

**University of Tennessee Chattanooga**  
**Academic Program Review**  
**Doctorate in Learning and Leadership**  
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## **PART 1 – Learning Outcomes**

***How would you rank this program with similar ones in the state, region, and nation?  
Are the intended program and learning outcomes clearly identified?***

The Learning and Leadership Doctoral (LEAD) programs at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga are as good as any doctoral program in the country. The program draws students from the local community, the region, and other universities. The unique opportunity for students to pursue an EdD or a PhD in the field of learning and leadership, in a program designed working adults, and that will help them understand the challenges of organizational change is very unique in the region. The program's mission, vision, and learning outcomes are clearly identified and woven into the fabric of the program's curriculum. Not only are the students held accountable to the 7 outcomes of the program, they also build knowledge and skills specifically related to their own professional practice and have an opportunity to add to the body of knowledge for the profession/discipline. The LEAD faculty are highly qualified with unique backgrounds and professional experiences that create an environment that allows the program outcomes to be achieved by the students that might not be found at other universities. The ability to have students achieve student learning outcomes in this program is made possible by the varied and rich experiences the faculty bring in with them in addition to their academic qualifications.

***What criteria does the department use to evaluate sufficient achievement of intended program outcomes? Are the criteria appropriate for such evaluation and/or for the program? How? Does the department make use of evaluation information and/or information obtained from student, alumni, and employer surveys and/or data from institutional research to strengthen and improve the program? Does the program fit/align within the institutional mission?***

Students are evaluated each semester on course and related program learning outcomes. LEAD uses a variety of resources to do this including but not limited to written papers, discussion issues, face to face class meetings, and presentations. Students also complete a written dissertation, and there are several levels of pre-defense and preparation to ensure success in the dissertation. LEAD uses the university's Campus Labs platform to do annual program assessment online. The program regularly reviews this data, and makes continuous improvement to the program. The program displayed in its self-study how retention and advancement to candidacy goals were at 50%, but after reviewing data in 2017, found that they were meeting those goals and moved the goals to 75% beginning in 2017-18. They have changed the order of coursework based on feedback from students and looking at the data. During my visit while talking to students, they identified another opportunity for improvement of the course sequence,

and the department head thought that the students' ideas were great and they are planning to make even further changes to the sequence based on the student feedback.

The LEAD program began as an EdD program, but based on feedback from students and employers in the region, the program pursued and was approved to add a PhD option to the program. Area businesses and prospective students wanted the added value of the PhD for advancement in their profession or to pursue other professional opportunities, and thus the basis the program to pursue this additional degree option.

The main strategic directives from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) mission and strategic plan that apply to the LEAD program are:

1. Partnerships for Students: Teaching and Learning
2. Partnership for Education and Research

As it relates to Strategic directive 1, the program is specifically designed as a partnership between participants and faculty in the areas of Teaching and Learning. Participants are engaged in the learning process throughout the coursework phase of the program. All courses are designed to include collaborative and social cognitive learning components, which enhances and increases the student engagement in the teaching and learning processes. Strategic directive 2 includes partnerships for education and research. Each doctoral candidate completes a full research dissertation, which is typically aligned with his/her professional practice. Through this process, we partner for research opportunities with a large number of institutions and organizations. The completed dissertation serves as a documentation and ongoing record of addition to the field and ongoing research on the professional practice of the doctoral candidates

## **PART 2 – Curriculum**

***Is the current curriculum appropriate to the level and purpose of a graduate program? Is the program more advanced in academic content when compared to related undergraduate programs?***

The LEAD program's curriculum is specific to the Learning and Leadership degrees that they offer. It is not intended to serve a specific employer or workforce need, but to create professional scholar practitioners in a multi-disciplinary program. The program defines a multi-disciplinary approach as "one that incorporates and integrated view of learning and leadership across a variety of organizational settings and environments." These professionals come from a variety of disciplines and organizations, thus the unique curriculum and program focus. I have not seen a program like this and the approach they take in other similar programs.

***How has the program designed a process by which students can be assured of making timely progress in the degree program? How is it determined that courses are offered? Is there a set schedule for course offerings upon which the student can rely? Does the department clearly outline program requirements and offer courses regularly to ensure timely completion of the program?***

Students are admitted to the program in a cohort model, and the curriculum is offered in a lock-step fashion to ensure successful movement throughout the program. This cohort model and course sequence is clearly outlined for each student upon entering the program.

***Does the curriculum align with the program learning outcomes? How is mastery assured through the curriculum? How is the content reviewed on a regular basis with results used to determine actions to take to improve the curriculum? Does the department regularly review and revise curriculum content and organization to ensure that it is appropriate and that it prepares students to meet the specified learning outcomes? Will the department need to update the curriculum and/or develop new or alternative offerings in the near future?***

***Is the curriculum adequate to enable students to develop the skills and attain the outcomes? Does the curriculum include knowledge of the disciplinary literature?***

The LEAD program faculty work tirelessly to ensure alignment of the curriculum to the program learning outcomes. The program has built a curriculum map (labeled as Table 3 in their self-study) that demonstrates the current coursework and alignment. The program has also clearly defined the different tracks available, either EdD or PhD, and made sure that the proper differentiation is present. The next step for the program in further curricular updates will be in the future as they look to move their EdD to a fully-online model and some minor changes including the program title for the PhD program. The curricular changes are in process with academic affairs now for the PhD with a plan for the new program to begin in fall 2020. The plan for the online EdD is to begin in fall 2021. They do plan to alter the curriculum for the EdD and change the focus and target audience for this program to further differentiate it from the PhD program. This process has been set in motion from feedback from students and looking at enrollment data. Current students are choosing the PhD and love the hybrid model with an on campus course one Saturday a month. The new EdD will be fully online, thus giving prospective doctoral students a choice in program based on curriculum as well as delivery mode.

***Are opportunities available to students that allow them to engage in research, professional practice or training experiences? How are those opportunities communicated to students? Is the program offered through distance education or online? If so, how are those offerings assessed compared to on ground programming?***

The LEAD programs are work-embedded, meaning students all work and have experience beyond the classroom. Students have specific professional development activities available to them via their employer. The program offers additional opportunities for professional development through graduate student travel and grants, an on-campus research conference, and other extra-curricular activities. There are specific research grant options available to students as well that students can apply to receive.

***Are appropriate pedagogical and/or technological innovations included that enhance student learning? Are the department's instructional practices consistent with the standards of the discipline?***

The LEAD programs are based on a hybrid delivery model, with structured face to face meetings and virtual classroom activities to facilitate the scholar-practitioner model. As 100% of the students are working adults, this delivery model is perfect for students with busy schedules and

other work-related demands. My on campus interviews with current students found them actually looking forward to their Saturday meetings and found this delivery model to be perfect for their busing lives.

### **PART 3 – Student Experience**

***Does the program have enough students to allow an appropriate group of peers as they participate in the program?***

The program goal is to admit 16-22 students into a new cohort each year, and they recruit from a 300-mile radius around Chattanooga. The program has averaged 83 students the past 3 years, and students interviewed described the cohort size to be appropriate for discussion and dialog in the coursework. The students also commented on the cohort make up, as the students come from varied backgrounds and organizations, as a tremendous strength of the program.

***Are students offered the opportunity to evaluate both the curriculum and the faculty? How? Are these methods effective in getting feedback about the program and teaching effectiveness?***

Each semester students are given the opportunity to evaluate their coursework, and separate evaluations are given for each faculty member. These surveys are administered each semester using *SurveyDig*. Evaluations are then made available to each faculty member and department head at the end of the semester, and the LEAD faculty as a whole meet to review the course evaluations for ongoing program and course review. The LEAD program has frequently made changes to deliverables, books or articles used in the class, and even to the faculty depending on a careful analysis of these evaluations.

***Are there appropriate curricular and co-curricular offerings to enhance student experiences?***

One example where UTC enhances the graduate student experience is through an on-campus research conference. Held each spring, ReSEARCH Dialogues is the largest academic conference on the UTC campus. The event showcases the scholarship and creative endeavors of more than 750 UTC faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students and staff from all campus programs and disciplines. In addition, members of the local Chattanooga community are invited to participate as pitch competition judges, event volunteers, presenters, and conference guests.

***Are diverse perspectives and experiences provided for the students both through the curriculum and through extracurricular activities? Are students provided with appropriate academic support services? What services are offered? Do students use the services? How well do they meet the needs of the students?***

Doctoral students receive formative and summative feedback each semester. The specific nature of the feedback depends on the nature of the assessment. Written feedback is provided on all deliverables by the instructors of record. If a participant is struggling to make satisfactory progress in a timely manner (ex: multiple No Progress (NP) grades in Dissertation) or is having academic difficulties (examples: program GPA approaching 3.0 or multiple “C” grades), the Program Office schedules an appointment with the Program Advisor.

All UTC students have excellent access to full text journals through several online databases including SAGE Research Methods. When students do not have direct access to the full text of a journal article of interest, the interlibrary loan service is generally able to secure and share the full text within 48 hours. With respect to other general academic support services, all UTC students have access to UTC's Counseling Center, Center for Career and Leadership Services, Center for Women and Gender Identity, Athletic and Recreation Center (ARC), regular enrichment through activities in the fine arts and sporting events, as well as a variety of nearby campus ministries that are affiliated with UTC

#### **PART 4 – Graduate Faculty Quality**

***Are the faculty competencies/qualifications those needed by the program and by UTC? Do all graduate faculty meet the standards set by the program and expected SACSCOC faculty credentials?***

I have reviewed the faculty CV's (appendix D) as well as Table 5 in the LEAD Self Study, which demonstrate the faculty qualifications, doctoral degree area, and courses taught. The variety of professional and academic backgrounds of the faculty create a high-quality department/program for the LEAD students.

***Are faculty teaching loads sufficiently reasonable and equitable to accommodate the highly individualized nature of a graduate program, especially the direction of theses or dissertations? With respect to ethnicity, gender, and academic background, is faculty diversity appropriate for the program? Does the program student and faculty diversity mirror the demographics of the discipline?***

Faculty teaching loads are aligned based on student enrollment in courses, not just the number of courses taught, which is a refreshing way to design faculty teaching loads. The dissertation load on each faculty member is also calculated in this same manner, and creates a load based on student credit production not just the typical FTE calculation. As for diversity and the background of the faculty, the faculty mix mirrors the student mix, but the program will look to further diversify the faculty as new positions are considered as the program grows.

***Do the faculty have regular opportunities for professional development such as travel and participation in professional organizations, workshops, and other learning experiences? Do faculty take advantage of the opportunities provided?***

Faculty are given ample opportunities for professional development, opportunity to present research at conferences, and opportunity to travel. Faculty are regularly engaged in these professional development opportunities.

***Are faculty engaged in the planning, assessment, and improvement processes that measure and advance student success? Does the program use assessment data, etc. to improve teaching, scholarship and creative activity and service? How does this work? Are the processes effective?***

Faculty in the LEAD program are actively engaged in the continuous improvement of the program, meet on a regular basis to discuss data and student feedback, and have demonstrated

numerous examples of how they have used the data to improve their scholarship, teaching, and the overall program for the good of the students.

## **PART 5 – Learning Resources**

***Does the program regularly evaluate its equipment and facilities and pursue necessary improvements?***

The LEAD doctoral program seems to have the resources it needs to operate its current program and they have engaged in the planning for future needs as well. The lab they use to video stream classes is updated, and plans to further upgrade it as the technology changes is underway. The program appears to have what it needs, and is a priority within the scope of the overall university plan.

***Are library holdings and other learning and information resources current and adequate to support the teaching and learning needs of the discipline? Are there resources adequate to support the research and publication needs of the faculty and staff?***

Absolutely. The library at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga is a shining star on their campus, as it employs over 40 people and has a budget in excess of \$4 million dollars. The resources contained here are overwhelming, and are more than adequate to support the needs of the LEAD program.

## **PART 6 – Support**

***Is the program's operating budget consistent with the needs of the program?***

As demonstrated in Table 9, page 30, of the LEAD self-study, the program's budget is consistent with the needs of the program. Actual expenditures have increased each of the last four years, but that has been steady with the increase in program enrollment over the same timeframe.

The next pressing need for program expenditures will be for additional faculty and marketing as they look to further expand and differentiate their EdD and PhD programs. The program is also looking to add a Center for Leadership Inquiry and Research (CLIR) that focuses on discovering and understanding the practice of decision-making and solution generation, specifically, on the intersection of behavior and experience and the impact on the leadership process. The Center for Leadership Inquiry and Research will pursue collaborative inquiry and research opportunities that create and sustain areas of research and recognition of experiential learning. CLIR will serve as an incubator for organizations of all types, and offer research possibilities for our students, faculty, and community. The college and university are aware of these needs in the future, and are supportive in making them come to fruition.

***Does the program have a history of enrollment and graduation rates sufficient to sustain high quality and cost effectiveness?***

The program has sufficient enrollment and graduation rates, and their future plans and program changes will most definitely result in further enrollment growth. There will be a need to more actively promote and advertise the program as further differentiation in the two doctoral programs is created, and additional faculty will likely need to be added as growth occurs, but the

added student credit generation will more than make up additional revenue to offset the new expenses added to the program.

***Is the program responsive to local, state, regional and national needs of the discipline?***

Being a partner and responsive to the needs of the region are of the utmost priority for UTC. The LEAD doctoral program has made modifications over the years to address specific needs from students and employers in the region, and will continue to do so as the program moves forward.

***Does the program regularly and systematically collect data related to the success of its graduates, including placement?***

The LEAD program regularly updates and publishes a newsletter highlighting the success of current students as well as alumni of the program. Promotions and new jobs are featured in the newsletter, as well as program information for current cohorts of students. The data the systematically collect is used on a regular basis to produce this newsletter.

***Are the program policies reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with institutional policies and mission?***

Faculty meet on a bi-weekly basis to review curriculum, program processes, student concerns, and other topics. As the discussions at these regular meetings warrants, changes are made to the program.

## **PART 7 – Summary Recommendations**

### ***Overall, what are your impressions of the program?***

I am very impressed with the LEAD doctoral program at UTC, including the faculty, staff, facilities, and administration. This is a sound program and is a leader in the university in terms of how they operate, how they look at faculty class loads, and how the faculty's contracts operate. The faculty are on 12-month contracts to ensure year-round success of the program and their model of faculty loads based on student credit generation is a model to be looked at by all. The current plan to further differentiate their PhD and EdD programs are right in line with what the students need and the employers in the region have requested. The Saturday classes and hybrid format are perfectly suited for the students, and alums of the program have been promoted and achieved professional success. I have very little critique of the program, and the only suggestions I made to the team at my exit meeting was planning for the future. The program is going to grow, and to continue its success a marketing plan must be established and plans for future growth in faculty must be in place. But I am confident that the university leadership and leadership in the college and the program are strengths, and those leaders will ensure that they are prepared for the growth and next steps in the LEAD doctoral program.

***What goals would you suggest the program set for the next five years? Please list goals in order of priority (i.e., the most important goal first, followed by the second most important goal, etc.) How can the program work to achieve these goals over the next five years?***

- Finalize plans for minor changes to the name and curriculum in the PhD program
- Make changes to the EdD program during the 2020-21 academic year
- Marketing plan to ensure prospective students and employers understand the difference in these 2 programs, as well as a recruiting plan for both doctoral programs
- Plans for future faculty growth based on enrollment targets