

Education Research Center (ERC) Graduate Research Program

Purpose:

The Education Research Center (ERC) Graduate Research Program aims to expand research opportunities for doctoral students by providing authentic research experience. Participants will engage in various elements of the research process, focusing on advanced data collection and analysis, addressing key questions in education policy, and synthesizing findings to draw scholarly conclusions. Through these experiences, doctoral students will develop critical thinking, methodological rigor, and scholarly communication skills, and gain firsthand experience in applied research environments.

Format:

The collaboration takes place over one summer. The ERC will pair interested faculty and students based on mutual interests and needs to conduct a research project. Students and faculty meet throughout the summer to advance the project, ideally towards completion. Faculty will provide mentorship and ensure students receive timely feedback.

This experience is not equivalent to a full-time graduate assistantship. Rather, it is additional time the graduate student devotes to experiential research to gain greater expertise and further their scholarly development. Students are expected to commit approximately 5–10 hours per week, though the exact time commitment will be negotiated between faculty and student at the start of the partnership.

Foundational Principle:

This experience is grounded in authentic doctoral research and scholarship. Participants will engage in meaningful scholarly work that produces tangible research outputs, such as conference proposals, presentations, policy briefs, research briefs, and potentially publications. This experience may also support dissertation development and establish the student as an emerging scholar in their field.

Criteria:

1. Faculty applicants should:
 - Be full-time faculty members;
 - Be actively engaged in an advanced research project that requires assistance. Projects should not be at the idea generation stage; ideal projects are at the data analysis or, in some cases, data collection stage where additional assistance would be beneficial;
 - Be actively engaged in mentoring, working closely with their doctoral student;
 - Ensure that students who make adequate progress receive authorship, with author order negotiated up front;
 - Have a negotiated exit plan at the end of summer, whether or not the project is completed.

2. Graduate students should:
 - Be actively enrolled in a graduate program (master's or doctorate);
 - Have completed at least one graduate methods course;
 - Be willing to work independently under faculty supervision;
 - Have a desire to conduct educational research.

3. This experience is conceived as authentic doctoral research and scholarship. The summer experience should lead to a formal research product (e.g., conference proposal and/or publication) and may support dissertation development.
4. The ERC Graduate Research Program should culminate in at least one dissemination product. Examples include a presentation at a departmental seminar, graduate student research week, or academic conference; a research brief; a policy brief; or a conference proposal. There will also be opportunities to present work within the ERC in the 2026-2027 academic year.
5. Either the faculty or the student has to be within CEHD. The other can be external and we would ensure that pairings are appropriate.

Application Process:

Faculty members interested in pursuing this opportunity should submit an interest form containing the following information:

[Click here to access interest form](#) →

Application Deadline: Interest forms must be submitted by April 15.

1. For Interested Faculty:
 - Faculty information: Name, rank, department, and contact information.
 - Project information: Title; lay abstract (maximum 500 words) explaining the purpose, scope, and potential impact of the project.
 - Student engagement: Outline the anticipated plan for engaging the doctoral student in the research process, including meetings, mentoring plan, feedback process, etc.
 - Faculty presentation: Faculty must present at the upcoming ERC faculty talks on April 23rd. This is a 5-minute presentation on their work that students can then identify their interests.
2. For Interested Students:
 - Student information: Name, program, department information, and email.
 - Student background: Faculty advisor, methods courses taken, preferred methodology, preferred part of the research process to participate in, and current or previous research projects/experience.
 - Student interests: Outline of research interests (maximum 250 words). Upon faculty presentations, students will provide a ranking of projects that may be of interest.