UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Curriculum and Instruction
PH.D. HIGHER EDUCATION

FAQ

Revisions and Benefits: What were the basic revisions made in and benefits of the revised program?
1. We consolidated the degree choices. Instead of having 3 different degrees which most people found confusing (College Teaching PhD & EdD and Higher Ed Admin PhD), we now have one, the Higher Ed PHD

2. We revised the program to provide a comprehensive, but focused study of higher education, while leaving room for custom choices within each student's program of study in agreement among chair, committee and student.

3. We provided more freedom for students, chairs, and committees to select research courses which will best prepare students for their dissertation and future work.

4. The revised program includes two courses which "wrap" the program of study in order to provide an introduction to each major phase of doctoral studies (first course work, and then dissertation). These two courses are (EDH 7057 Introduction to Research Studies in Higher Education and EDH 7935 Higher Education Capstone Seminar)

5. We reduced the minimum number of dissertation credit hours for the degree. However, students still have to continue to enroll in dissertation hours until the finish they successfully defend their dissertation.

6. We eliminated the PhD cognate because most of our students enter the doctoral program with a master's degree in another field. Therefore, actually our students already have a cognate. Also, this change adds value for all our students as they earn a PHD. It avoids confusion or assumptions about EdD and PhD degrees as there is no national or global standard which differentiates these degrees.

Why did program decide to revise the higher education doctoral programs?
Part of this decision was in order to simplify and focus our degree programs by collapsing three doctoral degrees into this revised one-- Higher Ed PHD.

We revised the program to provide a comprehensive, but focused study of higher education, while leaving room for custom choices within each student's program of study in agreement among chair, committee and student.

Where is the old EDD?
We no longer accept applications to the EdD program in the higher education area. Instead, with fewer credit hours than the prior version of the EdD, you may now earn the PhD degree.

What is the difference between an EdD or PhD?
There is no national or global standard which differentiates these the EdD and PhD degrees in our field. It entirely depends on where one earns their degree 1) whether there is any difference, and 2) if so, what difference between the degrees might be.

Many years ago, originally in general across the field, there was supposed to be a difference between the PhD and EdD, but in practice this difference has vanished decades ago. In many cases, when one compares the PhD and EdD from different universities, they are equally as rigorous and research focused.

Based on our experience, we believe our current and future students will be best served and avoid confusion with a variety of people by earning the PhD degree.