

# **Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Ecopsychology**

## **(by Dissertation)**

### **Akamai University**

*Oh, what a catastrophe, what a maiming of love when it was made personal, merely personal feeling. This is what is the matter with us: we are bleeding at the roots because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars. Love has become a grinning mockery because, poor blossom, we plucked it from its stem on the Tree of Life and expected it to keep on blooming in our civilized vase on the table.*

D. H. Lawrence

*A true to life 'Pandora-Na'vi' relationship-strengthening process;  
it helps our well being improve through sensory contact  
with nature's restorative balance and beauty.*

Michael J. Cohen

Applied Ecopsychology reverses our disconnectedness by utilizing proven medical procedures. For example, good medical thinking and research have created surgical techniques that reattach an amputated arm back to the body. If reconnected properly, the arm will, in time, function normally. Part of this art is the surgical technology our clear thinking has devised to bring the arm back in proper contact with the body. The remainder of the procedure is trusting that once this reconnection is made, nature itself has the wisdom to heal the rupture and rejoin the arm and body as one integrated organism. We don't know how to do that healing, however nature does it continuously via its natural attraction ecological processes at sub-atomic and global levels, for that is its way. Good medical thinking respects that nature has this extraordinary regenerative power. It taps into it. It surgically provides the proper environment and time for nature to heal, as only nature can. Applied Ecopsychology activities do the same thing with respect to our extremely nature-separated psyche and thinking process and the disorders they create.

As a field of inquiry, Applied Ecopsychology researches and initiates practical self-guiding methods and materials. These tools enable the prospective applied ecopsychologist to learn, use, and teach the nature-reconnecting process in the personal, professional and educational environments. This degree program offers vital information, expertise and support through mentorship, distance learning courses, interactive workshops, academic readings, Internet presentations, and independent study and projects.

Discover how our excessive separation from nature stresses our sentient inner nature and causes our most challenging problems. Learn to reverse this destructive process. Master thoughtful nature reconnecting activities that dissolve stress by satisfying our deepest natural loves, wants and spirit. This course teaches hands-on education, counseling and mental health skills that interlace our thoughts and feelings with the "higher power" wisdom of nature's creation process. Its unique natural attraction methods and materials let nature nurture self-esteem, friendships and responsibility. Applied Ecopsychology increases wellness and creativity and helps us build rewarding, sustainable relationships. Learn and teach this process to increase personal, social and environmental well-being.

Michael J. Cohen, Ph.D.  
Program Director  
Applied Ecopsychology

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**Program Audience**

Applied Ecopsychology participants have successfully applied nature-connected education and healing to a wide array of career fields, entrepreneurial and professional activities. While not an exhaustive list of fields from which our program has prepared successful practitioners, following will provide a perspective for the interested applicant for application of the program.

- Self-help, stress management, personal growth, motivational neuro-linguistic programming, creative writing, home schooling, hypnotherapy, aromatherapy, Reiki, energy medicine, and art therapy.
- Life coaching, personal coaching, success coaching, and relationship coaching, leadership skills, consulting, memory training, nutrition, men's and women's issues, and action assertiveness
- Teaching, mentoring and facilitating disorder and prevention remedies: eating, sleep, anxiety, post traumatic stress (PTSD), attention deficit, addiction, dependency, burnout, autism, self-confidence, mid-life crisis, and self-worth dysfunctions.
- Counseling: pastoral, therapy, recovery, family, marriage and spiritual counseling, massage therapy and biofeedback.
- Shamanism, spirituality retreat centers, self-esteem, Yoga, civil rights, therapist, retreat center training.
- Course instruction, workshop presentations, social work, conservation strategies, outdoor leadership, sociology, environmental education, and mental health.
- Meditation, complementary and alternative medicine, naturopathic medicine, parenting, relaxation, and intimacy.
- Founding or directing stress and healing programs, or creative writing courses for training or degree programs.
- Increasing training, administration, personal and professional benefits, improved conferences, progressive human services, independent contracting, child care, addressing global warming, retreats.

**Entry Requirements**

Akamai University provides an effective path to the doctorate for mid-career professionals who have completed Master's level study in their major field and considerable career experience at the higher levels of the profession. The primary objective of the program is to provide a means for qualified candidates to produce quality dissertations under the tutorial of a graduate committee of three qualified members of the Akamai faculty.

As prerequisites for acceptance to the "doctoral program by dissertation only" to be conducted by major research, participants should have completed the equivalent of a recognized graduate degree in an appropriate field of study and have several years of meaningful professional experience. Participants are expected to be proficient in English language skills or provide other assurances of effective guidance and language support throughout the program. Participants must have access to a computer, appropriate software, email and Internet, and academic library resources.

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**Degree Requirements**

Participants pursuing the doctorate degree by research shall complete a seven-phase process (equivalent to 52 credits above the Master's degree in traditional doctoral program) including three doctoral research tutorials, a comprehensive review, and a dissertation project. The doctoral research tutorials are intended to assure the participants have the skills and knowledge to examine the existing scholarly literature, design an effective advanced research study, carry out the project, analyze the data and present the findings in a publishable quality manuscript. The comprehensive review includes written and oral components that permit faculty to determine if the participant has sufficient preparation to proceed to the research phase of the program. The dissertation process includes preparation of a formal dissertation proposal, completion of the dissertation project, and preparation of the manuscript for review by the doctoral committee review. Participants then complete an oral review of dissertation as a conclusion of the degree process.

As a minimum degree requirement, doctoral participants must maintain enrollment at Akamai University for at least one and one-half calendar years. Although a maximum period of six years is allowed to complete the program, most doctoral participants are fully capable of finishing their programs within three years. No transfer credit shall be applied to this degree, as it is based upon a seven-step quality review process.

At each phase of the doctoral process, in order to progress to the next phase, written approval by the University doctoral committee is required. To remain in good standing, participants must demonstrate effective progress toward achieving quality standards at each phase. Upon successful completion of the process, participants are awarded the doctor of philosophy degree.

- Phase 1: Dissertation Tutorial I - Basic Research Methods
- Phase 2: Dissertation Tutorial II - Literature Review
- Phase 3: Dissertation Tutorial III - Research Presentation
- Phase 4: Doctoral Comprehensive Review
- Phase 5: Dissertation Proposal Process
- Phase 6: Conduct of Dissertation Project
- Phase 7: Oral Review of Dissertation

**Phase 1: Basic Research Methods**

The first tutorial instructs the participant in foundational theories, principles, and practices specific to the proposed dissertation research, thus clarifying the underlying principles and justifications that support the proposed concept for research.

As a minimum element of this tutorial, participants must complete a suitable course selected from the appropriate Center research offerings. Participants must pass a quality review examination conducted by the graduate committee, and if deemed essential, complete additional research methodology coursework to satisfy preparation requirements.

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**Phase 2: Literature Review**

This second research tutorial is designed to guide the participant in conducting a thorough and effective search of the scholarly literature in relation to a project of research. Participants examine the quality of existing scholarly literature in their field of research and participate in a quality review under the guidance of the doctoral committee.

**Phase 3: Research Presentation**

The third tutorial is intended to guide the participant in understanding the requirements for effective written argument, referencing and citations of the scholarly literature, and presentation of the findings from research and participate in a quality review under the guidance of the doctoral committee.

**Phase 4: Doctoral Comprehensive Review**

Upon satisfactory completion of the doctoral research tutorials, the participant will be authorized to schedule the comprehensive review. The senior member of the doctoral committee will direct the written and oral components of the review. The written portion is open book style with selected essay questions requesting creative responses that reach for the higher levels of understanding. Answers should be drawn from the scholarly literature as well as applications within the professional business environment. Proper referencing of the scholarly literature is expected. The oral component of the review shall be completed by conference between the participant and committee members and is intended to encourage an open discussion of the written essay responses.

**Phase 5: Dissertation Proposal Process**

During this phase of the process, participants prepare a formal proposal related to their concept for research. The proposal is completed under the direction of the doctoral committee and prepared according to published University guidelines, which shall be provided to the participant.

**Phase 6: Conduct of Dissertation Project**

Following approval of the dissertation proposal, participants will begin their research project. The dissertation may take the form of a traditional research project or it may be a major scholarly project of the type appropriate to the discipline. Whichever approach to the dissertation is chosen, the resulting project must demonstrate mastery of a body of knowledge in the field and represent a meaningful and original contribution to the betterment of the profession.

The dissertation project may be conducted by quantitative, qualitative, or participatory action research. The body of the dissertation manuscript should exceed 75 double spaced, typewritten pages and be structured according to a set of approved research and manuscript guidelines provide by the University. Dissertations that take the form of a scholarly project must follow the guidelines provided by the University for such projects.

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**Phase 7: Oral Review of Dissertation**

Once the participant has prepared the dissertation manuscript, the senior member of the doctoral committee will schedule the formal review process and act to conduct both the formal physical review of the manuscript and oral review of the dissertation project.

Following receipt of the research manuscript, it usually takes the three member doctoral committee four to six weeks to complete the physical review and prepare questions and commentary for later discussion. The oral review is carried out by personal conference and is designed to allow detailed investigation of the underlying review of the literature, the dissertation methodology, and the mechanics of the project, presentation of the findings, and conclusions and recommendations.

One outcome of the dissertation review process is a set of final expectations directing the participant through the remaining tasks for completing the dissertation manuscript. Once the final manuscript is approved, the participant will submit the formal document to an approved bindery and later arrange for the bound dissertation to be shipped to the University headquarters in Hawaii for permanent archival storage. Upon the participant's completion of the final tasks, and receipt of the needed records and documentation, the University will issue a letter of completion to the participant. It will then make preparation for issuance of the transcript of record and diploma certificate.

**Doctoral Research Committee Expectations**

Doctoral participants will progress through their programs under the advisement and mentorship of a three-member Doctoral Committee composed of qualified Akamai graduate faculty. The Committee is comprised of a primary, secondary and tertiary mentor, each with a assigned role in directing the doctoral process. Doctoral participants are expected to work in unity with the same doctoral committee members throughout the entire program. However, participants requiring a change in committee members must submit a formal petition to the University administration to request the change and such petitions must include a special fee. It must be understood that changing the composition of a doctoral committee may result in a readjustment of expectations, as the committee works to incorporate the ideas and advisement of the new committee member. This may also result in extending the completion date of the degree.

Formation of Dissertation Committee

Doctoral students have a Dissertation Committee of three qualified graduate faculty appointed to oversee and govern the student's program structure, progress of studies, comprehensive examinations and dissertation project

Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee

The responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee, under the leadership of the Committee Chair, are as follows:

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- Directing the preparation and approval of the student's plan for study, clarifying the timeline for study and the assignment of faculty to provide instruction and to assist with the functions of the Dissertation Committee.
- Providing direction regarding the student's foundational studies, core studies, specialization, and research preparation coursework.
- Providing leadership by integrating appropriate research preparation coursework or assignments within the plan for study, distributing the coursework to appropriate faculty for instruction and advisement.
- Providing leadership for the written and oral components of the student's comprehensive final examination, in unity with the other Committee members
- Providing oversight, direction, and mentorship during the conduct of the student's research project and manuscript preparation, in unity with the other Committee members
- Providing leadership for the physical and oral reviews of the research manuscript, in unity with the other Committee members.
- Assist the student in making formal changes in the plan study and timeline for completion, by written addendum, as needed to assure effective progress throughout the program of study.
- Providing final approval for the student's Dissertation and overall degree program and cooperate fully in building the appropriate archival records for the University.

Doctoral Committee Appointment Schedule

- The Committee Chair is appointed immediately following the Doctoral student's registration and continues in charge of the student's program until final completion is recorded at the school of record. While the secondary and tertiary members of the Dissertation Committee are identified and confirmed at the onset of the program, and listed in the plan of study, they become active later, just prior to the activities for which they are asked to participate.
- In lieu of the Dissertation Committee Chair being appointed at the onset of the program, when appropriate, a primary faculty advisor will be appointed, in lieu of the Dissertation Committee Chair, to guide the development of the Doctoral student's plan for study. Under this situation, the Chair will be appointed later, one month prior to the commencing of the written component of the Doctoral student's Final Comprehensive Examination and shall continue with governance of the student's program until final completion is recorded at the University.
- The Secondary Committee Member becomes active one month prior to the commencing of the written component of the Doctoral student's Final Comprehensive Examination and continues with the student's program until final completion is recorded at the University.
- The Tertiary Committee member becomes active one month prior to the commencing of the dissertation proposal activities and continues with the student's program until final completion is recorded at the University.

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Building the Student's Plan for Study

Immediately following registration, Doctoral students begin work with their assigned Committee Chair in structuring their formal plan for study. The process determines and formalizes the elements of the student's Doctoral program and the timeline for completion. The plan for study includes the following essential elements:

- The designation of the degree major for the Study Plan
- The identification of the school contacts and contact information for the schools participating in the delivery of the Doctoral program.
- Identification of the required array of coursework for each element of the program.
- Identification of the secondary and tertiary members of the Dissertation Committee.
- Appointment and notification of the course module instructors
- Acceptance of transfer courses for the student's program.
- The timeline for completion of the degree program.

At times, these activities require active participation in program planning by the student and may take considerable time to complete the dialogue and exchange of information. Students are strongly advised to discuss in detail the elements in the plan for study including the coursework, the examinations, and elements of research including the manuscript guidelines.

Once all of the decisions have been made concerning the plan for study, the student and Committee Chair sign the formal document. Copies of the document are sent to the University headquarters for entry to the permanent student record. The plan for study is then distributed to the participating schools and becomes the document that determines effective progress toward the degree. When the expectations laid out in the plan for study have been successfully accomplished, the student is recommended for the degree by the Committee Chair. Students are alerted that the University can make no commitment to inclusion of course modules and assignment of instructors to a student program until after the plan for study has been fully processed and approved.