



University
of Otago
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

College of Education
Te Kura Ākau Taitoka



Handbook for Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

Revised July 2025

While all reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that the information contained in this Handbook is correct at the time of printing, matters covered by this publication are subject to change.

The College of Education reserves the right to introduce such changes as it may judge to be necessary or desirable. These changes, as reflected in the appropriate policies and procedures, will supersede the relevant information in this Handbook.

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Purpose and Organization

The aim of this Handbook is to provide information and guidance on matters related to the EdD. This handbook is designed to be read in conjunction with the information available for PhD students available at <https://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/current-students/index.html>. Information contained on the website for PhD students is not replicated here.

The web version of the Handbook will be updated as changes occur and is available at: http://www.otago.ac.nz/education/forstudents.html#Postgraduate_Students

It is expected that the Handbook will be consulted by students and staff alike, in conjunction with the information for current PhD students. It is hoped that together they will serve as orientation and induction, as well as a reference source.

The Handbook will not reproduce all of the policy documents relating to the EdD. Instead, it will draw on EdD, PhD, and other College and University documents to provide a summary of those policies and a description of the practices which they govern. In many places, that description is accompanied by an explanatory commentary outlining the purpose of specific procedures.

The Handbook is divided into two parts:

- Section A provides a general overview of the degree, its nature and the administrative processes which support it.
- Section B deals with the key activities involved in the pursuit of the EdD itself.

At Otago, it is customary to refer to enrolled doctoral students as "candidates". For purposes of this Handbook, however, "student" is used interchangeably with "candidate".

This Handbook should be read in conjunction with other handbooks, brochures and guides, produced by the University of Otago College of Education and the University. In any cases where there are apparent discrepancies between the information contained in any of those documents and this Handbook, the reader should assume that the document which has been updated most recently is correct. If in doubt, contact the Doctor of Education Coordinator for advice and clarification.

The regulations for the EdD degree are available at: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/edd.html>

Section A: Overview

A1: The Nature of the Degree

The degree of Doctor of Education at the University of Otago is achieved by the successful completion of coursework and the submission of a thesis and portfolio prepared under supervision. The coursework is a distance/flexible learning paper, offered in a collaborative and learner-centred community based around an online environment.

The minimum period of study is normally the equivalent of 2.5 years of full-time study (2.5 EFTS) and the maximum period is 4 years of full-time study (4 EFTS). Extension of study beyond this period (equivalent to 4 EFTS) is only permitted with the approval of the Senate. The course may not exceed 8 calendar years from the date of first admission. The coursework will normally comprise part-time study for 12 months. The thesis may be completed either full- time or part-time.

The coursework will be examined by three examiners: two examiners from the College of Education, and one from outside New Zealand. In appropriate cases, examiners with special expertise in Māori matters shall be appointed instead of, or in addition to, the normal categories of examiners. The thesis and portfolio will be examined by one overseas examiner, one New Zealand examiner from outside the University of Otago, and one internal examiner. An oral examination will be part of the examination process.

Before proceeding to the thesis research stage, students will present their thesis proposal in a confirmation seminar and have it confirmed by an examining panel consisting of three examiners, of which one is normally external to the University.

A research-to-practice portfolio (equivalent to 60 points) consisting of evidence documenting the connection between the candidate's research and practice and how the research has informed and enhanced practice shall be submitted alongside the thesis.

The thesis should give evidence that the candidate has:

- the ability to carry out research,
- shown originality and independence, and
- made a significant contribution to knowledge in their particular profession.

Examiners of EdD theses are asked specifically to respond to the following questions:

- Does the thesis comprise a coherent investigation of the chosen topic?
- Does the thesis deal with a topic of sufficient range and complexity to meet the requirements of the degree?

- Does the thesis make an original contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field of practice and contain material suitable for publication in an appropriate academic or professional journal?
- Does the thesis meet internationally recognized standards for the conduct and presentation of research in its field?
- Does the thesis demonstrate both a thorough knowledge of the literature relevant to its subject and general field and the candidate's ability to exercise critical and analytical judgement of that literature?
- Does the thesis display a mastery of appropriate methodology and/or theoretical material?

As one of the highest degrees awarded by the University of Otago for research supervised by members of the academic staff, the EdD requires a high degree of scholarly acumen, independence and perseverance.

A2: Key Contact Staff

EdD Programme Coordinator

The EdD Programme Coordinator has overall responsibility for the EdD programme. The Coordinator's main role is to:

- provide an environment within the programme which is conducive to research culture
- check that the candidate's previous level of academic attainment and experience are appropriate for admission to the programme
- guarantee that adequate funding and technical assistance are available to support the project
- ensure that the supervisory arrangements are satisfactory to both student and supervisor(s)
- check that the research interests and expertise of the supervisor(s) are suited to the candidate's needs and to the demands of the project
- support the primary supervisor by arranging co-supervision and/or an advisory committee
- identify cases where it is desirable to change the supervisory arrangements for academic or personal reasons
- administer the reporting process and make recommendations as necessary
- determine that supervisors are not over-committed, and to check this annually to deal with complaints and problems promptly

Admission and administrative enquiries specifically related to the EdD should also be directed to the EdD Coordinator.

The EdD Coordinator will work in conjunction with the University of Otago College of Education Postgraduate Coordinator.

The current EdD Coordinator is:

Dr Helen Trevethan
University of Otago College of Education
P O Box 56
Dunedin
New Zealand

Tel: 64 3 479 4230

Email: helen.trevethan@otago.ac.nz

EdD website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/education/postgraduate/otago022628.html>

Section B: The EdD

B1: Entry Requirements

A person wishing to be admitted as a candidate for the EdD is expected to have a Bachelor's degree in education or related fields with first or upper second class honours, PGDipArts, PGDipTchg or equivalent (including a research component), or a Master's degree with distinction or credit in education or a related field (including an appropriate research component). Possession of a Master's degree or other postgraduate qualification (such as a professional diploma) which does not have a substantial research component will not automatically be regarded as a qualification for entry to the EdD programme.

Every applicant must have at least five years' experience as a professional in education or related fields and be a leader in their field. Applicants should present evidence of ability for advanced level of academic study. Exceptionally qualified professionals, who meet the equivalent of the admission requirements above, may be admitted to the programme on the recommendation of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Humanities).

In special circumstances, a candidate who does not have these formal qualifications but can demonstrate appropriate equivalent research experience will also be considered for admission.

Acceptance as a candidate also depends on the University's ability to offer expert supervision and provide the necessary resources to support the intended research project.

B2: Initial Application

In order to be considered for admission into the EdD programme, applicants should apply online via the EdD qualification page (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/edd.html>). Click on the Apply Now button and this will take you through to the eVision application. Required documents will need to be uploaded in PDF format as part of this process.

- Certified copies of all tertiary-level academic transcripts and grading schemes
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Indication of research topic

Applications for the EdD programme open in August of the year prior to the start date, and close at the end of March of the starting year.

Applications will be assessed once applications have closed (31st March) although the assessment may occur earlier, depending on the number of applications that have been received. As part of this assessment, the EdD Coordinator may contact the applicants to discuss any area of the application about which further information is sought.

At this stage, it is essential that questions can be asked in an open, direct way by all concerned.

B3: Admission to the EdD Degree

In order to engage in study towards an EdD, it is necessary to be admitted to the programme and enrolled as a student of the University. Admission occurs once, at the beginning of a candidature. It involves an academic decision about the prospective student's eligibility for EdD study.

Approval

In addition to the specific requirements for entrance into the EdD programme, the normal entrance requirements of the University as stated in the University Calendar apply.

Applications are considered by the EdD Admissions Committee and decisions endorsed by the relevant Coordinator, Dean and/or Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Applications are then considered by the Graduate Research Committee, which meets once a month. Once approval for admission has been granted, the candidate's enrolment as a student of the University will be processed. The official EdD start date is the first day of the residential school.

Enrolment

Enrolment follows admission and is a University requirement which occurs each year (or part year) until the thesis is submitted for examination. Enrolment involves:

- Completion of online course enrolment via eVision
- Payment of Tuition Fees

A candidate is required to be enrolled continuously for the entire period of the candidacy, up to the submission of the thesis, unless approval has been given for temporary withdrawal (known as a deferral).

Initial enrolment will occur for semester 2 (July) for the first part of the coursework. Students will then need to re-enrol for the second part of the coursework, to be completed in the first semester of the following year. Having successfully completed the coursework, students will then be required to enrol again in July, this time as thesis students. From this point on, students will only need to enrol for the beginning of each year.

Initial status of EdD candidates

Initial admission to the degree programme is provisional; it shall be confirmed after attaining at least a B+ grade for the coursework (EDDC911) and after the research proposal has been satisfactorily presented at a Confirmation Seminar.

On-Campus EdD Study

While the EdD is primarily delivered as a distance programme, students are required to attend a one-week residential school in early July for the first two years of study. During residential school, students are required to attend all scheduled activities.

Off-Campus EdD Study

The EdD coursework is primarily taught by distance. Other than the compulsory residential school, all study is undertaken by distance. Students will be learning and working collaboratively in an online community of practice. In the first year of study, regular computer mediated conferences are scheduled throughout the calendar year. The online learning environment is at: <https://blackboard.otago.ac.nz>.

Full-Time And Part-Time Study

The University will normally enrol EdD candidates as part-time and the EdD coursework will normally comprise part-time study for 12 months. The thesis may be completed by either full-time or part-time study, and students may, with approval, change this at the beginning or middle of any year.

B4: The First Year

The Early Stages - Coursework

Students are required to attend a one-week residential school at the beginning of the first year of study. Completion of the year of part-time coursework (EDDC911) will prepare students for their thesis and research to practice portfolio research.

For students to proceed to the thesis component of the EdD degree they must attain at least a B+ grade for the coursework (EDDC 911), and the research proposal must be satisfactorily presented at the Confirmation Seminar. If admission to the degree programme is not confirmed, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities) may approve provisional admission for a further period of up to one year or the candidate shall be required to withdraw from the programme. Students who do not get the required grade in coursework may be given the chance to resubmit one or both of the major assignments in order to achieve this minimum grade. If they do not gain the minimum grade with their resubmission, they may be required to withdraw from the programme.

B5: The Second Year

Research Proposal

In the first half of the second year, students will complete a research proposal. Students are required to present their research proposals to be examined in a confirmation seminar. Once they are confirmed, they can proceed to the research stage.

If confirmation is not granted, then provisional admission may be approved for a further period of up to one year or the candidate will be required to withdraw or to register for another degree. If, after a period of extension, admission is not confirmed, the candidate will be required to withdraw or to register for another degree.

In order to continue work on the EdD beyond the coursework and research proposal stage, the candidate must be able to demonstrate the following, as appropriate to the nature of the project:

- Satisfactory endeavour and application
- Ability to conduct a detailed literature search and review
- Acquisition of technical or other practical skills
- Evidence of suitable professional skills
- Firm understanding of methodological and/or theoretical issues
- Ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing
- Achieve the minimum B+ grade in the EDDC 911 coursework
- Successful presentation of the research proposal at the Confirmation Seminar