

Doctoral Student Competencies Handbook
Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development

Introduction to Eliot-Pearson Ph.D. Program

Eliot-Pearson is an interdisciplinary department, with faculty from fields including psychology, child and adolescent development, family studies, education, neuroscience, linguistics, technology and public policy. Our scholarship and service are built on the intrinsic value of children and aimed at enhancing the development of the assets possessed by children and their families. For 80 years, the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development has been dedicated to the study and well being of children and families, and the doctoral program in Applied Child Development was established in 1981. Today, Eliot-Pearson's perspective integrates theory and research from multiple disciplines with knowledge of effective practice to promote understanding and thriving of diverse young people, from infancy through adolescence.

The goal of Eliot-Pearson's doctoral program in Applied Child Development is to prepare PhDs who have a "signature" of research-practice integration. We aim to achieve these goals through a competency-based approach, with the goal of embedding students' accomplishments in the process of their training within an overarching vision of applied child development as necessarily integrative, extending beyond boundaries of particular disciplines, theories, and methodologies. Key components of this approach include training in a) the theories and knowledge base that comprise applied child development, b) research methodologies, c) integration of this knowledge across "domains", and d) application to policies, programs, and practice.

The program aims for the highest standards of excellence in all areas of preparation: courses, supervised applied experiences, research preparation, and individual mentoring. Students will take multiple trajectories in their doctoral training and their careers, served by a common foundation of preparation that includes competency in nine core areas: foundation knowledge of the field, research methods and statistics, professionalism, publication, grantsmanship, applied work, teaching and mentoring, dissemination, and scholarly specialization. Competence in these areas can be demonstrated through a variety of mechanisms such as coursework (including independent study and directed research courses), independent writing and research (e.g., Qualifying Papers), research training with faculty mentors, presentations at professional conferences and applied internships. This competency-based approach ensures that all Eliot Pearson PhDs will achieve in-depth mastery of a particular specialty area (e.g., positive youth development, emotional development in early childhood, intervention approaches to reading disabilities), competence in communicating and disseminating their work, and the skills necessary for success in their professional development, such as teaching and mentoring, and participation in the grantsmanship process. Each student's program forms a unique configuration of experiences.

This approach reflects our understanding of what it means to be a professional in Applied Child Development in the 21st century, and the knowledge base, skills, and experiences our program can provide to support the dynamic challenges that will face graduates of the E-P Ph.D. program as they assume their professional identities. Graduates of our doctoral program assume positions of leadership in academic institutions, research centers, government and nongovernment organizations, medical centers, arts and cultural centers, and other settings concerned with the generation and application of scholarship to the welfare and education of children and families. Whether Eliot-Pearson graduates enter positions emphasizing knowledge production and

research, or positions emphasizing knowledge-utilization in service delivery or policy-making, they are especially well-suited to bridge the gap that often separates these worlds. Zigler (1998) argued that in order to hold applied intervention and policy research to the high standards recognized for basic science, rigorous training of young scholars interested in the boundaries of basic and applied science is essential. This emphasis on the interplay of application and scholarship characterizes our Applied Child Development doctoral program.

Eliot-Pearson doctoral training reflects a commitment to “outreach scholarship”. Defined as “the generation, transmission, application and preservation of knowledge...Outreach Scholarship depends heavily upon effective and sustained university-community partnerships and elevates the ethical dimensions of research and service in significant ways” (Chibucos & Lerner, 1999, p. xx). At Eliot-Pearson, the cultivation and integration of sophisticated social science frameworks and methods with the values, ethics and practices of outreach scholarship generates an intellectual environment conducive to the high quality training of students preparing for leadership positions in our global society.

Requirements Necessary to Earn the Ph.D. Degree

Program Requirements:

The Eliot-Pearson PhD program requirements include:

- **22+ credits**, including:
 - a) 16+ coursework
 - b) 4 credits internship
 - c) 2-4 credits dissertation

- **Teaching Assistantship**
 - Students must complete 2 semesters (at least 10 hours per week) of Teaching Assistantship at Eliot-Pearson

- **Preliminary Review** (after 4-6 courses)
 - Provide plan for completion of program requirements
 - Mechanism for transferring courses

- **Coursework**
 - 3 credits “Core theory” courses
 - 2 credits Methodology courses
 - 2 credits Statistics courses
 - 7 credits Electives
 - 2 credits Doctoral Proseminar

- **Qualifying Papers**

Two Qualifying Papers, representing breadth of knowledge and skills in areas in Child Development.

- **Internship**

- **Qualifying Review**

- **Dissertation**
 - Representing depth and research competence

Introduction to the Competencies

This document summarizes the Ph.D. program requirements at Eliot-Pearson and provides a detailed summary of the competencies through which these requirements may be met. The formal requirements of the doctoral program comprise one component or mechanism toward preparation of doctoral-level professionals with a “signature” of research-practice integration. Sitting alongside the program requirements is a set of competencies, or skills, that we consider essential to working as a professional in Applied Child Development. Students enter the Ph.D. program with different profiles of experience, knowledge and strengths. Working to further augment competence in these areas will more fully prepare doctoral students to become professionals in this field, with expertise in an area of specialization. The “competencies” are not extensions of, or additions to, program requirements, but provide a potential “roadmap” for conversations between students and their advisors, and are meant to enhance the advising experience. Because students have different career goals (e.g., academic roles versus positions in state or federal government), we expect there will be different profiles for fulfilling the competencies. The competencies are intended to foster students’ scholarship in knowledge generation, the transmission of knowledge, application and preservation/integration (Boyer, 1990)

Proposed Doctoral Program Competencies

Graduates of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development doctoral program in Applied Child Development shall develop competence in the following areas during their doctoral training:

- Foundation Knowledge of the Field
- Methods and Statistics
- Research
- Professionalism
- Publication
- Grantsmanship
- Applied Work
- Teaching & Mentoring
- Dissemination
- Development of an Area of Scholarly Specialization

The Preliminary and Qualifying Reviews are the means of documenting progress towards achieving the competencies.

- For the Preliminary Review students develop a coherent, integrative plan with his or her committee to attain as many of these skills and experiences as feasible.
- The Qualifying Review documents the PhD candidates' abilities to integrate multiple substantive areas, theory and method, and basic and applied dimensions of the field.

Plan for Completion of Competencies

- a) Students, at the Preliminary Review, will indicate how they plan to achieve the competencies. Preliminary Review plan would be approved by the student's Preliminary Review Committee, and by the Graduate Programs Committee.
- b) Qualifying Review: portfolio would address how the student has achieved the competencies; Qualifying Review Committee and Graduate Program Committee approval required.

Foundation Knowledge of the Field

Goal: Student will have a knowledge base that reflects mastery of important areas in field of child development.

- **Competency primarily is fulfilled through coursework**
- **Consists of following areas:**
 - History & Theory
 - Critical and cultural perspectives
 - Contexts (e.g. family, school, neighborhood)
 - Cognitive Development
 - Social and Emotional Development
 - Language Development
 - Physiological/Developmental Neuroscience
 - Policy

Methods and Statistics

Goal: Student will have knowledge of methodologies and working ability in statistical techniques used in applied child development research.

- **Competency is documented through coursework, papers and publications.**

Research Methods:

- **Student must complete two courses in research methods:**

Examples include:

Problems in Research Methods and Design (CD 142)

Qualitative Research Methods (CD 144)

Program Evaluation (CD 247)

Advanced Research Methods in Applied Developmental Science (CD 285)

If student has already taken equivalent of one of the above-listed courses, the requirement may be fulfilled by another course in the research methods area, selected in consultation with the advisor.

Statistics

- **Student must complete two courses in statistics**

Examples include:

Introductory Statistics (CD 140)

Applied Data Analysis (CD 143)

Applied Multivariate Analysis (CD 249)

Students may select alternative statistics courses as approved by their advisor. Approved alternatives may be taken outside the department or university.

Professionalism

Goal: Student will demonstrate ability to assume the role of a professional in the field. The role of a professional includes both assuming membership in professional organizations, attending professional meetings, and presenting one's own ideas and work to members of the community.

Goal can be met by both A and B.

A) **Presentation skills:** *One of the following:*

1. serve as *primary presenter* at a professional conference or meeting, (may be either a paper or poster presentation); or
2. serve as *primary presenter* at a professional workshop to an external (non-EP) audience; or
3. both of the following:
 - a. serve as *primary presenter* at E-P Student Presentation Day; and
 - b. present one's own work at a "brown bag lunch" or informal colloquium to either an internal or external audience.

B) **Membership in professional society, association, or other organization:** *Both of the following:*

1. Demonstrate membership in at least one professional society or organization; and
2. Attend at least 3 professional conferences or meetings while a student at Eliot-Pearson.

The following are *examples* of relevant professional organizations:

American Psychological Association (APA), Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA), Society for the Study of Human Development (SSHD), American Educational Research Association (AERA), Eastern Psychological Association (EPA).

Research

Goal: Student will have exposure, to experience with, and develop expertise in, the conduct of research in the field of Applied Child Development.

As a guide to the achievement of mastery in this area, the following activities are recommended, in order from those that can be begun early in the program to those that may require greater preparation and/ or practice. It is expected that doctoral candidates will be able to document evidence of this competence during the Qualifying Review so that the candidate is prepared to assume the challenges of doctoral dissertation research.

- Brief written description of experience to be provided at Qualifying Review
- Required: Documentation of having completed Tufts IRB online course; certificate of completion must be included in Qualifying Review Portfolio

In addition, either A or B below must be met:

- A) Equivalent of 2 semesters of Directed research credit; documentation will be provided by transcript.
- B) Research assistantship (paid or unpaid) in research lab at EP or outside EP (e.g., another academic, medical, or research facility). (2 semesters). Documentation to be provided via a letter from student’s research advisor describing research activities and accomplishments.

Description of research experience may include the following categories:

Review of Literature
Statement of Problem
Institutional Review Board Application
Data Collection
Qualitative Data Analysis
Quantitative Data Analysis
Research Administration
Report Writing
Publication

Publication

Goal: Students will gain experience in the process of reading and critically evaluating empirical research, and in preparing their own work for publication.

As a guide to the achievement of mastery in this area, the following activities are recommended, in order from those that can be begun early in the program to those that may require greater preparation and/ or practice. It is expected that doctoral candidates will be able to document evidence of this competence during the Qualifying Review.

1. Participation in reviewing papers under the guidance of advisors or other faculty who review papers submitted to journals (e.g. several faculty are editors or consulting editors of journals).
2. Familiarity with various publication outlets which are relevant given areas of interest.
3. Participation in the process of preparing papers for presentation and publication – earning joint authorship on papers, chapters, etc. with faculty or through research projects.
4. Presenting papers and posters at conferences, including Student Day presentations.
5. Preparing at least one of the Qualifying Papers for publication.
6. Students are expected to have submitted at least one paper to a refereed journal by the time of their Qualifying Review. The paper should be one on which the student has made a major contribution, preferably as 1st or 2nd author. If available, student must also submit reviewers' comments.

This Goal can be met by completing both A and B.

- A) Student submits an article for publication in which s/he is an author, and includes this paper, along with responses to reviewer comments (if they are available), in QR. If student is not first author, a letter from the first author must certify that the student has participated fully in the writing and submission process.
- B) One of the following:
 - 1) student serves as a student reviewer for a professional journal and, in that context, reviews at least one article (review must be included in the QR portfolio); or
 - 2) student takes a course that has substantial reviewer-related experiences, (e.g., Advanced Research Methods in Applied Developmental Science, CD 285). Documentation (e.g., reviews completed during the course must be included in the QR portfolio.

Grantsmanship

Goal: Students will gain experience in the evaluation, preparation, and submission of grant proposals.

As a guide to the achievement of mastery in this area, the following activities are recommended, in order from those that can be begun early in the program to those that may require greater preparation and/ or practice.

Note: A proposal for funding is required by the time of the Qualifying Review.

1. Participation in grant reading and in reviews of grants applied for by faculty and other students under the guidance of experienced recipients of grants and fellowships.
2. Achieving knowledge about funding sources: agencies, foundations, government sources, and associations.
3. Attendance at workshops on grant writing and fellowship preparation.
4. Applications for support for projects, travel, and/or research from departmental and university resources.
5. Applications for major fellowships from foundations or government agencies such as the W.T. Grant Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Templeton Foundation, NIH, NSF, or NIE.
6. Students are expected to have submitted a proposal for funding (fellowship and/or research grant) by the time of their Qualifying Review.

This goal can be met by any one of the following below, A, B, C, or D.

- A) *Both of the following:*
 1. student participates in writing a grant proposal that is submitted for funding, with a letter from the PI documenting that the student has made a substantial contribution to the written proposal; and
 2. student submits a written critique of a grant proposal, included as part of the QR.
- B) *All of the following:*
 1. student submits a grant proposal to the Graduate School for dissertation (or other) funding; and
 2. student sits on the GSAS student research awards committee as a student member (for at least 1 semester); and
 3. student submits a written critique of a grant proposal, included as part of the QR.
- C) Student takes a semester-long course for credit, or workshops (totaling at least 12 hours) on grantsmanship that has as products both a written grant proposal

and critique of a grant proposal. These documents are submitted as part of the QR.

- D) If student has already had grant-writing experience prior to coming to E-P, student submits documentation of competency in both writing and critiquing via a letter from PI plus other documentation (e.g., copy of grant proposal; critique of grant proposal).

Note: the grant proposals mentioned above must have the components of those submitted for government or foundation funding, including specific aims, literature review, methodology, and budget.

Applied Work

Goal: Students in the Ph.D. Program at Eliot-Pearson will be actively engaged in work that promotes health and positive development among children and families. There are a number of ways to become involved, and there is a framework that is part of the Department's strategic plan to help guide students as they approach their applied activities.

Eliot-Pearson has included the goal of "Research/Practice Integration" as its primary commitment as it moves toward future efforts on behalf of children and families. There are several ways that research, theory, policy, and practice have been conceptualized to impact each other in the Department's strategic plan summary. The main figure used in that conceptualization is reproduced below:

[Insert here the diagram from the Strategic Plan Document]

A key feature of this representation of interactions among areas of emphasis in the Department is that they go in all directions. One can start with any area (e.g. practice) and see how it may impact research, policy, and/or theory. All combinations of mutual influence are considered part of the mandate of Eliot-Pearson.

For students' applied activities, it is assumed that they will become familiar with, and develop skills in, an area of practice (e.g., clinical, educational, early intervention, health, social service). Students who enter the program with professional skills already in hand will be expected to enrich and extend those skills while in the Ph.D. program. Supervised experiences beginning as early as the first semester should be part of the student's program, with the culmination of training occurring during the year long (halftime, or semester-long full-time equivalent) internship required of all students.

Numerous ways to develop practice expertise are available within the Eliot-Pearson community. These may include field placements for course credit, summer internship opportunities, assistantships, clerkships, or staff positions in clinics, institutes, professional practices, consulting firms and the like.

Documentation of Competence: For the student's Preliminary Review, a summary of previous applied activities before entering the Ph.D. program as well as any additional applied activities since entering the program will be prepared. Documentation of all applied activities while in the program, letters from supervisors, and a summary of progress toward high levels of expertise, are required as part of the student's Qualifying Review Portfolio. Where available, students may apply for licenses, certificates or other professional qualifications in applied areas in which they hope to continue to practice post-degree.

Teaching and Mentoring

Goal: Student will develop skills in communicating knowledge and supporting the intellectual growth of others through teaching and mentoring.

It is recommended that student complete both Teaching and Mentoring competencies, as described below:

Teaching:

Teaching Assistantship: complete the TA requirement of 10 hours/week for two semesters for an Eliot-Pearson course. If TA responsibilities do not include teaching one's own section (and receiving student evaluations), then additionally student must do 1 *or* 2 below:

1. The student must develop and deliver a lecture or class session at Tufts (for a course in which student is not enrolled) or another school, with written evaluation provided by students and/or supervising faculty.
2. Complete a teaching internship, with written evaluation provided by students and/or supervising faculty.

Mentoring:

Training in mentoring will be provided as part of the Proseminar

Complete at least one of the following:

1. Undertake a mentoring role for a new graduate student for one year, as documented by program advisor;
2. Function in a supervisory role within a research lab or project; for example, supervise a senior thesis student, a summer scholar, or directed research student, documented by faculty lab director, course instructor, or advisor;
3. Serve as a lead TA for a multi-TA course, documented by the course instructor;
4. Serve as an advisor to the undergraduate Child Development Association, documented by the CDA advisor;
5. The GPC will consider other proposals, which must be submitted before the project is initiated.

Supervision/documentation provided by faculty advisor.

Dissemination

Goal: All students in the Eliot-Pearson Ph.D. program will demonstrate their experience in disseminating the results of their work to non-academic audiences. This competency will be developed through the following steps, each of which should be demonstrated for a successful Qualifying Review.

1. **Exposure to various forms of dissemination.** All students will become familiar with several types of media dealing with families and children. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Web sites (e.g., agencies, companies, foundations, interest groups, organizations, etc.)
- Print media (SRCDD Policy Briefs, publications of policy organizations, such as Child Trends, newsletters of professional organizations, community research agencies, etc., newspapers and popular press and magazines)
- Video media (Children's TV, network talk shows, cable outlets)
- Radio media (talk shows)

2. **Reviewing examples of dissemination** in terms of purpose, audience, appropriateness, quality, and effectiveness. This could be done through written assignments in appropriate courses. Student will submit a brief written statement documenting both

- A) several examples of dissemination reviewed, and
- b) a critique or review of any one of these examples.

3. **Demonstration of competency**

Students will prepare a written (1-2 page) or taped (5 minute) jargon-free report/article that could be used to disseminate findings from a Qualifying Paper or other study done by the student. This could be a report to a school or site where a study was conducted, a policy brief, a press release, etc.

NOTE: The Graduate Programs Committee is in the process of providing greater detail and further guidelines about how this competency can be fulfilled.

Conclusion

The competencies listed above should serve as a roadmap to help students and their advisors navigate the student's pursuit of the doctoral degree, including program requirements. They provide suggestions and guidelines about possible pathways to pursue, but they do not dictate courses of action. Ultimately it is up to the student and advising team to determine the particular course to follow when fulfilling requirements.

This is a living document. As requirements change, it may also be necessary to change this document. Please bear in mind the possibility of a time lag between new policies and new descriptions of the competencies, and plan accordingly with your advisor. A student is held to program requirements that were in place upon his/her admission to the doctoral program. Fulfillment of requirements that were approved during the course of the student's program participation is at the discretion of the student and advising team, but is not required. Each student's particular pathway through program requirements and competencies will be unique, determined in part by courses selected, timing of requirements, and nature of competency fulfillment. For example, the Chart provided on the next page lists the various requirements and competencies, but it does not indicate the sequence in which the various boxes (the points of intersection of the two dimensions) should be fulfilled, because that sequence will vary from student to student.

Doctoral Competencies Chart

Current Requirements* (listed across in columns) →
 Proposed Competencies (listed down in rows) ↓

Blank Chart:

Requirements → Competencies ↓	Coursework	Teaching	Research	Qualifying Papers	Internship	Dissertation
Knowledge Base						
Methods and Statistics						
Research						
Applied work						
Professionalism						
Publication						
Grantsmanship						
Teaching and mentoring						
Dissemination						

* The Preliminary Review & Qualifying Review are requirements not included on chart.

Note. Overtime, we hope to gather examples of how various students have fulfilled the competencies. Those examples will provide valuable information about different possible sequences.

References

Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered. Priorities of the Professoriate*. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Chibucos, T., & Lerner, R. (Eds.). (1999). *Serving children and families through community-university partnerships: Success stories*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Zigler, E. (1998). A place of value for applied and policy studies. *Child Development*, 69(2), 532-542.

Suggested Changes in Requirements

Drop requirement to TA in Department

Increase number of statistics and research methods courses

Require publications

Drop internship requirement for students who have extensive applied experience