Programme Specification for

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) by Practice

Online Hybrid Delivery, Part/Full Time

Contents

Programme Title

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) by Practice

Awarding Institution

This programme is accredited by the **Swiss School of Business Research (SSBR)**, a Switzerland-based university who will confer the doctoral degree upon successful submission of the thesis and completion of the viva assessment.

Duration

Minimum 18 months – Maximum 36 months.
Extension allowed with approval from Director of Learning[1].

Mode of Study

Part Time & Full Time, Hybrid Online Learning, more information:
https://premierlearning.org/hybrid-online-learning

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[1] Maximum of 8 years from initial enrolment. May incur additional fees. T&C's apply.

Programme Overview and features

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) by Practice is a distinctive professional doctorate programme designed for experienced educators and education leaders seeking to advance their expertise while making a significant, evidence-based contribution to professional practice. The programme integrates advanced research methodologies with real-world educational challenges, enabling candidates to develop actionable insights that drive meaningful change within their institutions and communities.

Candidates on this programme progressively build toward an 80,000-word doctoral thesis through a series of structured modules. These modules engage candidates in intensive academic training, reflective practice, and hands-on research, culminating in a rigorous viva voce examination. By balancing scholarly inquiry and professional application, graduates of this Ed.D. by Practice will be equipped to influence policy, drive innovations in teaching and learning, and lead educational reforms on a global scale.

Theoretically diverse educational opportunities – the learning opportunities presented are theoretically robust. The modules offered highlight the importance of critically and reflectively engaging with your professional practice, fostering insightful and innovative discussions and analyses. Each module is designed to systematically contribute to your thesis, concentrating on your professional identity, the context of your practice, your methods of acquiring knowledge, and the potential research impact you aim to achieve.

A faculty engaged in active research while providing instruction – during the program, you will benefit from the guidance of a knowledgeable team of tutors and supervisors, each possessing specialised expertise in areas such as education policy, inclusive education, research methodologies, and applied linguistics. Instruction will be provided by faculty members from the university's professoriate, along with other staff who hold substantial research responsibilities.

The extent of support – we recognise that numerous individuals pursue a professional doctorate following a hiatus in their studies. Therefore, in addition to the organised supervisory instruction, we offer supplementary support designed to enhance your confidence as an academic writer. This includes access to formative assessment opportunities, group development sessions, research writing days, and personalised tutorials with your module tutors. Furthermore, as a postgraduate researcher, you will benefit from all resources available to those enrolled in a conventional PhD program, which encompasses tailored training, seminars, conferences, and various development opportunities.

Entry Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate both academic and professional readiness to undertake doctoral-level research[2]:

1. **Academic Qualifications**

   o An honours degree (2:1 or equivalent) and/or a master's degree in education or a related field.

   o For applicants whose qualifications do not match these criteria, significant professional experience and a strong research proposal may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2. **Professional Experience**

   o A minimum of three years of relevant experience in a, teaching, educational, support and/or leadership role in the education sector.

   o Active engagement, work and/or employment (paid or unpaid) in a professional educational setting during the course of the doctoral study.

3. **Research Proposal**

   o An initial research direction that aligns with the programme's focus and demonstrates the feasibility of doctoral-level inquiry[3].

4. **Language Proficiency**

   o Proficiency in English (IELTS or equivalent) for non-native speakers. The institution may require additional evidence of English competency (e.g., a writing sample or oral interview).

5. **Interview / Portfolio**

   o Applicants may be required to attend an interview or submit a digital/physical portfolio of work to demonstrate research readiness and subject matter alignment.

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[2] Enrolment and acceptance of eligibility is at the discretion of the Admissions and Registrations Office.

[3] Can be formulated post-enrolment on the programme of study (see Module 1)

Programme Level and Credit Value

EQF LEVEL 8	ACADEMIC LEVEL	DOCTORATE
EQF LEVEL 7		MASTER
EQF LEVEL 6	POST UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL	BACHELOR
EQF LEVEL 5		HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA
EQF LEVEL 4	UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL	HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE, UPPER SECONDARY DIPLOMA
EQF LEVEL 3	SECONDARY LEVEL	SECONDARY DIPLOMA OR VOCATIONAL DIPLOMA
EQF LEVEL 2	PRIMARY LEVEL	SECONDARY SCHOOL WITH NO DIPLOMA
EQF LEVEL I		PRIMARY SCHOOL

Figure 1 EQF Qualification Level Chart

Programme Level

As a European-registered education service provider, Premier Learning Institute follows the European Qualification Framework (EQF) for the determination of qualification levels. Refer to Figure 1 for a qualification level chart. Refer to the Programme Structure table below for more information about the EQF Level for this programme.

Credit System

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the United States credit system, and the United Kingdom credit system are widely used frameworks for measuring and comparing academic credits in higher education institutions, and qualifications based on any of these frameworks can be converted and considered globally. As a European-registered education service provider, Premier Learning Institute follows the ECTS. Refer to the Programme Structure table below for more information about the credit value of this programme. Note that doctoral-level programmes are typically not credit-rated, hence any ratings provided are for reference only.

Programme Structure

The programme is based on 9 modules, each contributing to a chapter in your doctoral thesis. The module outline is as follows:

Module Code	Name	Level (EQF)[4]	Assessment overview[5]	Credits (ECTS)[6]
EDD/01/INT	Introduction & Academic/Research Skills	8	8,000 words	Completion of all modules and/or assessments will bare **240 ECTS credits** (equivalent of **480 UK credits**) leading to the confer of a Doctoral Degree[7].
EDD/02/REF	Reflection on Practice	8	15,000 words	
EDD/03/PHI	Educational Philosophy	8	10,000 words	
EDD/04/LIT	Literature Review	8	15,000 words	
EDD/05/RES	Research Methods; Data Collection and Analysis	8	10,000 words	
EDD/06/ST1	Pilot Study	8	10,000 words	
EDD/07/ST2	Subsequent Study	8	10,000 words	
EDD/08/WRI	Write-up & Conclusion	8	Accumulative thesis submission	
EDD/09/VIV	Presentation & Viva Skills	8	Viva voce	

- Word counts indicated are for guidance only, and do not constitute a formal requirement. The requirement for each module will be doctoral level output presenting a new contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of study, as agreed by the supervisory panel and approval from the Director of Learning.
- Modules must be taken sequentially, and students will not be allowed to proceed without successful completion of all modules prior.
- Modules EDD/04/LIT, EDD/06/ST1 and EDD/07/ST2 will present opportunities for submission of research to academic journals and/or presentation of research at academic conferences. Although research output does not constitute a formal requirement, it is highly recommended.

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[4] European Qualifications Framework
[5] Word counts indicated are for guidance only and do not constitute a formal requirement.
[6] European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
[7] Doctoral-level programmes are typically not credit-rated, hence any ratings provided are for reference only

EDD/01/INT | Module 1: Introduction & Academic/Research Skills

Module Overview
This foundational module introduces candidates to the principles and standards of doctoral-level research. Emphasis is placed on developing critical research skills, honing academic writing, and understanding core theoretical paradigms. Candidates will also engage with ethical and policy considerations relevant to educational research.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Demonstrate advanced academic writing techniques and research methodologies.

    2. Critique key ethical concerns in educational research.

    3. Formulate a researchable problem pertinent to professional practice.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Exploration of research paradigms (positivism, interpretivism, critical theory).

    o Doctoral writing conventions (argumentation, coherence, referencing).

    o Research ethics and institutional review processes in education.

    o Database skills and digital research tools for literature search.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Lectures & Seminars**: Covering foundational research theories and applications.

    o **Workshops**: Focused on ethical approval processes and referencing standards.

    o **Formative Tasks**: Online quizzes and short reflective writing on proposed research topics.

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: Submission of a structured research proposal (8,000 words) plus an academic writing sample demonstrating appropriate critical style and referencing.

EDD/02/REF | Module 2: Reflection on Practice

Module Overview
Reflection on Practice equips candidates to examine their current professional context, identify critical areas of educational practice, and build a reflective framework guiding their inquiry. The module encourages a deeper self-awareness of professional values, assumptions, and potential biases.

- **Learning Outcomes**

  1. Critically evaluate one's professional practices to discern research opportunities.

  2. Integrate theoretical concepts with experiential learning to frame researchable questions.

  3. Produce a reflective portfolio demonstrating analytical rigour and reflexivity.

- **Indicative Content**

  o Theories of reflective practice (e.g., Schön, Brookfield).

  o Action research cycles and their practical relevance in educational contexts.

  o The role of mentorship and peer feedback in reflective inquiry.

  o Case studies illustrating practice-based research successes and challenges.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

  o **Seminars**: Supervisor-led critiques of reflective observations.

  o **Online Fora**: Facilitated discussions on professional identity and methodological choices.

  o **Self-Evaluation Exercises**: Mapping out professional competencies against research aims.

- **Assessment**

  o **Pass/Fail**: 15,000-word reflective practice report, evidencing critical engagement with personal and institutional contexts.

EDD/03/PHI | Module 3: Educational Philosophy

Module Overview
This module provides a comprehensive exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of educational practice and research. Candidates will debate different epistemological and ontological perspectives, grounding their own methodological choices within an explicit philosophical framework.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Analyse the influence of philosophical paradigms on educational policy and practice.

    2. Critically appraise epistemological debates underpinning research paradigms in education.

    3. Justify the philosophical stance of a proposed research project, demonstrating coherence with personal professional values.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Overview of major philosophies (pragmatism, realism, phenomenology).

    o Contemporary debates on knowledge production and truth claims in education.

    o Historical shifts in educational philosophy (e.g., Dewey, Freire).

    o Ethical dimensions of adopting particular philosophical frameworks.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Lectures**: Detailed expositions of historical and contemporary philosophical thought.

    o **Tutorials**: Application of philosophical concepts to real-case scenarios in educational settings.

    o **Reading Research**: Critical analyses of key philosophical texts (e.g., Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed).

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: Submission of a position paper (10,000 words) outlining and defending the chosen philosophical perspective for the doctoral research.

EDD/04/LIT | Module 4: Literature Review (with Submission for Publication)

Module Overview

Candidates deepen their literature-reviewing skills by systematically analysing existing research in a chosen area. This module focuses on developing critical appraisal techniques, identifying research gaps, and constructing a robust theoretical framework. Publication standards and journal selection strategies are also emphasised.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Undertake a critical and systematic review of relevant literature to identify knowledge gaps.

    2. Develop a coherent theoretical framework to guide empirical research.

    3. Produce a literature review suitable for peer-reviewed publication.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Techniques for comprehensive literature searching (databases, grey literature).

    o Systematic vs. narrative reviews: strengths, weaknesses, and applicability.

    o Structuring the literature review: thematic analysis, conceptual frameworks.

    o Targeting academic journals: editorial focus, submission guidelines, peer-review process.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Workshops**: Practical sessions on using citation management software, e.g., Zotero or Mendeley.

    o **Simulations**: Mock review exercises to refine clarity and quality of writing.

    o **Formative Supervisory Feedback**: Candidates submit preliminary sections for instructor and peer critique.

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: 10-15,000-word literature review (e.g. systematic review of state of the art, development of a conceptual framework), accompanied by evidence of journal submission (e.g., cover letter or acknowledgment of receipt).

EDD/05/RES | Module 5: Research Methods; Data Collection and Analysis

Module Overview
This module enables candidates to master both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The focus is on designing ethically sound data collection instruments, employing rigorous data analysis techniques, and interpreting findings in alignment with the chosen philosophical stance.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research methods within educational contexts.

    2. Design and implement a robust data collection plan, incorporating ethical considerations.

    3. Demonstrate proficiency in data analysis procedures suitable to the research questions.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Designing surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observational protocols.

    o Statistical analysis (descriptive, inferential) and qualitative coding (thematic, discourse).

    o Mixed-method approaches: rationale, design, integration of data.

    o Ethical frameworks (consent, confidentiality, data protection) and institutional review board (IRB) processes.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Lectures & Practical Labs**: Hands-on sessions using statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R) and qualitative analysis tools (e.g., NVivo).

    o **Case Studies**: Examination of published research to showcase diverse methodological approaches.

    o **Formative Feedback**: Candidates submit a mini research design for peer discussion and instructor critique.

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: Submission of a research methodology report detailing design, instruments, ethics, and initial data analysis plan (10,000 words).

EDD/06/ST1 | Module 6: Pilot Study (with Submission for Publication)

Module Overview
Candidates conduct a small-scale pilot study to refine and test their research instruments. This experiential learning process helps identify methodological challenges and guides adjustments before the main data collection phase. Publication aspects focus on conference proceedings or short academic papers.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Implement a pilot study that tests instruments and refines the main study's design.

    2. Critically analyse preliminary findings, highlighting methodological improvements.

    3. Produce a concise, publishable report or conference paper showcasing pilot outcomes.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Sampling strategies for pilot work (purposive, convenience, random).

    o Pilot data analysis: detecting trends, clarifying instrumentation reliability.

    o Strategies for revising research instruments based on pilot feedback.

    o Dissemination of early-stage findings in academic and professional contexts.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Supervisor Feedback Sessions**: Critical review of pilot instruments and preliminary results.

    o **Conference Preparation Workshops**: Guidance on writing an abstract, preparing posters or slides.

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: 10,000-word pilot study report demonstrating data analysis, reflexivity, and methodological refinement, plus evidence of submission for publication or conference presentation.

EDD/07/ST2 | Module 7: Subsequent Study (with Submission for Publication)

Module Overview
Building on the insights from the pilot, candidates conduct a full-scale research study. This module emphasises deep data collection, comprehensive analysis, and theoretical integration. Candidates work toward producing significant, original findings that address identified gaps in the literature.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Execute a thorough research investigation aligned with a well-defined methodology.

    2. Critically interpret data in relation to theoretical frameworks and existing literature.

    3. Develop research outputs suitable for high-impact publications or professional dissemination.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Longitudinal or multi-phase data collection methods.

    o Advanced statistical or qualitative analyses (e.g., structural equation modeling, grounded theory).

    o Aligning empirical findings with broader theoretical debates in education.

    o Preparing manuscripts for indexed journals or relevant academic outlets.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Lectures & Advanced Workshops**: In-depth training on complex analytic techniques.

    o **Ongoing Supervision**: One-to-one meetings with supervisors to discuss emerging findings and data integrity.

    o **Peer-Led Seminars**: Presenting interim results to the doctoral community for critique and discussion.

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: 10,000-word study report presenting a comprehensive set of findings, alongside proof of submission to a peer-reviewed publication (if journal article) or acceptance at an academic conference.

EDD/08/WRI | Module 8: Write-up & Conclusion

Module Overview
In this module, candidates synthesise their research findings into a coherent doctoral thesis of approximately 80,000 words. Emphasis is placed on creating a cohesive narrative that situates the candidate's work within a wider academic context, addresses key research questions, and reflects high standards of academic integrity.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Synthesise research findings into a coherent and logically structured thesis.

    2. Demonstrate critical engagement with relevant scholarly debates and theoretical frameworks.

    3. Reflect on the methodological journey, acknowledging limitations and directions for future research.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Thesis architecture and writing strategies (chapter structuring, thematic linking).

    o Cohesion and clarity in academic argumentation, including transitions and signposting.

    o Detailed analysis of limitations, implications for policy/practice, and future research pathways.

    o Formatting and referencing standards for final thesis submission.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Writing Retreats & Workshops**: Focused sessions to draft and revise thesis chapters.

    o **Supervisor Consultations**: Ongoing feedback on chapter structure, argumentation, and alignment with institutional guidelines.

    o **Mock Viva / Peer Review**: Practice sessions to strengthen candidates' preparedness for defending their thesis.

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: Submission of the final doctoral thesis (approximately 80,000 words), demonstrating intellectual rigour, coherence, and alignment with academic standards, explicitly outlining the candidate's new contribution to the body of knowledge in their respective areas of study.

EDD/09/VIV | Module 9: Presentation & Viva Skills

Module Overview
This final module prepares candidates for the viva voce examination, emphasising presentation skills, defence strategies, and the ability to respond critically and confidently to examiners' questions.

- **Learning Outcomes**

    1. Develop advanced presentation skills tailored to a formal doctoral examination setting.

    2. Articulate and defend the study's methodological choices, theoretical underpinnings, and findings.

    3. Respond effectively to examiner critiques with clarity and evidence-based reasoning.

- **Indicative Content**

    o Structuring a coherent oral defence: introduction, key findings, implications, limitations.

    o Techniques for managing challenging questions and demonstrating reflexivity.

    o Stress and anxiety management strategies for high-stakes presentations.

    o Post-viva processes: revisions, corrections, and publication pathways.

- **Teaching & Learning Strategy**

    o **Practice Viva Sessions**: Simulated defenses with peers and supervisors offering questions and critiques.

    o **Presentation Skills Workshops**: Covering the use of visual aids, clarity in spoken delivery, and time management.

    o **Reflective Discussion**: Post-presentation evaluations to identify strengths and areas for further refinement.

- **Assessment**

    o **Pass/Fail**: Successful completion of the mock viva voce examination, demonstrating doctoral-level intellectual engagement and the ability to defend the thesis rigorously.

Accreditation and Award

This programme is accredited by SSBR, which confers the doctoral degree upon successful completion, submission and defence of the thesis. The thesis will be eligible for submission to the accreditation partner once the candidate has passed all modules. Graduates may attend a formal graduation ceremony in Switzerland (or at a location decided at the discretion of the awarding institution) upon successful completion of the programme of study.

The Ed.D. by Practice is considered equivalent in status to a traditional PhD, affording holders the title of 'Doctor/Dr'.

Further Information and Contact Details

For more information, prospective candidates are encouraged to contact our admissions team or visit our official website. Detailed module guides, reading lists, and additional learning resources are provided upon enrolment, ensuring transparency and alignment with best practices in postgraduate research.

- **Admissions Office**: admissions@premierlearning.org
- **General Enquiries:** info@premierlearning.org