Ph.D. in Public Policy with a Concentration in Educational Leadership and Policy

The PhD in Public Policy with a Concentration in Educational Leadership and Policy is a partnership between the Policy, Planning and Management Program within the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service and the Educational Leadership Program within the School of Education and Human Development under the College of Management and Human Service. It is a post-masters 45 credit hour cohort program designed for experienced educational leaders who are employed throughout the duration of the program. The program integrates courses in public policy, educational policy and leadership, and dissertation research. Through the program, educational leaders develop the policy and research skills to influence educational policy and practice.

Program Overview

The public policy curriculum at the Muskie School prepares students to understand and analyze problems from diverse political, economic, and ethical perspectives; identify and implement innovative policy solutions and strategies; and lead, facilitate, and enhance civic discourse, public-private cooperation, and organizational and community development. A comprehensive examination focused on the public policy side will strengthen the students’ capabilities in melding their expertise in educational leadership with the theoretical and analytical tools and techniques of policy practitioners.

Core public policy courses in the Ph.D. are complemented with training in education leadership and policy provided by the USM School of Education and Human Development. The concentration in educational leadership and policy encompasses a range of educational policy and leadership topics and issues. In addition, the program benefits from SEHD’s Center for Education Policy, Applied Research and Evaluation (CEPARE), which is also the home of the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI). Students have the opportunity to participate in the Center’s research and use that policy research as cases for learning.

Program Schedule and Delivery

Students will take two courses each semester for a total of four courses during the school year (September - May) and two courses during the summer for a total of 18 credits per year. The final course schedule will be developed after students have been admitted, so the program can be best designed to fit the students' needs. However, students can expect to have class one evening per week and approximately one Saturday per month throughout the academic year. During the summer, courses will be compressed with one or two weeks of intensive study.

This is a face-to-face program. There are no online courses in the program. At their own discretion, individual instructors may include online components, including the option to attend class at a distance.

Curriculum Overview

Policy courses (12 credits):

- PPM 610 Government, Democracy and Public Policy Making
- PPM 611 Economics for Policy, Planning and Management
- PPM 615 Organizational Theory, Management, and Leadership
- PPM 620 Introduction to Policy Analysis

Educational Leadership and Research Courses (24 credits)

- EDU 701 Foundations of Education Policy and Research (6 credits, 3 each semester)
- EDU 702 Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership and Implications for Policy
- EDU 705 Data Collection and Analysis in Education Research (6 credits, 3 each semester)
- EDU 706 Evidence-based Practice and Programs (6 credits)
- EDU 708 Dissertation Proposal Seminar (3 credits)

Dissertation (9 credits)

- EDU 799 Dissertation in Education (9 credits)
Admission Requirements

Minimum Requirements:
Candidates should have a master’s degree in public policy, education, or a related field with a minimum GPA of 3.25. Applicants who do not have a 3.25 overall GPA must enclose a letter asking for special consideration, in which they provide evidence of an ability to complete doctoral studies successfully. Without such a letter, applicants who fail to meet eligibility requirements may be automatically denied.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is required. See below for details.

Application Deadline: April 1, 2016

Candidates should submit all application materials to the Application Processing Center, University of Maine System, P.O. Box 412, Bangor, ME 04402-0412. Electronic transcripts and other application materials can be emailed to: edocs@maine.edu

Application must include:

- A submitted online graduate admission application;
- The application fee of $65.00;
- Test scores from the GRE (see below);
- Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended, excluding the seven campuses of the University of Maine system. A transcript is official when it comes directly from the institution. If an applicant is submitting an official transcript, it must be in a sealed envelope from the institution indicating that it is an official document. If the envelope has been opened prior to arriving at the Office of Admissions, it is no longer considered an official transcript;
- Two letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant’s knowledge of current scholarship, capacity to connect theory and practice in posing and solving educational problems, achievement of excellence in educational practice, and demonstrated capability and motivation to engage in doctoral study. References should be from individuals who are qualified, through direct experience with your academic or professional work. One of these individuals should be your supervisor. Your supervisor and the other person writing a letter of reference on your behalf should comment on your qualities and experience as an educational leader and/or your ability to undertake doctoral level graduate study. Recommendations are submitted using our online application form. You will need to provide the name and email address for each of your recommenders during the application process. Once you submit your application, an email will be automatically generated to your recommenders directing them to fill out the electronic letter of recommendation;
- Essay (see below);
- Certification of finances (international students only);
- Submission of official TOEFL or IELTS scores (if English is not first language);
- Current resume.

Special Essay Questions:
In addition to the general requirements of the program, candidates for the PhD in Public Policy with a Concentration in Educational Leadership and Policy should address the following questions. Both essay questions are required.

The essay questions are as follows:

1. Describe your professional background and goals. How does the Ph.D. in Public Policy: Concentration in Educational Leadership and Policy fit with these and what makes you a good candidate for this program? (500 words)
2. Identify an education policy and describe it. What research evidence is there related to the policy’s impact, and how might you design further research to investigate the policy’s impact? (750 words)

Testing Requirement:
The GRE is required. Applicants must have earned a score of either 1,000 points or above (for tests taken before 9/1/2011) or 300 or above (for tests taken on or after 9/1/2011) on the combined Verbal and Quantitative subtests of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE must be taken within the last five years. Applicants who did not score 300 combined on the verbal and quantitative sections of the GRE must enclose a letter asking for special consideration, in which they provide evidence of an ability to complete doctoral studies successfully. Without such a letter, applicants who fail to meet eligibility requirements may be automatically denied.

If English is not your language you must submit official TOEFL or IELTS scores. You must have earned a score of at least 550 on the paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 79 or higher on the Internet-based test, or 213 on the computer-based test, or an IELTS score of 6.5 or higher for students whose native language is not English.

For more information:
School of Education and Human Development
(207) 780-5902; kiwarren@maine.edu
8 Bailey Hall, USM Gorham Campus
usm.maine.edu/phd-public-policy

For assistance with the application process:
Office of Admissions
(207) 780-4386
usmgrad@maine.edu