Human and Community Development, Ph.D.

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Degree Offered

- Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of the Program

The Ph.D. in Human and Community Development (HCD) is intended for applicants with a professional background in community development and design, landscape architecture, interior architecture, fashion design, design and merchandising, or applicants who have significant prior experience improving the social, cultural, and/or economic conditions of communities by working with government or educational institutions. The program provides students with access to a variety of courses and faculty expertise to help candidates develop an interdisciplinary perspective of human and community development, through research in two or more fields. To this end, the program is flexible and relies on the intellectual maturity and curiosity of the student and the guidance of the student's graduate committee, to develop a student-centered curriculum.

The Ph.D.degree is the most advanced degree offered and prepares students for careers at the highest level of the profession as a faculty member, staff in a research organization or governmental and non-governmental agencies, or as a consultant. This program is currently administered by the School of Design and Community Development in partnership with the Resource Economics and Management Division within School of Natural Resources.

Admissions for 2025-2026

A regular graduate student is a degree-seeking student who meets all the criteria for regular admission to a program of their choice and be under no requirements to make up deficiencies.

For regular admission, a student must:

- Possess a baccalaureate degree from a college or university and have at least a grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale (or an average of 3.0 or higher for the last sixty credit hours).
- Provide three letters of reference from persons acquainted with the applicant's professional work, experience, or academic background.
- Submit a written statement of 500 words or more indicating the applicant's goals and objectives relative to receiving a graduate degree, and identify a potential faculty advisor.
- A design portfolio (physical or digital) is encouraged for applicants who come with a design background, such as environmental planning and design, landscape architecture, interior architecture, fashion design, industrial design, and so on.
- Either a master degree in design discipline relevant to human and community development, or a master's degree in a social science or humanities discipline relevant to human and community development.
- At least two years equivalent of full-time relevant professional experience.

Major Code: 1732

A candidate for the Ph.D. degree in Human and Community Development must meet all University, College, School, and Program requirements as outlined in the WVU Graduate catalog.

Program Requirements

All Ph.D. degree candidates are required to follow a planned program of study. The student develops the plan of study during their first year in the program in conjunction with the graduate committee. The plan must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator of the School of Design and Community Development and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Davis College.

Code	Title	Hours
A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required in all courses applied toward degree requirements.		
Block 1: School of DCD Grad Seminars Sequence		
DSM 694	Seminar	1
LARC 694	Seminar	1
AGEE 694	Seminar	1
Block 2: Core Requirements		
AGEE 642	Agriculture Education Research Methods and Design	3
Quantitative Statistical Analysis		3

AGEE 644	Data Analysis/Interpretation	
EDP 613	Statistical Methods 1	
Additional courses as approved by Program Coordinator.		
Introduction to Qualitative Research		3
SBHS 761	Qualitative Research Methods	
SCFD 615	Qualitative Research Methods	
Additional courses as approved by Program Coordinator.		
Advanced Research Methods and/or Analysis		3
AGEE 670	Thesis and Dissertation Proposal Development [*]	1
Block 3: Required Area of Emphasis		**12**
Agricultural and Extension Education		
Fashion and Design		
Community Development		
Block 4: Two Specializations		**18**
Specializations are 9 credit minimum areas of study, as determined by committee.		
Block 5: Research Requirements		
Candidacy Exam		
Research [**]		12
Dissertation Defense		
Dissertation		
Total Hours		58

[*]

Suggested semester immediately before beginning dissertation research.

[**]

AOE Specific 697.

Areas of Emphasis

- Agricultural and Extension Education (p. 2)
- Community Development (p. 2)
- Design (p. 2)

Agricultural and Extension Education Area of Emphasis

Code	Title	Hours
AGEE 650	Program Development in Community Education	3
AGEE 651	Program Evaluation in Comm Ed	3
AGEE 680	Advanced Principles of Teaching and Learning	3
AGEE 570	History and Philosophy of Land Grant Education	3
Total Hours		12

Community Development Area of Emphasis

Code	Title	Hours
AoE Cognate Expertise [*]		12
Total Hours		12

[*]

Program built from 500-level and above in ARE, ENCP, ENLM, LARC, RESM, and/or RPTR.

Design Area of Emphasis

Code	Title	Hours
DSM 512	Global Fashion Affairs	3
DSM 560	Sustainability in Fashion	3
DSM 622	Fashion Theory	3

Electives (DSM and FDM 500-level and above)	3
Total Hours	12

Major Learning Outcomes

HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Learning outcomes for this degree program include:

- Complete a core consisting of quantitative and qualitative research methods, graduate seminars, and teaching practicum;
- Demonstrate competency in their chosen field(s);
- Demonstrate the capacity to produce research that can be accepted for publication in interdisciplinary journals of the social sciences;
- Be proficient in oral and written communication skills in order to have research accepted by and presented at professional conferences; and
- Show the ability to organize and to assess a community engagement project.