

# Higher Education



## OVERVIEW

The Doctoral Program in Higher Education is an advanced, dual-degree program offered jointly by Universidad Diego Portales and Leiden University in the Netherlands. It is the only doctoral program in this field in Chile and one of the few in Latin America. Its faculty comprises subject-matter experts from various universities, and the program operates under a cooperation agreement with the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

The program features a tutorial format centered on dissertation development. It is structured on a part-time basis, making it highly accessible to professionals who wish to continue working while pursuing their studies.

Initially developed within the framework of the Ring Program on Higher Education Policies (Conicyt Project SOC01, 2008–2011), its formulation and design involved academics from Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Universidad de Talca, Universidad Nacional Andrés Bello, and Universidad Diego Portales, alongside representatives from the Faculty of Humanities at Leiden University. The program is currently co-directed by UDP Professor Emeritus José Joaquín Brunner, Leiden University Professor Emeritus Patricio Silva, and Leiden University Associate Professor Damian Pargas.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1.** To contribute to the training of researchers and professionals who can work across various academic settings and in the administration of higher education systems and institutions, with advanced analytical and reflective capacities related to practice.
- 2.** To develop in them the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills required to perform in high-demand positions involving knowledge management, complex problem analysis, collaborative work, and performance within organizations operating in dynamic and uncertain environments.
- 3.** To cultivate their interest in and the necessary skills for participating in public deliberation on higher education issues, communicating their reasoning and the available evidence in a well-grounded manner.

## RESEARCH LINES

The program's faculty currently covers the following specialized areas of work within the field of higher education studies:

### 1. Systems level

Encompasses the study of higher education systems, their forms of integration, coordination, and governance, primarily from the perspectives of political economy and neo-institutional theories, and with a comparative approach. Topics addressed in this area include policies, actors, and stakeholders in systemic governance (including public agencies, the political sphere, social actors and movements, intellectual and technocratic layers, and the media); national regulatory policies and legislation governing higher education across all levels of ISCED 2011; key policy instruments (funding, external quality assurance, curricular organization and qualifications frameworks, among others); processes of massification, differentiation, and internationalization of higher education; and trends of change and continuity and their calibration at national and global levels.

### 2. Institutional and organizational levels

Focuses on the study of processes within institutions considered as organizations, whether individually or in groups and categories. This includes aspects such as institutional governance and its intermediate and base units (faculties and departments); core functions — teaching, research, and outreach — and their organizational modalities; the academic profession and its transformations; management regimes, their professionalization, and the emergence of new layers of professional-administrative staff; internal quality assurance and institutional cultures; and student experience and graduate employability.



## APPLICANT PROFILE

The Doctoral Program in Higher Education is open to professionals from various disciplines who hold a master's degree and have an excellent academic record, a vocation for research, and the motivation to join a pluralistic, critical, and internationally oriented learning community.

Candidates must be interested in conducting in-depth study of the Chilean higher education system with a view to contributing to its development, improvement, and evaluation in one of the topics and research lines of the program. Additionally, applicants must be capable of independent work and available to dedicate the equivalent of part-time employment to the elaboration and development of the dissertation.

Ideally, candidates should also have prior work experience in the academic sphere — whether in research, teaching, or higher education administration — or have worked in private or public organizations, Chilean or foreign, connected to the field of education and/or education sector policy.

## GRADUATE PROFILE

Upon completing the program, graduates will be in a position to demonstrate that they have completed an original research project that constitutes a contribution to the field of higher education studies, through the creation and interpretation of new knowledge of value to both the academic community and professional practitioners.

They will have an in-depth understanding of their own area of work and the ability to articulate, on that basis, advances in knowledge, thereby contributing to the critical reflection on practice and the resolution of complex emerging problems. More specifically, they will have acquired the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand, manage, and apply a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of the higher education studies field, and use it in academic work and professional practice.
- Create and manage new knowledge through processes of inquiry, analysis, and reflection on practice.
- Design research projects, plan and organize their execution, identify relevant sources of knowledge, master methods of analysis and interpretation, and adjust a project in light of emerging findings or unforeseen problems.
- Apply scientific knowledge and research-based evidence in contexts of public deliberation and in the design and evaluation of policies at both the system and institutional levels of higher education.

## CURRICULUM

The program is organized around each candidate's individual research plan. The development of that plan is assisted, supported, and guided by a supervisor from Leiden University and a Chilean co-supervisor, who are responsible for orienting, monitoring, and supporting each student's academic progress.

The primary activity of each candidate throughout the program is the writing of the dissertation, for which they meet regularly with their supervisors. Although the program does not include weekly scheduled courses, the process is complemented by other activities also designed to support dissertation development. The table below summarizes the activities in which students must participate, according to their year in the program. At the beginning of each year, the dates of all activities are provided so that students from outside Santiago can plan their travel accordingly.

ESTUDIANTES DE PRIMER AÑO	ESTUDIANTES DE SEGUNDO AÑO	ESTUDIANTES DE TERCER AÑO Y SUPERIOR
3 talleres doctorales presenciales (abril, septiembre y diciembre, cada uno 2 mañanas)		
Reuniones de tutoría: mínimo 2 semestrales con tutor en Chile (presenciales al menos el primer año), y 2 anuales con tutor de Universidad de Leiden		
4 coloquios de lectura presenciales (mayo, julio, septiembre, noviembre)		
Taller de escritura académica 10 sesiones online		
Taller de metodologías de investigación (semestre 2 y 3) 10 sesiones online		

In order for students to complete the doctorate within the stipulated timeframe (8 semesters), a part-time commitment of 20–22 hours per week is required. It is important that students have the support of their employer.

At the end of the first year of study, and in order to continue in the program, students must present and defend a “Thesis Proposal and Draft of the Theoretical Chapter.” This document forms the basis from which the student will develop their research.

To be awarded the degree of Doctor of Higher Education, candidates must have their thesis manuscript approved for submission to Leiden University and defend it at that institution in accordance with the regulations established for this purpose. Once the doctoral degree is conferred by Leiden University, the degree will also be awarded by Universidad Diego Portales.



## FACULTY



**JOSÉ JOAQUÍN BRUNNER**

**DIRECTOR – UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES**

PhD in Sociology, Leiden University, Netherlands. Director of the UDP–Leiden University Doctoral Program in Higher Education in Santiago and of the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Higher Education Systems and Policies. Professor Emeritus at UDP. Member of the National Education Council. Full Member of the Academy of Social, Legal, and Moral Sciences of the Instituto de Chile. Member of the Advisory Council of the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI).



**PATRICIO SILVA**

**DIRECTOR – LEIDEN UNIVERSITY**

PhD in Political Science, Leiden University, Netherlands. Director of the UDP–Leiden University Doctoral Program in Higher Education in Leiden. Professor Emeritus of Modern History of Latin America in the Department of Latin American Studies (LAS) at Leiden University. Active member of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA). Member of 11 editorial boards and reviewer for 12 journals. His research focuses primarily on public policy in Chile and Latin America, and on technocracies and the political system.



**MARIO ALARCÓN**

**UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES**

PhD in Higher Education, Leiden University, Netherlands; Master's in Public Management and Policy, University of Chile; Civil Industrial Engineer, Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María, Chile. Currently Director of the Master's Program in Management of Higher Education Institutions at UDP and academic at the Centre for Comparative Education Policy (CPCE) of the Faculty of Education at UDP. Member of the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Higher Education Systems and Policies. His research focuses on higher education governance, university governance, and the academic profession.



**ANDRÉS BERNASCONI**

**PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CHILE**

PhD in Sociology of Organizations, Boston University; Master's in Public Policy, Harvard University, USA. Currently Director of the National Accreditation Commission, Full Professor at the Faculty of Education of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and researcher in its higher education line. His research focuses on the sociology of higher education, and more specifically on the university as an organization, university management, and the development of the academic profession, all from an international comparative perspective.



CRISTIÁN COX

UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES

PhD in Sociology, University of London, UK. Director of the Centre for Comparative Education Policy (CPCE) and Full Professor at the Faculty of Education of UDP. He actively develops research projects in the field and has consulted for major institutions including UNESCO-OREALC and EuroSociAL. His research lines address initial teacher training, citizenship education, and curricular and institutional governance and structure.



MARIA JESÚS ESPINOSA

UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES

PhD in Education, UDP-UAH. Professor at the Faculty of Education and coordinator of the language area. Instructor for the Academic Writing Workshop in the program. Her research focuses on the didactics of writing. She serves as the facilitator of the Academic Writing Workshop for the Doctoral Program in Higher Education.



ÓSCAR ESPINOZA

UNIVERSIDAD DE TARAPACÁ

PhD in Education Policy, Planning and Evaluation, University of Pittsburgh, USA. Full Professor at Universidad de Tarapacá. Researcher at the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Higher Education Policies – UDP. Senior Researcher at the Inter-University Educational Research Institute IESED-Chile and coordinator of its higher education policy area. Member of the expert group of the Ibero-American Network of Higher Education Indicators (OEI and RICYT). His research covers access, dropout, student and graduate experience, higher education policy, and critical theory.



ENRIQUE FERNÁNDEZ

PhD in Sociology, Free University of Berlin, Germany; Master's in Sociology, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile; History and Geography Teacher, University of Concepción. He is an independent consultant, researcher at the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Higher Education Policies, and advisor to institutions on higher education systems and policies. His areas of work include higher education public policy, quality policy, organizational development and university governance, university management, and international comparative private higher education.



CARLOS GONZÁLEZ

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CHILE

PhD in Education, University of Sydney, Australia; Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Education, University College London, UK. Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Technology and Evaluation at the Faculty of Education of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Currently coordinates the “Higher Education” specialization of the Master’s in Education at UC. Evaluator for ANID projects (Fondecyt, Advanced Human Capital, Scientific Information Program). His main research interests include teaching and learning in higher education, information and communication technologies, initial teacher training, student trajectories, and university faculty evaluation.



CAMILA JARA

UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES

PhD in Latin American Studies, Leiden University. Adjunct Researcher at the Centre for Comparative Education Policy (CPCE), UDP. Instructor for the Research Methodologies Workshop in the program. Researcher and organizer of seminars and discussion events related to social movements, citizenship education, and educational leadership.



JULIO LABRAÑA

UNIVERSIDAD DE TARAPACÁ

PhD in Sociology, Witten/Herdecke University, Germany; Master’s in Systemic Analysis Applied to Society, University of Chile; Bachelor’s in Sociology, University of Concepción. Currently Director of Institutional Quality at Universidad de Tarapacá and Assistant Professor at its Faculty of Education, Adjunct Researcher at the Centre for Comparative Education Policy at UDP, and researcher at the Nucleus for Transdisciplinary Systemic Studies (NEST) at the University of Chile. His research focuses on the sociology of higher education, social systems theory, comparative organizational analysis, entrepreneurial universities, academic capitalism, and governance.



PAULA LOUZANO

UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES

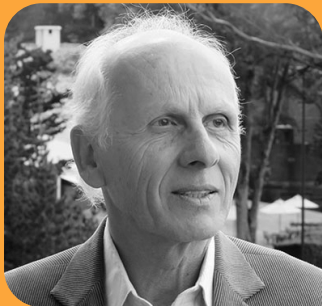
PhD in Education, Harvard University, USA; Postdoctoral Fellow, University of São Paulo, Brazil; Bachelor’s in Pedagogy, University of São Paulo; Master’s in Education, Stanford University, USA. Dean of the Faculty of Education at UDP. Previously served as Director of the Stanford University PED Brasil program and is a member of UNESCO’s teacher working group, for which she has also consulted on educational issues. Her main research lines are initial teacher training, curriculum, and practice-based research.



DAMIAN PARGAS

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

PhD in Sociology, Leiden University. Professor at the Institute of History, Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University. Executive Director of the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies in Middelburg.



JAMIL SALMI

UDP PROFESSOR EMERITUS

PhD in Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK; Professor Emeritus at UDP. Internationally recognized for his role as coordinator of higher education programs at the World Bank. He has served as a normative and technical advisor on higher education reforms in more than 95 countries across all regions of the world, and has advised strategic planning at universities in Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. His main research areas include funding, equity, strategic planning, governance reform, world-class universities, and higher education institution rankings.



SOLEDAD VALDIVIA

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

PhD in Sociology, Leiden University. Associate Professor at the Institute of History, Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University, in the Latin American Studies program (BA, MA, Research), where she teaches, supervises theses, and conducts research. Currently a member of the Advisory Council of the Centre of Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) at the University of Amsterdam, the Editorial Committee of the European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the selection committee of the Slicher van Bath Fund. Her research focuses on plurinationality, indigenous social organizations and movements, and the governance of higher education systems and institutions.



MAURICIO VILLENA

UNIVERSIDAD DIEGO PORTALES

PhD in Economics, University of Cambridge. Dean of the Faculty of Administration and Economics at UDP and Full Professor at the same university. His main research areas are higher education financing, political economy, and innovation.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply to the program, candidates must meet the following requirements:

- Master's degree.
- Academic (research) or professional experience in the field of higher education.
- High reading comprehension level in English.
- Native or advanced proficiency in Spanish.
- Availability of the equivalent of part-time dedication to the program.
- Availability to attend in-person activities (doctoral workshops and reading colloquia).

The application process is completed through the online form provided by the University, where the following documents must be submitted:

- a) National identity card or passport.
- b) Curriculum vitae, including at minimum: national ID number, address, date of birth, contact number, email, academic background (undergraduate and post-graduate studies, each with date of degree conferral and academic distinction if applicable), professional history (specifying current position clearly), and publications (if any).
- c) Bachelor's degree or professional qualification certificate.\*
- d) Master's degree certificate from a Chilean or foreign university.\*
- e) Undergraduate/professional qualification and Master's transcripts.\*
- f) Undergraduate graduation ranking certificate.\*
- g) Results of an international English proficiency certification exam – such as TOEFL iTP, TOEFL iBT, APTIS (British Council), Linguaskill (Cambridge

Assessment), IELTS, Michigan, Cambridge, Trinity, TOEIC – issued within the past two years. Reading comprehension scores alone are acceptable. The remote testing options accepted are: TOEIC from Tandem Santiago (tandemsantiago.cl) and TOEFL iBT from ETS (es.ets.org). Only online English assessments with rigorous identity verification processes (e.g., TOEFL iBT) will be accepted.

- h) Letters of recommendation, including at least one from an academic holding a doctoral degree (addressed to the Program Director in Chile, Professor José Joaquín Brunner; no set format required; must be signed). It is highly desirable to include a letter from the applicant's master's thesis supervisor. When completing the form, referees will be asked to send their letters directly.
- i) Statement of interest explaining the applicant's reasons for applying to the program.
- j) Thesis proposal (maximum 10 pages, excluding bibliography) including:
  - Research topic.
  - State of the art regarding the chosen topic in the literature and its academic discussion (3 pp.).
  - Main conceptual frameworks proposed for use (2 pp.).
  - Proposed research methodology (2 pp.).
  - Tentative chapter outline, including possible titles and sections (see thesis structure).
  - Expected results and/or possible conclusions to be discussed in the thesis (1 pp.).
  - Selected bibliography of national and international publications considered central to the study (2 pp.).
  - Tentative Gantt chart for the 4 years of study (taking into account the activities included in the progression matrix).

- k) Writing sample demonstrating the applicant's writing competency and capacity for postgraduate-level research (article, report, or master's thesis). This sample must be solely authored by the applicant, and may be an article, report, book chapter, book, or master's thesis.\*\*
- l) Written and signed declaration stating: a) that the applicant has the equivalent of part-time availability to dedicate to the program throughout its entire duration, and b) that they commit to continuing with the enrollment and payment process in the event that they are not awarded a scholarship (ANID or otherwise).

\* Degree programs that issue both a bachelor's certificate and a professional qualification certificate must submit both. All certificates issued abroad must be presented in English or Spanish and apostilled, or bear an online validation system. Notarially authenticated certificates are not accepted.

Applicants who are accepted will be required, during the Leiden University admissions process, to submit all study certificates translated into English and apostilled, or certificates in English with an online validation system.

Applicants who are unable to provide their undergraduate graduation ranking certificate – one that explicitly states their graduation rank and the total number of students in their graduating cohort – due to the fact that their undergraduate institution does not provide such rankings or has had its accreditation revoked, must formally certify this circumstance through a certificate issued by the undergraduate institution or by the Ministry of Education and/or the National Council of Education, as applicable.

\*\* Applicants who are selected will be asked, during the Leiden University admissions process, to provide their master's thesis and a summary in English (1–2 pages).

Pre-selected applicants will be called to a personal interview.



## INFORMATION AND CONTACT

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Academic Coordinator

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[postgrados.udp.cl/programas/doctorado-en-educacion-superior](https://postgrados.udp.cl/programas/doctorado-en-educacion-superior)

# DOCTORADOS . UDP . CL

ADMISSION 2027

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MODALITY

ON-CAMPUS PROGRAM

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APPLICATIONS

FROM APRIL 1 TO JULY 17, 2026

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MORE INFO AT

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