

The Curriculum

The Ed.D. in ALSI is a prescribed 60-credit-hour degree program (post-master's) with focused coursework and learning experiences in four core areas.

Student Learning Core: 13 Credits

- Cognitive Learning Theory and Student Achievement
- Implementing a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
- The Effective Teaching Knowledge Base
- Teacher Observation, Evaluation, and Improvement
- Application and Research Seminar: Student Learning

Research Methods: 9–12 Credits

- Educational Statistics
- Qualitative Research
- Advanced Quantitative Research Methodologies and/or
- Advanced Qualitative Research Methodologies

Assessment Core: 13 Credits

- Assessment Literacy
- Advanced Applications of Assessment
- Formative Assessments and Improved Student Learning
- Data Analysis, Learning, and School Improvement
- Application and Research Seminar: Assessing Student Learning

Research-Based School Improvement Core: 13 Credits

- Highly Effective Schools and School Districts
- Schools as Professional Learning Communities
- Collaborative Teaming and Effective Schools
- Improving Student Achievement in Core Academic Areas and Subgroups: Best Practices
- Application and Research Seminar: Research-based School Improvement

Dissertation: 12 Credits

- Dissertation Research
(Students will enroll in Dissertation Research in multiple semesters for a total of 12 credits.)

“The coursework is the greatest strength of this program. It is very specific in promoting an intense focus on student learning and giving educators the tools they need to improve upon that learning.”

— Dr. Rick Dufour, expert education consultant and author

Admission Requirements

Admission is limited and competitive, based on a holistic review of test scores, past academic success, and potential for success in a rigorous doctoral program that is designed to develop individuals who can effect immediate school improvement and gains in student learning as measured by achievement assessments. The following are minimum requirements for admission to the Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement program, although meeting these criteria does not guarantee admission to this selective program of study.

Applicants are expected to have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.50 in all master's coursework.

Application Procedures

All application materials for the Ed.D. in ALSI program are to be submitted and confirmed by the MTSU College of Graduate Studies. Enrollment in each cohort is limited, and selection is based on a competitive review of the application materials.

Admission into the Ed.D. in ALSI requires two steps.

Step 1: The College of Graduate Studies will review materials and make decisions regarding acceptance.

Step 2: The College of Education will review all materials and make decisions regarding admission into the Ed.D. in ALSI program.

Both steps must be completed before admission into the program and enrollment in the coursework.

Each applicant must meet the following requirements:

1. Have an earned master's degree from an accredited institution.
2. Submit MTSU College of Graduate Studies application with the appropriate application fee (online at www.mtsu.edu/graduate/apply.php).
3. Submit official transcripts from all colleges and universities previously attended showing a grade point average (GPA) in previous academic work that indicates potential for success in advanced study. (Successful applicants will typically have a GPA in prior graduate work that exceeds 3.5/4.)

4. Submit official scores for the verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing measures of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) that indicate potential for success in the Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement doctoral program. Although specific minimum scores are not set, evaluation of scores is an important factor in admission decisions, and successful applicants will typically submit scores above the 50th percentile on each measure.
5. Submit three letters of recommendation. Letters from professors and/or professionals should address the applicant's potential to successfully complete an Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement. Letters from leaders of school districts (including directors of schools, school board members or other educational community leaders, and colleagues who are teachers or administrators) should specifically address the applicant's ability/opportunity to lead an effort to significantly improve student learning and achievement in her/his current position.
6. Submit a statement of purpose (750–1000 words) communicating professional goals and suitability for the doctoral program in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement. In your statement, you should address how your participation in this program will result in increased student learning and achievement as measured on standardized test scores for students under your educational care and authority. You may include a brief discussion of any literature (e.g., research articles, texts—please use appropriate APA citations) that has informed your professional practice or influenced you in some way.
7. Submit a current vitae including education and employment history, experience with school improvement, professional presentations and publications, awards, recognitions, etc.
8. Candidates who meet all criteria for admission will participate in an interview with the Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement doctoral program admission committee as part of the admissions process.

Accepted students will be required to attest to their commitment to the cohort and to contribute the necessary quality and quantity of time and energy to ensure the success of this community of learners as each student prepares to lead an effort to significantly improve her/his school or school district.

International students will be required to meet the University's English language proficiency requirements in addition to the program admission requirements.

Degree Requirements

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Assessment, Learning and School Improvement requires

1. completion of the 60-credit-hour program of study,
2. completion of a minimum of one research-based article submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed professional journal,
3. completion of one research-based presentation at a regional/national educational conference,
4. mastery of academic coursework (measured by course grades and successful completion of a comprehensive examination), and
5. successful defense of a dissertation that demonstrates mastery of applied research methods in the field of education.

“The cohort approach is well suited to a program that emphasizes the need for collaborative teams and a collective effort to meet the needs of students. The cohort structure aligns with and reinforces the importance of collaboration as a key component of improving schools and districts.”

— Dr. Roland Barth, founder and former director of Harvard University Principals' Center and the International Network of Principals' Centers

For more information, email EdD@mtsu.edu,
or visit www.mtsu.edu/education

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in
**ASSESSMENT,
LEARNING, and
SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT**

Residency Requirements

This requirement will be met by all students through the prescribed cohort course sequence and schedule.

Financial Aid

For financial aid information, visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarship website at www.mtsu.edu/financialaid.

How to Apply

To be admitted into the Ed.D. program, candidates must apply and be admitted to the College of Graduate Studies at MTSU and the College of Education Ed.D. in ALSI program.

The MTSU College of Graduate Studies application process may be completed online at www.mtsu.edu/graduate.

The MTSU College of Education will

- review applicants who have complete application materials on file at the College of Graduate Studies (details in the application procedures section),
- conduct interviews of all eligible applicants, and
- select cohort members for programs beginning each fall semester.

For more information on how to apply for the Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement, visit our website at www.mtsu.edu/education.*

*Application materials are considered on a competitive basis for the limited number of available positions. Materials must be completed and confirmed by the MTSU College of Graduate Studies by January 31. The College of Education review will begin February 1 for admission to the cohort starting fall semester.



COLLEGE OF
GRADUATE STUDIES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement

MTSU's Ed.D. program "offers the best example of an attempt to bridge the gap between universities and public school practitioners that I have seen. Its focus on learning for both adults and students, its use of balanced assessment processes to monitor learning and inform professional practice, and its recognition of the need to develop the collective capacity of a staff to improve their schools is exactly what educators need in an era of accountability that places greater demands upon schools."

— Dr. Rick Dufour, expert
education consultant

The Doctor of Education program (Ed.D.) in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement offers educational leaders the practical and research-based knowledge and analytical skills to enhance student-learning, increase assessment scores, and improve schools.

To implement school improvement processes as they progress through the program, applicants will capitalize on their current leadership roles as school administrators; teacher-leaders; policy makers; policy advisors; staff members in philanthropic and not-for-profit agencies; and professionals in higher education or educational consulting in pre-K–12 settings.

Successful graduates will be able to interpret all forms of student-learning data—formative and summative, quantitative and qualitative—in order to accurately identify areas of success and areas in need of specific attention to attain school improvement.

Estimated Time for Completion

This will be a selective and limited-enrollment cohort program. Because most, if not all, students will be employed during their program of study, students are enrolled in 5–8 credits each semester, including summers.

Students will be expected to complete 20 credits in each of the first three years (fall, spring, and summer).

Generally, cohort programs have significantly higher than normal retention and completion rates, and all students are expected to complete the coursework portion of the degree on schedule.

We do allow for the possibility that some students will fail to complete their dissertation research within the three-year cohort time frame.

Possible Career Opportunities

The Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement is designed to meet a specific need to develop the capacity of existing pre-K–12 school leaders (including teacher-leaders) and those in education-related careers to significantly improve student academic achievement and to meet increased accountability mandates. Program graduates may also find work in higher education, research, educational policy, governmental agencies, not-for-profit and philanthropic organizations, and professional development consulting, which will also contribute to improved student and school achievement.

The Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement (ALSI) is a cohort-based doctoral program on the MTSU campus in Murfreesboro, Tenn. The program provides a structured curriculum with early development and ongoing support for students as they work to complete their doctoral dissertations.

"If each student emerges from the program with a keen understanding of each of these topics, they would be well prepared indeed. I wouldn't subtract any of them."

— Dr. Roland Barth, founder and former
director of Harvard University Principals'
Center and the International Network of
Principals' Centers