

Aspiring Leaders Program

This documents contains frequently asked questions related to eligibility requirements, admissions process, and Teaching Trust Program Participant and Loan Agreement.

Eligibility Requirements

What is required for me to be eligible for this program?

- 2 years of teaching experience completed by June 2019
- Strong desire to step into a school leadership role in Dallas-Fort Worth
- Commitment to working in a partner district or charter
- Alignment with the program's core values of educational equity, disciplined action, courage & resilience, entrepreneurial mindset, and reflection & growth
- Demonstrated capacity to lead adults
- Must meet [admission requirements](#)

Do I need classroom experience to apply?

Yes, applicants must possess a minimum of two years teaching experience as of June 2019.

Do I need a Texas teaching certificate to participate in the program?

While it is strongly recommended, it is not required. However, a Texas teacher certificate is required in order to be eligible to obtain the Texas probationary principal certificate. If you hold a teacher's certificate/credentials from another state, you are encouraged to have your credentials reviewed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) – visit https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Certification/Out-of-State_Certification/Out-of-State_Certified_Educators/.

Can I apply if I'm employed by a non-partner district or charter network?

We currently partner exclusively with Dallas ISD, Fort Worth ISD, Grand Prairie ISD, Irving ISD, Garland ISD, KIPP DFW and Uplift Education. If this is a program you are committed to pursuing, we encourage you to explore employment opportunities with the partners listed above prior to applying.

If I'm a part of the central administration team at a district or charter, how does this affect my eligibility?

You are eligible to apply if you possess a minimum of two-years teaching experience as of June 2019. Due to the nature of the residency experience during the second year of the program, you must commit to seeking a campus-based leadership role by the end of the first year of the program.

If I'm currently working in the private or nonprofit sector, how does this affect my eligibility?

Participation in the Aspiring Leaders Program is contingent upon employment within a partner district. As a result, we strongly encourage you to explore employment opportunities with our district and charter network partners prior to applying. You may apply if the district/charter leadership approves of your participation. In order to be accepted, you must have two years of previous classroom experience and be approved by the district/charter you intend to work for in the 2019-2020 school year.

Aspiring Leaders Program

Can I apply if I have an H1B visa?

An H1B visa is specific regarding the occupation its holder has been sponsored to possess. We have learned that H1B visa holders must remain in the position as listed in their work documents, and are unable to move into a different role (i.e. assistant principal or principal). At this time, we are unable to sponsor H1B working visas. Please reach out if your residency status changes in the future.

The application asks for a copy of my 2017-2018 Teacher Evaluation. What should I use?

If you were a teacher last year, include your summative evaluation:

- Dallas ISD: TEI Summative Scorecard
- Garland ISD: T-TESS Summative Evaluation
- Grand Prairie ISD: T-TESS Summative Evaluation
- Ft. Worth ISD: T-TESS Summative Evaluation
- Irving ISD: PDAS
- KIPP: End of Year Teacher Evaluation
- Uplift Education: Instructional End of Year Performance Review

If you were in a non-teacher role, include your prior year summative evaluation.

*If you have additional questions, please reach out to kmilligan@smu.edu.

Admissions Process

When are the application deadlines?

Priority Deadline: Friday, November 9, 2019 @ 11:59 PM CST

Final Deadline: Friday, February 15, 2019 @ 11:59 PM CST

What is the difference between the Priority Deadline and Final Deadline?

Priority Deadline candidates (November 9) have more time to complete admissions requirements (including completing the application, obtaining official transcripts, taking the GRE if applicable, etc.).

Final Deadline candidates (February 15) are on a tighter timeline and must be prepared to collect required documents and test scores. If you are a Final Deadline candidate, **please consider collecting the following items as soon as possible:**

- Official Undergraduate Transcript
- Texas Educator Certificate (e-copy)
- Official Teaching Service Records
- TOEFL Score (if applicable)

Can I save my application and return to it later?

Yes, you may return to your application through by clicking "Apply Now" on the main website (www.smu.edu/urbanleader) or directly at <https://gradadmission.smu.edu/apply/>.

Do I need to take the GRE?

Applicants who graduated from an accredited undergraduate program with a 2.5 GPA or higher are not required to submit GRE scores. Candidates with an undergraduate GPA below a 2.5 will be

Aspiring Leaders Program

required to submit their GRE scores when applying to SMU. We recommend that candidates who qualify to take the GRE register for it as soon as possible; they may wait to do so until after receiving confirmation that they have moved forward from the selection center. Official scores may take up to 15 days to arrive.

Do I need to take the GRE before submitting my application?

No. If you advance past the assessment center, and have an undergraduate GPA of below a 2.5, you will be required to take and submit your GRE scores by February 15 for Priority Deadline candidates and April 15 for Final Deadline candidates before a final admissions decision will be made. Official scores may take up to 15 days to arrive so please plan to register and take the exam in advance of these deadlines accordingly.

If I need to take the GRE, what is the minimum GRE score requirement?

In accordance with TEA guidelines, for those who have an undergraduate GPA of below a 2.5, SMU requires applicants to score a minimum 140 in Quantitative Reasoning, a minimum 143 in Verbal Reasoning, and a minimum 3.0 in Analytical Writing on the GRE. Please note that meeting the minimum requirement does not guarantee admission.

How soon can I expect to receive a response from after submitting my application?

If you applied for the Priority Deadline (November 9, 2018), you will be notified of your application status no later than November 21, 2018. If you applied for the Final Deadline (February 15, 2019), you will be notified of your application status no later than March 1, 2018. Candidates will be notified of their status regardless of if they are moving forward or not.

References

Who can be used as a reference?

- Reference #1 must be submitted by your current principal.
- Reference #2 can be submitted by either: 1) Someone who has worked with you in a professional capacity and who has knowledge of your current practice as an educator and your leadership experience, or 2) Your current supervisor, if that person is not currently your principal.

Note: If you have a special circumstance (e.g., you have been out of the classroom for 5 years, currently work at a non-profit or in the private sector, etc.) please reach out to kmilligan@smu.edu.

Should I submit a third reference?

No, a third reference is only required for current 2017 Teach For America corps members. We ask that their Manager of Teacher Leader Development submit an additional reference along with their principal and current supervisor/colleague.

How does my reference obtain the reference form?

Your listed references will receive an email through the application system when you list them as a reference. It is your responsibility to ensure each reference submits the form on your behalf no later

Aspiring Leaders Program

than the application deadline you applied for.

Selection

What does the selection process entail?

- **Phone Interview:** Some candidates may participate in a 30-minute phone interview.
- **Assessment Center:** An experiential process for assessors to best understand and identify if this is the right program for a candidate at this specific time. Candidates can anticipate engaging in various role plays, data activities, and conversations with multiple assessors.
- **Final Interview:** Some candidates may be contacted in order to follow up on conversations from the Assessment Center.
- **District or Charter Employer Review:** All candidates are subject to review and approval by their district/charter (employer). District/CMO partners may also be engaged at different points in the selection process, including participation in the assessment center.
- **Offer Extended:** Once the offer has been extended, selected candidates must complete the Program Commitment and Agreement form and submit the Loan Agreement Form, along with any other documents as required.

Acceptance

What happens after I have been selected?

Once the offer has been extended, selected candidates must complete the Program Commitment and Agreement form and submit the Teaching Trust Loan Agreement Form, along with any other documents as required. Also, a two-hour evening orientation sessions will take place in May.

When does Summer Intensive begin?

The program starts with an immersive experience called Summer Intensive, which is held on campus at SMU. Dates will be released in March 2019. We encourage all candidates to hold the month of June for Summer Intensive. As an example, the 2018 Summer Intensive dates were: Saturday, June 9th through Wednesday, June 27th. Classes are held Monday – Saturday from 8am to 5:30pm.

If I am not accepted, am I eligible to apply again?

Yes. Past candidates have not been accepted the first time, but implemented the feedback provided during the Assessment Center to develop themselves and were later admitted to the program. For many, it is not a question of “if” but “when.”

SMU - Tuition and Financial Aid

What is the cost of tuition?

For the cohort starting Summer 2019, the 2-year Master’s degree tuition is \$11,500 based on scholarships granted through SMU. Based on current published tuition rates for SMU, available [here](#), this program would normally cost over \$24,000.

Aspiring Leaders Program

Teaching Trust additionally covers significant costs of the program, including the residency and coaching supports.

What is the schedule of tuition payments?

Aspiring Leaders commence tuition payments in the fall semester of their first year. Tuition must be paid during the first two years of the program, when Aspiring Leaders are enrolled in SMU's Simmons School of Education.

The projected payment and number of course hours per semester are charted below. Amounts per term are subject to change based upon course hours in a given term; however, tuition will not exceed \$11,500 for the two year degree.

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>	<i>Tuition</i>
Summer 2019	7	\$0
Fall 2019	6	\$2,400
Spring 2020	5	\$2,000
Summer 2020	4	\$1,600
Fall 2020	8	\$3,100
Spring 2021	6	\$2,400
Total	36	\$11,500

Is financial aid available?

No additional financial aid application is required to receive the scholarships resulting in the two-year program tuition of \$11,500. Applicants may choose to submit a [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) to qualify for financial aid (e.g., loans). To be eligible for FAFSA, you must be a citizen or eligible noncitizen of the United States (e.g., U.S. Permanent Resident). Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov to start your application and enter SMU's Federal School Code: 003613.

Are payment plans available?

Yes. Anyone in need of a payment plan is encouraged to contact the Office of the University Bursar to explore options. For more information please visit: <https://www.smu.edu/EnrollmentServices/Bursar/Payments/PaymentPlanOptions>.

Three-Year Commitment

What is the Teaching Trust Program Participant and Loan Agreement?

We expect all Aspiring Leaders to commit to serving high-need DFW schools, in an instructional leadership capacity, for three years beginning at the start of the program. The Teaching Trust Program Participant and Loan Agreement document contains participation terms and conditions and is provided to applicants upon admittance to the program. All Aspiring Leaders must sign and submit the

Aspiring Leaders Program

document as a condition of acceptance into the program.

What happens if I exit the program early?

If you were to breach the Teaching Trust Program Participant and Loan Agreement, the program repayment would vary depending on the date in which the breach took place. The amount would range between \$10,000-\$15,000 and repayment would initiate immediately to Teaching Trust.

If you exit the program:

- in Year 1 the penalty associated is \$10,000.
- in Year 2, the penalty associated is \$15,000.
- in Year 3, the penalty associated is \$10,000.