



Doctor of Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church

Program Overview

The Doctor of Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church at the Universidad Católica Americana (UNICA) is conceived as the highest level of academic formation, designed to cultivate researchers, theorists, and thought leaders capable of generating original and relevant knowledge that impacts the transformation of educational systems and the deep understanding of the phenomenon of learning in contemporary civilization.

This program transcends professional praxis, demanding epistemological rigor and heuristic capacity to problematize, conceptualize, and restructure existing pedagogical paradigms. The doctorate fosters a transdisciplinary vision, essential to address educational challenges emerging at the convergence of technology, neuroscience, and philosophy.

The doctoral curriculum, structured over four years, allocates 60% of its credits (72 C) to the research component, ensuring full immersion in the generation of knowledge. This component is sequential and culminates in a Doctoral Dissertation that must represent a *princeps* contribution to the field of education. The program ensures the inseparable articulation between methodological training, scientific production, and integration into academic networks.

With a focus on Critical Theoretical Foundations and Emergent and Interdisciplinary Studies (16% of credits), the Doctor of Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church at UNICA forms academics with the rigor necessary for postgraduate university teaching, frontier research, and strategic consulting in global educational policy.

Justification

The justification of this Doctorate lies in the urgent need to generate advanced educational theory that responds to the anthropological transformation imposed by hyperconnection and algorithmic uncertainty.

The global educational system operates under paradigmatic inertia, applying 20th-century solutions to 21st-century problems. The educational crisis is not merely didactic, but ontological and epistemological: *What does it mean to “learn” in an ecosystem where information is ubiquitous and identity is fluid?*

The Doctor of Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church at UNICA assumes this epistemic responsibility by providing the space for the researcher to:

Deconstruct and Reconstruct the Paideia: Train doctoral candidates to transcend mere model application and dedicate themselves to the production of original theory that underpins new conceptions of curriculum, assessment, and teacher formation, aligned with an integral and ethical vision of the human person.



Lead Transdisciplinary Synthesis: A deep understanding of learning requires the convergence of Philosophy, Cognitive Psychology, Information Sciences, and Sociology. The program channels Emergent Studies to form researchers capable of interrogating disciplinary boundaries and generating hybrid conceptual frameworks that explain complex educational phenomena.

Foster Scientific Socialization: Knowledge is not a private end. The strong research component ensures that doctoral students actively integrate into the global scientific community through peer-reviewed publication and participation in research networks, thereby increasing their influence and ensuring external validation of their intellectual production.

This Doctorate is, therefore, a strategic investment in the intellectual human capital of society, generating the architects of the educational future.

Institutional Identity

The Universidad Católica Americana (UNICA) establishes its doctoral program as the pinnacle of its mission in research and service.

Mission

To train Doctors in Education with the highest research competence to generate, disseminate, and apply original knowledge in the educational field, contributing to high theory, public policy, and social transformation from an ethical and humanistic perspective.

Vision

To be an internationally recognized doctoral center of excellence for the methodological rigor of its graduates, the conceptual innovation of its dissertations, and its leadership in global educational research networks.

Values

Epistemological Rigor, Originality, Transdisciplinarity, Research Ethics, and Intellectual Leadership.



Field	Description
Program Name	Doctor of Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church
Academic Level	Graduate / Doctorate
Total Duration	4 years (8 semesters)
Total Credits	120 credits
Research Component	72 credits (60%)
Foundational Component	29 credits (24%)
Elective Component	19 credits (16%)
Emphasis	Frontier Research, Transdisciplinarity
Modality	Virtual, Hybrid, and Research Residencies
Degree Awarded	Doctor of Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church — Universidad Católica Americana (UNICA)

Graduate Profile

The Doctor of Education and the Pastoral Mission of the Church graduating from UNICA will be a highly qualified researcher, capable of:

Theory Generation: Producing and validating original theoretical knowledge that represents a significant contribution to the educational discipline.

Methodological Mastery: Applying advanced research methodologies (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed) with mastery, and utilizing specialized software for complex data analysis.

Research Leadership: Directing and managing large-scale, high-funded research projects at both national and international levels.

Knowledge Dissemination: Demonstrating sustained and peer-reviewed scientific production (publications in high-impact journals) and effective participation in academic networks.

Policy Influence: Advising and influencing the definition of educational public policies based on scientific evidence and a solid ethical framework.



Curriculum by Semester (4 Years — 120 Credits)

Semester	Code	Course	Credits	Component	Prerequisites / Articulated Requirements
1	DEC-701	Epistemology and Ontology of Education	6	Foundational	None
	DEC-702	Doctoral Research Seminar I: Foundations	6	Research	None
	DEC-703	Advanced Quantitative Methodology	3	Foundational	None
Total			15		
2	DEC-704	Critical Curriculum Theories and Systemic Design	6	Foundational	DEC-701
	DEC-705	Doctoral Research Seminar II: Systematic Review	6	Research	DEC-702
	DEC-706	Advanced Qualitative Methodology	3	Foundational	DEC-703
Total			15		
3	DEC-801	Evaluation Models and Educational Accountability	6	Foundational	DEC-704
	DEC-802	Doctoral Research Seminar III: Protocol and Design	6	Research	DEC-705 (Dissertation Proposal)
	DEC-803	Emerging Study I: Technology and Transdisciplinarity	3	Elective	Graduate Level
Total			15		
4	DEC-804	Leadership and Governance in Educational Systems	5	Foundational	DEC-801
	DEC-805	Doctoral Research Seminar IV: Piloting and Ethics	6	Research	DEC-802 (Proposal Approval)
	DEC-806	Emerging Study II: Cognitive Neuroscience and Learning	4	Elective	Graduate Level
Total			15		
5	DEC-901	Doctoral Research Seminar V: Data Collection and Analysis	6	Research	DEC-805 (Fieldwork Start)
	DEC-902	Emerging Study III: Disruptive Educational Innovation	5	Elective	Graduate Level
	DEC-903	Research Internship (National/International)	4	Research	Completion of 70% of



					Foundational Component
Total			15		
6	DEC-904	Doctoral Research Seminar VI: Networks and Publication	6	Research	DEC-901 (Paper Publication Required)
	DEC-905	Scientific Production and Dissemination (Publications)	6	Research	Acceptance of a Peer-Reviewed Article (Q1/Q2)
	DEC-906	Emerging Study IV: Advanced Interdisciplinary Elective	3	Elective	Graduate Level
Total			15		
7	DEC-907	Doctoral Research Seminar VII: Scientific Writing	6	Research	DEC-904 (Dissertation Articulation)
	DEC-908	Emerging Study V: Transdisciplinary Elective	4	Elective	Graduate Level
	DEC-909	Doctoral Dissertation I: Final Draft Development	5	Research	Dissertation Draft (70% Completed)
Total			15		
8	DEC-910	Doctoral Dissertation II: Final Review and Public Defense	15	Research	DEC-909 (Advisor Approval)
Total			15		

Credit and Component Distribution

Component	Credits (C)	Percentage (%)	Key Courses
Research	72 C	60%	Seminars I–VII, Internship (4C), Publications (6C), Dissertation I–II (20C)
Foundational	29 C	24%	Epistemology, Curriculum Theories, Advanced Methodologies (Quantitative/Qualitative), Leadership
Elective (Emergent Studies)	19 C	16%	Emerging Studies (Technology, Neuroscience, Innovation, etc.) with inter- and transdisciplinary focus
Total	120 C	100%	

Research Component Articulation (60% – 72 Credits)

The research component is the axial structure of the program, designed sequentially and progressively to ensure the production of the Doctoral Dissertation and the formation of world-class research competencies:



Sequence and Dissertation (Seminars I–VII – 42 Credits):

Seminars I and II establish the epistemological foundation and *state of the art* (systematic review).

Seminars III and IV focus on the Dissertation Proposal, rigorous methodological design, and ethical validation.

Seminars V, VI, and VII cover field execution, data analysis, scientific writing, and articulation of final dissertation chapters.

This sequence ensures the acquisition of scientific writing skills aligned with high-impact journal publication standards.

Network Immersion and Research Internship (4 Credits):

The course DEC-903 (Research Internship) requires a supervised research residency (national or international) at a recognized academic center or network, aimed at validating the methodological design and exposing doctoral students to diverse research cultures.

Scientific Production and Dissemination (12 Credits):

DEC-904 (Seminar VI) is directly linked with DEC-905 (Scientific Production), requiring as an accreditation condition the acceptance or publication of at least one peer-reviewed scientific article (preferably in Q1 or Q2 journals) derived from the Dissertation. This guarantees knowledge dissemination and external validation of the graduate's research capacity.

Completion and Defense (20 Credits):

The final credits (DEC-909 and DEC-910) are dedicated exclusively to the final drafting, editing, and public defense of the Doctoral Dissertation, which must demonstrate originality and methodological rigor at the doctoral level.

Elective Component (16% – 19 Credits)

The Emergent Studies Component is designed to provide doctoral students with a transdisciplinary vision, allowing the articulation of Education with other fields of knowledge. These courses explore the frontiers of knowledge:

Inter/Transdisciplinary Approach: Courses (e.g., Cognitive Neuroscience, Disruptive Technology) are taken alongside academics from other faculties (Science, Engineering, Philosophy), challenging doctoral students to apply hybrid conceptual frameworks to enrich the theoretical basis of their dissertation.

Continuous Updating: This curricular component is dynamic and adapts to cutting-edge research trends, such as Artificial Intelligence in Education or the Ethics of Big Data applied to learning.