepare you will be fine. Your committee wants you to pass—you just have to do the work!
- When you are writing, you are presenting your ability to synthesis, reason, and communicate. Take the time to organize and use this time to compose a strong argument.
- When you defend, think about your committee as colleague and have an academic dialogue.

Berkley's The Graduate-Studying For The Qualifying Exam
Educational Leadership Summer Course Offerings

Summer is a great time to take a course or focus on your professional writing. Check out your Degree-Works audit to see what courses you need moving forward to degree completion. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Dr. Howell @ chowel22@uncc.edu.

Course Offerings

Extended Summer Session (May 22-Aug 10):

- ADMN8439 590 31217 Practicum in Adult Ed
- ADMN8999 590 30666 Dissertation Research
- RSCH8800 590 30664 Ind Study in Research

First Summer Session (May 22-Jun 28):

- ADMN8170 590 31214 Intro to Comm College
- RSCH8111 590 30653 Qual Research Methods
- EIST 8120 080 30687 Curr Trends in Instr Systems Technology
- EIST 8800 080 30690 Ind Study in Instr Systems Technology

Second Summer Session (Jul 5-Aug 10):

- ADMN8121 790 40677 Doc Sem in Curr Design
- ADMN8800 790 40415 Ind Study in Educ Admn
- EIST8000 780 40572 Topics in Inst Systems Technology
- ADMN8000 796 40798 Women in Higher Educ

Fall Course Schedule will be available beginning Monday, March 6, 2017.

Registration for summer and fall classes opens March 27th.

CALENDAR REMINDERS AND EVENTS

* March 6  Fall 2017 Schedule of Classes available
* March 10  Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Review Deadline
* March 6-11  Spring Recess - No Classes
* March 7-10  Dissertation Writing Bootcamp
* March 17  MSDK Research Symposium (CCOE)
* March 27  17th Annual Graduate Research Symposium (Student Union)
* March 20  Last day to withdraw from course(s)
* March 21-23  Commencement Fair
* March 27  Registration Opens for Summer 2017 and Fall 2017
* April 7  Doctoral Dissertation Defense Deadline
* April 14-15  Spring Weekend - No Classes
* April 17  Last Day to Submit Dissertations for May 2017 Graduation
* May 2  Last day of classes
* May 5  ASHE Conference Deadline (Conference date 11/8-11)
* May 4-11  Final Examinations
* May 13  Commencement for College of Education
Emergent Student Leaders and UNC Charlotte Professors Participate at NCARE

A Note from Dr. Sandra Dika, 2016-2017 President NCARE
The annual meeting and conference of the North Carolina Association for Research in Education (NCARE) was held February 16-17, 2017 at the Friday Center at UNC Chapel Hill, with over 60 educational researchers from across the state in attendance. The conference kicked off on Thursday, February 16 with workshops by the Center for Creative Leadership and the Accountability Services Division of NCDPI, followed by a catered reception and poster session. Friday’s schedule included 3 paper breakout sessions (18 papers total) and a keynote lunch address by Sean Hamel, program evaluator for the NC General Assembly. Conference presenters represented 6 higher education institutions and 3 school districts.

UNC Charlotte was well represented at the annual NCARE Professors, students, and alumni presented a total of 21 posters or papers (listed in this article). NCARE is a great opportunity to present your research under the guidance of seasoned professionals. Talk to professors who share a common research interest to help you cross this bridge.

“I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge. Harriet Tubman was a bridge. Ida B. Wells was a bridge. Madame C.J. Walker was a bridge. Fannie Lou Hamer was a bridge.”
—Oprah Winfrey

Student Volunteers: Monica Allen, Kiran Budhrani, Yolanda Kennedy, Maria Leahy, Nhu Nguyen, Neda Pouraskari, & April Smith

Poster Presentations:
1. Kiran Budhrani
   Exploring the Opportunities of “Smart Learning” in the Classroom
2. Tracy Creech & Bette Butler
   A Tale of Two Libraries: A Quantitative Comparison Study of School Library Media Centers
3. Jason Giersch
   Civics, like Science: Another Gender Gap in Student Achievement
4. Eugenia Hopper
   Perceptions of Professional Support for African-American Female Elementary Teachers
5. Jennifer Johnson
   Calling African American Students to Enroll in Advanced Mathematics
6. April Smith
   Examining Student-Faculty Interactions with Students of Color at Predominantly White Institutions
7. Yoona Lim
   Curriculum Reform for a 21st Century Knowledge-Based Society in South Korea: Two Conflicting Foci in One Plan
8. Neda Pouraskari
   Institution Support (Financial and Cultural) and Increase in Persistence of Female STEM Students
9. Anna Sancyz
   A Quantitative Analysis of Perceptions and Practices of Adult ESL Teachers in North Carolina Community Colleges as Regards the Promotion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
10. April Smith & Yolanda Kennedy
    How Culture Influences Gender Roles and Expectations in Chinese Culture
11. Victoria Yegelwel
    NC Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Paper Presentations:
1. Matthew Peeler
   A Comparison of Developmental Math Sequence Progression at a North Carolina Comm. College Using a Markov Chain Model
2. Jason Giersch
   It’s Not About the Money: An Experiment in Teacher Recruitment
3. Tatia Prieto
   Administrative Spending Differences Between Charters & Traditional School Districts
4. Maria Marsella Leahy
   Skills and Characteristics of Sustained Leaders of Successful Public Charter Schools in N. Carolina
5. Claudia Interiano, Jae Hoon Lim, & Carrie Nowell
   Constructing Authentic Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Professional Identity: Case Study of a Successful Engineering Course
6. Priscila Baddouh, Angela Ferrara, Richard Lambert, & Erica Merrill
   An Examination of the Implementation of a Statewide Kindergarten Electronic Portfolio Assessment
7. Kiran Budhrani, Florence Martin, & Lynn Ahlgrim-Delzell
   Systematic Review of Two Decades (1995-2014) of Research on Synchronous Online Learning
8. Florence Martin, Chuang Wang, & Ayesha Sadaf
   Being There: Student Perception of Instructor Facilitation Strategies in Online Learning
9. Nhu Nguyen
   Vietnamese American College Students’ Perceptions and Strategies of Engagement on College Campus and in Community
JOIN NCARE — **NCARE** Membership for students is only $10.
When do you begin thinking about your dissertation? Advice from a candidate who successfully defended—“If you haven’t started to think about it, start today!”

If possible, your coursework research should be related to your potential topic. Talk to your professors and colleagues about your interests. As you explore your topic for other assignments, keep track of the articles you read. You never know where your interest will take you!

Get to know your research librarians, Abby Moore and Judith Walker. J. Murrey Atkins Library has a variety of resources. Click here to see some resources available to you.

If you need support with writing, UNC Charlotte offers assistance.

On-Going Dissertation Writing Assistance

Dissertation Writing Support - Book an Appointment
Mon-Wed: 2:00-5:00pm; Cone 268

Dr. Lisa Russell-Pinson is available to help dissertation students improve their academic writing skills, understand the dissertation process, work more effectively with their chairs and committee members, manage their time, set realistic writing goals, and deal with barriers to writing, such as writer’s block and procrastination. Email Dr. Russell-Pinson (lpinson@uncc.edu) to arrange an appointment.

Dissertation Writing Boot Camp – Dissertation Boot Camp
March 7 to March 10

Dissertation boot camps provide multi-day opportunities for doctoral students to devote focused time and attention to one goal: making progress on their dissertations. The boot camps offer a quiet space to work, structured writing time, and writing-related resources and support; because all participants are actively engaged in writing their dissertations, the boot camps also serve to decrease the sense of isolation that many doctoral students feel during the dissertation process.

Commencement Fair
Tuesday, March 21st – Thursday, March 23rd
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Graduation is an exciting experience for you the graduate and friends and family. Begin to think about the costs associated with graduation and how to reduce some expenses so that you may fully enjoy your special day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cap and gown</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom regalia</td>
<td>$375 – $1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Linda Burke at <a href="mailto:lburke10@uncc.edu">lburke10@uncc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allow at least 6-8 weeks for arrival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline Friday, March 24th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tickets</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photos: Optional - GradImages</td>
<td>$12.95 - $169.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD: GradImages</td>
<td>$89.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation: Required - Submission and ETD From</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation: Electronic submission to ProQuest – Traditional Publishing</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation: Optional - Copyright Registration</td>
<td>$55.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation: Optional - Open Access Publishing</td>
<td>$95.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation: Optional – Personal Bound Copy</td>
<td>$10.00 – $40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commencement Invitations - personalized</td>
<td>$109.98 - $279.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnes &amp; Noble – generic invitations</td>
<td>$27.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refer to the Division of Academic Affairs website for commencement information.
Opportunities Available to Ed.D. Students

Funding

The Department of Educational Leadership and the Graduate School have provided a wide variety of resources to assist graduate students with financing their education. Check the sites frequently for updated information and apply early to avoid missing deadlines.

Priority deadline for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is March 1, 2017; however, applications still be submitted. Even if you do not plan to use a federal loan, the FAFSA may be an important factor if you plan to apply for other types of funding.

Some current opportunities for funding:

- **Philip Morris Educational Leadership Fellowship Award** is awarded to a full-time doctoral student. Philip Morris Fellowship provides an annual $5000 award for an outstanding full-time doctoral student in educational leadership. Contact the Department of Educational Leadership. Check it out on the website or contact the Ed. Leadership Office. Deadline for applying is March 16, 2017.

- **Thomas L. Reynolds Graduate Student Research Award**, established by Graduate School Dean Tom Reynolds, supports exceptionally talented graduate students and can be used for books, travel, materials and supplies or other qualified expenses. For more information and to apply, visit the Graduate School's website. Questions may be directed to Christi Skerlak, Executive Assistant to the Dean at cskerlak@uncc.edu.

- **Lucille P. and Edward C. Giles Dissertation-Year Graduate Fellowship** was established to recognize and support students who are in the final stages of earning a doctoral degree in a STEM Field of Study as defined by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Through the generosity of the Edward C. Giles Foundation and Lucille P. Giles, the recipient will be awarded $20,000 plus full tuition, required fees, health insurance, and a $1,000 travel allowance for research. Application Deadline Date: April 15, 2017

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New Certificate Program

**Program Description**

This [12 credit hour Graduate Certificate](#) in College Teaching will prepare graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, current faculty, and others with the skills needed for the full range of faculty responsibilities at a range of Institutions of higher education.

**Counseling Support**

The Counseling Center offers individual and both structured, theme-centered groups as well as interpersonal group counseling designed to help students achieve personal growth and development, discuss interpersonal issues or difficulties, and try out new ways of behaving. In group therapy, approximately six to ten people meet with two trained group therapists.

Some current opportunities for group support:

- **Stress for Success** Wednesdays: 2:00-2:50 PM, April 5 - April 26 Stress is unavoidable, especially when the stakes are high or when a situation is very important to us. Do you find your level of stress overwhelming to the point that it interferes with your ability to be at your best? This workshop series includes four rotating weekly topics such as mindfulness, managing worry that can help you learn to reduce overwhelming stress, and channeling helpful stress into energy that will help you feel positively motivated and more engaged in your academic and personal life. Group Leaders: Sarah Stewart, Ph.D. & Sandy Milling, M.S.

- **Peace of Mind** Mindfulness, Meditation & Coping Thursdays: 1:00-2:30 PM, February 16 - March 23 & March 30 - April 27 Do you find that you worry a lot, are self-critical or just can’t seem to relax? Would you like to learn to be more attentive and present in your life? Goals of this group are to help you gain greater self-awareness, reduce emotional distress, and increase your ability to manage unhelpful thoughts. Group Leaders: Jessalyn Klein, Ph.D. & Becky Pearlson, Psy.D.

Click on the link, [Counselling Center](#), for more information about free support for Ed.D students.
I completed my dissertation and defended in July 2016, though I didn’t walk in graduation until December 2016. I am in the same position for the past three years as principal at Lincolnton Middle School in Lincoln County. In the future, I desire to teach at a public university, hopefully Western Carolina University. I LOVE the mountains and we have purchased some property in that area. This is my “ten year plan” to move there after my son finishes either middle school or high school. In the meantime, I am content to stay principal at my current school and potentially teach at a community college part time.

Dana Ayers, Ed.D.
Graduation date—December 2016

For me, focusing on higher education and learning more about the theories behind the work I’ve been doing has been the most rewarding experience in this program. The most challenging aspect of being a doctoral student is also working full-time at Queens University of Charlotte. Balancing the responsibilities of the program and the experiences I want to have in the program with work can be tough.

Amber Perrell, Doctoral Student

Um, where am I in the program right now? I’m in the final stages of the program finalizing my proposal and working toward dissertation. Over the course of the degree, the connections I’ve made and friendships that have fostered out of this experience have meant the most to me. Those connections are what help me through this arduous time of the degree. I would consider this my most rewarding experience being in the program. My greatest challenge is focusing when there is no specific deadline. Chapter 2 has been the most challenging because it appears as if information climbs out of the woodwork and there’s no definitive stopping point.

Tammy DeCesare, Doctoral Candidate
Anticipated graduation date—August 2017

My daughter gave me a card with quote by Neale Donald Walsch on the day I defended my dissertation (February 9, 2017!). She saw me grow and stretch myself through UNC Charlotte’s Ed.D. program. I’m proud that I allowed myself this challenge and that those I care for understand how important is it to give yourself the opportunity to stretch yourself to “the end of your comfort zone.” I wouldn’t change a thing!

Maria M Leahy, Ed.D.
Anticipated graduation date—May 2017
Available Software and Support Ed.D. Students
Nhu Nguyen, Ed.D. Student

**DegreeWorks** is a web-based tool that allows students to plan and monitor academic progression of degree completion. Students, faculty, and staff may access **DegreeWorks**. Students should routinely check the audit and report any inaccuracies to [degeworks@uncc.edu](mailto:degeworks@uncc.edu) or contact Dr. Cathy Howell at chowel22@uncc.edu.

**Research Consultations with Project Mosaic** Faculty members and graduate students in any disciplines can attend our workshops and come to us for consulting. **Project Mosaic** facilitates scholarship between social scientists and other scholars, especially, data scientists and natural scientists.

**J. Murrey Atkins Library** provides workshops on **EndNote Citation Management**.

**Additional Support Opportunities:**
**SAS** and **JMP** are the only software available for students to download free. You can download them by logging into [software.uncc.edu](http://software.uncc.edu) (FAQ).

**SPSS** is available to students to use (not download) by using **Citrix** (FAQ)

**QSR NVivo** is licensed only for Graduate Students by using **Citrix** (FAQ)

Access **Citrix**:  
1. Login with your NinerNET account  
2. Check the box to for I Agree with the Citrix license agreement  
3. Click Install  
4. After the Citrix plug-in has been downloaded and installed click Continue  
5. Access software and applications by clicking on the + icon on the left  
6. Select the software or application and a shortcut will be added to your Citrix window  
7. Click on the software shortcut link on the Citrix window to open the software

All doctoral students have access to SPSS via Citrix on the web.

Contact UNC Charlotte's help desk if you have difficulty (704-687-5500).
Voices from Educational Leadership

Newsletter Contributions and Acknowledgments

If you are interested in submitting articles or have ideas for the next edition of the Ed.D. Ledger, please contact Dr. Cathy Howell, Graduate Program Director at chowell@uncc.edu.

The newsletter is a bi-semester communication that is distributed to all current doctoral students, faculty, and staff.

Special thanks is extended to doctoral graduate assistants Maria Leahy and Nhu Nguyen who developed the Spring 2017 edition.

Join our Facebook Group

Engage and interact with other members of the Educational Leadership Facebook community. The group is only for students, alumni, faculty, and staff of the College of Education at UNC Charlotte. The purposes are to communicate, connect, and celebrate your successes! This may include completing course work, qualifying examinations, dissertation proposal, or sharing job opportunities.

Group membership must be approved by a group administrator or other member of the group.

Click the Facebook icon to go to our page!