



Student Handbook 2011-2012
Master's Degree in Educational Leadership
Principal Certification Program
Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Southern Methodist University

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Welcome

Welcome to the M.Ed. program in Educational Leadership at Southern Methodist University. Our program offers many learning opportunities that support the growth and development of educators on the path to a career in school leadership. We believe that your experience in our program will positively influence your success as a professional educator and leader.

Sincerely,

Master's Degree Committee, Principal Certification Program

Department of Education Policy and Leadership

Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development

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About this Handbook

This handbook is a comprehensive guide to the policies, procedures, and requirements for obtaining a master's degree in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at SMU. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the handbook, as it contains information that will be of importance to you throughout your program. At the end of the handbook, you will find a form to sign indicating that you have read the information provided here. When you have read the handbook and printed and signed this form, please return the form to the Department of Education Policy and Leadership.

The information in this handbook is current as of August 2011. We will make every effort to provide you further details about program requirements; in addition, updates to the requirements will be posted on the appropriate programmatic website and in an updated version of the handbook on the department's website.

Although this handbook provides a complete guide to our program, as a graduate student at SMU you must also comply with the general policies and procedures of the university, as well as with those of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

Further information about graduate student policies and procedures is available online at <http://smu.edu/registrar> and <http://smu.edu/graduate>. It is your responsibility to review this information.

Feel free to contact us with questions about this handbook. To make suggestions for improvement, please call Jordan Morrison at 214-768-1715 or email her at jordanj@smu.edu.

The Department of Education Policy and Leadership

The Department of Education Policy and Leadership at Southern Methodist University offers a unique program through which students may obtain a master's degree: the Master of Education in Educational Leadership. This degree typically attracts practicing teachers who wish to become certified for the principalship, or private school teachers whose goal is to become a Head of School or Headmaster. A full-time doctoral program with a specialization in education policy and leadership is available and is intended for PK-12 and college educators.

The Master of Education in Educational Leadership is a research-based professional degree that involves students who are working to become exemplary practitioners and school leaders. The emphasis is on integrating research-based theory and practice. As accomplished professionals, graduates with these degrees are prepared to be leaders in diverse educational settings. The three foundational principles of the Master's Degree in Educational Leadership are to prepare educational leaders for positions in PK- 12 educational systems where they will:

1. Develop and support effective educators.
2. Select and implement effective curricula and instructional programs.
3. Identify, implement, and sustain effective organizational practices.

To this end, the program offers the following unique features:

- Comprehensive Academic Leadership component focused on the core domains of instruction (e.g., mathematics, literacy, science, social studies and world languages), as well as fine arts, physical education, career and technology education, and programs for special populations
- Field-based projects (internship experiences) integrated throughout the program;
- Input from other programs that provide related essential content (e.g., Cox School of Business, Dedman School of Law);
- Projects that mirror the cycle of a typical school year; and
- Quarter system enabling students to complete the M.Ed. program in one calendar year

IMPORTANT: As noted above, this is an intense program which is completed in a calendar year. In order to maximize the likelihood of success, candidates admitted to this program will need to place a high priority on effective time management in order to balance their academic responsibilities, work responsibilities, and family commitments. Success in this program will require regular attendance and active participation in class, timely completion of high-quality work (including preparation of assigned readings), demonstration of a high level of proficiency in internship tasks and projects, demonstration of the attitudes and dispositions identified in the standards for principal certification, and completion of the required examinations for graduation and for state certification. In addition, candidates should anticipate the possible need to take one or two days of personal leave each semester in order to visit other grade levels, programs, or school sites which will give the perspective needed for completion of field projects.

Course Structure: The program structure is unique among the Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development's graduate programs because participants enter the program as a cohort and progress through all courses in the program in a structured manner. Learning and working in a cohort builds on shared knowledge and experiences and develops a supportive peer group. The basic program consists of 45 hours of coursework (including 5 Field Studies courses which fulfill the internship requirement). The program is selective and intense, offering well-qualified and motivated individuals the opportunity to telescope Master's level courses and principal certification into one calendar year. The courses are taken as a cohort in the following prescribed sequence:

1) Fall Module A (7 weeks, four 2-credit courses, total of 8 credit hours)

EDU 6240 Legal and Ethical Aspects of Leadership
EDU 6241 Organizational Behavior
EDU 6242 Academic Leadership: Literacy and Language Arts
EDU 6243 Field studies 1

2) Fall Module B (7 weeks, four 2-credit courses, total of 8 credit hours)

EDU 6244 Organizational Leadership
EDU 6245 Leading Organizational Change
EDU 6246 Academic Leadership: Math and Science
EDU 6247 Field studies 2

3) Spring Module A (7 weeks, four 2-credit courses, total of 8 credit hours)

EDU 6250 Leader Coaching Development
EDU 6253 Personal and Professional Development
EDU 6254 Student Services
EDU 6251 Field studies 3

4) Spring Module B (7 weeks, four 2-credit courses, total of 8 credit hours)

EDU 6248 Academic Leadership: World Languages and Social Studies
EDU 6249 Academic Leadership: PE/Fine Arts/Career & Technology Education
EDU 6252 Academic Leadership: Special Populations
EDU 6255 Field studies 4

5) Summer Session 1 (5 weeks, two 3-credit courses, total of 6 credit hours)

EDU 6391 Collaborative Leadership
EDU 6392 Field Studies 5

6) Summer Session 2 (5 weeks, one 6-credit course and one 1-hr course, total of 7 credit hours)

EDU 6393 and EDU 6394 Portfolio Development
EDU 6140 Instructional Leadership Development Seminar

Course descriptions are available at www.smu.edu . Detailed syllabi for each course, including information on assessments, projects, and the state standards to which the course objectives are aligned, are provided by the respective professors at the beginning of each course. In addition to the assessments in each course, students take the TExES, which is a state-administered test required for principal certification. The TExES is taken near the end of the program (usually in June) since it assesses competencies from all of the courses.

Field Studies courses are taught by clinical faculty members who are highly-experienced practitioners with specialized training in clinical supervision, and who conduct site visits and facilitate the completion of the field-based projects in the Field Studies syllabi. As previously mentioned, candidates should anticipate the possible need to take one or two days of personal leave each semester in order to visit other grade levels, programs, or school sites which will give the perspective needed for completion of field projects.

Program Admission for Master's Degree

The requirements for the Master of Education in Educational Leadership program are as follows:

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and submission of official transcripts. Transcripts from countries outside the United States must be accompanied by official evaluations of the transcript by a U.S. evaluation agency recognized by SMU.
- A minimum undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). NOTE: Applicants whose GPAs fall slightly below 3.0 may request consideration for an exemption to this requirement by attaching a letter explaining why an exception should be made based on other qualifications (such as long-term experience, expertise in a related specialized field, other graduate degrees, or a satisfactory recent Graduate Record Examination score).
- A GRE score obtained within the past five years. The preferred score is 4.0 for the analytical writing test and a combined score of 1000 for the verbal and quantitative tests. Although the test is required, applicants not meeting the preferred score level may request consideration based on other qualifications, such as long-term experience, expertise in a related specialized field, or other graduate degrees.
- A minimum of 2 years of experience in a public, private, or charter school AND a valid Texas teaching certificate.
- Applicants from countries where the predominant language is not English are required to supply scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) administered by the Educational Testing Service. The minimum score for admission is 83 on the internet-based test.
- Demonstrate writing and reasoning skills through the submission of a two essays responding to the prompts in the application.
- Three letters of recommendations from principals or direct supervisors and evidence of a high degree of support from the school of employment. In particular, the applicant must submit a letter of support from the principal or an equivalent administrator, indicating support and willingness to mentor the applicant in school-

based field studies projects throughout the program and to participate in three-way conferences with the student and the SMU clinical professor at specified intervals.

- Completed application form and payment of a nonrefundable \$75 application fee.

Deadlines for Submission of Applications

Only complete applications will be reviewed by the Master's Degree Committee. Applications are accepted and reviewed according to the following schedule:

- Applications for the 2013 cohort will be reviewed beginning March 30, 2012. Applications received after March 30 will be held for the following cohort if space is no longer available.

Credit Requirements

Candidates must complete a minimum 45 semester credits at the 6000-level that have not been used to fulfill an undergraduate requirement. All courses toward a graduate degree must have been taken after the awarding of the baccalaureate degree and must have been registered for as graduate credit.

Transfer Credit

While applicants may request consideration for transfer of up to six hours of graduate credit, please be advised that this is a cohort program with a tightly structured and integrated design, and it is not likely that traditional 3-hour courses will be accepted for transfer. Requests for transfer credit will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students need to submit a transfer request as soon as they are accepted into the program in order to be considered. As stated in the graduate school guidelines in the graduate catalog, the time limit for the use of credit for a course toward the master's degree is six years. This time limit also includes any courses which are transferred into a program of study. However, as noted above, this degree program is tightly structured with competencies integrated throughout the courses. Therefore, it is unlikely that there will be opportunities for transfer credit.

Advising

Upon acceptance into the Master of Education program, students should participate in the required orientation. After the orientation has taken place, students may request an individual appointment with the appropriate adviser if there are special circumstances to discuss which were not addressed in the orientation or in the Student Handbook. To request an appointment, call Jordan Morrison at 214 768-1715.

Dropping Courses

If dropping a course becomes necessary, students are responsible for dropping their own courses. Discussion about dropping a course with an adviser or professor is not sufficient; the student must follow up and drop the course. If a student does not officially drop a course, the professor will assign an F to this student at the time final grades are due.

Unsatisfactory Course Grades

If a student makes a grade below C in any EDU graduate course, the student must retake that course and earn a B or better before enrolling in any other course. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required for continued enrollment.

Continuous Enrollment

Once admitted to this cohort program, students must maintain continuous enrollment in every course in all of the fall and spring modules and the summer session until the degree is conferred. If a situation occurs which makes it impossible for a student to enroll in all of the scheduled courses, or if it becomes necessary for a student to drop or repeat a course, the student would need to reapply to resume the degree program with the next cohort. In addition, every course includes a grading component in which professional comportment is assessed with a rubric. A candidate whose performance in this area creates significant concern with regard to the attitudes and dispositions required for the principalship may be referred to the Master's Degree Committee for possible removal from the program.

Statement of Student Responsibility

Students should ensure that all courses they take are courses that apply to their degree plans. Questions about specific courses or requests to modify or extend degree plans should be taken to program advisers.

Code of Conduct and Honor Code

Graduate students are held accountable for the University's Student Code of Conduct (http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_03_Conduct_Code.asp) and for the University's Honor Code (http://smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp), especially Article III, section 1:

SECTION 1: FACULTY DISPOSITION OF A SUSPECTED HONOR VIOLATION A faculty member who suspects that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty may take either or both of the following courses of action:

(a) Determine to handle the situation privately with the student, in which case these procedures should be followed:

(i) the faculty member shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and, after discussing it with him or her, determine whether or not the student is responsible for a violation of the Honor Code;

(ii) the faculty member shall inform the student of the sanctions for a determination of responsibility, which may be as severe as a failing grade in the course;

(iii) the faculty member shall determine whether to notify the ACSSEHD Honors Council. Faculty members should use this reporting mechanism, as it serves two purposes: first, it enables the University to track the number and severity of Honor Code violations; second, it preserves a record of a particular student's violation of the Honor Code in the event the student is charged with other alleged violations in the future.

(b) Determine that the matter should be referred to the ACSSEHD Honors Council, in which case the charge must be filed and received by the Council within 22 class days from the date of discovery of the alleged violation. The ACSSEHD Honors Council includes representatives of the faculty and graduate students from the Simmons School.

Official University Communication

SMU email is the official mode of communication for the University. Students are required to check it regularly for messages from the Department of Educational Leadership, different departments of the University, and professors.

Tuition bills are no longer sent through the mail. Students can view and pay tuition through ACCESS.

Financial Aid

The tuition for master's education coursework is significantly reduced from the standard university tuition as part of SMU's commitment to graduate education for teachers.

Students who are admitted to a degree program and who enroll for a minimum of 6 hours in any one term may be eligible to apply for federal financial aid. All inquiries about financial aid are handled by the SMU Office of Financial Aid. All students interested in financial aid need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This can be done electronically at www.fafsa.ed.gov even before the application for admission has been submitted. It is extremely important that this be done as early as possible. Please contact the SMU Office of Financial Aid for more information (214-768-3417). Eligible students may apply for partial scholarships which are merit-based. Details are available on the program website. However, students applying for a merit scholarship should still pursue the regular process for applying for financial aid at the university level.

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students

Southern Methodist University admits students without discrimination based on race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, alienage, or citizenship to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the University.

Additional Requirements

1. Use of APA Formatting

Students must master the use of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual (2009, 6th edition) for all academic papers.

2. Final Portfolio

In lieu of a final comprehensive exam, the Master of Education Final Portfolio will be created throughout the year and will be completed in the student's final summer session of graduate work. (This is in addition to the state exam which is required for principal certification.) Further details about the Final Portfolio will be provided by instructors.

Graduation and Certification

Although courses and exams will be completed in time for August graduation, you must file for August graduation in June. Formal commencement will occur in December should you wish to attend the ceremony. However, upon completion of all courses and exams (including the TExES, which is required for certification), and compliance with all SBEC procedures (such as fees and fingerprinting requirements),

the Department of Education Policy and Leadership will be able to recommend you to SBEC for certification and to issue a letter stating that you have completed the requirements for the degree and for principal certification. This letter will serve as notification to school districts until your official certificate arrives and your degree is posted on your transcript.

Many states offer reciprocity for out-of-state certificates. Some states will issue a one-year certificate, with the requirement that the exam for their particular state be taken within that year. You will be able to determine this by contacting the state education agency for the states where you might be considering employment.

Signature Form

I have read this handbook carefully and understand the requirements for a master's degree in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at SMU. I understand my rights and responsibilities as a master's degree student and will seek additional information from the appropriate sources if I have questions or concerns.

Name (printed) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Please print this page and return a signed copy to Jordan Morrison, and retain a copy for your records.