



Department of Education Policy and Leadership:
[FAQs for the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership \(Principal Certification Program\)](#)

Why study educational leadership?

There is a significant body of research that underscores the critical role of the principal in creating effective schools. The principal is responsible for creating the environment which encourages teachers, students, families, and community to work together to achieve the vision of the school.

What will I learn in SMU's program? What is the basis for the curriculum?

Through study and research in the three core areas of organizational leadership, academic leadership, and teacher effectiveness, graduates of the program will be well prepared to:

- Develop and support effective educators;
- Select and implement effective curricula and instructional programs; and
- Identify, implement, and sustain effective organizational practices.

There are many educational leadership programs offered in the area. Are there any unique features of SMU's program?

- Comprehensive Academic Leadership component: A series of 5 courses focused on the core domains of instruction (i.e., mathematics, literacy, science, social studies and world languages) as well as special programs such as fine arts and Special Education.
- Field-based projects (internship experiences) integrated throughout the program and completed on each student's campus of employment, so that all learning is immediately applied.
- Projects that mirror the cycle of a typical school year.
- Quarter system enabling students to complete the M.Ed. program in 13 months as part of a cohort.
- A focus on ensuring that all graduates have the knowledge and skills to evaluate the effectiveness of their leadership on the schools in which they serve

Can I earn certification as a principal?

Yes, this program is designed in accordance with competencies required for Texas certification as a principal. It is consistent with national standards and empirical evidence on effective school leadership knowledge and skills. In addition to the required courses, candidates must also pass the TExES certification exam in order to be recommended for certification. The certification is valid for PK-12 principal positions in any type of school (public, private, charters, urban, suburban, rural.)

What if I want to be in a leadership role but don't want to be a principal?

Other career options available to candidates completing this degree and certification include school leadership positions at the campus level or district level in areas such as curriculum and instruction, staff development, and human resources.

Is this program only for public school teachers?

No, it is open to teachers or other professional educators from a variety of school settings. The Master's Degree in Educational Leadership is designed to prepare educators for leadership positions in pre-K through grade-12 public, charter, private secular, and religious schools. The program is intense and rigorous; therefore, it is intended for educators who demonstrate a high level of commitment, initiative, and focus in addition to the leadership traits and dispositions identified in state and national standards.

Who is on the faculty?

Our permanent faculty is comprised of distinguished leaders and scholars with a broad base of expertise and practical experience and a strong personal commitment to excellent teaching.

Are courses scheduled so that full-time teachers can take them without missing school?

Yes! Students begin the program in the summer as part of a cohort, taking courses in a prescribed sequence through a summer workshop course in July, followed by two 7-week modules offered during the fall, two 7-week modules offered during the spring, and two 4-week modules offered during the summer. This year's schedule is on our website. Classes are taught on the main campus. Internship experiences are integrated throughout the program and are completed on each student's campus of employment. Students should plan for the possible need to take one or more personal days during the program in order to visit other schools as part of the field requirements. As previously mentioned, it is an intense program and requires careful planning in order to balance academic work, personal/family needs, and professional commitments.

Is there a thesis requirement? What about comprehensive exams at the end of the program?

In lieu of a thesis or comprehensive exams, this program requires a field-based project which integrates competencies from the three core strands of organizational leadership, academic leadership, and teacher effectiveness. The project is carried out throughout the program and tracked in an electronic portfolio. The project and the portfolio are finalized during the summer session at the end of the program.

What if I want to be in a leadership role at a community college or a university?

The M.Ed. program in Educational Leadership with a specialization in higher education is available in our department to serve educators at this level.

Is there a doctoral program?

The Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development offers a Ph.D. in Education with a focus on educational research. A specialization in educational leadership within this program is available. This is a full-time program.

What is the cost of the program? Is financial aid available?

The program offers reduced tuition which is approximately one-third of the regular rate. The 2011-2012 rate is \$487 per credit hour. There is an extra fee for parking. Financial aid is available. **Students interested in applying for financial aid should complete and submit the FAFSA, which can be done even before applying for program admission.** Information on completing the FAFSA is available at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. Information for applying for financial aid at SMU is available at http://smu.edu/financial_aid/. Students are responsible for paying for the initial summer workshop course, since eligibility for financial aid is effective for the fall semester. The approximate cost is \$500 plus parking.

How do I apply?

The application for admission is located on the program website. Detailed instructions and admission requirements are provided. **The application deadline is March 21, 2012.** Applications for financial aid are handled by the **Office of Financial Aid** once the FAFSA has been submitted and processed.

Can I transfer credits from another institution? Can I take courses as electives without being enrolled in the program?

Because this is such a unique program with an integrated curriculum, opportunities to transfer credits from other programs are very limited and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. At this time, only students who are accepted into this program and are enrolled in the program on a full-time basis may take courses.

Where can I get more information?

Check out our program website: <http://smu.edu/education/edleadership/EdLeaderMasters.asp>

If you have some specific questions after checking out the website, feel free to eMail: EdLeader@smu.edu. A faculty member will contact you to respond to your questions or to arrange a phone appointment or a meeting time for further discussion.