The University of Liverpool’s Doctor of Education - Higher Education (EdD) is a professional doctoral programme focused on the latest practice, research, and leadership thinking within Higher Education environments.

The programme places great emphasis on the development of a deep understanding of universities, operating in a global context, as places of learning and as learning institutions.

The focus is on the use of professional knowledge, academic and policy literature, and published and personal research to promote the leader at the heart of institutional development.
This professional doctoral programme in Higher Education produces a qualification which, whilst being equivalent in status and challenge to a PhD, may be more appropriate for those pursuing leadership and professional roles within Higher Education, or those who wish to focus their research on learning and teaching and other aspects of Higher Education. The practically oriented approach of the programme allows working professionals to develop and apply actionable, research-based knowledge and critical thinking skills, with immediate effect into their professional practice.

Delivered 100% online in an international learning environment, and supported by rich media to enhance the students’ educational experience, the programme adopts an integrated, holistic approach to learning.

This learning experience, in combination with a classroom of international educators, offers exciting opportunities for students to network with professionals from all over the world. This EdD programme aims to deliver a professional practitioner who is insightful, reflective, and capable of creating exceptional practical, research informed knowledge as a leader in higher education environments.

The University of Liverpool EdD – Higher Education is ideal for those pursuing professional routes within an academic career, or those wanting a professional services career. EdD graduates should be well placed to compete for promotion and leadership responsibilities in high-level professional positions in the broad field of education.

Career destinations may include roles such as consultants, middle/senior managers, or administrators working in contexts such as educational development, learning development, planning and policy development, and Departmental or Faculty leadership where learning and teaching are the principal focus.

› With an emphasis on Higher Education and leadership in environments open to international influences, the University of Liverpool’s EdD can serve a variety of professional audiences. The programme will be particularly appealing to:

› Senior professionals in Higher Education seeking to extend their knowledge of Higher Education and skills in educational leadership and management
› Education practitioners seeking advancement into international education environments
› Education professionals who are seeking a career shift from an academic focus to an administration and leadership focus
› Academics who want to extend their knowledge and understanding of Higher Education and leadership within their discipline and beyond
› Academic professionals who wish to focus their development as teachers and pursue the scholarship of teaching and pedagogic research
Programme Outline

The online EdD programme is offered by the University of Liverpool’s innovative Centre for Higher Education Studies. The Centre has a strong reputation for educational development - delivering accredited and externally recognised programmes, and continuous professional development (CPD) for University of Liverpool staff, and the staff of international partner universities, involved in teaching and learning.

The Centre sits within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, but is also unique in that it acts as a professional service for the University. Institutionally it engages in policy development, consultancy and professional development, offering academic programmes in Higher Education.

The EdD offers students an international programme focusing not on UK higher education, but on Higher Education as a global enterprise. Typically each cohort will consist of students from diverse backgrounds, bringing unique, individual insights and perspectives of Higher Education into the classroom. The curriculum of the EdD is constructed from an international perspective – using research, case studies, policy and academic literature from international sources – to complete the international experience.

The programme employs a pedagogy that is based around forms of collaborative inquiry. In collaborative inquiry, a group of educators study their own practice, develop their capacity to engage in research, and share results of their studies to deepen the understanding of every individual in the class. The programme aims to extend students’ capacity for educational leadership within the setting of Higher Education to supports visible and transformative personal impact. Students will conduct investigations within the workplace setting that support evidence-based problem solving of direct relevance to their work and career development.

A key feature of the EdD in facilitating transformative personal impact for the student is the Doctoral Development Plan (DDP) which provides continuity and support throughout the whole programme. The DDP is a unique module incorporated into the EdD programme designed to facilitate students’ understanding and experience of the personal transformation process. It captures the student’s reflections in their personal transformation to becoming a doctoral scholar and practitioner, supports the creation of a doctoral level professional knowledge portfolio, and further develops critical thinking skills.
Integrated Holistic Approach

The concept of an integrated, holistic approach refers to the idea that all the properties of a given system, in any field of study, cannot be determined or explained by the sum of its component parts. Instead, the system as a whole determines how its parts behave. Therefore as students progress through the increased levels of analytical complexities in the modules, they will reflect upon key thematic threads which bind the complete educational experience together.

Woven throughout the programme’s curriculum, these thematic threads are consistent with international education, global leadership, and organisational trends. Rather than teach these themes in isolation, this programme recognises the importance these topics play in today’s educational leadership environments. With this in mind, the University of Liverpool’s online EdD introduces key thematic threads which cut across all the modules offered:

Leadership and Personal Impact

Throughout the programme, students will learn to understand who they are as a leader and how they relate their role to their organisation. Via this thread, students are encouraged to develop an integrated view of the leadership role in educational organisations and environmental contexts. Therefore the focus of this thread is not only on the theories of leadership, but also on how leadership is enacted.

Globalisation and International Networking

Modern education needs to take into account global realities while preparing individuals to act locally. Additionally, many Higher Education institutions already operate in a fully globalised environment. To be effective, educators must be able to critically evaluate the opportunities and challenges of globalisation and prepare students and their organisations for this changing reality. With this thread running throughout the programme, students gain an understanding of the importance of intercultural dynamics and learn to leverage that understanding into networking opportunities with their colleagues.

Personal and Professional Values

It is fundamental that individuals in leadership roles within Higher Education are guided by their personal and professional values. Throughout the programme, students will explore the embedded values within different educational philosophies, learning to better articulate their own values, and actively translate those into their professional life and activities.

Collaborative Learning

Effective collaboration amongst colleagues is a requisite for successful navigation of the challenges facing Higher Education professionals. Across all taught modules, students participate in small, collaborative teams where they learn to effectively operate across professional disciplines and intercultural dimensions. This ongoing, intensive interaction reflects the integrated and international philosophy of the programme.

Practitioner Research

The development of research skills is an essential component of any doctoral programme. To help students become effective change-agents, they undertake increasingly complex, practitioner-oriented research tasks throughout the programme. Students graduate as doctoral practitioners with the research skills needed to support them on their path to professional advancement.
Programme Structure

The programme begins with an initial orientation of the online classroom, followed by nine core modules (30 credits per module), the Doctoral Development Plan (90 credits) and a thesis (180 credits).

The first module is eleven weeks in length and each subsequent module is ten weeks. Modules are sequenced in an order that is best suited to the students’ development on the programme. Student support services are available from the Centre for Student Success. The Doctoral Development Plan (DPP) progresses in parallel with the nine core modules.

Preparatory Modules

› Student Readiness Orientation (0 credits)

Core Modules

› Doctoral Development Plan (90 credits—10 credits accumulated per module)
› Becoming a Doctoral Practitioner (30 credits)
› Learners and Learning (30 credits)
› Learning: Environments, Infrastructures and Organisations (30 credits)
› Ways of Knowing: Perspectives on Educational Research and Practice (30 credits)
› Values in Educational Research and Practice (30 credits)
› Leadership, Policy and Institutional Change (30 credits)
› Educational Research Methods (30 credits)
› Action Research for Educational Leadership (30 credits)
› Internationalisation and the Impact of Global Trends (30 credits)
› Thesis (180 research credits)

The programme takes on average 4½ years to complete with a few weeks’ break in between modules. Should students need to alter their study path due to work or family commitments they can do so in consultation with a Student Support Manager.

Course work: 2.5 years. Thesis: 1 – 2 years.
Modules

Student Readiness Orientation

Aim: To equip students with the technical skills necessary to successfully study online, aided by inspirational testimonials from current students and alumni, in a rich multimedia environment.

In this module, students will grasp the basic technical information and knowledge needed to successfully participate in an online curriculum. They will learn how to use the online classroom to get assignments, interact with instructors and other students, and submit work. In this introduction students will gain a clear idea of what is expected from them as they participate in an online classroom. Finally the orientation provides students with an overview of the rules regarding quotation and citation – essential to any postgraduate study, whether online or campus-based.

Core Modules

Doctoral Development Plan (DDP)

Aims: The DDP module forms the backbone of the Doctor of Education - Higher Education programme, giving it coherence and continuity, both intellectually and in relation to the student’s engagement in the programme. The DDP runs in parallel to the other nine core modules. It is intended to support critical reflection on the part of the student at the level of personal, practice related career progression, and the capacity to act as a doctoral practitioner.

A DDP Mentor supports students as they progress from the development of doctoral level skills to the application and exploitation of those skills. Through interaction with the DDP Mentor and completion of reflective writings, the DDP will build students’ confidence and capacity to act as a critically reflective doctoral practitioner within their own professional and leadership practice. This module, and the DDP Mentor, will also support the students’ planning of their research thesis.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Apply well developed critical thinking skills to their reading and writing capabilities

› Reflect on personal and professional transformations arising from the programme and recognise the skills and dispositions developed on their journey

› Identify areas for development and consolidation in their professional and research context

› Draft a framing document for their doctoral thesis that is well argued, relevant, ethical, and realistic, as well as demonstrating the potential to lead to the development of new professional knowledge or insights.

Becoming a Doctoral Practitioner

Aim: To introduce students to the ethos and ways of working on the EdD programme, and set the expectations for the subsequent modules as they engage with the basic skills and attributes of doctoral level work.

This module will introduce students to the ethos and ways of working on the EdD, setting the pattern for future modules as they engage with the basic skills and attributes of doctoral level work. The module provides students with the opportunity to articulate their own motivations for entering the programme. This is achieved through collaborative discussion on the origins of, and variations in, higher education in the home countries of the students. Students will gain insights into the potential for learning by working with a diverse cohort of international learning collaborators.
Core Modules (continued)

in the online classroom. Students will begin to consider how their own and others’ approach to leadership is influenced by contextual and cultural factors, and how research might play a part in promoting the development of their professional practice. By encouraging students to get to know one another the module begins the process of forming an international cooperative academic community.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Understand and manage the requirements of the EdD academic environment
› Articulate their motivations for pursuing an EdD
› Understand the value of learning in an international online team
› Understand the contextual and cultural factors that impact on Higher Education leadership
› Begin the process of forming an international cooperative academic community

Learners and Learning

Aim: To explore the nature of the learner, and learner/facilitator relationships, learning theories, and the relationship between research and learning.

This module will build the students’ understanding in reading and critiquing literature on learning theories and research findings; consolidate their understanding of a range of models of learning, both generic models and those which focus on individual differences; and in so doing develop the students’ ability to select and apply different models to the interpretations of different learning goals and the design of different learning tasks.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Take part in informed debates about the merits of different models of learning in a range of contexts
› Analyse the learning behaviour of themselves and their students, in terms of its likely effectiveness in reaching learning goals, and recognise ways in which to improve learning behaviour
› Read and critically assess a range of theories and research findings in the area of learning, in particular the relevance and generic nature of such theories and findings within their own contexts and experiences

Learning: Environments, Infrastructures and Organisations

Aim: To explore the nature of learning environments, and the plans, creating, and structuring of those environments.

In this module students will develop a systematic understanding of the social and organisational context within which learning unfolds. This understanding will help inform subsequent practitioner research, and the scoping, evaluation, and leadership of transformative change in educational environments.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Describe and justify what constitutes an environment that promotes high-quality learning suited to the diversity of learners present in given social, organisational, and cultural contexts
› Analyse ways in which specific factors influence any given environment for learning across a range of macro-level factors - whether underlying infrastructures, technologies, organisational, professional, cultural, national or global factors
› Articulate the implications of the above analysis for learning that promotes either social transformation or social reproduction

Ways of Knowing: Perspectives on Educational Research and Practice

Aim: To provide students with a philosophical and methodological underpinning of knowledge creation in education research.
Core Modules (continued)

In this module, students will develop an ability to critically evaluate the ways in which different views of knowledge, theory, and inquiry impact approaches to educational issues and problems. Students will learn to recognise the value of clarifying ways of knowing in various educational and cultural contexts, with an aim to inform practitioner research and leadership of transformative change in educational organisations.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Recognise individual, social and cultural influences on ways of knowing
› Articulate the value of different ways of knowing in studying and solving real-life educational problems
› Analyse educational issues using theories generated and tested from different epistemological perspectives
› Critically evaluate the ways in which approaches to inquiry can impact on actions in an educational environment

Values in Educational Research and Practice

Aim: To encourage students to explore their personal values and educational philosophy, understand the role of education in society and policy, and the relationship between research and policy.

This module will develop the students’ ability to analyse, articulate and make a commitment to the realisation of their own educational values. Students will be able to recognise the nature of educational values and how they are manifested in policy and practice, whether or not they are stated explicitly. With the ability to recognise these values, students will be able to better inform their own decision-making skills, particularly when faced with conflicts in value.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Articulate and provide a reasoned basis for their personal educational values
› Recognise and express correspondences and conflicts between personal and cultural values in different contexts
› Analyse educational policies and practice in terms of the cultural and educational values manifested, whether explicitly or implicitly
› Assess the interests and values of different stakeholders, and relate these to the power relationships which pertain within each context, in relation to a range of educational projects
› Develop personal and institutional strategies for bringing about educational policies and practices which are more consonant with their personal educational values

Leadership, Policy and Institutional Change

Aim: To explore theories of change and models for facilitating continuous improvement, leadership and personal impact to act as a change agent, as well as the context for institutional change.

This module will develop the students’ capacity to drive transformative change within an organisation or other social setting, ensuring that one’s focus extends beyond acting as a collaborator to acting as a leader. The module also paves the way for extended forms of practitioner research within the practice setting.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Display a clear understanding of theories of change, organisational learning, and models for facilitating continuous improvement, linked to given institutional and professional contexts
› Analyse ways in which change initiatives and policies play out for a diverse set of stakeholders, and affect one’s capacity to enact values fundamental to the educational enterprise
› Develop strategies for exercising leadership amongst the students’ professional colleagues, establishing shared commitments and building on a personal
network of peers that crosses organisational and geographical boundaries

› Articulate inter-relationships between strategies for change, and the policy, organisational and resourcing context within which change occurs

Educational Research Methods

Aim: To introduce the student to a range of inquiry frameworks, including those predicated on the behavioural theories of naturalistic and positivistic assumptions.

This module will support students in understanding the complexities underlying research production, dissemination and application. Students will be able to develop a well articulated understanding of the nature of educational research and the features that constitute good education research. Throughout the module, students will come to recognise the factors that drive the questions we ask and the methods we use to seek answers. Students will understand the tools that can be used in educational research and apply rigorous practitioner research in their own professional context.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Critically analyse the relationship between theory, policy and practice in research

› Critically evaluate a wide variety of educational research literature bringing both academic and professional knowledge to bear

› Assess the appropriateness of a research design and the suitability of a variety of methods

› Identify productive problems in their own contexts and present a cogent argument for adopting particular approaches to addressing these problems

› Design a small scale research project including methodology and application for ethical approval

Action Research for Educational Leadership

Aim: To explore the notion of action research in its many varied forms, and gain an in-depth understanding of the approach and application of action research within a practical context.

This module will enable students to critically examine action research - a form of practitioner research of significant value to leaders in educational organisations. Students will explore the underlying values and diversity of approaches of action research, and learn to apply action research to an existing concern in their practice. Students will critically evaluate action research as a powerful tool for use in their wider leadership roles as well as their own personal professional practice. Students will also be in a position to apply action research as an approach to their thesis.

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Critique the various approaches to action research in light of their understanding of research paradigms, methods and tools

› Articulate and defend their value base in using action research

› Apply an action research approach in their professional setting and leadership role

Internationalisation and the Impact of Global Trends

Aim: To explore globalisation in education and national policy issues, as well as their relationship to global trends.

This module will enable students to develop a critical understanding of the relationships between the international and national factors that enable and constrain effective practice in particular contexts. Students will consider the ways in which interactions between different levels, from personal through to global, affect practice settings and the scope for change. Students will also examine policy setting and policy enactment in light of global trends relevant to Higher Education. This module will help students to develop and sustain a personal and professional network to underpin their practice.
Core Modules (continued)

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

› Analyse policies relevant to Higher Education and evaluate their impact on practice
› Relate changes in the local educational context to international and national trends
› Evaluate the relationship between personal agency and evolving structures in light of international and national trends
› Assess theoretical positions on globalisation
› Plan for ongoing professional collaborative networking

Thesis

The thesis is the cornerstone of any doctoral programme. It is an original, scholarly work that embodies the students’ advanced knowledge and experience and allows them to prove their mastery of the techniques they have studied in applied practice. Within the context of the EdD, the thesis leads to refinements of practice which can reveal differential outcomes rather than refinements of theory.

Thesis development will last between one and two years and will consist of four stages. These stages are: developing your thesis proposal, faculty review and approval of your proposal, writing the thesis itself, and the oral examination (known as the “viva voce”) of your thesis.

Accreditation

The University of Liverpool meets or exceeds all academic quality standards for UK higher education, as defined by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the independent body that is responsible for standards in higher education in the UK. For details, see www.qaa.ac.uk.

Please note all modules are not guaranteed to be offered in any calendar year and current scheduling may be subject to change.