

# **Graduate Programs in Educational Psychology with emphasis in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development**

**Department of Educational Psychology  
Neag School of Education  
University of Connecticut**

## **Program Handbook**

### **Welcome and Introduction**

The graduate programs in Educational Psychology with emphasis in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut offer multiple pathways for interested graduate students to pursue advanced-level courses, professional growth, and research. Students have opportunities to gain in-depth knowledge about identifying students with gifts and talents for special programs and services, developing creative productivity in all students, providing supports for these students and those who work with them, and conducting research in the field. Students can also pursue research in the area of creativity and innovation. We expect our students to graduate from our programs prepared to take on positions as talented teachers, leaders, and scholars.

The graduate programs are housed in the Department of Educational Psychology and include two degree programs, a diploma program and a graduate certificate option. Students can earn a graduate certificate in Gifted Education and Talent Development, a Sixth-Year Diploma in Professional Education with concentration in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development, or a Master of Arts in Educational Psychology with a concentration in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development. Students wishing to pursue more advanced work may earn a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Psychology with concentration in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development.

This handbook serves as the guiding document for the graduate programs in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development, under the larger umbrella of the policies and procedures of the University of Connecticut Graduate School (<http://grad.uconn.edu/>). This handbook outlines program-specific guidelines, procedures, and policies as a complement to the Graduate School requirements. Additional information is contained on our program website (<http://gifted.education.uconn.edu/>).

## Overview of the Degree Programs

### *Doctoral Degree Program*

Students may pursue a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology with a concentration in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development (GCTD). The Ph.D. program was created for outstanding educators who exhibit unusual ability and talent and wish to pursue academic and leadership positions, including roles as researchers, state department consultants, authors, university professors, and creative contributors in the fields of education of the gifted and talented or creativity studies. Students accepted into this program are continually involved in research and service projects that focus on problem finding and creative problem solving. Each student's advisor assumes the role of mentor and facilitates the development of professional skills associated with creative productivity within the university community.

The Ph.D. program in GCTD includes coursework specific to gifted education and creativity, as well as courses related to learning theories and research methodologies. Individual programs of study vary and are determined in part by personal interests, goals, and research ideas. Students have opportunities to pursue coursework within the Department of Educational Psychology and other departments within the Neag School of Education and the broader university relevant to individual interests and career pursuits. Doctoral students are expected to design and complete a dissertation that will be a significant contribution to the body of knowledge relating to the field. Students are encouraged to explore possible dissertation topics early in the program and to integrate such topics as much as possible throughout the program in coursework, field experiences, and research activities.

We encourage applications from individuals interested in advanced study in the program focus areas. Applications to the program are evaluated on the basis of past performance in undergraduate and graduate education, experience, test scores, and career goals. A Master's degree is preferred but not required for program applicants. For individuals interested in advanced study of giftedness and talent development in K-12 educational settings, past coursework and experience in K-12 teaching are strongly preferred.

Most doctoral students complete a residency of approximately 3-4 years. The doctoral program cannot be completed through summer residency only. Research experiences are available through participation in faculty research projects and student-initiated studies.

Further details on the application process, courses, and program experiences and requirements appear elsewhere in this handbook and on our program website at <http://gifted.education.uconn.edu>.

## *Master's Degree Program*

The Department of Educational Psychology offers a Master of Arts degree in Educational Psychology with a concentration in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development. The M.A. program prepares individuals for specialization in teaching in gifted and talented programs, as well as for leadership roles in the fields of creativity and gifted education. The program of study includes coursework on strategies and program models for supporting academic and creative endeavors for gifted students. The program also includes a focus on field experiences in school settings.

The M.A. program is available in two different formats: a full-time, on-campus program, and the Three Summers Program. Both programs require 30 semester hours of coursework and completion of a comprehensive exam. The full-time program can generally be completed in 12-18 months, while the Three Summers Program is spread across 2 to 3 years with coursework on campus during the summer and online during the academic year.

Individuals with a Bachelor's degree and some experience and/or coursework in education are encouraged to apply. The M.A. program is not a teaching certification program; individuals interested in pursuing K-12 teaching positions should consider completing a teaching certification program prior to applying for the M.A.. The Three Summers Program is specifically targeted toward motivated educators who have professional or family obligations that make regular year study impossible. The program is designed to allow educators to keep their teaching positions while earning a graduate degree part-time in the summer with additional online course work throughout the year. Out-of-state Three Summers students pay the same course fees as in-state Three Summers students.

Further details on the application process, courses, and program experiences and requirements appear elsewhere in this handbook and on our program website at <http://gifted.education.uconn.edu>.

## **Diploma and Certificate Programs**

### *Sixth-Year Diploma in Professional Education*

The Sixth-Year Diploma in Professional Education with concentration in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development provides options for educators with a Master's degree to pursue study in this area to enhance their professional work. The Sixth-Year Diploma program prepares individuals for specialization and leadership in gifted and talented programs, frequently leading students to roles as administrators, coordinators, or curricular specialists in such programs in K-12 schools.

The Sixth-Year Diploma program is available as a full-time program or as a Three Summers Program. Most Sixth-Year Diploma candidates pursue their work through the Three Summers program format. The Sixth-Year Diploma requires 30 semester hours of coursework and completion of a comprehensive exam. Teachers who already have a Master's degree and who work in districts with pay scales that specifically target "30 credits beyond the Master's" should consider applying to the Sixth-Year option. Because the Sixth-Year Diploma is not a degree, the credits earned for the Sixth-Year Diploma often can later be applied to degree program requirements.

Further details on the application process, courses, and program experiences and requirements appear elsewhere in this handbook and on our program website at <http://gifted.education.uconn.edu>.

### *Online Graduate Certificate Program*

The online graduate certificate program is a 12-credit program that provides a solid foundation of coursework in Gifted Education and Talent Development. Individuals with a Bachelor's degree and specific interest in this area of study are encouraged to apply. A background in teaching is useful but not required for the certificate program.

The online certificate program requires four online courses, including three required courses and one elective. The program may be completed in 1 year. The credits earned in this program may later be applied to a Master's degree or Sixth-Year Diploma in Professional Education.

Further details on the application process, courses, and program experiences and requirements appear elsewhere in this handbook and on our program website at <http://gifted.education.uconn.edu>.

## **Core Program Faculty**

Listed below are core and adjunct program faculty in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development. Graduate faculty are eligible to serve as advisors for program students.

### ***Graduate Faculty:***

Ronald Beghetto, Ph.D.

E. Jean Gubbins, Ph.D.

James C. Kaufman, Ph.D.

Catherine A. Little, Ph.D.

Sally M. Reis, Ph.D.

Joseph S. Renzulli, Ed.D.

Del Siegle, Ph.D.

### ***Adjunct Faculty:***

Susan Baum, Ph.D.

Meredith Greene Burton, Ph.D.

Jann Leppien, Ph.D.

Rebecca Mann, Ph.D.

Mary Sullivan

## Admissions

Prospective students applying to the degree, diploma, or certificate programs must submit a completed application to the UConn Graduate School (<https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/apply-to-uconn/>). Applicants should review requirements for admission to the university and the specific program requirements listed below in preparing an application.

Applications for programs in GCTD must include the following components:

1. Completed application form
2. Undergraduate and graduate transcripts<sup>1</sup>
3. Personal statement
4. Current resume
5. Three letters of recommendation
6. Current (within the last 5 years) Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores (*required for Ph.D. applications only*)
7. Current evidence of English proficiency (for non-native speakers of English): See Graduate School guidelines for options regarding evidence of proficiency in the English language.
8. Processing fee

The personal statement should address (a) reasons for undertaking graduate work in this area of study, (b) description of prior experiences that inform pursuit of the program/degree, (c) post-program career goals, and (d) (specifically for Ph.D applicants) areas of potential research interest. Details about an applicant's preparation, strengths and weaknesses as a student, and any academic honors, scholarships, or fellowships previously received will all be helpful. Applicants are encouraged to consult the program website as a basis for highlighting program-specific connections (e.g., rationale for wanting to work with a particular advisor, interest in specific research endeavors in progress in the program).

After confirming receipt of all required documents, the Graduate School forwards the application to the program faculty for admission consideration.

### *Admissions Timeline*

The program faculty consider applications each winter for admission the following fall semester. Applicants for the Ph.D. program and the full-time Master's program are considered **only** for fall admission. The application deadline for fall admission is **December 1**. Following initial application review, applicants to the Ph.D. program may be invited to complete an interview with program faculty (generally conducted via video conferencing).

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<sup>1</sup> Review graduate school requirements at <https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/requirements/> for baccalaureate degree requirements and prior academic performance as evidenced on transcripts.

Funding (generally in the form of graduate assistantships) may be available to students applying for full-time study. Admissions decisions for the full-time program are generally made in January or February, and funding decisions are made prior to April 1.

The program faculty consider applications for the Three Summers Program and the online graduate certificate at multiple times during the year, related to students' desired semester to begin. Applications for the Three Summers Program are considered based on the following deadlines:

<b>Intended Starting Semester</b>	<b>Application Deadline</b>
Summer	April 1 <sup>2</sup>
Fall	June 1
Spring	December 1

Applications for the online graduate certificate program are considered based on the following deadlines:

<b>Intended Starting Semester</b>	<b>Application Deadline</b>
Summer	March 1
Fall	July 1
Spring	November 1

### **Evaluation of Program Applicants**

Admissions decisions are based on review of the student's academic and professional record, the match of individual interests and career plans with faculty interests and program focus, and the program faculty's assessment of the student's readiness to complete graduate work at the University of Connecticut and make contributions to research and/or practice in the field beyond graduation. We consult all available information provided through the application process and conduct a holistic review.

Additional information regarding qualifications for admission to the Graduate School may be found on the Graduate School website at <https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/>.

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<sup>2</sup> Applicants seeking consideration for admission after April 1 should contact Judith Mathews at [judith.mathews@uconn.edu](mailto:judith.mathews@uconn.edu) to inquire.

## **Student Housing**

Graduate student housing on campus is available but limited. The University does not have family housing available for students. Information on housing on campus is available through Residential Life at <https://reslife.uconn.edu/graduate-housing/>. UConn's Off-Campus Student Services office (<https://offcampus.uconn.edu/>) serves as an advocate and resource for students who commute or live off campus, including maintaining an off-campus housing database.

Students who pursue the Three Summers Program will work with program staff to arrange campus housing during summer coursework.

## **Advising**

Program applicants may indicate a preferred advisor as part of the application process. An advisor will be assigned upon a student's admission to the program, with consideration of the applicant's preferences and interests as well as current faculty load.

At the time that they submit a plan of study to the Graduate School, within the first year of their program, Ph.D. students select an advisory committee including a major advisor from the core program faculty and at least two additional committee members. At least one of these committee members must also come from the core program faculty. Ph.D. students are encouraged to re-evaluate their selection of major advisor and committee members after their initial year of the program and again upon completion of the comprehensive exam to ensure alignment of student and faculty research interests.

## **Annual Review of Students**

Program faculty continuously review students' progress toward degree or program completion. In addition to formal evaluations, such as course grades, faculty evaluate students' progress on research initiatives and other academic activities.

For Ph.D. students, an annual performance review provides the context for faculty and the student to evaluate progress toward the degree, to reflect on past successes, to discuss areas of academic and/or professional concern, and to set goals for the coming year. The annual review consists of a 30-minute meeting with 2-3 members of the program faculty. These meetings are held at the conclusion of the spring semester.

## *Program Dismissal*

According to the Graduate School requirements, any graduate student whose scholastic record does not meet minimum requirements of the program and/or the Graduate School may be subject to dismissal. Students who are not demonstrating satisfactory progress toward their degree or whose scholastic record does not meet minimum requirements will be notified in writing of unsatisfactory performance. If performance does not show improvement within a semester beyond such notification, the student may be subject to dismissal.

## **Degree Requirements for M.A.**

Students enrolled in the Master's degree program must complete at least 30 credits and maintain good academic standing. Good academic standing requires a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher at all times. Students must also successfully complete a comprehensive exam.

Students must prepare a plan of study with their academic advisor early in their program. Recommendations for specific courses and scheduling vary somewhat depending on whether students are pursuing the full-time program in the academic year or the Three Summers Program. We consider students' prior professional and educational experiences in determining courses for the plan of study, but generally a combination of the core courses outlined below would be required. All courses are 3 graduate credits.

### ***Core Courses***

*At least 15 credits from the following:*

- EPSY 5710 Introduction to Gifted Education and Talent Development
- EPSY 5720 Developing Schoolwide Enrichment Programs
- EPSY 5740 Strategies for Differentiating the Grade Level Curriculum
- EPSY 5750 Enhancing Creativity in the Classroom
- EPSY 6770 Curricular Options for High-Ability Learners
- EPSY 5194 Seminar

*At least 9 credits from the following:*

- EPSY 5601 Principles and Methods in Educational Research
- EPSY 5092 Practicum
- EPSY 5195 Workshop in Education - Confratute
- EPSY 5198 Curriculum Lab – Confratute
- EPSY 5199 Independent Study in Education

*At least 3 credits from the following:*

- EPSY 5760 Improving Students' Thinking Skills
- EPSY 5780 Social and Emotional Components of Giftedness and Talent Development

Additional credits may be earned through coursework outside of the program area or EPSY department.

### ***Comprehensive Exam***

The comprehensive exam for the Master's degree contains questions related to content covered in EPSY 5710, 5720, 5750, 5194, 5601, and 6770. Students who fail the exam are assigned additional education experiences followed by an oral examination. A passing grade on the exam is 70%.

### ***Continuous Registration***

Once students begin coursework, they must maintain registration continuously each semester thereafter (except summer/winter sessions) until all degree requirements have been met. Registration may be maintained by taking coursework for credit or by registering for one of five non-credit Continuing Registration courses. Failure to maintain continuous registration during the spring and fall semesters results in the student's inactivation. See the Graduate Catalog for further details on continuous registration. Guidelines for students who may need to take a period of leave from the University are provided here: <https://cdee.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2260/2018/10/Continuous-Reg-Guide.pdf>. Note that non-credit registration requires payment of University fees.

## **Degree Requirements for Ph.D.**

Students in the Ph.D. program must maintain good academic standing throughout their program. Good academic standing requires a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher at all times. Ph.D. program credit totals vary considerably, depending on what specific course interests students choose to pursue. All Ph.D. students must complete 15 credits of dissertation preparation (as required by the graduate school) and coursework within the content area as outlined below. Students must also successfully complete a comprehensive exam, complete and defend a dissertation proposal, and complete and defend a dissertation to finish the degree.

Students must prepare a plan of study with their academic advisor during their first year in their program. The plan of study must be signed by the student and the advisory committee members and submitted to the Graduate School for approval as outlined in the Graduate Catalog. The student may not take the general examination before the plan of study has been fully approved.

### ***Core Courses***

We consider students' prior professional and educational experiences in determining courses for the plan of study, but generally a combination of the core courses outlined below would be required. All courses are 3 graduate credits.

#### *Core Courses Required for All EPSY Ph.D. Students (at least 12 credits):*

EPSY 5510    Learning: Its Implication for Education

EPSY 5605    Quantitative Methods in Research I

EPSY 5607    Quantitative Methods in Research II

Choice of:

EPSY 6601    Methods and Techniques of Educational Research

or

EPSY 6651    Methods for Causal Inference from Data

#### *Core Courses in Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development:*

EPSY 5710    Introduction to Gifted Education and Talent Development

EPSY 5720    Developing Schoolwide Enrichment Programs

EPSY 5740    Strategies for Differentiating the Grade Level Curriculum

EPSY 5850 Introduction to the Science of Creativity (may be replaced by EPSY 5750 with advisor approval)

EPSY 6770 Curricular Options for High-Ability Learners

EPSY 6194 Seminar (may be taken multiple times)

*Dissertation Preparation* (at least 15 credits):

GRAD 6950 Dissertation

*Additional Courses Recommended for Ph.D. Students:*

EPSY 5760 Improving Students' Thinking Skills

EPSY 5780 Social and Emotional Components of Giftedness and Talent Development

EPSY 5602 Educational Tests and Measurement

EPSY 5613 Multivariate Analysis in Educational Research

EPSY 5621 Construction of Evaluation Instruments

EPSY 6092 Practicum

EPSY 6611 Hierarchical Linear Models

EDCI 6000 Qualitative Methods of Educational Research

EDLR 6052 Qualitative Methods of Educational Research II

EDCI 6005 Advanced Methods of Qualitative Research

### ***Ph.D. Examination Procedures***

Doctoral students are required to take general examinations. The examinations shall be taken before the proposal defense and not later than eight months prior to conferral of the degree. The examination consists of three parts: creating a portfolio, completing a computer exercise analyzing data based on the two required quantitative research courses, and an oral exam.

Ph.D. students will complete a comprehensive exam process that includes demonstration of competence in the three key areas of responsibility for academic positions (i.e., scholarship, teaching, and service). The process also includes completion of a written exam assessing statistical applications. Students will work with their advisor to determine what evidence will be presented in each of the three major areas, with some guidelines provided below. Once students have assembled evidence in all three areas, they will present the documentation as a portfolio to

their advisory committee. *The portfolio should demonstrate growth the candidate has made during the Ph.D. program; therefore, the components selected for the portfolio should have been developed after the student was accepted into the Ph.D. program.* Students will schedule an oral exam with their committee, at least 2 weeks after the date of submission of the portfolio of evidence. The oral exam will include discussion of the materials in the portfolio as well as questions related to key aspects of expertise in the field of study.

### *Timeline*

Most students will be expected to complete their comprehensive exam after most coursework has been completed, usually approximately 2 years into the program. The statistics exam may be completed separately at whatever stage the student and advisor determine the student to be ready.

### *Statistics Exam*

The statistics exam is intended to provide the candidate with an opportunity to demonstrate the following research skills:

- Code and enter data into statistical software (generally SPSS)
- Conduct a bi-variate correlation, paired and independent  $t$  test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical analysis
- Report results using APA guidelines for correlations,  $t$  tests, and ANOVAs

The exam is open note and involves analyzing simulated data provided by the program.

### *Portfolio Components*

*Scholarship* – (a) brief statement of intended line of/approach to research (1-2 pages), and (b) samples of written work completed *after admission* to Ph.D. program, demonstrating the student's content knowledge and ability to apply to appropriate written context. Examples might include the following:

- Grant proposal (actual or mock)
- First authorship on a paper submitted for publication

*Teaching* – (a) brief statement (1-2 pages) of teaching philosophy, and (b) samples to demonstrate student capacity for teaching/preparing courses at the undergraduate or graduate level. These experiences should have occurred *after admission* to the Ph.D. program. Samples should incorporate multiple aspects of teaching, including planning, delivering instruction, and assessment. Examples might include the following:

- Syllabus for a course (possibly for an experimental/new topic beyond standard courses in our/similar programs)
- Teach a course/guest lecture
- Evidence of working with other educators to implement course innovations, such as efforts to infuse creative thinking, critical thinking, etc. through social media

*Service* – samples to demonstrate involvement within the university or larger professional community, beyond the level of membership only in an organization. Service examples should

represent work conducted *after admission* to the Ph.D. program. Examples might include the following:

- National/regional presentation
- Committee service within organizations or university
- Consulting with schools
- Evidence of working with other educators to implement course innovations/differentiation for advanced populations

### *Oral Exam*

At the oral exam, students will be expected to explain how the portfolio evidence demonstrates competence in the field and coherence toward future positions. The committee may ask questions on any aspect of the portfolio, including the teaching and research statements, and may also ask questions reflecting the types of circumstances with which a scholar/expert in the field may be presented (e.g., questions that might emerge from an unexpected phone call or in a faculty meeting). The committee may also ask questions about content covered in coursework. Only the committee and the student will be present for the oral exam.

### *Continuous Registration*

Once students begin coursework, they must maintain registration continuously each semester thereafter (except summer/winter sessions) until all degree requirements have been met. Registration may be maintained by taking coursework for credit or by registering for one of the non-credit Continuing Registration courses. Failure to maintain continuous registration during the spring and fall semesters results in the student's inactivation and discontinuation from the graduate program. See the Graduate Catalog for further details on continuous registration. Note that non-credit registration requires payment of University fees.

### *Dissertation Requirements*

The primary focus of the dissertation should be an empirical study that will contribute to the knowledge base in the fields of Giftedness, Creativity, and Talent Development. The major advisor and advisory committee work with the student to craft a study that will meet program expectations. The procedures for development of the proposal and the final dissertation follow the requirements of the Department of Educational Psychology and the Graduate School.