What Is Doctoral Study?

Doctoral-level education stresses both depth and breadth of learning. This means you will need to read deeply in a few areas and become expert in them as well as read widely across your field (adult education or higher education) so that you get a solid understanding of how the field operates and how its parts work together and separately. What may be implied by this description is that you will need to change your approach to learning which may have worked well in your bachelor’s and master’s degree.

1. You cannot do well in the coursework (or finish the dissertation) if you do not find the **time**. You cannot do this degree only if free time comes available; you have to make the time. That means you may need to drop other activities for the time you are enrolled, or plan ways to find time that will work with your job and/or family obligations. We cannot stress this enough: students fail to finish because they do not make the time to do the work.

2. You have to perform at a **higher level** than you have before. We expect that you read the materials assigned (and even those that are suggested), think about your questions and conclusions, and write capably and clearly. Sloppy thinking and writing contribute to poor grades. And yes, you must learn the **APA Style Manual** (6th edition) and correctly use it in your papers; if you do this, writing your dissertation will be that much easier.

3. We expect that you **improve your skills** from class to class. That includes your use of APA as well as your writing. Mistakes that appear repeatedly from class to class tell us that you are not paying enough attention to what you need to be learning in the program.

4. A large part of a doctoral program is **learning how to do research**, including using the online databases at the library to find appropriate research articles for your class papers. Galvan (2005), *Writing Literature Reviews*, can help you learn how to prepare a literature review which will help improve your class papers. Doing research also means taking the research courses (Research Design, Stats I and II, Qualitative Research) but also reading research articles and critiquing what was done and determining how reliable the results are.

5. Part of being prepared for an online class is making sure your **computer and Internet connections** are up-to-date and in proper working order. You have an obligation to make sure you can perform using the technology that is essential to online learning.

6. Learn the **policies** that govern the program. These are posted to the Online Student Resources webpage (http://www.memphis.edu/lead/hiad/online/edd_resources.php). If we change policy or add a new one, it will be posted here. You also need to be aware of Graduate School policies, too as spelled out in the Graduate Catalog located at http://www.memphis.edu/gradcatalog/

The doctoral degree is the highest degree the university offers. We want to ensure that you perform at a level that both you, and the university, will be proud of in the future.