

AGST Alliance

Doctor of Education

Program Handbook



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www.agstalliance.org

Welcome to your AGST Alliance program!

This handbook provides specific details of our **Doctor of Education (EdD)** programs.

Please ensure you also read carefully the general guidelines, *Information for Students* – the information there complements what you read here.

If there is further information you would like to see included in this handbook, please let us know, so that it can be of maximum value for you and your peers in your study program – as well as future participants.

In the Kingdom's ventures.



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Wherever you see this icon in these guidelines, it has a hyperlink to a relevant page of our AGST Alliance website, www.agstalliance.org. Ensure that you are on-line, and double-click on the icon. For example, a double-click on this one should take you to the AGST Alliance homepage. Try it and see!

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Introducing...

Doctor of Education (EdD)

with majors in:

Education, Spiritual Formation & Discipleship
Child and Family Development

Program objectives

AGST Alliance's **Doctor of Education** program is designed to produce graduates who will be significant change agents in enhancing informed and improved policies and practices in their organisations. They will be able to integrate sound educational, social science and spiritual formation theory with their professional practice, by means of clear thinking and original applied research that demonstrates advanced theological reflection.

If they stay in their professional role, graduates are likely to be invited to teach applied courses in seminaries. They may also be likely to be invited to take up (or continue in) senior leadership positions in these seminaries.

The EdD program has two disciplines: Education, spiritual formation and discipleship, and Child and family development. We work hard to **integrate theological, educational, and social science elements** into all the components of learning (rather than having separate theology and education modules), as an avenue for 'serving God's people in Asia'.

Our AGST Alliance programs are validated by the Asia theological Association (ATA). The ATA guidelines for the purpose and nature of professional doctorates like our EdD program are these:

Programs granting the Professional Doctorate degree are designed to prepare the graduates for a qualitatively enriched practice of ministry and to function as leaders in denominational and parachurch agencies, and as Christian ministry trainers. Each of these also includes sophisticated academic and research components.

(Manual for Accreditation, ATA, 2010, p. 38).

Program components

To achieve the objectives of the EdD program the following components are built in:

• Modules		
3 core modules @ 3 credits per module		9 credits
A research Methods module		3 credits
2 interest-specific modules @ 3 credits per module		6 credits
• Critical engagement practicum		3 credits
• Dissertation		15 credits
		—————
	TOTAL	36 credits
		—————
<p><i>[One credit is equivalent to a minimum of 13-14 hours of classroom instruction and 20 hours outside of the classroom. However, for post-graduate programs like our EdD program there may be a smaller number of on-campus hours and more time expected to be given to assessable pre-campus and post-campus work.]</i></p>		

1. Modules

Participants complete modules for 18 credits: three 3-credit core modules, a research methods module for 3 credits, and two other modules for a further 6 credits. The modules are also offered for our AGST Alliance MTh (Ed) program.

Three-credit modules span about three to four months. Each module involves pre-campus preparation, a 5-7 day on-campus session, and post-campus assignment activities.



See the range of core and other module topics of the MTh (Ed)/EdD program.

2. Critical engagement practicum (CEP)

The CEP is a personalised field-based practicum designed to encourage and enhance critically reflective and creative practice in your teaching-training ministry. The process will help you identify and examine the assumptions (personal, socio-cultural, theological, academic, etc.) underlying your educational approach(es), and how these assumptions influence your personal practices.

A mentor-coach journeys with you through the CEP, which will likely span 3-4 months duration.

Details of the CEP are available in a separate set of guidelines.

3. Dissertation

The dissertation is designed to demonstrate your competence to integrate educational, social science and spiritual formation theory with your professional practice. It will comprise

original applied research that demonstrates advanced theological reflection and which is designed to enhance informed and improved practice in your ministry/organisation.

The length of the dissertation will normally fall in the range of 30,000-45,000 words (excluding references and appendices, but including footnotes), depending on the nature of the research.

A successful EdD dissertation will reflect original research, in candidates' organisational/professional sphere. The dissertation may take one of a variety of forms, tailored to your interests and ministry setting. While it may be conceptual-theoretical research, it will more likely be of an applied nature, with implications for senior educational leadership in professional and/or policy areas. Hence, it is likely to have a significant quantitative or qualitative research element to it. While you may come into the EdD program with an idea of the area you want to focus on for your dissertation, you will be encouraged to firm this up after you have a sense of the broad panorama of the program.

The dissertation will probably require 24-36 months' work after you complete the coursework. A supervisor will be with you through the dissertation process.

Two competent external examiners will be appointed to examine the submitted dissertation.

Details of the thesis/educational project are available in separate sets of guidelines.

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Program practical details



The FAQs on our website cover many of the practical details of this program. We'll review the major ones in this section.

1. Status in the EdD program

Students are admitted into the EdD program **in principle**. Your candidature in the program will be confirmed (or otherwise) by the AGST Alliance Education Programs Committee after two modules of coursework have been completed, during which you will be expected to have consistently produced work at least at the Credit level.

By the end of these coursework modules, you will also submit a 500-600 word outline of your proposed research focus, and how you envisage using the outcome of the research in order to either function more effectively yourself as a teacher-trainer, or to have a more effectively functioning organisational leadership role in some way or another. This will be approved by the Committee.

If you fail to produce work at the appropriate level, your EdD candidature will be reviewed by the Education Programs Committee, who will decide whether you will be allowed to continue in the EdD program, or invited to complete the MTh (Ed) program.

2. Module dates



See the dates of the modules on our AGST Alliance website.

3. Location of on-campus sessions

The on-campus sessions of the modules are usually conducted on campuses of AGST Alliance consortium member institutions in Malaysia/Singapore/Thailand.

The decision about which campus/location is used is determined by:

- The geographical spread of the module participants. More participants from one country may mean more modules taught on campuses in that country.
- The preference of the person facilitating the module (= the lecturer).
- The need to share module hosting.

Note: Participants need to budget for the cost of travel and living expenses for the on-campus sessions. Budget airlines help ease the travel costs. We will suggest possibilities for accommodation, but participants are responsible for making the specific arrangements.

4. Participation

The EdD is a 'semi cohort program': While you may enter the program at any module, if you intend to complete the program you are advised to go through the modules consecutively. In this way, you will be with a core group of participants, and able to share your experiences and challenges with others who become friends and colleagues to network with after the program.

If you miss some of the on-campus sessions of a module for genuine reasons, you may be given some directed studies to take the place of the missed elements of the module. But if you miss all the on-campus sessions, you are unlikely to be allowed to complete the module. You will need to discuss this with the module facilitator in the first instance.

5. Program marker points

All EdD candidates enter the coursework phase of the program on a **two-module probationary basis**: continuation is contingent on adequate attendance at the modules and satisfactory completion of the assessable work.

An **EdD program confirmation review** takes place after two modules of coursework – see #1 above.

Your formal **dissertation proposal** is a further program marker. Your proposal must be approved by the Education Programs Committee in order to continue in your EdD program.

In the dissertation phase, satisfactory **annual reviews** are required to ensure ongoing continuation in the program.

6. Program duration and completion

The maximum duration for completing the EdD is six years. This allows participants to take some electives of their choice and still have adequate time to complete their dissertation.

If EdD participants complete the coursework satisfactorily, but don't finish the dissertation and critical engagement practicum within the required time they will be awarded a Postgrad Dip Ed.

7. Annual doctoral colloquium

All AGST Alliance doctoral candidates – EdD and PhD – are expected to participate in an annual 3 days /2 nights colloquium.

The purpose of the colloquium is primarily to provide a setting for encouraging you and your peers to 'keep on keeping on', and so bring your research to a successful conclusion sooner rather than later. The focus of the colloquium is thus twofold:

- a) To enable you to talk through the direction and progress of your research with 'critical friends' (EdD/PhD peers and faculty) – you will be required to make a presentation of your work to date, followed by discussion.
- b) To enhance your research ability, with skills training in areas which you and your peers sense you need further help.

8. Time commitment

You need to ensure that you are able to give adequate time to the course. This means not just blocking out time during the coursework phase to attend the 5-7 days on-campus sessions, but also to allocate significant time for pre- and post-campus study and assignment writing. Later, of course, you will need to allow adequate time to focus on your dissertation research and writing.

If you plan to attend the coursework modules consecutively, this is equivalent to at least 50% of a typical full-time seminary program load.

Good time management is essential. You will need to restructure your work/ministry load and responsibilities for the duration of the program.

- Some participants have **study leave** provisions in their church/organisation.
- Others arrange to **cut down their work/ministry load**.
- Others take **unpaid leave**.

We urge you to use the *Student Support Framework Memorandum of Understanding* so that the major stakeholders in your program – your family, ministry organisation/seminary and/or local church leaders – are informed and committed to help you complete the program well.

9. EdD study skills

Getting back into study, especially as a mature-age student, can be daunting. To help you thrive in your program, we provide specific research and writing skills workshop activities. These are designed to help you review and/or develop the skills to do effective research and writing, and to use library and internet facilities well.

In addition, a specialised research methods module is also part of the EdD program, to ensure students are well prepared for their dissertation research.

10. Transfer to PhD(Ed) program

As they progress through the EdD program some participants may realise they would like to move into our PhD(Ed) program. This is possible.

If you complete the coursework modules with sufficiently high grades, you may request to transfer into the PhD(Ed) program without completing the EdD dissertation. Requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis with consideration to academic competence, age, maturity, leadership experience, ministry involvement, etc. Discuss the possibility with the Education Programs Director in the first instance.

If you later withdraw from the PhD(Ed), you will need to request permission to complete the requirements for an EdD or MTh(Ed) – otherwise you will be awarded a Postgrad Dip Ed.

Note: The Postgraduate Diploma in Education is awarded to students who have completed the MTh(Ed) coursework. Thus, it is a credible qualification, giving recognition for achieving at the MTh level. Students who received the Postgrad. Dip. Ed because they have not completed the MTh(Ed) thesis should not feel that they have a 'lesser' qualification or have failed to come up to an acceptable MTh standard. It is simply an incomplete MTh(Ed).

Moving from the EdD to the PhD(Ed) will involve additional program fees.

11. Interest-specific modules

Unless the subject is very specialised, there are sufficient course offerings in the AGST Alliance programs for the students to choose their interest-specific modules. These modules can be selected from the Bible -Theology or Doctor of Ministry programs. One approved module of 3 credits from other accredited institutions may replace an EdD interest-specific module. The module needs to be at the appropriate academic-level.

12. Finance matters



Details about fees and the payment schedule are found in *Information for Students* and on our website

Note that you will need to factor other significant costs into your program, beyond the program fees – for travel, accommodation, resources, etc. (See 'Other costs' in the Fees page on our website.)

We regret that no scholarship money is directly available from AGST Alliance. However, we actively support student applications to trusts/foundations for financial assistance.

13. Immigration matters

It is essential that you check carefully about immigration regulations *well in advance* of the on-campus sessions of coursework modules being conducted in a country other than your own. *This is your responsibility.*

Usually, when you travel to another country from your own to attend the module on-campus sessions, a social visit pass is adequate. (You are officially attending a short training program.)

AGST Alliance is able to provide official letters if required for immigration purposes.

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Expectations of EdD level study

What level and quality of study is expected for our AGST Alliance EdD? This question may be answered in two ways.

A. Generic expectations

As a doctorate, our EdD is an advanced degree which will be recognised internationally. The academic expectations are close to those for our PhD(Ed), except that whereas the PhD(Ed) tends to have universal application (i.e. it contributes to the theory of the field), the EdD tends to have local application (i.e. it addresses concerns in a specific, local setting).

Think of the expectations as ‘becoming a full professional in your field’. In practice this means:

- You have something to say your peers want to listen to.
- You have a command of what is happening in your subject so that you can evaluate the worth of what others are doing.
- You have the astuteness to discover where you can make a useful contribution.
- You have mastery of appropriate techniques that are currently being used, and also be aware of their limitations.
- You are able to communicate your results effectively in the professional arena.
- All this is carried out in an international context – your professional peer group is world-wide.

(adapted from Phillips and Pugh, *How to get a Ph.D.*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1987, pp. 18-19)

B. Expectations in an evangelical Christian institution

The above guidelines are generic. But there is another essential dimension to bear in mind in your doctoral study in AGST Alliance.

Doctoral study within an evangelical Christian institution is founded on an understanding of knowledge that is more than academic. In the Bible, acquiring and exercising wisdom involves a combination of faith, reason and action. It requires

- right belief and committed trust in the living God (“the fear of the LORD is the first principle of wisdom”),
- creative and humble use of the rationality God has granted to humans made in his own image, and
- appropriate living in the world to reflect God’s calling and participate in God’s mission.

Doctoral study, therefore, pursued on such a foundation, will be *confessional*, *rational* and *missional*. For a Christian, doctoral study is one dimension of what it means to “love the LORD your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength.”

Within such a framework of Christian identity and commitment, it is assumed that our doctoral students will be recognised as Christians maturing in faithful discipleship and having leadership skills as experienced practitioners in aspects of ministry. The following qualities of their doctoral work will be demonstrated through appropriate examination:

1. **Comprehensive understanding**, having demonstrated a breadth of systematic understanding of a field of study relevant to an aspect of Christian ministry, and mastery of the skills and methods of research and applied reflective practice appropriate to that field and ministry context.
2. **Critical skills, faithfully exercised**, having demonstrated their capacity for critical analysis, independent evaluation of primary and secondary source materials, ability to integrate academic insights and professional practice in their ministry context, and their

commitment to exercise such skills on the foundation of biblical faithfulness to Jesus Christ and his church.

3. **Serious inquiry with integrity**, having demonstrated the ability to conceive, design and implement a substantial project of inquiry into professional practice, and to do so with Christian and scholarly integrity.
4. **Creative and original contribution**, having produced, as a result of such disciplined inquiry, a creative and original contribution that extends the frontiers of knowledge, or develops fresh insights and generates new perspectives on professional practice, some of which merit national or international refereed publication.
5. **Contextual relevance**, having shown their capacity, in the course of their doctoral program and in their expectation of its future potential, for biblically-informed critical engagement with the realities of their professional ministry contexts.
6. **Ability to communicate**, having shown an ability in communicating about their area of expertise to peer-level academic and professional audiences, and, where appropriate, to non-specialists in local Christian communities and the wider society in culturally relevant ways, including their mother tongue, for example through teaching, preaching or writing.
7. **Missional impact**, having demonstrated that the doctoral work produced promotes the kingdom of God and advances the mission of the church (both local and global), especially through significant enhancement of professional practice and leadership for transformational service.

All these seven elements are expressed to the glory of God.

(The section above has been adapted from *The Beirut Benchmarks for Professional Doctorates*, developed by ICETE, 2010/2011.)

If this seems daunting, don't despair! We will help you acquire and sharpen your ability in these areas, as you bring diligence and discipline to the learning process.

Don't hesitate to seek help early to cope with the expectations.

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Assessment and grading scale

Coursework

The coursework for the EdD is assessed on the same basis as the AGST Alliance MTh/ Postgrad Diploma programs.

Typically, six main areas are considered when work is assessed for higher education programs such as these:

1. *Evidence of knowledge and understanding of the subject and/or texts*

To what extent does the assignment demonstrate breadth of knowledge, coverage of the topic, depth of understanding of issues, accuracy of information?

2. *Evidence of reading and use of other appropriate resources*

To what extent does the assignment show appropriate use of relevant, well-chosen and both classic and up-to-date literature and/or other source material, and an appropriate and accurate method of referencing?

3. *Quality of critical analysis and interpretation*

To what extent does the assignment demonstrate the ability to identify and analyse underlying issues, problems and questions and relate these to one another; to evaluate arguments and the evidence for them and examine their implications; to identify and to evaluate different perspectives?

4. *Quality of argument and structure (planning) of the assignment*

To what extent does the assignment answer the question in a clear and direct way; form a coherent argument; develop in a logical and convincing way, relating the introduction to the conclusion?

5. *Evidence of critical reflection, personal or ministerial application*

To what extent does the assignment demonstrate critical reflection on evaluation of personal and/or ministerial practice?

6. *Quality of communication skills and presentation*

To what extent does the assignment reflect appropriate standards and academic conventions in relation to the mode of presentation, including clarity of expression, spelling, grammar and syntax, referencing and bibliography?

[These categories and following criteria have been adapted from R. Ackroyd and D. Major, Shaping the tools: Study Skills in Theology, London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1999.]

Notice above the recurring phrase 'to what extent'. It is the extent to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated that determines the grade awarded. Thus, the grading scale for the coursework of the EdD – with the assessment criteria for each of these six areas – is shown on the following page.

Critical engagement practicum/dissertation



The grading scales for the EdD critical engagement practicum and dissertation are different. See our website and/or the specific handbooks for these items.

Grade	Criteria
High Distinction (HD)	<p>Excellent quality – indicating...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. excellent coverage of the topic; accurate in detail offering sophisticated, even original insights; excellent use of examples to demonstrate understanding; clear understanding of complex ideas and issues. 2. extensively researched in breadth and/or depth and accurately referenced. 3. imaginative, insightful, original, creative interpretations; impressive level of critical analysis and evaluation. 4. a persuasive, authoritative coherent argument supported throughout by evidence, ability to show limitations of approaches; systematic and cogent structure. 5. evidence of sophisticated, critical reflection and evaluation of personal and/or professional ministerial practice. 6. written with flair and panache; fluent and confident; lucidly expressed and accurate in spelling and grammar.
Distinction (D)	<p>Very good quality – indicating...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. high level of coverage of the topic; accurate in detail with some originality and innovative insights; good use of examples to demonstrate understanding; clear understanding of complex ideas and issues. 2. widely researched in breadth and/or depth and accurately referenced. 3. insightful and creative interpretations; high level of critical analysis and evaluation. 4. a persuasive, coherent argument supported throughout by evidence, some ability to show limitations of approaches; systematic and cogent structure. 5. evidence of a high level of critical reflection and evaluation of personal and/or professional ministerial practice. 6. fluent and confident; lucidly expressed and accurate in spelling and grammar.
Credit (C)	<p>Good quality – indicating...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. topic is covered in depth; detail is accurate throughout; independence of thought; good identification and understanding of complex ideas and issues. 2. well researched and referenced. 3. perceptive, thoughtful interpretations; good level of critical analysis and evaluation; systematic analysis of source material. 4. presence of a cogent argument, supported throughout by evidence; the work is well structured. 5. evidence of critical reflection, understanding and evaluation of personal and/or professional ministerial practice. 6. lucidly expressed and accurate in spelling and grammar.
Pass (P)	<p>Satisfactory quality – indicating...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. most relevant issues are covered with reasonable understanding; adequate knowledge is demonstrated; most central issues are identified. 2. reasonable range of reading, sources not always explicit; not all referencing may be accurate. 3. material from a variety of sources is drawn together in interesting ways; development of analysis may not be consistent, giving way to description. 4. demonstrates the ability to construct an argument and present supporting evidence; links between introduction and conclusion are made. 5. some attempt is made to reflect critically and evaluate; reference is made to personal and/or professional/ministerial practice. 6. clearly written; there may be occasional errors in spelling and grammar.
Borderline Pass (BP)	<p>Of doubtful quality for a pass, but there are just enough strengths to allow a pass grade to be awarded rather than Fail.</p>
Fail (F)	<p>Unsatisfactory quality – indicating...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ <i>Either</i> the work is unsatisfactory, deficient and/or insufficient in many respects, relating to both mastery of content and expression; ♦ <i>Or</i> work is not submitted, is excessively late, or has been produced by cheating.

Incomplete (I)	<i>[Distinguished from a Fail]</i> Work is not completed/submitted
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For the purposes of comparison, this grading scale may be compared with other frequently used grading scales. Note that these comparisons are only approximate:

AGST Alliance Grade	Common descriptor	Percentage equivalent	Letter equivalent	Grade point equivalent
High Distinction	Excellent	85% +	A	4.0
Distinction	Very good	75-84%	B+/A-	3.6
Credit	Good	65-74%	B/B+	3.2
Pass	Satisfactory	50-64%	C+/B-	2.6
Borderline pass	Marginal	40-50%	C-/C	2.0 - 2.3
Fail	Unsatisfactory	Below 40%	F	< 2.0

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