

EdD in Leadership & Change

Curriculum Overview

About the Program

The EdD in Leadership & Change is a three-year executive doctoral program preparing scholarly practitioners: senior leaders who systematically study practice, analyze organizational systems, and generate knowledge to advance Jewish communal life. Designed for experienced professionals, the program develops capacity to conduct rigorous applied research while remaining embedded in practice.

Students deepen their leadership while investigating real challenges in their institutions through Dissertations in Practice, developing the capacity to:

- **Understand context** – Analyze the Jewish communal landscape through empirical research and situate their work within field-wide trends
- **Analyze systems** – Apply systems thinking to diagnose organizational dynamics and identify leverage points
- **Facilitate change** – Lead transformation at individual, organizational, and communal levels using developmental frameworks
- **Lead thoughtfully** – Navigate complex challenges drawing on reflexive practice and ethical reasoning
- **Think strategically** – Make nuanced decisions about innovation, adaptation, continuity, and organizational futures
- **Conduct rigorous research** – Design and execute practice-based research that generates actionable knowledge
- **Translate research into action** – Communicate findings to multiple audiences and contribute thought leadership to the field

Three-Year Curriculum Map

YEAR 1 – Foundations: Vision, Research, and Design

Term	Courses	Credits
Fall	Leadership in Practice Research Induction & Methods Foundations	6
Winter	Leadership Development Intensive: Self-Assessment & Practice	1
Spring	Organizations in Context: Systems, Dynamics & the Jewish Communal Landscape Applied Methods I: Action Research & Program Evaluation	6
Summer	Writing Seminar I: Problem of Practice and Literature Review	3

Year 1 Total: 16 credits

YEAR 2 – Practice: Fieldwork, Analysis, and Integration

Term	Courses	Credits
Fall	Theories of Change: Individual, Organizational & Communal Elective	6
Winter	Advanced Leadership Practice Intensive: Skills & Application	1
Spring	Strategic Futures: Innovation, Adaptation & Organizational Evolution Applied Methods II: Fieldwork, Data Collection & Early Analysis	6
Summer	Writing Seminar II: Analysis in Progress	3

Year 2 Total: 16 credits

YEAR 3 – Integration: Capstone & Field Leadership

Term	Courses	Credits
Fall	Writing Seminar III: Findings and Discussion Integrative Leadership Capstone: Reflecting on Growth & Practice	4
Spring	Writing Seminar IV: Completion and Synthesis Capstone Symposium: Research and Field Engagement	4

Year 3 Total: 8 credits

Program Total: 40 credits

Core Content Courses

Leadership in Practice (Fall Y1) – Examine foundational leadership theories and frameworks, developing capacity to analyze leadership as a complex, context-dependent practice. Students explore the distinction between technical and adaptive challenges, examine authority and power in organizational contexts, and begin articulating their own leadership philosophies.

Organizations in Context: Systems, Dynamics & the Jewish Communal Landscape (Spring Y1) – Develop capacity to diagnose organizational challenges by understanding institutions as open systems embedded in dynamic environments. Students establish empirical grounding in contemporary Jewish life and explore how organizations function as complex adaptive systems, connecting external context to internal dynamics.

Theories of Change: Individual, Organizational & Communal (Fall Y2) – Examine how individuals, organizations, and communities transform, drawing from psychology, adult development, organizational learning, pedagogy, and social movement theory. Positioned as students conduct fieldwork, the course provides frameworks to interpret observations in real time.

Strategic Futures: Innovation, Adaptation & Organizational Evolution (Spring Y2) – Explore strategic frameworks for examining organizational choices—when to innovate, adapt, sustain, renew, or let go. Students apply frameworks to their Problem of Practice, positioning research within broader organizational and field evolution and preparing to translate findings into field-facing recommendations.

Leadership Development Intensives

Leadership Development Intensive: Self-Assessment & Practice (Winter Y1, 1 credit) – Focused intensive on students' own leadership development

through structured self-assessment, reflection, and coaching. Students deepen self-awareness about their leadership practice and establish foundations for ongoing development throughout the program.

Advanced Leadership Practice Intensive: Skills & Application (Winter Y2, 1 credit) – Develop applied leadership skills for navigating complex organizational challenges. Through case clinic methodology, role-play, and structured practice, students build competencies including facilitation, difficult conversations, conflict engagement, and leading adaptive change.

Research Methods & Dissertation Development

Research Induction & Methods Foundations (Fall Y1) – Develop research literacy, engage research ethics and IRB processes, and learn to read scholarly literature

Applied Methods I (Spring Y1) – Design practice-based research using action research and program evaluation approaches

Applied Methods II (Spring Y2) – Conduct fieldwork, collect data, and begin analysis using qualitative coding and analytic memos

Writing Seminars – Four advisor-led writing seminars (4-5 students per group) provide intensive feedback and support throughout dissertation development. Each seminar offers structured writing time, peer review, and faculty guidance tailored to where students are in their research and writing process—from initial problem framing through final defense preparation.

Elective

Students take one elective (Fall Y2) aligned with their Problem of Practice, allowing them to deepen expertise in areas directly relevant to their research and organizational context.

Year 3 Capstones

Integrative Leadership Capstone: Reflecting on Growth & Practice (Fall Y3, 1 credit) – Dedicated space for students to reflect on their leadership growth across the three-year program. Students create a leadership reflection portfolio examining shifts in self-awareness, leadership philosophy, and practiced skills.

Capstone Symposium: Research and Field Engagement (Spring Y3, 1 credit) – Students present their Dissertations in Practice to an audience of practitioners and organizational leaders, and share field-facing products that translate their research for practitioner use. Through this public engagement, students complete their development as scholarly practitioners.