DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEGREE PROGRAM

As the nation’s first interdisciplinary doctoral program in Leadership Studies, USD is internationally recognized as an institution of dynamic innovation and scholarly excellence. Known for our close student/faculty engagement and collaboration, we offer a rigorous yet practical course of study grounded in prevailing theory and a social change orientation. The program is designed to empower the next generation of researchers, scholars and practitioners to make significant contributions to the field of leadership studies and efforts to address the pressing needs of the world at large.

The 57-unit program includes required leadership courses, electives consistent with the student’s career goals, a minimum of four research courses and credit-generating activities leading to a dissertation. The program is unique by virtue of its interdisciplinary approach, the diversity of the student cohorts and its strong commitment to developing leaders who have the skills and inclination to make organizations not only effective and efficient, but also ethical and humane.

Program of Study

Upon admission, each student is assigned a program advisor, with whom he or she will develop a program of study. Students are required to complete a minimum of 57 semester-units beyond the master’s degree.

General Regulations

1. Academic Performance Requirements
   Doctoral students are required to maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in their coursework throughout the program.

2. Maximum Load
   Doctoral students who are employed full-time may not take more than 6 units per semester unless the additional load is approved by the student’s advisor and the department chair. No doctoral student may take more than 12 units per semester without special approval of the student’s advisor, department chair and the associate dean.

3. Transfer of Credit
   With approval, a student may transfer up to 12 units of appropriate post-master’s graduate coursework taken at an accredited and USD-recognized college or university up to five years prior to the student’s entry into the USD program (See here catalogs.sandiego.edu/graduate/academic-regs/transfer-graduate-credit and for more information on Transfer of Graduate Credit). A student previously enrolled elsewhere in an accredited doctoral program recognized by USD may appeal to the faculty and the Dean’s Office for the transfer of more than 12 units. Transferred credit must be for courses that are consistent with the goals of the Leadership Studies program. Transfer credit will normally not be substituted for either core or research courses. All core courses must be completed at USD.

4. Advancement to Candidacy Process
   To advance to candidacy, students must complete a two-part process. Part A of this process involves the preparation of a qualifying paper that normally relates to a student’s dissertation topic. Part B of the Advancement to Candidacy process involves preparing and successfully defending a dissertation proposal. More detailed information about the Advancement to Candidacy process can be found in the Doctoral Student Handbook.

5. Admission to Candidacy
   Admission to candidacy (not equivalent to admission to the program) is achieved when the student has successfully completed Parts A and B of the Advancement to Candidacy process and all required courses, except for LEAD 695. Next, the candidate will have the proposal approved by the Institutional Review Board, if appropriate. The candidate is then ready to focus completely on the dissertation and is not eligible for a leave of absence.

6. Dissertation
   Successful written and oral defense of dissertation is required for graduation.

7. Time Limit
   A student must complete the doctoral program within seven years of the first semester of enrollment.

Additional Admission Requirements

See the Admission page for basic admission requirements.

Requirements for the Degree

I. Core - 33 units

These foundational courses are required for all students; courses taken at other institutions may not be substituted.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 602</td>
<td>Competing Conceptions of Knowledge and Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 607</td>
<td>Applied Statistics and Quantitative Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 608</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 610</td>
<td>Dissertation Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 611</td>
<td>Leadership Theories: Past, Present and Future</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 612</td>
<td>Advanced Qualitative Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>or LEAD 613</td>
<td>Advanced Quantitative Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 619</td>
<td>Applied Leadership Practices: Integral Self and Systems Approach</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD 609</td>
<td>Evaluation: Theory and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>or LEAD 612</td>
<td>Advanced Qualitative Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>or LEAD 613</td>
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<td>or LEAD 614</td>
<td>Special Topics in Advanced Research Methods</td>
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<td>or LEAD 615</td>
<td>Action Research Methods II</td>
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<tr>
<td>or LEAD 616</td>
<td>Survey Research Methods</td>
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II. Area of Specialization/Electives - 24 units

With the assistance and approval of their advisors, students select electives to acquire an area of specialization. Students may select from 500 and 600 level classes at USD.

Examples of Possible Areas of Specialization:
- Higher Education Leadership (community college, student affairs, general administration)
- Nonprofit/Philanthropic Leadership and Management
- Coaching and Organizational Consulting
- Educational Leadership for Innovation and Social Justice
- Leadership for International School Leaders
- Individualized Option

After completing all required units of LEAD 695, candidates must register for 1 unit each semester to maintain candidacy until the final, approved dissertation is submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

III. International Experience

At SOLES, all masters and doctoral students participate in an international experience designed to support the growth of cultural competency. Our goal is to inform best practices in working with culturally diverse populations locally, nationally and globally. International experiences are approved by each student’s faculty advisor and can be credit based or non-credit based activities.

IV. Advancement to Candidacy - Part A

Part A of this process involves the preparation of a qualifying paper that normally relates to a student’s dissertation topic.

V. Advancement to Candidacy - Part B

Part B of the Advancement to Candidacy process involves preparing and successfully defending a dissertation proposal.

VI. Dissertation

Successful written and oral defense of dissertation is required for graduation.