

# Department of Educational Leadership

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College of Education  
University of Nevada  
Reno, Nevada 89557-0201  
URL- [www.unr.edu/educ/el/](http://www.unr.edu/educ/el/)

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

and

## HANDBOOK



**Doctor of Education Degree  
(Ed.D.)**

**Doctor of Philosophy Degree  
(Ph.D.)**

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Doctor of Education Degree (Ed.D.) and Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D.)

Offered by the Department of  
Educational Leadership

Accredited by:  
The Northwest  
Association of Schools and  
Colleges\* and  
National Council for Accreditation  
Of Teacher Education

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Dr. Jane Nichols, Vice Chancellor – Ed.D., 1986; University of Tennessee  
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\*These accrediting bodies are recognized by the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ADMISSION PROCEDURES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ADMISSION CRITERIA</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Full Admission Status</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Alternative Admission</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Graduate Special Standing</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Other Ed.D. and Ph.D. Requirements</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Comprehensive Examination Options</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Transfer Credit</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>EL Departmental Policies on Examinations</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Independent Study Policy</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Course Validation</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Internships</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>16</b>

**University of Nevada, Reno**  
**College of Education**  
**Department of Educational Leadership**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information concerning programs, departmental policies, and procedures required to obtain a Doctoral degree. The handbook, used in conjunction with the University of Nevada General Catalog, is designed to provide answers to frequently asked questions.

**Overview**

The Department of Educational Leadership (EL) offers graduate degree programs at three levels: Master of Education (M.Ed.), or Master of Arts (M.A.); Education Specialist (Ed.S.); and Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Courses leading to an M.A. or M.Ed. are taught by a core faculty with expertise in areas of organizational development, policy development, school administration, supervision and evaluation, curriculum development, school law, school finance, school plant planning, higher education, and educational foundations.

Specializations in areas of elementary and secondary curriculum, reading, counseling and guidance, special education and research can be obtained in cooperation with other departments within the College of Education. By combining some areas, it is possible to provide additional programs for administrators whose roles require specific emphases.

**Admission Procedures**

University of Nevada, Reno  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership (EL)

The University of Nevada, Reno is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, disability status or veteran status in the educational programs or activities which it operates.

Students seeking admission to a graduate program in EL should first contact:

The Graduate School/326  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Reno, NV 89557-0035  
(775) 784-6869

**Upon receiving the application packet, the following should be completed and returned to the Graduate School:**

1. Completed UNR Application for Admission and application fee (\$60-first time; \$40 UNR returning or UNR alumnus) must accompany the application.
  - a. If you have already been admitted as a Graduate Special, you must complete a new Graduate School Application for Admission to a graduate program (\$40 fee).
2. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work. (If coursework was completed at UNR, Admissions and Records would already have your transcripts available for the Graduate School, and you need not send them.)
3. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores: The Department requires test scores on the **Verbal** and **Quantitative** areas for all doctoral applicants. Information regarding test dates may be obtained from the Office of Student Services (775-784-4638), the ETS Bay Area Testing Center (510-654-1200), or the Sylvan Learning Center (960 W. Moana Lane, 775-829-2700).
4. **In addition to the application form required by the Graduate School, applicants must complete an EL application and submit it to the department.** This includes:
  - a. Three letters which speak to the applicant's potential for success both as a graduate student and as an educational administrator. It is recommended that one letter be from an immediate supervisor, one from a school district officer or university administrator, and one from a university professor. Appropriate variations are acceptable.
  - b. A typed essay of approximately 1,000 words in response to a selected question provided by the office. **Applicants to the doctoral programs are required to write the essay on site.**
  - c. Applicants may submit additional information such as a biographical sketch that may provide relevant information for assessing professional promise.
  - d. A typed departmental application form must be submitted. This form (available online) lists departmental requirements and a description of the required essay.
  - e.. Applicants should submit one or more sample documents demonstrating writing skills and ability to conduct and report research. Examples may include a Master's thesis, research paper, journal articles, a scholarly term paper, field study reports, etc.

# Admission Criteria

## Full Admission Status

Most applicants to the Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs surpass the minimum requirements established by the Graduate School (see the UNR General Catalog concerning specific regulations on graduate standing). Full admission is based on the following criteria:

- (1) academic ability
- (2) research and writing skills
- (3) professional promise
- (4) the collective professional judgment of the EL faculty

Use of these criteria provides both our department and the applicant with an indication of probable success in the program.

## Alternative Admission

Under special circumstances, exceptions to admission criteria may be made for students who do not meet the minimum admission requirements set by the Graduate School. In these instances, students may be admitted provisionally until a prescribed program has been successfully completed.

## Graduate Special Standing

Application for graduate special standing is made at the Graduate School. Once obtained, students can pursue graduate work. However, with department approval, **only nine credit hours taken with graduate special status can be applied toward a graduate degree.**

## Doctoral Degree Programs (Ed.D. and Ph.D.)

The Ed.D. and Ph.D. are terminal degrees in educational leadership. The doctoral program provides an opportunity for personalized specialization compatible with a student's career objectives. The purpose of the doctoral degree is to increase the knowledge and skill base in educational administration, enhance research skills, and provide the necessary credentials for those desiring to pursue a career in higher education or the public schools.

The Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs contain five components:

- (1) Research
- (2) Educational Leadership Core
- (3) Program Emphasis
- (4) Area of Support
- (5) Electives

The number of courses required in each component is dependent on the student's academic background, preparation, and the degree pursued.

Each program option has been designed for students who seeking an advanced degree in EL. It should be noted that the sample programs of study presented below contain 90-120 credits. In the final analysis, the total credit requirement will be dependent on the chosen career emphasis and the coursework transferred into the program. The minimal program accepted by the Graduate School is 90 credits for the Ed.D. and 96 for the Ph.D. Beyond these minima, the graduate committee determines the total number of credits required for each student.

## Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program

<b><u>Master's (30 credits)</u></b>		
<b>Master's credits transferred in</b>		<b>30</b>
<b><u>Research (33 credits):</u></b>		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Research courses – Minimum required of 21 credits from the following:</b>		
CEP 740	Adv. Ed. Measurement & Stat. (prerequisite: CEP 640)	3
CEP 741	Applied Research Design (Nonparametric Stat) (prerequisite CEP 740)	3
CEP 743	Applied Research Design (Multivariate Stat)	3
EDS 752	Qualitative Research	3
EDS 753	Adv. Qualitative Research (prerequisite EDS 752)	3
EL 761	Policy and Program Evaluation	3
EL 785	Survey Research in Education	3
EL 790	Research Applications	3
With approval, students may take other research courses.		
EL 799	Dissertation (REQUIRED)	12
<b>Required number of research credits</b>		<b>30</b>
<b><u>Educational Leadership Core (24-45 credits):</u></b>		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
EL 702	Organizational Theory (P-16)	3
EL 722	Crucial Issues in Education (P-16)	3
EL 727	Seminar in Finance (P-16)	3
EL 736	Seminar in School Law (P-16)	3
EL 741	Politics, Policy and Ethics (P-16)	3
EL 747	Intro to Doctoral Studies (P-16)	3
EL 753	Seminar for Administrators (P-16)	3

EL 763	Change Strategies (P-16)	3
		<b>24</b>
<b><u>Comprehensive Examination (Required)</u></b>		
EL 795	Comp Exam	1
<b>Total credits required from above</b>		<b>88</b>
<b><u>Program Emphasis (9-21 credits)</u></b>		
The student and the advisor jointly determine the courses in the area of emphasis. The typical Ed.D. student completes approximately 12 credits in an area of emphasis.		
<b>Estimated total credits in Program of Study</b>		<b>100</b>

## Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Program

<b><u>Master's (24 credits)</u></b>		
<b>Master's credits transferred in</b>		<b>24</b>
<b><u>Research (48 credits)</u></b>		
Research courses – minimum required of 24 credits from the following:		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
CEP 740	Adv. Ed. Measurement & Stat. (prerequisite: CEP 640)	3
CEP 741	Applied Research Design (Nonparametric Stat) (prerequisite CEP 740)	3
CEP 743	Applied Research Design (Multivariate Stat)	3
EDS 752	Qualitative Research	3
EDS 753	Adv. Qualitative Research (prerequisite EDS 752)	3
EL 761	Policy and Program Evaluation	3
EL 785	Survey Research in Education	3
EL 790	Research Applications	3
With approval, students may take other research courses.		
EL 799	Dissertation (REQUIRED)	24
<b>Required number of research credits</b>		<b>48</b>
<b><u>Educational Leadership Core (24-33 credits)</u></b>		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
EL 702	Organizational Theory (P-16)	3
EL 722	Crucial Issues in Education (P-16)	3
EL 727	Seminar in Finance (P-16)	3
EL 736	Seminar in School Law (P-16)	3

EL 741	Politics, Policy and Ethics (P-16)	3
EL 747	Intro to Doctoral Studies (P-16)	3
EL 753	Seminar for Administrators (P-16)	3
EL 763	Change Strategies (P-16)	3
	<b>Total Required from above</b>	<b>24</b>
<b><u>Comprehensive Examination (Required)</u></b>		
EL 795	Comp Exam	1
	<b>Total credits required from above</b>	<b>97</b>
<b><u>Program Emphasis (9-21 credits)</u></b>		
The student and the advisor jointly determine the courses in the area of emphasis. The typical Ph.D. student completes approximately 12 credits in an area of emphasis.		
	<b>Estimated total credits in Program of Study</b>	<b>105</b>
<b><u>Program Emphasis for Higher Education (9-21 credits)</u></b>		
EL 701	Administration for School Staff Personnel	3
EL 702	School Leadership and Decision Making	3
EL 704	Administration of the Junior and Community College	3
EL 705	Seminar in Administrative Problems	3
EL 707	Seminar in Administration of Higher Education	3
EL 709	The Administrator and Community College Curriculum	3
EL 741	Policy, Politics, and Ethics in Education Administration	3
EL 742	Administration of Vocational and Educational Programs	3
EL 752	Seminar in College Teaching	3
EL 760	Practicum in Computer Technology for Administrators	
EL 785	Survey Research in Education	3
EL 798	Internship	3-9

### **Other Ed.D. and Ph.D. Requirements**

**Advisory/Examining Committee:** Once accepted into the doctoral program, the student and advisor shall organize an advisory/examining committee. The committee consists of five members of the graduate faculty--three from EL, one from the College of Education and one from outside of the College of Education. The primary purposes of the committee are twofold:

- (1) approve the program of study and dissertation topic
- (2) participate in the written and/or oral examinations and dissertation defense.

**Program of Study:** The program of study form *should be submitted before 12 credits of course work have been completed.* This form can be obtained online. In addition to

the completion of the designated program course requirements with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0, students must complete:

- (1) Residency Requirement
- (2) Comprehensive Written and/or Oral Examination
- (3) Dissertation
- (4) Dissertation Defense

**Ed.D. Residency Requirement:** The residency requirement is fulfilled by completing two semesters of full-time graduate study of 12 semester hours each. Only **3** of the **12** hours may be taken in courses that do not have regularly scheduled class time. Examples include independent study, internship or dissertation hours. A 12-credit load taken during the summer is equivalent to one regular semester. (*NOTE: a proposal to accept either this residency requirement or the Ph.D. residency requirement is currently under review in the College of Education*).

**Ph.D. Residency Requirement:** The residency requirement is fulfilled by completing two regular semesters of full-time graduate study of at least 9 hours each. Only **3** of the **9** hours may be taken in courses that do not have regularly scheduled class times. Summer credit earned may not be counted as meeting the residency requirement for the Ph.D.

**Written Comprehensive Examination:** Students may select one of two options for fulfilling the written comprehensive examination requirement (“Comp Exam”). These two options are described in detail in the next section.

**Oral Comprehensive Examination:** The requirement for an oral examination varies by degree and area of emphasis. If applicable, the first oral examination focuses on the comprehensive written examination. This exam should be held approximately eight months prior to the anticipated graduation date. A second oral examination involves defense of the dissertation.

**Dissertation:** Students are required to enroll in 12 credits hours of EL 799, Dissertation, for the Ed.D. and 24 credit hours for the Ph.D. Students should not register for dissertation until most of the program, including courses in statistics and research, is completed. There is no fixed length for the dissertation. Rather than concentrating on the size of the document, students are well advised to consider the following purposes of a dissertation:

- (1) to demonstrate technical mastery of the student's field
- (2) to originate new knowledge or to advance or modify the present knowledge base in educational leadership.

The dissertation normally follows a five chapter format beginning with the problem statement, need for the study, limitations and definition of terms. Chapter two is the review of the literature. Chapter three focuses on research design and methods. Data and analyses are reported in Chapter four. Chapter five generally contains a summary, conclusions and recommendations. The dissertation presents original research and

evidence that the student has developed an acceptable level of expertise in the chosen topic area.

A dissertation proposal should be submitted no later than the first semester the student enrolls in EL 799, and it must have IRB approval. In order to insure a quality dissertation, a proposal consisting of the first three chapters of the dissertation may be developed and presented to the examining committee for approval. Once accepted, the student will begin the actual research. Students should meet with their advisor on a regular basis for guidance.

University policy requires that all students are continuously registered for a minimum of three credits per semester in Fall and Spring semesters until the degree is conferred.

**Dissertation Defense:** Eight weeks after the dissertation has been received by the advisory committee, and at least three weeks before the date in which the degree is to be conferred, a final examination on the dissertation and related topics is conducted by the student's advisory and examining committee. The oral examination is announced and open to interested faculty and students.

## **Comprehensive Examination Options**

**Adopted in Fall, 2007**

The comprehensive examinations are intended for you, as a doctoral student, to show your ability to do scholarly work and merit continuation in the program. The “comps” should be completed after finishing the majority of courses listed on the student's Program of Study; and at least eight months before graduation. Upon satisfactory completion of the comprehensive exam, the “Notice of Completion/ Admission to Candidacy” form must be submitted to the Graduate School.

The nature of comprehensive exams may vary widely across the departments, colleges, and universities. There are two formats used within the Department of Educational Leadership, a written examination option and a research paper option. These are described below.

### **Written Examination Option**

The *purpose* of the written examination is to:

- Ensure program participants and potential doctoral graduates exhibit subject matter, professional knowledge, and methodological proficiency, as defined by EL faculty.
- Encourage doctoral candidates to cooperate with each other in acquiring scholarly knowledge and analytic understanding.

- Facilitate doctoral program participants' ability to grasp connections across courses and content areas.
- Provide a means by which the EL faculty can discern unusual participant weakness, as soon as reasonably possible, and provide counsel to students who might more productively pursue another career path.
- Ensure a uniform and fair standard of quality across candidates pursuing the doctoral degree.

### *Coverage*

Examination topics and fields are those covered by, or widely assumed in, required doctoral courses and experiences. The written examination covers three subject matter and skill areas:

- The initial section of the examination will concentrate on inquiry. It will include topics such as research, methodological understandings and design.
- The second section of the examination covers core competencies – such as finance, organizational theory, change strategies and leadership theory.
- The third section of the examination will appraise a participant's knowledge of professional and research issues involved with K-12 education, postsecondary education, or foundations of education.

### *Examination Settings*

The examination is taken during a single day in the Department of Educational Leadership with each section requiring approximately 2.5 hours. There is one scheduled break for lunch during the examination period. Examinees are encouraged to bring something to drink, but not food. Relevant medical problems or special accommodations should be specified in advance, clearance sought, and approval gained.

The examination will be taken on a computer but Internet access is precluded in this instance. Examinees must not bring notes, books, or other accompanying materials. The examination is proctored, and the proctor will collect examination responses in electronic form.

### *Examination Corrections and Notifications*

Examination passage is judged as a correct answer to each and every question applicable to a participant taking the examination. Each examination question, within each examination section, is graded by readers as "Passed," "Failed," or "Passed with Distinction." EL faculty read the examinations. The advisor in consultation with the chair will write or choose the examination questions and designate readers. Responses are

intended to be read anonymously. Responses are distributed to readers with only numeric identifiers. Each section, and, where appropriate, each question in a set of responses, will be read by two separate faculty members. If these initial two readers disagree regarding passage or failure, the examination response(s) will be read by a third faculty member appointed by the department chair.

Examination results will be distributed to individual test takers and their advisors within a reasonable time frame, usually three weeks. Reviewer comments regarding participant responses to examination questions will be made available.

### *Examination Preparation*

Participants are encouraged to study collaboratively. Review of course notes; projects and simulations are useful. Where appropriate, articles to be used as a part of the comprehensive examination will be provided to participants in advance of the examination administration. Participants are encouraged to discuss the article or articles with each other.

### *Examination Consequences*

Successful passage of all examination sections and questions renders a participant eligible to proceed toward a dissertation proposal defense and dissertation research conduct.

Any successfully passed portions of an examination can be banked and need not be retaken. A participant failing all or a portion of the examination may, with Faculty Adviser approval, retake whatever part or parts of the examination were not rated as passing.

A make up, or second examination will be offered, at least one month later. A failing participant can retake the examination or examination sections then, or reschedule at a later, mutually agreeable, date. Failure to pass all required sections of the examination, after a participant has had two opportunities, will result in a participant's removal from the doctoral program.

## **Paper and Oral Defense Option**

A second option for the comprehensive examination is a research based project or projects developed in conjunction with your advisor. It should be useful to you in some manner, such as examining in depth several theories that you might draw from later in framing your dissertation. However, the comprehensive exam should not duplicate work that you will do elsewhere, such as in your dissertation literature review. On the other hand, you and your advisor might develop examination questions that could lead to publishable papers related to an area of scholarly interest that you will explore in more precision in your dissertation. The extent to which your advisor might assist you in the process by providing input into your work or reading a draft before it goes to your

examining committee also may vary, but your committee members should be told how this was approached when they evaluate your work.

It is not uncommon in this type of comprehensive exam to develop and answer one or two substantial, scholarly questions. The combined total length might be about 40-60 double-spaced pages. Most references should be seminal and/or recent research articles from scholarly journals (e.g., within the past five years or so, unless you are seeking historical or comparative perspectives).

Once you have completed your exam, the typical process is for you to arrange – in conjunction with your advisor – a meeting with three Educational Leadership committee members for an oral defense of your work, submitting a copy to your committee members at least two weeks in advance. Your oral exam might consist of, in order, a brief oral presentation of your work, questions from your committee, a confidential committee discussion with you being excused from the room, and a final decision about your performance reported to you upon returning to the room. The outcome might be “Pass,” “Conditional Pass” (e.g., with demonstration of acceptable revisions), or “Fail.” This process is quite similar to that followed during the dissertation study itself and should help prepare you for that culminating task.

It is not unexpected that the paper or papers which you prepare under this option may have to go through a number of revisions before you will be judged to have fulfilled your comprehensive examination requirement. You should also be aware that final approval is not a given in this option either – you must produce work which meets the criteria established by the committee or face dismissal from the doctoral program.

### **Choosing an Option**

The provision of a choice is based upon the faculty’s recognition that students have different learning styles, work requirements, and personal needs. As you near the end of your program, you should have a serious discussion with your advisor about which option you will exercise to meet the comprehensive examination requirement. Although your advisor may make suggestions, the decision, ultimately, rests with the student. Please note that your decision should be carefully weighed because it is Department policy that only one option can be explored, and failure to advance through that process precludes the student from another chance to successfully complete this requirement.

## **Departmental Policies**

### **Transfer Credit**

If you plan to apply any graduate credits earned at another institution toward your degree, prior to completing your Program of Study form you must complete a "Graduate Credit Transfer Evaluation Request" available online. Results of the evaluation will be directed to the student, advisor, and Graduate Dean for reference in program planning.

## Policies on Examinations

1. EL Departmental Policies on Examinations: All students applying to take comprehensive examinations must enroll in EL 795, Comprehensive Examination, 1 credit.
2. The comprehensive examination is normally taken in the final semester or summer session of coursework. It may be taken earlier with the advisor's approval if no more than six semester hours of class work remain.
3. Ed.D. and Ph.D. exams are individually scheduled. Students must select one of the two options (see section on “Comprehensive Examinations for Doctoral Students”) and file a written request with the departmental secretary. This request must be approved by the student's advisor approximately three weeks prior to the examination.
4. Final oral examinations are required for Doctoral candidates after successful completion of the comprehensive exam requirement. The student has the responsibility of scheduling the oral examination and contacting the committee members concerned. Final oral exams should be scheduled at least three weeks before the end of the semester or term.
5. No student will be allowed to take either comprehensive exam option before an approved program of study has been filed with the Graduate School.

## Independent Study Policy

Independent study is recommended only in those instances in which a student desires to do further research or explore special interests. Such study should not be undertaken in lieu of regularly scheduled coursework which covers the same topics, except under special circumstances and with the approval of the advisor and department chair.

A student wishing to pursue independent study must make arrangements with a member of the faculty to supervise the independent study prior to registration. It is understood that the effort expended in independent study should be comparable to formal coursework. Students taking a three-credit college course are expected to spend three hours per week in class and to spend approximately two hours in study and preparation for each hour spent in the classroom. *Students taking independent study credit are expected to devote comparable time and effort for the credits earned.*

## Course Validation

Students are expected to satisfy all requirements for the Ed.D. or Ph.D. within a period of eight calendar years following matriculation. An extension may be granted with approval of the EL faculty and the Graduate Dean given sufficient professional justification, and

for students who receive an approved leave of absence. With extended durations, some courses may have to be repeated to insure that courses on a program of study are current.

### **Internships**

EL 798, Internship – “Practical experience in the student’s major field under close supervision and direction of local school system personnel and university faculty. Experience areas selected by student, advisor, and intern coordinator. Prerequisite: Approval of student’s advisor or departmental chair.”

Prospective interns must have been formally admitted into an EL graduate program or have completed a degree in educational administration. Students must have successfully completed at least 12 semester hours of coursework prior to registering for an internship; a requirement that may be waived by the student’s program committee if the student has had comparable administrative experience.

Students should meet with their advisor and the 798 instructor to review plans and procedures, and to obtain necessary approvals for their proposed internship project.

All student interns placed in Washoe County Schools must be cleared through the Office of Field Experience (see Mary Sedgwick, 784-6248)

# Appendix A: Certification Requirements

## Administrative Endorsements

1. The Nevada Department of Education will issue the following types of administrative endorsements:
  - a. Professional administrator of a school; and
  - b. Professional administrator of a program;
  
2. A person who holds an endorsement as an administrator of a school may be employed by a school district as:
  - a. An assistant superintendent of schools;
  - b. A superintendent of schools;
  - c. An associate superintendent of schools;
  - d. A principal;
  - e. A vice principal;
  - f. A supervisor;
  - g. An administrative assistant; or
  - h. A supervisor or coordinator at a:
    - (1) Program of nursing
    - (2) Program of psychology as it is applied in a school;
    - (3) Program of speech therapy;
    - (4) Program of physical therapy;
    - (5) Program of occupational therapy; or
    - (6) Other program areas.
  
3. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, a person must hold an endorsement as an administrator of a program if he/she supervises or coordinates a program of:
  - a. Nursing;
  - b. Psychology as it is applied in a school;
  - c. Speech Therapy;
  - d. Physical Therapy; or
  - e. Occupational Therapy.

The following program tracks have been designed to meet Nevada Administration Certification requirements. In addition, suggestions offered by professional organizations have been incorporated to better prepare students for a career in educational leadership.

<b><u>EL Courses Required for Nevada Administrative Endorsement</u></b>		
<b>Course</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
EL 700	Basic Principles of Educational Administration	3
EL 701	Administration of School Staff Personnel	3
EL 703	Administration and Curriculum Improvement	3
EL 715	Supervision and Evaluation of Teaching	3
EL 725 or 726	Public School Finance or School Business Management	3
EL 735	The Law of Public Education	3
EL 780	Research Methodologies in Educational Leadership	3
EL 798	Internship	3-9
ELECTIVES	Additional EL courses to reach minimum of 36 credits	
<b><u>Recommended for the additional credits in Educational Leadership</u></b>		
EL 710	Principalship	3
EL 722	Critical Issues in Education	3
EL 734	Special Education Law	3
EL 743	Public Relations for Schools	3
EL 746	Data Based Decision Making	3
EL 795	Comprehensive Exam	1

*Amended 12/15/86*