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**CROWN COLLEGE**  
*“A Distinctive Christian College”*

**Crown Graduate School**

**Doctoral Capstone Handbook**

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide doctoral candidates, instructors, and mentors with a clear understanding of the Doctoral Capstone process while providing resources to guide candidates through to successful completion. It details the policies and procedures within the 58 credit-hour degree program culminating in the successful defense of a Capstone project. It defines the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

If you need answers concerning the Doctoral Capstone process, please contact the Doctoral Program Director at [Robert.butz@thecrowncollege.edu](mailto:Robert.butz@thecrowncollege.edu).

## 2. Program Overview

The program consists of 58 total credit-hours that are offered 100% online. It is divided into 42 credit-hours of coursework and 16 credit-hours of Capstone project work. Full-time candidates can complete the program in three years.

The program provides a unique academic experience preparing candidates to become educational leaders. Doctoral candidates will participate in rigorous course work and demonstrate a mastery of technology, research, writing, curriculum, instruction, and organizational leadership.

The Doctoral Capstone represents the culmination of the candidate's learning experience. The candidate will employ advanced research strategies and apply critical thinking skills to produce an original work that positively influences the field of education.

The course progression may be found on pages 9-10 in this handbook. This course progression represents candidates who desire to complete the program within three years. **Please note:** Completing the program within three years requires the candidate to take two classes during each semester. However, the program is designed to provide flexible scheduling.

## 3. Program Outcomes

- Demonstrate a knowledge of both theoretical and historical foundations of education.
- Demonstrate knowledge and synthesize major research in curriculum and instruction.
- Analyze and apply quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methods.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and apply the major theories of research design.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and apply the major theories of organizational leadership.
- Demonstrate knowledge and research applications in a specific area of emphasis.
- Successfully design, complete, and defend a Capstone project that will positively address a gap in education.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

**The Dean of Crown Graduate School (Program Director) will:**

- Assume the responsibility for the program's compliance set forth by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS).
- Collaborate with the Doctoral Capstone Committee to interview and evaluate prospective students for acceptance into the program.
- Collaborate with the Doctoral Capstone Committee to evaluate student progress after year 1 and year 2 of the program.
- Collaborate with the Doctoral Capstone Committee and faculty mentor to approve or deny the Capstone project topic.
- Collaborate with the faculty mentor to develop and implement strategies for remediation if recommended or required by the Capstone Committee.

- Collaborate with the Doctoral Capstone Committee and faculty mentor to approve or deny the final Capstone project.
- Monitor the number of mentees for each mentor.

**The Candidate Student will:**

- Follow all rules and regulations found in The Crown Code.
- Actively participate throughout the Capstone process by meeting regularly with mentor, participate in all online meetings, and meet all intended deadlines.
- Select a faculty mentor.
  - If the candidate is not able to choose a faculty mentor, the Doctoral Program Director will choose one for the candidate.
  - If the candidate chooses a mentor that is on the Capstone committee, the program director will appoint another faculty member to the committee.
  - After progressing through the program, if the candidate wishes to change mentors, he/she must present the reason for the change to the Capstone Committee for approval.
  - If the candidate feels his/her mentor is not reasonable, they may request a formal appeal to the Capstone Committee.
- Ensure open communication with all instructors, mentors, and Capstone committee members.
- Ensure they have access to all technology and resource needs throughout the Capstone process.
- Collaborate with the faculty mentor and Capstone Committee for continual progression updates.
- Ensure proper time management, self-discipline, and organizational skills.
- Not begin implementing the doctoral capstone until the Capstone Committee has approved the proposal.
- Keep appropriate and up to date records of communication with the mentor.
- Collaborate with the faculty mentor until the faculty mentor determines the proposal is ready to be reviewed by the Capstone Committee.

**The Faculty Mentor will:**

- Assist the candidate in navigating the Capstone process including overall development, course registration, Capstone approval, graduation requirements, research, etc.
- Build a strong professional relationship with the candidate.
- Encourage effective use of time.
- Ensure communication remains open with the Candidate.
- Prepare for the oral defense presentation.
- Participate in the candidate’s concluding Capstone presentation and defense interview.

**The Capstone Committee will:**

- Include two faculty members chosen by the program director.
- Conduct a qualifying interview for all incoming candidates.
- Conduct a progress interview with the candidate at the conclusion of year 1.
- Conduct a progress interview to include the Capstone proposal approval during ED887 Capstone 1.
- Participate in the candidate’s concluding Capstone presentation and defense interview.
  - The defense interview will include the candidate’s faculty mentor.

**5. Candidate Entrance Requirements**

- A complete Crown College application.
- Access SIS applicant portal.

- i. The portal will give the applicant an entrance requirement checklist to assist the applicant through the application process.
- An official transcript of a master’s degree (or equivalent).
  - i. The degree must be earned from an accredited institution recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the U.S. Department of Education, or from a Crown College-approved master’s or post-master’s program.
  - ii. An unofficial transcript will be accepted to begin the entrance process; however, the qualification interview will not be scheduled until official transcripts are received, reviewed, and approved.
  - iii. A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in post-baccalaureate degree coursework. Any GPA under a 3.0 will be reviewed for rigor with the possibility of a year of academic probation.
  - iv. A maximum of 50% of a post-graduate degree may be transferred in from an approved program of study.
    - 1. No transfer grades lower than a B- may be applied to the degree
    - 2. Master’s coursework may not be counted towards Doctoral coursework.
- Pastoral and professional recommendation.
  - i. Both recommendations will be submitted through an online portal.
    - 1. No recommendations will be accepted directly from the candidate.
  - ii. The Crown College reserves the right to contact qualified people listed in the candidate’s resume as references to comment on the applicant’s knowledge, skills, and qualifications.
- Statement of Purpose essay.
  - i. Answer the following question in an essay format.
    - 1. What is my purpose for seeking an EdD?
- Resume/CV
  - i. Three years of professional experience related to the program is preferred.
- Qualification Interview with the Capstone committee.

## **6. Doctoral Capstone Proposal**

- The purpose of the Capstone proposal is to give the committee the opportunity to determine whether the identified problem is appropriate for the Capstone project.
- Upon approval of the proposal, the candidate may begin collecting data.
- The proposal will be presented in an essay format that includes the problem, the literature review, and the proposed methodology.
- The proposal should be viewed as a means of ensuring that the research effort is well planned and appropriately rigorous for doctoral level study.
- Upon approval of the Capstone proposal, the candidate, in consultation with the mentor, will revise the proposal, if needed, begin the data collection, and proceed to the data analysis process.
- If a project changes in fundamental ways, candidates may need to submit and get approval for a new proposal, at the discretion of the faculty mentor and Capstone committee.

## **7. Institutional Research Board (IRB)**

Candidates collecting data from human subjects as part of their capstone must submit a proposal of research to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. A detailed report from the IRB will be attached to the approved proposal. Candidates should consult with their faculty mentor regarding any questions or clarification needed to proceed with data collection. Only after receiving IRB approval of the proposal may candidates collect data for the capstone as needed.

## **8. Doctoral Capstone Project**

- The candidate is required to demonstrate their ability to define a problem or gap in the field of education, clearly articulate field related theories, review relevant literature, document historical research on attempts to solve the issue, hypothesize an original solution, collect needed data to support the hypothesis, and work to draw pertinent conclusions. Candidates must successfully defend their project by demonstrating analytical, conceptual, and logic-based reasoning skills.
- Capstone projects may take many different forms. The candidate should choose the format best suited for their project needs. Examples include traditional thesis, fundamental research, innovative curriculum, translating research into practice, quality improvement, Policy analysis, policy design, programs analysis, program creation, program evaluation, or any other type of project approved by the Capstone Committee.
- The Doctoral Capstone proposal must meet the following criteria.
  - i. Address a significant problem or gap in the field of education.
    1. The problem to be addressed must be based on an action-research project, program development, policy development, a clinical research project, or another project deemed appropriate by the Capstone Committee.
    2. Candidates will be guided by their mentor to identify a problem that aligns their passion and expertise in education.
    3. Should the candidate choose the dissertation format, the dissertation should reflect a well-developed problem statement, a clear rationale for the study, a research plan, and sufficient information to accurately reflect what will be studied and that the study is significant enough to provide added information or extend existing knowledge bases.
  - ii. Address a clear theoretical connection.
    1. The project will be supported by research and able to withstand scholarly criticism.
    2. The proposed project will allow the research to drive the conclusion. Candidates ensure the project idea is not forced and can be supported by research.
    3. Students should expect modest changes to their Capstone as the result of unexpected turns that research can, and often does, take.
    4. The goal is to complete a written document that represents the student and the School of Education with excellence.
  - iii. Defend the Doctoral Capstone Project.
    1. The doctoral capstone oral defense is a required component of the graduate program of study.
    2. Once the capstone document is completed in proper form and style, the committee confers before giving final approval for an oral defense of the capstone.
    3. Students must attend a documented preparatory meeting with their faculty mentor before the final presentation and defense.

4. A “mock (or practice) defense” is strongly recommended for the candidate to present to the faculty mentor in order to identify problems with the presentation and timing.
5. The defense has three purposes.
  - a. To evaluate whether the candidate understands and can present the relevant literature, project questions, methodology, findings, and implications of the capstone to an audience of scholars and professionals.
  - b. To evaluate whether the candidate can respond fluently to questions related to the research.
  - c. To evaluate the student’s ability to communicate the results of the project clearly and convincingly to the Capstone Committee.
    - i. Satisfactorily passing the defense is separate from satisfactorily completing the written document. Both are necessary for earning the degree.

## **9. Course Repeat Policy**

- After receiving a failing grade candidates may repeat up to two courses prior to an official meeting with the Capstone Committee.

## **10. Graduation Requirements**

- 58 credit hours of completed course work.
- A 3.00 GPA or higher.
- A maximum of 50% of a post-graduate degree may be transferred in from an approved program of study.
- No transfer grades lower than a B- may be applied to the degree.
- Degree must be completed within 7 years.
- A petition to graduate must be submitted at the beginning of the final semester before defense of Capstone project.

## **11. Suggested Project Outcomes**

**Title Page** formatted according to current APA standards including Research committee, Permission statement, Abstract, Acknowledgments (optional), Dedication (optional)

**Table of Contents** including list of tables, figures, and illustrations

**Chapter 1:** Purpose and Organization including Introduction and background of the project, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study/significance of study, Theoretical foundation, Research questions, Limitations and delimitations, Assumptions and definition of terms, and Organization of the document.

**Chapter 2:** Review of Literature including Broad historical literature on the topic, Theoretical lens and related theoretical literature, Literature (comprehensive) related to the topic, Specific literature related to the current study, and Summary.

**Chapter 3:** Description leading to the project or article, Description of the specific approach, Contribution of the project to the need, Participants and setting, Data collection procedures if any, Ethical considerations as needed, Data analysis procedures as needed, and Summary.

**Chapter 4:** The project Introduction including the project description and actual content Results of the project and summary.

**Chapter 5:** Conclusions drawn from the study, relating the findings to theoretical constructs, Reflective critique and analysis of the process used Implications which could affect further studies, Recommendations for further studies and policy issues.

Reference and notes

Appendices



## Doctor of Education Course Sequence

		SUMMER	FALL	SPRING
Year 1	Session A	<i>ED701 Learning Theory and Research</i>	ED703 Theory & Practice of Organizational Leadership	ED720 Advanced Studies in Educational Leadership
	Session B	<i>ED702 Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education</i>	ED716 Advanced Curriculum Theory	ED721 Educational Governance & Policies

Year 2	Session A	ED723 Learning Technologies in Education	ED726 Models of Instructional Design	ED820 Literature Review for Applied Research
	Session B	ED725 Organizational Change and Improvements	ED 750 Survey of Educational Research	ED776 Educational Research and Statistics

Year 3	Session A	ED728 Leadership in Special Programs	ED887 Capstone I	ED889 Capstone III
	Session B	ED727 Philosophy of Science in Education	ED888 Capstone II	ED890 Capstone IV

## COURSE PROGRESSION SHEET

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<b><u>Education Theory Core Courses (12 hours)</u></b>	<b><u>Hrs</u></b>	<b><u>Semester</u></b>
<i>ED701</i> Learning Theory and Research	3	_____
<i>ED702</i> Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education	3	_____
<i>ED703</i> Theory & Practice of Organizational Leadership	3	_____
<i>ED716</i> Advanced Curriculum Theory	3	_____
 <b><u>Educational Leadership Core Courses (21 hours)</u></b>		
<i>ED720</i> Advanced Studies in Educational Leadership	3	_____
<i>ED721</i> Educational Governance & Policies	3	_____
<i>ED723</i> Learning Technologies in Education	3	_____
<i>ED725</i> Organizational Change and Improvements	3	_____
<i>ED726</i> Models of Instructional Design	3	_____
<i>ED727</i> Philosophy of Science in Education	3	_____
<i>ED728</i> Leadership in Special Programs	3	_____
 <b>Research Courses (9 hours)</b>		
<i>ED750</i> Survey of Educational Research	3	_____
<i>ED776</i> Educational Research and Statistics	3	_____
<i>ED820</i> Literature Review for Applied Research	3	_____
 <b>Capstone (16 hours)</b>		
<i>ED887</i> Capstone I	4	_____
<i>ED888</i> Capstone II	4	_____
<i>ED889</i> Capstone III	4	_____
<i>ED890</i> Capstone IV	4	_____
 <b>Total Hours</b>	 <b>58</b>	

### Graduation Requirements

- 58 credit hours completed.
- A maximum of 50% of a post-graduate degree may be transferred if approved by the program director.
- 3.00 GPA or higher
- No grades lower than a B- may be applied to the degree.
- Degree must be completed within 7 years.
- A Petition to Graduate must be submitted at the beginning of the final semester.