OVERVIEW

Within the Ph.D. in Education program, the Higher Education specialization provides intellectual growth and professional development for advanced post-secondary educators and leaders who are concerned with institutional success and the achievement of all students in colleges and universities.

During the 21st century, colleges and universities will undergo profound transformations as the student population becomes older and more diverse and as educational methods incorporate more technological solutions and distance approaches. Building on the foundational core KAMs in the social and behavioral sciences, the Higher Education curriculum emphasizes proficiency in understanding the needs of a changing clientele and academic community; analyzing and implementing strategies to promote learning and to support development in higher education; and learning how systems and policies can be used to assure organizational effectiveness and social change in postsecondary settings. Contexts for the study and practice of higher education include community colleges; private and public liberal arts colleges; distance-learning institutions; regional and state universities; proprietary, technical, and trade schools; state and federal agencies; and national professional associations.

SPECIALIZATION OUTCOMES

All Walden University students are asked to meet University-wide and Ph.D. in Education program outcomes. In addition, students who graduate with the Ph.D. in Education from Walden University and a specialization in Higher Education will be asked to address learning outcomes specific to the specialization:
As a professional in higher education, you should be able to integrate knowledge of the historical development and contribution of the higher education system in the United States in analyses of the current and future role of the system within society. You should be able to evaluate research related to the student’s experience in higher education, including post-adolescent development and learning theory and analyze higher education contexts, policies, and practices that contribute to success for diverse student populations. Finally, you should be able to synthesize current research on law, policy, and accountability issues, and demonstrate the ability to influence institutional change and continuous improvement within those issues.

These broad goals for learning should guide your work in KAM development and completion, advanced research and/or practicum experiences, and the doctoral dissertation. You need not try to meet every outcome in each component of your curriculum; instead, you should find strategies to align these outcomes appropriately with individual pieces of the Program of Study.

A NOTE ON THIS SPECIALIZATION

The Higher Education specialization is intended for professionals who perform a variety of administrative, academic, and student service roles in today’s colleges and universities. The purpose of the specialization is to focus on theories and research that enable colleges and universities to promote student success, either for the individual learner or through institutional effectiveness. The Higher Education Specialization does not focus specifically on the role of the professoriate. Walden students who aspire to faculty positions at colleges and universities are encouraged to fully explore the need to prepare for such positions through formal disciplinary study.