Doctor of Philosophy in Education (Ph.D. in Education)

(International Students)

(Applicable Starting from the 2026 Entering Cohort)

Training Unit (Official Seal): Faculty of Education, Shaanxi Normal University

Head of the Training Unit (Signature):_____

Head of the Discipline of the Training Unit (Signature):_____

Chair of the Academic Degree Evaluation Sub-Committee (Signature):_____

September 10, 2026

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This Training Program for International Doctoral Students in Education (Academic Degree) is formulated for the all-English doctoral program for international students offered by the Faculty of Education, Shaanxi Normal University, in accordance with the Measures for the Administration of the Enrollment and Cultivation of International Students by Schools (Order No. 42 of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China), the Quality Standards for Higher Education of International Students in China (Trial) (Jiao Wai [2018] No. 50), the Doctoral Training Program in Education (Academic Degree), and other relevant documents of the Faculty of Education, Shaanxi Normal University.

I. Goals

Upholding Marxism as its guide and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as its compass, adhering to the socialist orientation in running schools and to the Party's educational policy, and implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent, the Program aims to cultivate research-oriented educational practitioners, high-caliber reserve talents for educational scholarship, and top-notch innovative educational personnel who possess firm ideals and convictions, a heartfelt understanding of, friendship toward, and affection for China, who can adapt to the development needs of countries around the world, and who are broadly prepared to serve schools of all types and levels, social educational organizations and institutions, and other public service sectors in various countries.

（The specific objectives are as follows）:

- to develop devotion to education, a spirit of dedication, and sound professional character; to uphold research integrity and ethics and strictly observe academic norms; and to be willing to contribute to the educational cause of all countries;
- to build, on the basis of comprehensive knowledge at the doctoral level, a solid command of the foundational theories and professional skills of education and related disciplines, and to develop an interdisciplinary knowledge system and the

capacity for learning;

- to develop the ability to conduct educational research and pursue self-directed learning independently, including identifying and posing problems, designing research, analyzing and processing data, summarizing and articulating research findings, and engaging in academic exchange;
- to gain broad command of the international frontiers of the discipline of education, keep abreast of cutting-edge theories and topical needs worldwide, and acquire a broad international vision of education and cross-cultural communication competence;
- to possess sound capacities for original innovation, systematic construction, and research organization;
- to perceive the needs of educational practice, think about it independently, critically, and creatively, and engage in open and constructive dialogue with educational practitioners.

II. Basic Requirements

A. Basic Knowledge and Knowledge Structure to Be Mastered

Doctoral students in education shall master the fundamental principles and methods of education; acquire a comprehensive and systematic command of the history, current status, and frontiers of their research field; gain a thorough understanding of the major theories, core concepts, and historical development relevant to their research; master theories of other disciplines related to education so as to develop scientific thinking and analyze problems from multiple perspectives; systematically master the methodological principles and specific methods of educational research so as to conduct independent, in-depth, and innovative research in their field; and use English proficiently, making full use of English-language materials in education and demonstrating strong competence in international academic exchange.

B. Basic Qualities to Be Possessed

1. Academic Attainment

Doctoral students shall esteem science and rationality, maintain an independent scholarly identity, uphold a truth-seeking scientific spirit and a rigorous attitude toward research, possess a defined research field and academic specialty, and demonstrate sound research potential; comprehensively master the methodological principles and specific methods of educational research; use English with relative proficiency, read English-language materials in

the field, and conduct academic exchange with international peers; develop an awareness of and capacity for teamwork and cultivate the values and attitudes of consciously respecting and protecting intellectual property rights and software copyrights; preserve academic conscience, faithfully fulfill their responsibilities, and uphold the objectivity and fairness of academic evaluation; and abide by the fundamental academic morality, academic ethics, and academic norms.

2. Academic Integrity

Doctoral students shall strictly observe the laws, regulations, and rules of China and uphold scientific integrity; fully respect the fruits of others' labor and their intellectual property rights, cite others' work truthfully and faithfully, and refrain from plagiarizing texts or content generated by AI tools; strictly comply with the basic norms of writing, citation, and annotation in the discipline of education; uphold a scientific and rational spirit and evaluate others' research findings fairly; refrain from deliberately exaggerating the academic value or economic or social benefits of research findings; bear the corresponding responsibility for the publication of the dissertation and other academic works; when publishing research findings, sign their names truthfully according to the actual contribution made; obtain the consent of co-authors before publishing collaborative work; refrain from signing their names to research in which they did not participate or to which they made no academic contribution; and conscientiously refrain from submitting the same manuscript to multiple journals. They shall also observe the state laws and regulations on confidentiality and comply with other academic norms generally recognized by the academic community.

C. Basic Academic Competencies to Be Possessed

1. Ability to Acquire Knowledge

Doctoral students shall master solid and broad foundational theories of education and systematic, in-depth specialized knowledge; systematically master the theories and methods of their disciplinary field; acquire multidisciplinary research perspectives and apply the latest research tools and methods to explore and discover new knowledge; develop sound language competence, read English-language materials in education with proficiency, write academic papers in English, and engage in international academic exchange; and master information technology, making full use of the Internet and of academic databases such as the Web of Science and CNKI to access a large body of academic research outputs and other scholarly information.

2. Scholarly Discernment

Doctoral students shall adhere to the academic value, innovativeness, and frontier nature

of education as the criteria for assessing scholarly quality; clearly identify the forward-looking, advanced, and innovative character of educational research questions; accurately judge the appropriateness of research methods to research questions; clearly recognize the rationality and feasibility of research designs; properly grasp the scientific rigor and normativity of research processes; and fairly evaluate the theoretical value or practical value of educational research findings.

3. Research Capability

Doctoral students shall be able to aim at the frontiers of educational research, attend to the key, difficult, and hot issues in education, and raise valuable research questions; develop a sound academic style and methodological competence in educational research, with strong research potential; and be capable of conducting educational research independently, selecting and applying qualitative or quantitative research methods skillfully and appropriately in light of the research questions;and be capable of engaging in educational teaching activities, organizing and leading academic teams, coordinating and handling working relationships, and participating in relevant professional administration; and be able to carry out organized research activities with cross-disciplinary and cross-departmental teamwork and organizational leadership.

4. Academic Innovation

Doctoral students shall cultivate a critical and innovative spirit, integrate professional knowledge, and open up new fields of educational research; develop keen academic insight and logical reasoning so as to put forward important concepts or propositions in education; master the latest research methods in their field, discover the most recent research materials, and substantiate important viewpoints or theories; and, rooted in their own country, conduct innovative scientific research on major and urgent theoretical and practical issues, producing educational research findings that are innovative or of considerable academic or social value.

5. Academic Communication

Doctoral students shall conduct academic communication with proficiency in seminars and at international and domestic academic conferences; develop an international vision of education and engage in cross-cultural exchange and dialogue; and follow academic norms and requirements, using academic language correctly to present their research findings;and participate in academic exchange and scholarly debate with an open, inclusive, equal, and respectful attitude.

III.Second-Level Disciplines and Research Directions

A. Theories of curriculum and instruction

Curriculum and Instruction is a specialized area of study within education that focuses on the development, implementation, and evaluation of educational curricula and instructional practices. Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction prepares scholars to conduct research, develop innovative teaching strategies, and contribute to educational policy and practice.

Research directions: theories of curriculum and instruction; basic education and teacher education; and international comparison of curriculum and instruction.

B. Educational Technology

Ph.D. in Educational Technology is a disciplinary field that applies the principles and methods of digital technologies and artificial intelligence to improve educational processes. It focuses on how to effectively design, develop, use, and evaluate technological resources, tools, and pedagogies in education, helping educators innovate in their thinking and promoting the modernization of educational practice.

Research directions: applications of artificial intelligence in education; STEM education; and learning sciences and digital-intelligent technologies.

C. Comparative Education

Comparative education is a field of study that examines educational systems, processes, and outcomes across different countries and cultures. It aims to understand how various factors—such as social, economic, political, and cultural contexts—affect education and learning.

Research directios: education in area and country studies; comparison of educational policies and systems; and globalization of education.

D. Higher Education

Higher Education aims to cultivate high-caliber academic talents who grasp the laws of higher education, understand its development trends, are able to conduct frontier research with interdisciplinary approaches, and are competent for teaching, research, and educational administration in colleges and universities. This specialty emphasizes academic critique,

policy analysis, and an international vision, and is committed to advancing innovation in higher education theory and practice.

Research directions: higher education policy and development; higher education administration; and internationalization of higher education.

E. Economics of Education

Economics of Education takes as its research subjects the status and role of education in economic growth and in socioeconomic development, as well as the macroeconomic and microeconomic effects of educational expenditure, while explicating the principles and laws of the relationship between education and the economy. The specialty applies experimental economics methods (especially randomized intervention experiments) to research on rural education and development.

Research directions: early childhood development; nutrition, health, and education; and information technology and human capital.

IV. Training Approaches

The training of students pursuing academic degrees is conducted mainly through a combination of coursework, research training, scientific research, academic exchange, social practice, and dissertation work, under either individual supervision by a supervisor or team supervision. Joint training at home and abroad and interdisciplinary training are encouraged, and a joint supervision model involving a supervisory panel is adopted.

V. Duration of Study

The basic duration of study for doctoral students is four years, and the maximum duration is six years.

VI. Credit Requirements

The total credits shall be no less than **20** credits, of which：

A. Coursework of no less than **15 credits**, including 4 credits of Program Core Courses, at least 2 credits of Degree Foundation Courses, at least 6 credits of Required Courses for the Major, and at least 3 credits of Elective Courses for the Major.

B. "Understanding China" practical activities: **1 credit.**

C. Academic exchange: **2 credits.**

D. Literature review and dissertation proposal: **1 credit.**

E. Mid-term assessment: **1 credit.**

VII. Course Offerings

Category	Course Title	Semester	Hours	Credits	Faculty
Program Core Courses (4 credits)	Chinese History and Culture	2	72	4	International College of Chinese Studies
Degree Foundation Courses (at least 2 credits)	Topics in Curriculum and Instruction	1	36	2	Chang Yahui Feng Jiayu Ren Kai
	Topics in Educational Technology	1	36	2	Zhou Yun Pi Zhongling Ma Hongliang Zhang Wenlan et al.
	Topics in Comparative Education	1	36	2	Liu Ji
	Topics in Higher Education	1	36	2	Zhang Bin Wang Pengjuan
	Topics in Economics of Education	1	36	2	Liu Han Yang Jie Tang Bin
Required Courses for the Major (at least 6 credits)	Quantitative Analysis for Causal Identification in Educational Research	1	36	2	Liu Ji
	Academic Ethics and Norms	1	18	1	Ma Hongliang Liu Ji Luo Xin
	Introduction to Qualitative Research	2	36	2	Zhang Bin Li Ling
	Academic Writing	3	18	1	Liu Ji
Elective Courses for the Major (at least 3 credits)	The Retrieval, Analysis, and Review of English Research Literature	2	18	1	Zhang Baohui
	Educational Data Mining and R	2	36	2	Wang Qin
	Grounded Theory and Qualitative Data Analysis	3	18	1	Wang Pengjuan

	Narrative Research	3	18	1	Luo Xin Luan Xi

VIII. Required Components

A. “Understanding China” Practical Activities

Doctoral students are encouraged to actively participate in the various social practice activities organized by the University and the Faculty, including field visits and investigations in urban and rural areas of China, schools, and cultural venues. Through firsthand experience, students perceive China’s history and culture, social development, and educational practice, deepen their knowledge and understanding of China’s national conditions, promote cross-cultural exchange, and develop into high-caliber talents who know China and are friendly to China.

B. Academic Exchange

Each student shall publicly deliver at least one academic presentation at an academic forum of the discipline or of the training unit, or give at least one oral presentation at an international or national conference. During the period of study, students who earnestly attend no fewer than 24 on-campus and off-campus academic activities, write abstracts, notes, or reflections on the activities attended, and obtain the approval of the supervisor and the supervisory panel after assessment may earn 2 credits.

C. Dissertation Proposal

Academic doctoral students shall prepare their dissertation proposals under the guidance of their supervisors. The proposal shall include the rationale for the topic selection, the research content and objectives, the research plan and feasibility analysis, the research work schedule and expected outcomes, and the distinctive features and innovations of the research. All enrolled graduate students are required to attend the dissertation proposal defense on time. Doctoral students shall generally complete their dissertation proposal defense before April of the fourth semester.

The dissertation proposal defense is organized by each specialty in the form of a panel. The panel for doctoral students shall consist of 5–7 members, all of whom shall be doctoral supervisors in relevant research fields or experts with full senior professional titles. At the proposal defense, the doctoral student presents the proposal (generally within 15–30 minutes; the specific duration is determined by each specialty) and answers the panel’s questions. The

panel listens to the proposal, reviews the relevant materials, evaluates the relevance of the topic to the specialty, the feasibility of the research plan, and the research workload, proposes clear revisions, and reaches an assessment conclusion. The student revises the proposal materials in accordance with the panel's comments and submits them to the training unit after review by the supervisor and the panel.

The specific procedures shall be carried out in accordance with the Measures for the Administration of Graduate Dissertation Proposals of Shaanxi Normal University.

D. Mid-term Assessment

All enrolled graduate students who have passed the dissertation proposal defense are required to take the mid-term assessment on time. Doctoral students shall generally complete the mid-term assessment before April of the sixth semester, and for doctoral students in the integrated master–doctoral track, the assessment shall be appropriately advanced. In accordance with the requirement of the all-around development of graduate students, the mid-term assessment mainly examines students' ideological and moral character, coursework, research capability, and research progress. The assessment is scored on a 100-point scale, with the final score calculated according to the proportions of 20%, 20%, and 60%.

The mid-term assessment is organized by each specialty to conduct a comprehensive review of graduate students. The assessment panel for doctoral students shall consist of 5–7 members, all of whom shall be doctoral supervisors in relevant research fields or experts with full senior professional titles. The assessment combines a written examination and an interview. The written examination may take such forms as a written test, the writing of a reading report, or the submission of a research progress report; the interview shall include both a student presentation and a question-and-answer session.

Based on the assessment results, the outcome is rated as Excellent, Pass, or Fail. Those rated Excellent or Pass pass the mid-term assessment, while those rated Fail do not. Students who fail may reapply for the mid-term assessment three months later in light of their dissertation research progress, and each specialty shall organize the re-assessment on time. Doctoral students may take the mid-term assessment no more than three times in total.

The specific procedures shall be carried out in accordance with the Measures for the Administration of Mid-term Assessment of Graduate Students of Shaanxi Normal University (Trial).

IX. Dissertation

A. Academic Achievements

The quantity and quality of the academic achievements completed by academic doctoral students during their doctoral studies constitute one of the important indicators of the quality of graduate training and degree conferral. The basic requirement for academic achievements is: at least one academic paper published in an SSCI/SCI/ESCI academic journal (JCR Quartile 4 to Quartile 1), with the student as the first author under the name of Shaanxi Normal University.

B. Dissertation Writing

The dissertation is a comprehensive summary of the graduate student's scientific research work, an important academic document describing the research findings and reflecting the research level, and the fundamental basis for applying for and conferring a degree. Dissertation writing is one of the basic components of graduate training and must be carried out carefully in accordance with the relevant norms; the specific requirements are provided in the Standards for Doctoral and Master's Dissertations of Shaanxi Normal University. The dissertations of international doctoral students are primarily written in English.

C. Pre-defense and Defense

1. Pre-defense

Doctoral students are required to undergo a pre-defense of their dissertation. The pre-defense shall, in principle, be held at least three months before the submission of the degree application. The specialty shall invite five or seven experts holding full senior professional titles in the research field (including no fewer than two doctoral supervisors and no fewer than one external expert; special disciplines or specialties may include a small number of highly qualified associate professors) to attend. If a student has passed the pre-defense but has not yet undergone dissertation review, the sub-committee may deliberate and decide whether to retain the pre-defense result and the retention period; the maximum retention period for a pre-defense result is one year. Those who fail the pre-defense must make major revisions to the dissertation or the practical achievements and reapply for the pre-defense six months later. The procedures shall follow the relevant requirements of the University's Implementation Measures for the Conferral of Doctoral and Master's Degrees of Shaanxi Normal University (Shaan Shi Xue Wei [2025] No. 1) and the Measures for Strengthening the Whole-Process Management of the Quality of Graduate Dissertations of the Faculty of Education, Shaanxi Normal University (Trial).

2. Dissertation Review and Defense

The review of doctoral dissertations shall be carried out in accordance with the Implementation Measures for the Conferral of Doctoral and Master's Degrees of Shaanxi Normal University (Shaan Shi Xue Wei [2025] No. 1) and the Implementation Measures for the Review of Graduate Dissertations of Shaanxi Normal University (Interim) (Shaan Shi Xue Wei [2024] No. 3).

Specific requirements shall be implemented in accordance with the relevant provisions of the University and the Faculty of Education.

X.Graduation, Program Completion, and Degree Conferral

Doctoral students who, within the prescribed duration of study, complete the coursework specified in the training program, pass the relevant assessments, earn all required credits, pass the mid-term assessment, and pass the dissertation defense, and who meet the graduation requirements, shall be allowed to graduate. Those who meet the relevant provisions of the Academic Degrees Law of the People's Republic of China and reach the corresponding standards for degree conferral shall, upon review and approval by the University's Academic Degree Evaluation Committee, be conferred the Doctor of Education degree and receive the doctoral graduation certificate.

In accordance with the Detailed Rules for the Administration of Graduate Student Status at Shaanxi Normal University (Shaan Shi Xiao Fa [2021] No. 71) and the Detailed Rules for Graduate Graduation at Shaanxi Normal University (Revised) (Shi Yan [2024] No. 4), students who have completed the dissertation but for whom the defense committee voted "not to confer the degree but to approve graduation," or who have not completed the dissertation but have completed a graduation thesis and passed the defense, shall be allowed to graduate, and a graduation certificate shall be issued in accordance with the relevant provisions.

Those who are allowed to graduate without meeting the conditions for degree conferral may, within the prescribed period (within two years of graduation for doctoral students), apply to the University for one dissertation defense. With the consent of the relevant Academic Degree Evaluation Sub-Committee, the defense may be held in accordance with the relevant provisions of the University. Those who pass the defense and meet the conditions for degree conferral shall be issued a degree certificate in accordance with the relevant provisions on

degree conferral.

Graduate students who, within the duration of study prescribed by the University, have completed all the courses specified in the educational and teaching plan with passing grades and have completed their dissertation proposal, but who have not yet met the graduation requirements, may apply for program completion. Within two years of program completion, doctoral students may apply to the University for one dissertation defense; with the consent of the relevant Academic Degree Evaluation Sub-Committee, the defense may be held in accordance with the relevant provisions of the University. Those who pass the defense shall be issued a graduation certificate in exchange, and those who meet the conditions for degree conferral shall be issued a degree certificate in accordance with the relevant provisions on degree conferral.

Appendix: Major English Journals in This Discipline

Journals	Website
Educational Research Review	https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/educational-research-review
Computers & Education	https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/computers-and-education
British Journal of Educational Technology	https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14678535
Learning and Instruction	https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/learning-and-instruction
Comparative Education	https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/cced20
Higher Education	https://link.springer.com/journal/10734
Teaching and Teacher Education	https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/teaching-and-teacher-education
The Internet and Higher Education	https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/the-internet-and-higher-education

For additional journals, please refer to the list of Q1 journals in Clarivate's annual Journal Citation Reports (JCR).