Science and Mathematics Education

The Graduate Group in Science and Mathematics Education (known informally as SESAME) offers an interdisciplinary graduate program leading to a doctoral degree in science and mathematics education. The program is designed to produce graduates who have advanced expertise in a scientific discipline as well as in educational theory and research methodologies. The graduate group was established so individuals with training or experience in a mathematical, scientific or technical discipline could pursue advanced students focused on educational issues in these disciplines.

To enter the program, students must have an excellent academic record with a bachelor’s or, preferably, a master’s degree in mathematics, a natural science, or engineering/computer science. Experience teaching, developing instructional materials, or doing educational or psychological research in these areas will also be favorably considered. Knowledge of psychology, cognitive science, education, or statistics is helpful but not required.

Students enrolled in the program will be expected to attain in their chosen scientific discipline a degree of competence comparable to that of a departmental PhD candidate in that discipline. Their thesis research will consist of a project dealing with the development of improved educational approaches research on new instructional models or basic research on learning or cognition in mathematics and science. Upon satisfactory completion of their studies and thesis work, students will obtain the degree of PhD in Science and Mathematics Education.

Admission to the University

Minimum Requirements for Admission

The following minimum requirements apply to all graduate programs and will be verified by the Graduate Division:

1. A bachelor’s degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A grade point average of B or better (3.0);
3. If the applicant comes from a country or political entity (e.g., Quebec) where English is not the official language, adequate proficiency in English to do graduate work, as evidenced by a TOEFL score of at least 90 on the iBT test, 570 on the paper-and-pencil test, or an IELTS Band score of at least 7 on a 9-point scale (note that individual programs may set higher levels for any of these); and
4. Sufficient undergraduate training to do graduate work in the given field.

Applicants Who Already Hold a Graduate Degree

The Graduate Council views academic degrees not as vocational training certificates, but as evidence of broad training in research methods, independent study, and articulation of learning. Therefore, applicants who already have academic graduate degrees should be able to pursue new subject matter at an advanced level without the need to enroll in a related or similar graduate program.

Programs may consider students for an additional academic master’s or professional master’s degree only if the additional degree is in a distinctly different field.

Applicants admitted to a doctoral program that requires a master’s degree to be earned at Berkeley as a prerequisite (even though the applicant already has a master’s degree from another institution in the same or a closely allied field of study) will be permitted to undertake the second master’s degree, despite the overlap in field.

The Graduate Division will admit students for a second doctoral degree only if they meet the following guidelines:

1. Applicants with doctoral degrees may be admitted for an additional doctoral degree only if that degree program is in a general area of knowledge distinctly different from the field in which they earned their original degree. For example, a physics PhD could be admitted to a doctoral degree program in music or history; however, a student with a doctoral degree in mathematics would not be permitted to add a PhD in statistics.
2. Applicants who hold the PhD degree may be admitted to a professional doctorate or professional master’s degree program if there is no duplication of training involved.

Applicants may apply only to one single degree program or one concurrent degree program per admission cycle.

Required Documents for Applications

1. Transcripts: Applicants may upload unofficial transcripts with your application for the departmental initial review. If the applicant is admitted, then official transcripts of all college-level work will be required. Official transcripts must be in sealed envelopes as issued by the school(s) attended. If you have attended Berkeley, upload your unofficial transcript with your application for the departmental initial review. If you are admitted, an official transcript with evidence of degree conferral will not be required.
2. Letters of recommendation: Applicants may request online letters of recommendation through the online application system. Hard copies of recommendation letters must be sent directly to the program, not the Graduate Division.
3. Evidence of English language proficiency: All applicants from countries or political entities in which the official language is not English are required to submit official evidence of English language proficiency. This applies to applicants from Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Latin America, the Middle East, the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, most European countries, and Quebec (Canada). However, applicants who, at the time of application, have already completed at least one year of full-time academic course work with grades of B or better at a US university may submit an official transcript from the US university to fulfill this requirement. The following courses will not fulfill this requirement:
   • courses in English as a Second Language,
   • courses conducted in a language other than English,
   • courses that will be completed after the application is submitted, and
   • courses of a non-academic nature.

If applicants have previously been denied admission to Berkeley on the basis of their English language proficiency, they must submit new test scores that meet the current minimum from one of the standardized tests. Official TOEFL score reports must be sent directly from Educational Test Services (ETS). The institutional code for Berkeley is 4833. Official IELTS score reports must be mailed
directly to our office from the British Council. TOEFL and IELTS score reports are only valid for two years.

**Where to Apply**

Visit the Berkeley Graduate Division application page (http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/).

**Admission to the Program**

**Requirements**

1. A bachelor’s degree or its recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. Superior scholastic record, normally well above a 3.0 GPA;
3. Indication of appropriate research goals, described in the statement of purpose;
4. Results of the General Test of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE); and
5. For international applicants whose academic work has been in a language other than English, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

**Selection Criteria**

SESAME accepts three to six PhD students each year from more than 50 applications. Applicants are judged on a number of factors. Good scores and a high GPA are necessary, but not sufficient. The deciding factor is the ability to demonstrate a research record and agenda that fit well with specific SESAME faculty. In a small, interdisciplinary program, it is important that applicants clearly indicate in the statement of purpose which faculty member(s) they are interested in doing research with and why. SESAME only accepts applications for the fall semester.

**Statement of Purpose and Personal History**

The statement of purpose and personal history are two separate essays.

The statement of purpose should succinctly explain your reasons for applying to SESAME, briefly review our relevant academic preparation and work experience, and describe your future academic or professional goals once the degree is acquired. The focus should be on your preparation, experience and aims rather than a discussion of the trends or importance of education in general. The most successful statements are one to two pages in length and focus on the strengths and experiences of the applicant, providing the reviewers with evidence and justification for admitting those applicants who are qualified and well-suited for SESAME.

The personal history should include any relevant information not already included in the statement of purpose. Additional suggestions may be found in the Graduate Division’s Personal Statement Guide. There is no minimum length for the personal history.

These two essays are used in part to evaluate the candidate’s writing skills. Pursuant to UC Berkeley Policy, the two statements must be written by the candidate her or himself.

**Three Letters of Recommendation**

PhD applicants should provide at least three and no more than five letters that speak directly to their ability and potential to perform academic work at the doctoral level.

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**Normative Time Requirements**

**Total Time to Advancement and Total Normative Time**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Admitted with MA</th>
<th>Admitted without MA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advancement to Candidacy</td>
<td>7 semesters</td>
<td>8 semesters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of all PhD Requirements</td>
<td>10 semesters</td>
<td>12 semesters</td>
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Use this checklist if you entered the program with master’s degree in your mathematics, science, or engineering discipline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fall (1)</td>
<td>Discuss with adviser(s): Interests and professional development, Course planning to meet requirements, Research work plan, goals for year 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring (2)</td>
<td>Preliminary Exam (incl. required essay revisions)</td>
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<td>Discuss with adviser(s): Feedback from prelim exam, Progress on course requirements, professional goals; possible conference submission</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Fall (3)</td>
<td>Supplementary requirements from Preliminary Exam</td>
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<td>Spring (4)</td>
<td>Submit PhD outline of program (available in program office)</td>
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<td>Discuss with adviser(s): Suggested coursework, reading, Research and writing work plan</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Fall (5)</td>
<td>Discuss with adviser(s): Progress on course requirements, professional goals</td>
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<td>Meet with additional faculty for advice on research</td>
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<th>Semester</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fall (1)</td>
<td>Discuss with advisor(s): Interests and professional development, Course planning to meet requirements, Research work plan, goals for year 1, Plans for completing MS (or equivalent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fall (3)</td>
<td>Qualifying Exam (QE) / Advancement to Candidacy: All required coursework completed; Masters's Degree filed or Equivalency Plan Approved Dissertation prospectus (10-15 pages), Plan B application for candidacy submitted (including identifying 3-member dissertation committee). Doctoral Completion Fellowship (admitted fall 2010 or later) if eligible</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall (5)</td>
<td>Meet with dissertation committee members</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall (7)</td>
<td>Meet with additional faculty for advice on research</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Fall (9)</td>
<td>Spring (8) Dissertation Proposal Review (w/in 3 mos of QE): Dissertation proposal (max 30 dbl-spc pages), Proposal review meeting</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Spring (10)</td>
<td>Complete dissertation</td>
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Use this checklist if you entered the program without a master’s degree in your mathematics, science or engineering discipline:
Discuss with advisor(s): Progress on research, reading/writing, personal goals, identify candidates for 4-member QE committee (incl. one outside SESAME) Use form available in program office

Spring (8)
Qualifying Exam (QE) / Advancement to Candidacy: All required coursework completed; Master's Degree filed or Equivalency Plan approved, Dissertation prospectus (10-15 pages) or Description of proposed dissertation research, Plan B application for candidacy submitted (incl. identifying minimum 3-member dissertation committee)

Doctoral Completion Fellowship if eligible

Discuss with advisor(s): Results of QE and revisions for dissertation proposal

Fall (9)
Dissertation Proposal Review (w/in 3 mos of QE): Dissertation proposal (max 30 dbl-spaced pages), Proposal review meeting

Spring (10)
Discuss with advisor(s): Plans for completing dissertation, Progress on professional goals

Fall (11)
Meet with committee members

Spring (12)
Complete and file dissertation

Time to Advancement
Curriculum
The SESAME program requires doctoral students to complete coursework in each of the following seven areas. These courses provide exposure to the major concerns and issues of this field of study. Students, in consultation with their adviser(s), choose from the list of approved courses under each category. Students who wish to substitute other courses to meet the requirements may petition the SESAME Executive Committee.

First Year Seminar
Two semesters during first year of enrollment:
SCMATHE 210 Practicum in Science and Math Education Research and Development

Colloquia
Four semesters in first two years of enrollment:
SCMATHE 292 Research Seminar and Colloquium

Individual & Social Cognition
Select two from following courses involving a cognitive science approach to thinking, learning or instruction:
EDUC 200H Cognitive Development: Neo Vygotskian Approaches
EDUC 221C Scientific Cognition: Development, Learning, and Instructional Design
EDUC 226 Constructive Epistemology
EDUC C229A Proseminar: Problem Solving and Understanding
EDUC 229D Discourse and Learning in Math and Science Classrooms
EDUC 229F Conceptual Change

Discipline
Select one of the following project-based courses on learning and instruction in a particular subject area (mathematics, computer science, or one of the physical sciences). In addition to extensive readings, the student must conduct, report on, and write up an empirical study (an experiment, clinical interviews, models of out-loud protocols, field work, etc.) germane to the course:
EDUC 224A Mathematical Thinking and Problem Solving
EDUC 224B Paradigmatic Didactical Mathematical Problematic Situations
EDUC 290C Special Topics Seminars: Cognition and Development (Scientific Thinking and Learning)
EDUC 295B Technology, Computing, and Data in Classrooms
SCMATHE 220C Instructional Design in Science and Mathematics Education

Methodology
Select three of the following, one chosen from Qualitative Methodology Group A, a second course chosen from Quantitative Methodology and a third methodology course chosen in consultation with your faculty adviser. Students may petition for a waiver or substitution of a course to meet this requirement:
Qualitative Methodology - Group A:
EDUC 228A Qualitative Methodology

Note: Students must take required courses for a letter grade. A student’s transcript is required to have a balance of courses with letter grades and satisfactory/unsatisfactory such that two-thirds of the course units have earned a letter grade.
Qualitative Methodology - Group B:
EDUC 293V Video-Analysis Seminar 1-3
EDUC 290C Special Topics Seminars: Cognition and Development 1-4

Quantitative Methodology
EDUC 293A Data Analysis in Education Research 5
& EDUC 293L and Educational Data Analysis Laboratory
EDUC 275B Data Analysis in Educational Research II 5
& EDUC 275L and Educational Data Analysis Laboratory II

Research Groups
All students are expected to be enrolled in one or more research groups each semester:
EDUC 223B Special Problems in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education 2-6

Total Units 61-79

Preliminary Examination
The preliminary exam occurs in the spring semester. The exam is based upon the preliminary examination reading list compiled by the executive committee. However, the exam is more than just a review of the required readings. Students are expected to be able to analyze and synthesize what they have read in order to take a position on the main issues in cognitive and educational research. The exam typically consists of a written essay component and a one-hour oral debriefing based upon the same questions answered on the written component. The exam is used as one source of information during the students' year-end evaluation. It provides the faculty with a common piece of work from each student and a basis upon which to judge if students have become socialized to the SESAME intellectual community.

Science and Mathematics Education
Expand all course descriptions [+ ] Collapse all course descriptions [-]
SCMATHE 210 Practicum in Science and Math Education Research and Development 1 - 4 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2020, Spring 2020
Practical experience on an educational research or development project on campus or elsewhere for 8-12 hours per week. Class meetings augment research experience with discussions of readings and interaction with guest speakers. Practicum in Science and Math Education Research and Development: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of fieldwork per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Science and Mathematics Education/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Practicum in Science and Math Education Research and Development: Read Less [-]

SCMATHE 220C Instructional Design in Science and Mathematics Education 3 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2021, Spring 2019, Spring 2017
Survey of literature on design of instruction in science and mathematics, including development of computer-based instruction. Includes consideration of evaluation methods and development of instruction modules for topics in science and mathematics.
Instructional Design in Science and Mathematics Education: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: 220B or consent of the instructor
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Science and Mathematics Education/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Instructional Design in Science and Mathematics Education: Read Less [-]

SCMATHE 292 Research Seminar and Colloquium 1 Unit
Terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2020, Spring 2020
Discussion of current education research carried on by students, faculty, and guest speakers. A written analysis of several presentations required.
Research Seminar and Colloquium: Read More [+]
Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2 hours of colloquium per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Science and Mathematics Education/Graduate
Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.
Research Seminar and Colloquium: Read Less [-]
SCMATHE 294 Formulation of Educational Research 1 - 3 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2020, Spring 2020
Development of thesis proposal under supervision of faculty member.
Formulation of Educational Research: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Science and Mathematics Education/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.

SCMATHE 295 Research 1 - 12 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2020, Spring 2020
Independent research activities under supervision of a faculty member.
Research: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Science and Mathematics Education/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.

SCMATHE 299 Individual Reading and Study 1 - 5 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2020, Spring 2020
Individual reading and study under the supervision of a faculty member.
Individual Reading and Study: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Science and Mathematics Education/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.

SCMATHE 602 Individual Study for Qualifying Examination 1 - 8 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2020, Spring 2020
Individual study, under the supervision of a faculty member, designed to prepare the student for Ph.D qualifying examination.
Individual Study for Qualifying Examination: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor
Credit Restrictions: Course does not satisfy unit or residence requirements.
Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Science and Mathematics Education/Graduate
examination preparation
Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.
Individual Study for Qualifying Examination: Read Less [-]