

MASTER OF EDUCATION IN
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027



University of Houston-
Downtown

Department of Urban Education
One Main Street, Suite C440
Houston, Texas 77002-1001

Phone: 713-222-5349 • Fax: 713-223-7446

www.uhd.edu/edlead

UHD University of Houston
DOWNTOWN
Department of Urban Education
University of Houston-Downtown
1002 Commerce Street
Houston, Tx 77002

Future and Current Students:

Thank you for your interest in the Master of Education in Educational Leadership (MEDL) Program. We strive to provide you with the necessary skills that will prepare you to become an effective school leader within today's educational climate.

Our online courses emphasize quality interactions between the instructor and student and are tailored to the demands of today's busy professional educator and graduate student. The faculty of the MEDL program are professional educators who bring their public-school leadership experiences to the program. Our faculty have served as assistant principals, principals, supervisors, coordinators, and directors in various education settings. Their field-based understandings combined with active research agendas make for the best possible learning opportunities as students seek to become educational leaders who will make a difference in schools, school districts, and local communities.

Should you have programmatic questions regarding the MEDL program, please contact the appropriate graduate program contacts listed for assistance.

We appreciate your interest in the University of Houston-Downtown.

NOTE: This handbook is subject to change without prior notification and updates will be available in the Urban Education Department. This handbook does not constitute a catalog and does not carry catalog privileges.

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GRADUATE PROGRAM CONTACTS

<p>Mr. Fernando Lanza Assistant Director of Graduate Studies, College of Public Service. Office: C-420F Phone: 713-221-8635 Lanzaf@uhd.edu</p>	
<p>Bernardo Pohl, Ed.D. Assistant Chair of Graduate Studies Office: C-440K Phone: 713-221-5051 Email: pohl@uhd.edu</p>	
<p>Abdelnasser Hussein, Ph.D. Asst. Professor of Educational Leadership Master of Educational Leadership, Program Director Office: C-430H Phone: 713-221-9704 Email: husseina@uhd.edu</p>	<p>LaTreia Woodrard, Ed.D. Lecturer of Educational Leadership Office: C-430W Email: woodardl@uhd.edu</p>
<p>Department of Urban Education One Main Street, Suite C440 Houston, Texas 77002-1001 Phone: 713-222-5349 • Fax: 713-223-7446 http://www.uhd.edu/edlead</p>	

INTRODUCTION

This handbook reflects several policies that directly impact students enrolled in the Master of Education in Educational Leadership (MEDL) program. The handbook provides students enrolled in the MEDL program at UHD with guidance concerning the nature and progression of the program to aid in successful completion. Students are required to follow the policies and procedures herein. Changes to the handbook may occur at any time at the discretion of the program administration. This handbook is a supplement to the [UHD Graduate Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#) which provide additional information, resources, and policies for students at UHD.

DESCRIPTION

The Master of Educational Leadership degree (MEDL) is a 30-hour program designed to provide advanced professional knowledge in the areas most needed for leading diverse schools. Courses emphasizing leadership in the areas of educational equity, policy development, educational innovations, curriculum and instruction, and school improvement are required in the program. The MEDL at UHD is designed to prepare students for K-12 leadership roles at the school and district level ranging from school principal to other mid-management leadership positions requiring principal certification in Texas. The program will offer leadership coaching from UHD faculty to support the required, standards-based internships with principals currently and effectively serving in the role. The program will include assessment artifacts aligned to the new, performance-based, state principal exam. This will enable students to utilize program assessment expectations to successfully pass principal certification exams and unlock their career potential.

A cohort approach coupled with an online delivery format will be used so working teachers have built-in peer support as well as asynchronous learning engagement. Students will complete educational leadership courses online enhanced by virtual, synchronous interactive sessions as scheduled by the instructor.

REQUIRED COURSES

EDL 5310 Foundations of School Leadership (3)
EDL 5320 School, Family, & Community Engagement (3)
EDL 5330 School Law & Ethics (3)
EDL 5340 Educational Systems & Talent Management (3)
EDL 6350 Leading Teaching & Learning (3)
EDL 6370 Action Research for School Improvement I (3)
EDL 6375 Action Research for School Improvement II (3)
EDL 6380 Educational Leadership Internship I (3)
EDL 6360 School Culture & Communication (3)
EDL 6385 Educational Leadership Internship II (3)

In congruence with state principal certification requirements, students seeking principal certification through the MEDL degree will be provided the foundation for the skills and knowledge required to prepare for:

- *Principal as Instructional Leader (TExES 268) Certification Examination*

- *Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL 368)*

Certification Note:

No principal certifications will be granted through this program. For specific TEA requirements to become certified as a principal in the state of Texas, See the Texas Education Agency website: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/certification/additional-certifications/becoming-a-principal-or-superintendent-in-texas> for more information. For information on standards related to the certificate program, please see: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/sbecrules/tac/index.html>

CERTIFICATION

The Department of Urban Education (UE) Teacher Education and Certification programs are governed by regulations from the Texas State Legislature, the Texas State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). Any new rulings or changes made by any of these entities in interpreting the rulings on educator certification may supersede the requirements of a student’s existing certification plan (Urban Education (UE) Department Policy, 2001).

ADMISSION APPLICATION

All applicants submit admissions materials via UHD online graduate application., <https://connect.uhd.edu/portal/GRAD>, or to the Office of Graduate Admissions (GradAdmissions@uhd.edu). All students must meet the application deadlines in full in order to be considered and accepted for the following admissions cycle.

Office of Admissions—Graduate Admissions University of Houston-Downtown
 One Main Street, Suite 325-North Houston, Texas 77002-1001
 713-221-8093

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Master of Education in Educational Leadership	
	Fall
	July 31st
	Summer
(Only for students transitioning from Foundations of Educational Leadership to Master of Educational Leadership.)	
	May 25

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission Requirements
1. *Minimum GPA of 3.0 overall or in the last 60 hours of college courses
2. Graduate Records Exam (GRE) if undergraduate degree > 10 years old GRE waiver available for currently practicing Texas-certified teachers with at least 5 years of consecutive teaching experience. GRE waiver request form .
3. An official transcript which depicts an earned baccalaureate degree from an accredited university and any graduate credit earned. UHD graduates must request a transcript from the UHD Registrar's Office .
4. A state of Texas educator's certificate (for all candidates seeking principal certification)
5. Personal statement indicating that Educational Leadership is the area of interest and how educational and professional background will contribute to success in this program (700-word minimum).
6. Professional résumé.
7. Three professional letters of recommendation from professional colleagues, such as teachers, supervisors, and school principals.
8. Internship agreement letter from a building-level administrator.
9. Two years of creditable teaching experience needed before the end of the MEDL program or to be eligible to apply for a Principal Certificate in Texas.
10. If qualified, admissions interview with the Department of Urban Education
11. Applicants whose baccalaureate degree was conferred by a university whose native language is not English must demonstrate English proficiency by taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam. The following minimum scores are required: 24 for speaking, 22 for listening, 22 for reading, and 21 for writing on each of the subscales. A TOEFL waiver is granted for students who have earned a B or better in Composition I & II taken at a US college or university.
<i>*Applicants who do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement are encouraged to pursue the Foundations of Educational Leadership Certificate as an alternative pathway into the MEDL degree program. After completing the graduate certificate with a minimum GPA of 3.0, students can apply to transition into the MEDL program. To be considered, applicants must meet all MEDL admission requirements, hold a valid classroom teaching certificate, and obtain full endorsement from each MEDL program faculty.</i>

ADMISSION STATUS

Complete applications submitted by the deadline are reviewed by members of the Graduate Committee and Graduate Program Director for Urban Education. Qualified applicants will be invited to an online interview. Students will be notified of their acceptance or denial to the program by email following their interviews.

Note: All admission applications undergo a juried review process. Satisfying admissions requirements is not a guarantee of admission. Final admission decisions rest at the discretion of the Graduate Committee and Graduate Program Director.

Admitted students are encouraged to complete a FAFSA application and consult with the Financial Aid office about available forms of financial aid. An Orientation for new students is held each August prior to the start of the fall semester in order for students to meet faculty, receive important guidance, and connect with other members of their cohort.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students are strongly advised to follow the suggested course order as it appears on the degree plans. The offerings are on a planned rotation and organized so that the majority of students can complete their graduate degree within two years. The Assistant Director, Graduate Studies, College of Public Service will assist MEDL students in selecting courses and advise them on their progress and requirements. All MEDL students must attend the MEDL Orientation to receive a degree plan. After completing the first semester, MAT students should meet with the Graduate Advisor at least once per academic year to review degree progress. The Graduate Program Director will review graduate transfer hours and address prerequisites for the MEDL degree, as needed.

REGISTRATION & COURSE SCHEDULING

To register for courses, log-in to [myUHD2.0](#). Required course textbooks can be rented or purchased from the UHD [Bookstore](#). The courses are aligned in a specific order and are to be taken in that order. This sequence allows the student to build knowledge and comprehension with each course in preparation for the next course on the degree plan.

Fall I

EDL 5310 Foundations of School Leadership
EDL 5320 School, Family, & Community Engagement

Spring I

EDL 5330 School Law & Ethics
EDL 5340 Educational Systems & Talent Management

Summer I

EDL 6350 Leading Teaching & Learning
EDL 6370 Action Research for School Improvement I

Fall II

EDL 6375 Action Research for School Improvement II
EDL 6380 Educational Leadership Internship I

Spring II

EDL 6360 School Culture & Communication
EDL 6385 Educational Leadership Internship II

TIME LIMIT

The time limit for this degree is six years from the beginning of the first semester in which credit was earned toward the degree. The degree plan for all programs is organized to support completion with or without certification within two years from the starting semester, under the condition that students enroll in the suggested courses for each semester.

TRANSFER CREDITS

No more than six hours of equivalent graduate coursework may be transferred from other accredited universities. **A minimum grade of B is required** in any completed courses that students wish to transfer. Petition for transfer credit is required to be submitted for review by the graduate student and approval comes from the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Committee's review of the course equivalency. Transfer credit is by permission only and is not a right of the student.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Minimum Grades

A graduate student who receives a grade of "C" in six semester hours (two courses) attempted at this university for graduate credit or for application toward the Master of Education in Educational Leadership degree, whether or not in repeated courses, will be placed on academic probation.

A graduate student who receives a grade of "C" in nine semester hours (three courses) attempted at this university for graduate credit or for application toward the Master of Education in Educational Leadership, whether or not in repeated courses, is ineligible for the Master of Education in Educational Leadership degree and will not be permitted to re-enroll for graduate study.

Students who receive a grade of one "D" or "F" in a graduate class will also become ineligible for a Master of Education in Educational Leadership degree and will not be permitted to re-enroll.

Students will be notified of their removal from the program once final grades are posted at the end of

the semester. If a student intends to contest a grade or complete additional work with the approval of the course instructor, he or she must provide written notice to the Graduate Program Director, as well as the Assistant Director, Graduate Studies and the course professor within two weeks of the semester's closing and posted grades.

3.0 GPA Rule

A minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade point average is required to graduate. In order to remain in good academic standing during your graduate course work, you must maintain a 3.0 grade point average. All credit hours attempted, whether in repeated courses, will be calculated in the GPA and used in determining academic standing. Grades earned at other institutions and transferred into your graduate degree program at UHD are not included in the calculation when determining whether you are in good academic standing.

- “A”—the grade earned for demonstrating *exceptional* scholarship.
- “B”—the grade earned for demonstrating *competent* scholarship.
- “C”—the grade earned for demonstrating *acceptable* scholarship.

Appeals

Students wishing to appeal a course grade must first attempt to reconcile any grading error that might have occurred with the course Instructor. If the student still wishes to appeal a course grade, they can do so by contacting the Department Chair. According to UHD policy, course grades can only be changed due to mistaken grade entry, miscalculation of grade, or misapplication of syllabus criteria.

Students wishing to appeal a dismissal decision must submit their appeal in writing to the Program Director. They must make a clear and convincing case that they have the ability and potential to be successful in graduate school. According to UHD policy [PS 03.B.07](#), an appeal of the Program Director's final decision must be submitted in writing to the Dean of the College of Public Service.

Incomplete Grade

An incomplete grade (“I”) is given only when an unforeseen emergency prevents a student from completing the course work and only with the instructor's approval. An incomplete grade will be changed to a passing grade if the missing work is completed satisfactorily within the long (Fall/Spring) semester immediately following the semester in which the grade of “I” was received. An incomplete grade that is not removed by this deadline becomes an “F.” A grade of “F” resulting from failure to complete the work required to remove a grade of “I” has the same effect as an “F.”

Stop Out and Re-Admittance into the Program

To stop out (sit out) for a semester of taking courses, you must fill out an MEDL Drop/Stop-Out Form found at <https://www.uhd.edu/academics/public-service/Pages/MAT-Drop-Stop-Out-Form.aspx> and also notify the Program Director and Assistant Director, Graduate Studies. Additionally, you must formally withdraw from your course work at the University of Houston–Downtown. Submission of the form or notifying your advisor will not drop you from your courses.

As you consider your return to complete the program, please remember this statement from the “Time Limit” section in this handbook: “The time limit for this degree is six years from the beginning of the first semester in which credit was earned toward the degree.”

When students wish to re-enter the program, they need to visit the UHD website and complete the Application for Re-Admission. This should be done well in advance of the beginning of the semester in which you would like to return. The application for Re-Admission should be sent to the University of Houston—Downtown Office of Admissions. The Graduate Program Director, along with the Graduate Committee, if necessary, will review your application and complete a Decision Sheet for Graduate Re-admission. Upon acceptance of your application for re-admittance, you would then register and pay for your semester courses.

Please make note that courses are on a set rotation of offerings, so be aware of how stopping out a semester may impact your ability to take classes that have prerequisites that were offered when you were not enrolled.

UNIVERSITY COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

1. Students may drop a course until the official day of record without having the course appear on their permanent record. That date, which is approximately 2 weeks after the start of the semester, appears on the University Academic Calendar. No course drops will be allowed after that point.
2. Withdrawal from a course with a grade of “W” is possible after the official day of record until the last day to withdraw from a course. That date, which is in approximately the 10th week of a semester, appears on the University Academic Calendar. The grade of “W” will appear on the student’s official record but will not be calculated in the GPA.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The academic honesty code is the university’s standard of honesty. The code states, “Students must be honest in all academic activities and must not tolerate dishonesty.” It is each student’s responsibility to read and understand the University of Houston-Downtown Academic Honesty Policy found in the Student Handbook, pp. 18 and 19.

2.1.1 Academic Honesty Code

The Academic Honesty Code is the University’s standard of honesty. The code states, “Students must be honest in all academic activities and must not tolerate dishonesty.”

2.1.3 Student Responsibility

Students are responsible for maintaining the academic integrity of the University by following the Academic Honesty Policy. Students are responsible for doing their own work and avoiding all forms of academic dishonesty. *Students are expected to do original work, including class assignments, etc. Students are expected to cite references for work used during any assignment.*

Should a student be suspected, or found to have violated the academic honesty code, he or she will be required to meet with the professor to complete a required form detailing the accusations. Students can contest these accusations in writing. All forms should be copied after signatures are received and placed in the student folder in the advising office, as well as submitted to the chair of the department and Graduate Program Director.

Penalties for violations of the policy include failure of the entire assignment, failure of the course, and/or referral to the department chair for consideration of additional action. The professor will make suggestions regarding the violations in their written form submission to the chair and Graduate Program Director. Students will be notified in writing as to their consequences because of their academic policy violation. Students should become familiar with example violations of this policy.

PROGRAM CODE OF ETHICS

The Department of Urban Education, the MEDL program, its faculty, and its candidates adhere to the State of Texas licensure laws and regulations. The program is responsible for ensuring that all candidates display ethical, professional, and personal behaviors that comply with these guidelines as aspiring school leaders. Program candidates must adhere to the Educators' Code of Ethics as found in 19 TAC §247.2 of the Texas Administrative Code. These standards cover:

- Professional ethical conduct, practices, and performance.
- Ethical conduct toward professional colleagues.
- Ethical conduct toward students.

All candidates must understand, acknowledge, and adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators while completing the coursework for the MEDL program. A copy of the standards is available upon request.

ACADEMIC MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Houston-Downtown complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UHD strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a documented disability requiring academic adjustments/auxiliary aids, please contact the Office of Disability Services, One Main St., Suite 409-South, Houston, TX 77002. (Office) 713-226-5227 (Website) www.uhd.edu/disability/ (Email) disabilityservices@uhd.edu . Students should complete this process as soon as possible to avoid any delays in receiving reasonable accommodations.

GRADUATION

One semester prior to anticipated graduation, students must visit the Registrar's Office website to complete the application for graduation. The student's file will be assessed by the Assistant Director, Graduate Studies and forwarded to the Program Director for approval. If students are not eligible to graduate, the application and corresponding fee must be re-submitted the following semester. Students may not graduate or walk for graduation with any Incompletes on their transcript.