 

Department of Education Policy and Social Analysis

Teachers College, Columbia University

**Education Policy Ph.D.**

**Program Study Guide**

**Teachers College Major Code: EPOL**

**Degree and minimum point requirements: Ph.D. (75 points)**

**For incoming Summer/Fall 2021 students**

***Program Description*:** The Education Policy Program aims to build a cadre of education policy experts whose substantive grounding in a range of educational policy issues is matched only by their understanding of the policy process and the tools of policy analysis. The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education Policy is a selective 75-credit program focused on the preparation of policy analysts, policy advocates, and educational researchers. The Program is housed in the Department of Education Policy and Social Analysis at Teachers College, Columbia University and is intended for persons who want to acquire advanced training in the theory, methods, and practices of education policy. Tprogram will develop students’ skills by drawing on interdisciplinary approaches to policy analysis, including those employed within economics, law, politics, and sociology. The program adopts a pre-K to higher education focus, to better integrate understanding of important factors that cut across the typically fragmented study of early childhood policy, K-12 policy, and higher education policy and that bear upon the transitions from one level to another. Graduates of this program secure positions as university professors, and as policy advisors and researchers for school systems, government agencies, foundations and private agencies committed to analyzing and developing policies for the field of education.

Courses are offered in a traditional schedule during the fall and spring, with a limited number of course options available in summer.[[1]](#footnote-1) The program requirements listed below indicate the thematic areas across which courses should be distributed and the number of required courses in each area. Students must consult with their academic advisor before making any substitutions for required courses, including using transfer credits to meet requirements.

***Guided Options:*** The program combines structured requirements with a reasonable number of options about how specific requirements are met. We expect entering students to matriculate with somewhat varied academic and professional backgrounds. While many will have undergraduate or even graduate degrees in a social science discipline, they may have received little or no exposure to other approaches. Other students might have considerable grounding in the study of education and applied experience in leadership or policy positions, but may have had less grounding in the social sciences and research methods. Some may enter with a well-defined interest in a particular specialized area of education policy while others may have more general interests initially and develop their more focused specializations during their coursework. To complete the program successfully, students must develop a strong foundation including familiarity with how different disciplines conceptualize problems, understanding of the logic research and skill in applying advanced research techniques, and familiarity with the processes by which education policy is created and implemented. We do not aspire to turn out students who all know and think the same way, however, and there is room to shape your individual program to allow you to develop depth in areas of special interest and attitude. You develop the specific components of your program in close interaction with faculty advisors who will work with you to ensure that your choices are coherent and complementary.

***Breadth Requirement:***  For this degree program, students must complete at least 15 points of coursework in other Teacher College programs or departments (TC courses without an EDPA prefix), including courses at Columbia University.

***Transfer Credits****:* Students may transfer up to 30 points from a previous institution into this degree program with the approval of their faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will review all courses to determine which are relevant to the Education Policy program, and only such courses will be approved. The advisor may ask students to submit additional documentation to assist in this process (i.e., annotated bibliography or syllabus). The acceptance of transfer credit does not relieve the student of the need to meet the stated requirements of the program; for example, it is possible that a student transferring in the maximum 30 points would need to take more than an additional 45 in order to meet remaining requirements.

***Expectations for Satisfactory Progress:*** Students are expected to make satisfactory progress toward the completion of degree requirements. Program faculty will annually review each student’s progress. Where concerns exist about a student’s progress, students will be informed by the program faculty. If a student is performing below expectations he/she may be required to complete additional course work. The program will provide a plan and timeline for remediation so that students are aware of the expectations held for them. If satisfactory progress is not maintained a student may be dismissed from the program.

***(Beginning in the Fall 2018 term, all students who enroll in a degree program must register for courses beginning with their initial term of entry and continuing each fall/spring term until their degree requirements have been met. Please talk to your advisor about the ways you can meet the continuous enrollment requirement. For the full text of the continues enrollment policy see*** [***https://goo.gl/esMBDK***](https://goo.gl/esMBDK)***.)***

***Research Tool Requirement:*** Ph.D. students must demonstrate command of two “research tools” selected from the following list: 1) a reading knowledge of a foreign language, 2) a reading knowledge of a second foreign language, 3) an approved two-course sequence in quantitative analysis, 4) an approved two-course sequence in formal modeling or advanced multivariate statistics, 5) a comparable level of proficiency in a comparable research tool approved by the advisor. Unless they have well defined research needs for foreign language, EPSA students are expected to meet this GSAS requirement with a combination of options 3, 4, and 5. Data Analysis I & II serve as an approved two-course sequence in quantitative analysis. The more-advanced quantitative courses students typically enroll in additional advanced courses such hierarchical linear modeling and structural equation modeling. Students focusing on qualitative methods or other research approaches (e.g., Geographic Information Systems; network analysis) can alternately fulfill the “comparable research tool” option in consultation with their advisor.

***Doctoral Comprehensive Exams:*** All students must pass a written comprehensive examination, typically taken during the semester in which they reach 60 credits. The structure, content, and criteria of assessment for the comprehensive exam are intended to test your broad familiarity with the field and to push you to go deeper, become more sophisticated, and strive for more intellectual integration than is typically possible while completing coursework. Further information about the structure and process are available in our document “Doctoral Comprehensive Exams in Education Policy: What You Should Know.”

***Dissertation:*** Students are required to complete a dissertation that critically examines a problem within the field of education policy. Students are expected to work closely with their dissertation sponsor and committee members to develop and execute original research that will advance the areas of policy implementation, evaluation and/or research.

***Services for Students with Disabilities:*** The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities for information about registration (166 Thorndike Hall). Services are available only to students who are registered and submit appropriate documentation.

***Statement on Academic Conduct:*** A Teachers College student is expected to refrain from any conduct, including cheating, plagiarizing, or purchasing documents submitted for academic evaluation, that calls into question his/her academic and/or professional probity. Decisions regarding academic evaluation in all aspects of students’ work at the college, including course work, certification examinations, clinical or field experiences, and preparation of dissertations, are within the sole jurisdiction of the faculty concerned, including as appropriate, the department or program staff members. Disciplinary actions (e.g., reprimand, suspension, or dismissal) in cases of academic misconduct can be imposed by the Vice Provost or the Committee on Student Conduct.

***Resolution of Student Academic Program Concerns:*** Any student who has a concern regarding an academic matter may seek assistance. The procedure for resolving academic program concerns (see note of grade correction process below) begins with either the faculty member (if the concern is related to a course) or the student’s advisor. If the student is not satisfied with the response or resolution achieved at this first level, or if speaking with the faculty member presents a conflict of interest for the student, the student should proceed to speak with the Program Coordinator in the area in which the academic concern resides. If the student is not satisfied with the response or resolution achieved through the Program Coordinator, the student should proceed to speak with the Chair of the academic department in which the academic concern resides. If the student is still not satisfied with the response or resolution achieved through the Department Chair, or if speaking with the Department Chair presents a conflict of interest for the student, the next step is to contact the Office of the Vice Provost. At any stage of the process, students are welcome to seek the advice and guidance of the Ombudsman, who is charged with attempting to informally resolve student dissatisfaction of an academic nature on a completely confidential basis.

***Grade Correction Procedure:*** The instructor for a course has the responsibility for setting the requirements for a course and making an evaluation of students’ work. Once a grade has been given, the instructor is not free to change the grade unless the instructor indicates to the Registrar that an error was made in the original grade transmitted. If a student believes that an error has been made, he/she must take the initiative in bringing about the necessary correction prior to the conclusion of the semester immediately following the semester in which the course was taken. The normal procedure for effecting a correction would be through direct discussion between the student and the instructor. If redress cannot be attained through such discussions, the student may next appeal to the department chairperson of the department offering the course. If resolution cannot be attained through appeal, the student may next appeal to the Dean. In situations where the student feels that such an appeal process might not be in the student’s interest, counsel and assistance can be sought from the Office of the College Ombudsman and the Office of the Vice Provost.

1. Summer 2021courses will be offered online only. The information about the Fall 2021 methods of instruction (online or in-class) is not available as of April 15, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)