Thank you for your interest in the Education PhD program at UCSC. These FAQs provide answers to questions commonly asked by our applicants.

1. **What is the timeline for applying to the PhD program, and how do I apply?**
   Applications are accepted between October 1 and December 1 each year for entry the following fall quarter – there are no spring admissions. No late applications will be accepted.

   Before you submit your application online, you’re encouraged to check that it is complete and that all the correct attachments have been uploaded.

   For general information about admissions and to access the online application, see Instructions on the Graduate Admissions site: [http://graddiv.ucsc.edu/prospective-students/application-filing-requirements/index.html](http://graddiv.ucsc.edu/prospective-students/application-filing-requirements/index.html). This site is also a valuable source of general information about graduate studies at UC Santa Cruz. For information about the Education PhD program, see: [http://education.ucsc.edu/academics/phd-info/Prospective%20PhD%20Students.html](http://education.ucsc.edu/academics/phd-info/Prospective%20PhD%20Students.html).

2. **Can materials be submitted after the December 1 deadline?**
   The online application and fee payment must be submitted not later than Dec 1 (11:59 pm). *The online application will close at midnight.*

   Graduate Admissions will continue to update the electronic application file as supplemental materials arrive (letters of recommendation, test scores). The Education’s Admissions Committee will begin looking at applications soon after the December 1st deadline; therefore, it’s recommended to have all materials submitted by the deadline (or shortly after).

   - **Consider** the normal time for test scores to be sent from the testing centers (see GRE and TOEFL or IELTS sites for this information) and schedule your exams early enough so that the scores arrive by the deadline. There is space on the application to self-report your scores if you know them. These may serve for review purposes until the official scores arrive. However, without official scores, your application is incomplete.
   - **Official transcripts** are not needed to apply. You may upload unofficial transcripts to the application for purposes of review. Only those applicants who receive and accept an offer of admission will be required to supply official copies of transcripts. If you have access to some, but not all, of your unofficial transcripts, you will need to submit official copies of those you haven't uploaded. (Follow directions in the Graduate Division FAQs for)

3. **Has UCSC received all of my application materials?**
   Within a few business days after submitting your application, you will receive an email from Graduate Admissions with instructions about how to access your applicant portal. Portal access lets you monitor the status of your application and supporting materials.

   If a reasonable amount of time has passed since you had materials sent, or took an exam, but you do not see these in the portal, you should take steps to verify the materials have been sent. You should contact Graduate Admissions, gradadm@ucsc.edu, to check for anything that shows as ‘required’ in your portal. It is up to the applicant to track the status of their application and to follow-up if they notice anything missing.

   Please note that the campus is closed from December 23 through Jan 2, and you will be unable to reach anyone for assistance during that time. The department's review of applications will start shortly after December 1.

4. **When can I expect to hear about the admission decision?**
   The department typically makes admission decisions by mid- to late-February and relays its decisions to Graduate Admissions. The official offer of admission and funding is sent via email from Graduate Admissions. Admitted students have until April 15 to accept or decline the offer. Graduate Admissions will also send email notifications to students denied admission; these usually follow shortly after the admissions offers are sent.
5. Is the GRE required?
The GRE General Test is required in order to apply to the Ph.D. program in Education. You can find information about the test, registration, test centers and test dates at [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre). We only accept GRE scores sent to us by the Education Testing Services (ETS) online delivery system. ETS will provide scores for tests taken in the previous five years. The code for UCSC is 4860 (there is no department code).

6. How important are the GRE scores in selecting applicants for admission? Is there a minimum score?
Each application is carefully considered and reviewed as a whole. There is no minimum GRE cutoff score. Applicants with lower GRE scores might be considered favorably when there is other strong evidence of academic promise in the file. If you feel that your scores do not represent your academic potential, you should speak to your concerns in your Personal Statement, or in the additional information section at the end of the application.

(In addition to departmental fellowship funding, there are a few divisional fellowships available during the admissions process. Applicants with higher GRE scores will often be more competitive for these awards.)

7. Is there money for GRE testing costs?
The GRE site includes information about fee reductions at: [http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/fees/reductions](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/fees/reductions).

8. What is the most important portion of the application when being considered for admission?
All parts of the application are important, and the admissions committee considers all carefully.

9. What should my Statement of Purpose convey?
This should be a concise, well-written essay about your academic background and your reasons for pursuing graduate study. Admissions committees place particular importance on the statement of purpose. It exhibits your ability to present ideas in clear, coherent language. Your statement of purpose should indicate how knowledgeable you are in the desired field of study, what area of research you intend to pursue, and how your undergraduate studies and other experiences (work, community involvement, and so forth) serve as a foundation for graduate study. In addition, address how and why you intend to build on this foundation of knowledge and apply your doctoral training to theoretical and/or practical problems.

Please mention in your statement of purpose why you want to pursue graduate work in education and why you would like to do it at UCSC.

- You should address what your goals are in seeking a PhD and what area(s) of research you want to study. Include any possible research questions you want to explore.
- The Admissions Committee will be looking for a match between the applicant’s proposed area of research and the expertise of the Education Department’s faculty.
- Describe how you see your work in terms of larger social change or equity in education.
- You should address any problems or inconsistencies in your academic record, test scores, etc.
- Your Statement of Purpose is the “face” of your application: it should be substantive, well written, error free.

10. What kind of writing sample would you like? Is it ok to use a writing sample that is not on an education topic?
The writing sample is one source (along with the Statement of Purpose and letters of recommendation) that the admissions committee uses to evaluate an applicant’s writing abilities. Samples can be term papers, field reports, research proposals, or an essay (in addition to the Statement of Purpose) written especially for the application. Education or closely-related topics are preferred, but writing on other topics that demonstrates an applicant’s ability to engage in scholarly or academic writing is also acceptable.

11. How does my undergraduate GPA factor into the admission process?
The undergraduate GPA is one important indicator of students’ academic record and potential; it is considered along with all the other elements of the application. A GPA of at least 3.0 is preferred. If you do not feel your GPA represents your academic potential, you should address this in the Statement of Purpose or Personal History Statement. There are fields to list both your undergraduate GPA, and your graduate GPA, if applicable.
12. Whom should I ask to write letters of recommendation for me?  
At least two of the three letters should be from faculty members or other instructors who have taught you in higher education or academic settings. These letters should discuss your potential to successfully complete a doctoral degree program that requires significant reading, writing, analytical thinking, and scholarly research. All the letters should speak to your experiences and interests in the fields or topics you intend to explore in our program, and your potential for successfully pursuing the goals you have set forth.

The letters are important supporting materials, and you’re encouraged to ask for these letters soon after you begin your application. Recommenders can submit their letters before you’ve completed your application. As soon as you list and save their name and email on your application, they will receive an invitation and instructions to upload a letter.

13. Do I need a master’s degree to apply for the Ph.D. program? Will previous graduate coursework or a Master’s degree transfer?  
The basic requirement for admission to the Ph.D. program is completion of a Bachelor’s degree.

Many applicants have completed a graduate degree and/or hold teaching credentials (K-12 experience is a preferred qualification). While a graduate degree may indicate preparation or readiness for a Ph.D. program, it does not transfer nor count directly towards the master’s requirements in this program, nor does it reduce the number of units required to maintain full-time status. If a student has completed a Master’s thesis equivalent to the Second Year Project, that student may be allowed to pursue an alternate project that advances their research (see Alternative Second Year Project in the handbook).

14. Does the program admit students for an M.A. in Education?  
While our Ph.D. students have the option to earn an M.A. during the course of their doctoral studies, we only admit students who intend to earn a Ph.D. degree.

The Department does offer a Master of Arts/Credential Program, for students wishing to pursue a career in K-12 teaching. For more information, visit: http://education.ucsc.edu/academics/mac-info/index.html.

15. I am employed full-time. Is it possible to attend part-time?  
This program assumes students are pursuing the Ph.D. full-time. During the first two years, there is substantial coursework and a Second Year Project Paper to be completed. Most students maintain full time enrollment at least until they pass their QE and advance to candidacy.

Additionally, many graduate students support themselves with teaching appointments (as TAs or Graduate Student Instructors) or as Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs). Both kinds of employment usually involve working 20 hours per week. These positions are desirable because they pay a salary, but also cover all or most of the quarter’s fees.

16. Does the program admit international students?  
The department welcomes applications from international students. The following information may help you decide whether to apply.

(a) English Language Proficiency  
There are different scores required for admissions and TA eligibility.

Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not received a college degree from an institution in an English-speaking country must take the TOEFL exam (www.ets.org/toefl), or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam (http://www.ielts.org/contact_us.aspx). The minimum passing scores for the Social Sciences Division are: 550 for the paper-based TOEFL, 220 for the computer-based TOEFL, 83 on the internet-based TOEFL, or 7 for IELTS.

To be considered for a Teaching Assistantship (TAship), you must score 26 or higher on the speaking section of the TOEFL, or get a speaking portion score of 8 for the IELTS exam. Applicants with a Master’s degree earned in the US at an accredited institution and with TA experience at that university may be eligible for an exemption from the English language prerequisite for UCSC TAships – a letter from the TA supervisor is required.
For more information about waivers of the English language testing, see: http://graddiv.ucsc.edu/prospective-students/intnl-applicants.html.

(b) Supplemental Non-Resident Tuition
Some international students experience financial difficulty meeting the supplemental non-resident tuition (NRT) expense ($5,034 per quarter, $15,102 per year). Unless covered by NRT fellowship support, an international student owes NRT every quarter until they pass their qualifying exam and advance to candidacy (usually during the third or fourth year).

The department may nominate international applicants for a limited number of two-year NRT fellowships provided by the Graduate Division; if any of our nominees is selected, the department may include two years of NRT ($30,204 total, $15,102 per year) in the offer. These fellowships, however, are for the first two years only, so the student would still owe any additional quarters’ of NRT until they pass their qualifying exam.

Assuming they’ve met the English language proficiency requirement to TA, international students have the same eligibility for teaching appointments; these pay a salary and a large portion of graduate student tuition. But teaching appointments do not pay for supplemental non-resident tuition; NRT is $5,034 per quarter, $15,102 per year.

(c) Transcripts
Transcripts must be submitted in the original language and with an English translation. Many institutions may use an alternate grading scale; this is not a problem. Be sure to include at least one copy of the page that shows the explanation of the grading.

(d) Fellowships and Financial Aid
International students have the same eligibility for departmental stipends and tuition fellowships as other applicants. They have the same eligibility for student teaching appointments. They are eligible for Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) positions; GSR positions are the only graduate student employment that covers non-resident tuition, if applicable. International students are not eligible for diversity fellowships, nor are they eligible for need-based financial aid.

It is helpful if international applicants clearly show details about other sources of graduate support for which they've applied or have been awarded (e.g., from their government, Fulbright or other scholarship funding). Such external funding is not required, but it could help demonstrate that the applicant will have sufficient resources, and is less likely to experience financial difficulties, during their time in the program. The applicant does not need to show actual proof of support until they apply for the I-20, but you should consider your finances closely before accepting an offer. An estimate of graduate student costs can be found at: http://financialaid.ucsc.edu/costs/graduate-costs.html. The amount of support shown in an admissions offer counts towards this budget, but the student will need to demonstrate they have the remaining funds.

17. How does residency affect my status?
It is very important to fully answer the questions on the application about residency. ALL graduate students pay the same amount in graduate student fees (~ $5,917 per quarter).

In addition, non-CA residents (out-of-state and international students) also owe non-resident supplemental tuition (NRT). NRT is $5,034 per quarter, $15,102 per year. NRT fellowships may be part of the offers made to non-residents, but these are not guaranteed.

Out-of-state students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents may be reclassified as residents for tuition purposes by their second year, at which point they will no longer owe tuition.

International students owe both graduate student fees AND non-resident supplemental tuition (NRT) until they advance to candidacy. NRT does not reduce to zero in the second year for international students. After advancement, though, international students are exempt from NRT for three years. NRT resumes if an international student doesn't finish during the three-year period.
EXEMPTION: Some applicants are not CA residents, but may be exempt from tuition for other reasons. The most common NRT exemption is available to applicants (excluding international students) who are not current California residents, but who attended three or more years and who graduated from a California high school. An applicant who claims this exemption – and who is offered admission – will need to provide a high school transcript before the fall quarter begins.

For more information about CA residency, see the Registrar’s web site at: http://registrar.ucsc.edu/fees/residency/. Full answers will help the selection committee make an educated guess about whether a non-resident might be eligible for an exemption from tuition (useful in terms of formulating the offer). However, an official determination of residency status is not processed unless an applicant actually accepts the offer.

18. How much does the program cost? Is there financial support?
Tuition information can be found on the Registrar website at: http://registrar.ucsc.edu/fees/registration/undergraduate-student-fees.html#graduate. Information has been provided about 2016-17 fees and salaries (http://education.ucsc.edu/academics/phd-info/fees.salaries_16-17_rev1.pdf).

It is the student’s responsibility to secure funding for graduate studies. Over the course of students’ enrollment in the graduate program, they typically fund their education with some combination of the following: TAships, GIships (graduate student instructor), GSRships (graduate student researcher), UCSC graduate fellowships, scholarships or fellowships from outside sources, loans, personal savings, family income, and support from other individuals (e.g., extended family members). When possible, first-year students are supported with UCSC graduate fellowships, which typically cover part of a student’s expenses for the first year only. The campus has a limited number of admissions fellowships that cover more than one year; departments may apply for these on behalf of their applicants, and if their applicant is selected, the offer will show multiple-year funding.

Beginning in the student’s first year, he or she is strongly encouraged to apply for TAships in the department and other departments or for college core courses. Students are also encouraged to seek and apply for outside funding from government agencies, private foundations, and industry, and to plan alternative financing should none of these opportunities become available. The Social Sciences Division sends a weekly notice about grant opportunities. Information about grants and fellowships is available from Social Sciences Division (http://socialsciences.ucsc.edu/faculty-and-staff/grants/graduate-student-resources/fellowships-scholarships/index.html) and Graduate Division (http://graddiv.ucsc.edu/financial-aid/fellowships.html). Financial aid information is available at: http://financialaid.ucsc.edu/index.html.

19. How do I find out about TAships or other student employment?
Each spring the department sends a call to its PhD students for the following year’s TAships. It can vary between years whether new students receive TAships as part of their admissions offer, but they are invited to apply if there are vacancies once they enter the program (in particular, if all continuing students who’ve applied have funding).

Education has a limited number of TAships. Many Education PhD students also teach in other departments, programs, or colleges. There is an especially helpful web group that graduate students can subscribe to so they automatically receive news about campus wide vacancies.

20. How long does it take to complete the Ph.D. program?
Students vary in how long they take to complete the program, but the expectation is that students will finish in approximately six years. Students should have advanced to doctoral candidacy by the end of their third year, but not later than the end of their fourth year in the program. After advancement, they have three years to complete their PhD dissertation.

21. How often are required courses offered?
Required courses are generally offered every year (EDUC 235, 237) or every other year (all others). Program electives are offered on a two-year rotation.

22. Is there flexibility in course selection?
Faculty advisors work with their advisees to determine course selection. Students should be able to complete most of the required courses during their first two years in the program. Many take additional courses (in this department and others) while preparing to take their Qualifying Exam.

23. Are there restrictions on course enrollment?
Our doctoral courses are available to doctoral students only. Classes are set at about 15-20 maximum capacity. Because of the two-year course rotation, first- and second-year students will take a number of courses together. Graduate students from other departments may also enroll in our courses.

24. What are the opportunities for coursework in other campus graduate programs?
There are many opportunities to take elective courses in other departments and this is highly encouraged to augment your specific research goals. Some graduate courses are open to all graduate students, others by permission code from the instructor.

Some campus graduate programs also offer a Designated Emphasis. To find programs that offer DEs, see the General Catalog: http://registrar.ucsc.edu/catalog/fields/fields-of-study.html and also http://senate.ucsc.edu/committees/gc-graduate-council/policies-and-memoranda%20/designated-emphasis-policy/index.html. You can find out more from each department’s website, or by contacting their graduate advisor.

25. Is there a Visit Day for newly admitted students?
All applicants chosen for admission are invited to attend a New Admit Visit before the April 15 deadline for acceptance. At this one-day event, prospective students have the opportunity to meet other prospective students, hear about the program, and to socialize during the day and evening with faculty and current graduate students. Visitors will meet with the Graduate Director and with their potential faculty advisors. With prior notice, it is usually possible to visit student family or graduate student housing.

While we encourage attendance from as many prospective students as possible, we realize that some people will have work, school, or family conflicts. The best time for admitted students to visit is on the scheduled Visit Day, but if you are unable to do so, the department may be able to accommodate your visit at a separate time, with adequate advance notice.

Some travel reimbursement is allowed, and each invitee will be told the maximum amount of their reimbursement prior to the visit. The reimbursement is based on distance from UCSC, and is offered to help offset the cost of your visit.

26. How can I find out more about the Education PhD program at UCSC?
There are many ways to find out about the program.

(1) After reviewing the information for prospective students at: http://education.ucsc.edu/academics/phd-info/Prospective%20PhD%20Students.html, you might be interested in reading the student handbook found in the information for Current PhD Students at: http://education.ucsc.edu/academics/phd-info/Current-PhD-Students.html.

(2) Prior to completing your application, we recommend that you arrange a personal interview (Skype, phone, or in person) with at least one of our faculty whose research interests are similar to your own – see the faculty directory at: http://education.ucsc.edu/about/faculty/index.php.

(3) Applicants selected for admission will be invited to a Visit Day prior to the April 15th acceptance deadline.

(4) You can also direct questions about the program to the PhD advisor at edphd@ucsc.edu or to the Graduate Director (currently Professor Judit Moschkovich, jmoschko@ucsc.edu).

Please also review important admissions information on the Graduate Division’s site: http://graddiv.ucsc.edu/prospective-students/application-filing-requirements/index.html.

revised: Fall 2016