



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Educational Leadership EdS Graduate Program Handbook

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*Last updated March 14, 2014*

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# Educational Leadership EdS

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Introduction

The Educational Specialist Degree (EdS) is an advanced professional degree designed specifically for individuals who have completed a master's degree in a field other than Educational Leadership and who wish to meet the requirements for Florida Level 1 Educational Leadership Certification while working toward a degree. The plan of study leading to the EdS degree consists of a minimum of 36 semester hours beyond the master's degree in a planned program (including a maximum of 9 transfer hours). Students who complete the EdS degree may apply for admission to the doctoral program, but have the same transfer restrictions so are advised to do this early in the program. Individuals may also be admitted to the doctoral program and receive an EdS in progress toward completion of the EdD.

## Writing Proficiency

It is expected that all advanced degree students in Educational Leadership are able to write clearly and substantively. To this end, all advanced degree students will be expected to complete a writing sample as evidence of their proficiency during the first semester after they are admitted to the Specialist program. If, upon analysis of the writing sample, it has been determined that improvement is required, the student should meet directly with his or her advisor and the Educational Leadership Program Coordinator to establish a writing improvement program and timelines.

Although it is the responsibility of students to acquire the skills and information necessary to demonstrate their writing competence, faculty shall also make an important contribution to the development of students' writing proficiency through careful and continued evaluation of written course work. Throughout an advanced program, student writing should provide evidence of proficiency in organization of thought, sentence structure, paragraph development, and thesis development. Appropriate use of transitions, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary and conventions of grammar are expected. Students are strongly encouraged to seek faculty responses to their writing. If students are unsure of their writing skills or have received an indication of writing problems from faculty, they should seek help from the University Writing Center (UWC).

Students are expected to have remediated any writing deficiency before they take examinations.

# Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program

## Timeline for Completion

### Educational Leadership Program Goals

The following broad goals assume a constructivist perspective to program development. These goals have been identified by program faculty as appropriate broad goals to be used in building upon and extending the prior knowledge and experiences of individuals already in professional roles in schools. These goals are supported throughout the literature and under gird the several sets of state and national standards and competencies which must be considered in the preparation of students and in program development. In particular, these goals are used in the development of programs that encourage students to (a) reflect on current practice of administrators, and (b) use research and research methods along with knowledge about issues to improve practice in schools and classrooms.

**Goal One:** To develop knowledge and understanding of the broad, systemic, and dynamic context of education (progressively advanced understanding at the Specialist and Doctoral levels).

**Goal Two:** To develop a conceptual understanding of and personal competency in basic interpersonal relations.

**Goal Three:** To develop an awareness of and responsibility for the development and maintenance of creative, effective, and logical systems.

**Goal Four:** To develop a skillful and continuing interpretation of the legal, political, societal, economic and cultural climates operating on and within the educational system.

**Goal Five:** To develop a self-awareness of individual strengths, weaknesses, and skills in relationship to potential alternative career roles for both master's and specialist degree students and fostering a professional commitment to the field of education and the practice of administration for students in the doctoral program.

**Goal Six:** To develop an appreciation for (entry-level students) and a continuing concern for (advanced students) the development, utilization, and knowledgeable dissemination of research in education and administration.  
Guide for Planning Advanced Degree Activities

The following statements suggest the usual sequence of the major activities required to complete advanced graduate degrees in Educational Leadership. It is recommended that students follow this sequence as they progress through the program.

- Develop the Plan of Study with the academic advisor. The plan should be developed early in the program, usually during the first or second semester of course work. This plan should be officially filed, through administrative channels, with the College of Community Innovation and Education Graduate Studies Office. Any subsequent changes in the plan are made on a waiver form.
- Complete all course work needed to successfully write the specialist examination.
- Notify advisor of your intent to write the specialist examination the semester prior to the examination, and complete the appropriate application by the stated deadlines.
- Pass Specialist Degree Examination.
- Complete Specialist Degree research report.

## Assignment of Academic Advisor

At the time of notification of acceptance, the student will be assigned to an academic advisor. The advisor is the key individual with whom the student will work and the departmental representative who will monitor all progress toward completion of degree requirements. If the student, for some particular reason, prefers a different advisor, the program coordinator should be contacted immediately after the initial appointment. Any requests for a change of advisor, after the student has worked with a given advisor, should be directed in writing to the program coordinator for consideration.

## Plan of Study

Upon admission, the student should initiate contact with the advisor to begin preparation of the Plan of Study. Once the student and advisor have worked through the tentative program, the student is responsible for submitting the typed program to the advisor. The completed Plan of Study form will be reviewed in the College of Community Innovation and Education Graduate Studies office and returned to the student, advisor, and appropriate program coordinator for signature. Approved Programs of Study will be placed in students' files in the Graduate Studies Office and retained there until students are admitted to candidacy.

## Changing a Plan of Study

Once a program has been filed, changes in the program may be required or desired. Anytime a substitution is made, a **Course Substitution** form must be filed. Courses may need to be substituted for a variety of reasons—courses not offered, new courses added to the curriculum which are more appropriate, or a change in the direction of research interest. In order to avoid the need for many Course Substitution Forms, it is permissible for students to indicate on the plan of study general categories rather than specific courses, e.g., English electives (6), Public Administration elective (3) EDA electives (9) or Outside the College Electives (6).

## Examination Requirements

### Comprehensive Examination

Student must pass all required examinations including one three-hour comprehensive examination in general educational leadership. Students in this EdS program take the Masters in Educational Leadership comprehensive examination.

The Comprehensive Examination is administered once each semester (spring, summer and fall. Failure on a comprehensive examination requires re-enrollment and re-examination during a subsequent semester. Students are required to be enrolled during the semester in which they take examinations to satisfy this requirement and must be enrolled in the term they plan to graduate. The schedule for examinations is published a year in advance. The examination provides the student and the advisor evidence of weaknesses and strengths in the student's work. From the evidence provided, program adjustments may be made.

### Eligibility for Examination

The Comprehensive Examination shall ordinarily be taken when students have completed required pertinent course work as shown on the plan of study. Students typically are expected to have completed all of the core courses required in the program and a minimum of 22 hours or 2/3 of the planned program. Students may, however, request permission to sit for the examination when they and their academic advisors have determined they have adequately prepared themselves. Students who have incomplete grades in pertinent course work

should not apply to take an examination. Students should submit to their advisor for approval by the application deadline, an Application for Comprehensive Examination, this can be found in the College of Community Innovation and Education Student Services office, or on their webpage at: [ccie.ucf.edu/academics/student-affairs/forms/](http://ccie.ucf.edu/academics/student-affairs/forms/).

## **Dates of Examination**

The dates of the examination will be established one year in advance by the College of Community Innovation and Education Student Services office. Due to occasional conflicts with FELE test dates, an alternate examination date may be arranged with the student's advisor and/or the program coordinator. Students should verify anticipated test dates at the beginning of the term in which they expect to complete the exam. Examinations are ordinarily administered on Saturday, 9 am to 12 noon on dates designated each semester.

## **Preparation of Examination**

The program coordinator assumes responsibility in the preparation of the exam by soliciting exam questions and convening the faculty who will be involved in preparing and evaluating the examination. Examination questions will be solicited by the program coordinator from appropriate members of the faculty. Prior comprehensive examination questions are available on the department webpage for review.

## **Organization and Content of Examination**

The Comprehensive Examination is a three-hour examination usually administered to students on Saturday on a scheduled examination date. This examination poses questions for students that call on them to demonstrate their knowledge and ability to write in area(s) of their required Educational Leadership course work. This requires students to integrate learning from various courses.

## **Reading and Scoring the Examination**

Responses to each question on the comprehensive examination will be evaluated by a professor who is particularly knowledgeable in the area. Readers will be assigned by the program coordinator. Answers to examination questions will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Conceptual knowledge
- Factual knowledge
- Application
- Supportive Research
- Reasonability
- Communication skills (Written and Organization)

## **Grading the Examination**

The final decision as to the student's passing, passing on condition, or failing is reached in a faculty meeting attended by those persons involved in preparing and evaluating the examination. The student's advisor, after making independent evaluations and having knowledge of the experts' decision, shall recommend appropriate action by the faculty as to whether the student has passed or failed a particular question or the entire examination.

If the faculty determines that the student has attained a “Conditional Pass,” the student will be required to demonstrate competency in the area of deficiency. This could require completing additional written work or an oral examination or rewriting that portion of the examination within a prescribed time frame.

If the student is determined to have failed the examination, the entire examination will be rewritten no sooner than the next test administration. Students must be enrolled in a credit course during the semester in which they take the comprehensive examination.

## Graduate Research

### The College of Community Innovation and Education, Office of Research

The College of Community Innovation and Education, Office of Research is a support service for the College in the area of contracts and grants as well as non-funded research. The College of Community Innovation and Education faculty members are provided support in grantsmanship, faculty development, identifying funding sources, preparation of grant proposals and budgets, and submitting reports. The College of Community Innovation and Education, Office of Research provides guidance to faculty in the area of contracts and grants administration, and compliance.

### Institutes

Below is a list of various institutes the College of Community Innovation and Education supports. You may visit the following to obtain more detailed information.

- [Toni Jennings Exceptional Education Institute](#)
- [UCF Marriage and Family Research Institute](#)
- [Institute of Exercise Physiology and Wellness](#)
- [Program Evaluation and Educational Research Group \(PEER\)](#)

## Financial Support

### Graduate Financials

Students with qualifying assistantships or university-wide fellowships will receive financial packages that include an assistantship or fellowship stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance. Qualifying fellowships are accompanied by tuition waivers. Qualifying assistantships include single appointments of at least .50 FTE (20 hrs/week) or two appointments of at least .25 FTE (10 hrs/week). Tuition remission is in the form of either tuition waivers or tuition payments that cover in-state (resident) tuition. Non-resident students with financial packages are not charged out-of-state tuition or the non-resident financial aid fee.

For additional information about funding for graduate school, please visit the Student Finances section of the College of Graduate Studies student website at [graduate.ucf.edu/students/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/students/).

If you are interested in applying for loans or externally funded need-based awards, visit the Office of Student Financial Assistance website at [finaid.ucf.edu/](http://finaid.ucf.edu/) and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is available January 1 each year.

## Financial Support Requirements

Graduate students must meet certain requirements each term that they receive fellowships or assistantships. In brief, to receive and maintain these types of financial support packages, a student must:

- Maintain good academic standing
- Be enrolled full time

A more detailed description of the financial support requirements can be found in the Financial Information > Financial Support requirements of the current Graduate Catalog at [catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4](http://catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4).

## University Fellowships

Most university fellowships are reserved for incoming degree-seeking graduate students who plan to enroll full time. For a listing of merit-based fellowships that are offered through the UCF College of Graduate Studies, as well as a listing of various general graduate funding opportunities, see the Student Finances > Fellowships section of the College of Graduate Studies student website at [graduate.ucf.edu/students/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/students/).

## Graduate Presentation Fellowship

The College of Graduate Studies provides Graduate Presentation Fellowships for students to present their research or comparable creative activity at a professional meeting or conference. To review the award requirements and apply online, see [graduate.ucf.edu/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/) > Graduate Presentation Fellowship.

## Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantship appointments offer opportunities for students to engage in research, teaching, and other projects during their graduate study. These are paid appointments that promote the missions of the University. For eligibility, students must be accepted as a graduate student in a degree program and be enrolled full-time.

For more information concerning graduate assistantships, see the Financial Information > Graduate Assistantships section of the current Graduate Catalog at [catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4](http://catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4) or talk to the Graduate Program Director to learn about specific eligibility and application guidelines.

## Graduate Teaching

Graduate students may be appointed as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) to carry out responsibilities as classroom teachers (instructors of record), co-teachers or classroom assistants, graders, lab assistants, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction. Mandatory training requirements must be met for a student to be hired in the position of Graduate Teaching Associate, Assistant or Grader. The training, offered by UCF's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, covers course design, learning theories, ethics, and other topics relevant to preparing GTAs for their responsibilities. See [graduate.ucf.edu/students/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/students/) > Student Finances > GTA Information for training requirements and registration instructions.

Students who are non-native speakers of English and do not have a degree from a U.S. institution must pass the Versant test before they will be permitted to teach as Graduate Teaching Associates (position code 9183) or Graduate Teaching Assistants (position code 9184). The Versant test is not required for students who will be appointed as a Graduate Teaching Grader (position code 9187). Additional information including how to register for the test can be accessed through the [GTA Information](#) section of the College of Graduate Studies student website.

## GTA Performance Assessments

At the completion of each semester in which a student is employed as a GTA, the student's faculty GTA supervisor will meet with the student and complete the GTA Performance Assessment Form. These assessments are intended to facilitate and document the mentoring of graduate student teachers, promoting a review and discussion of the strengths and weaknesses in the student's performance in preparation for future employment.

## Vacation and Leave Expectations

Expectations concerning vacations, days off and leave vary greatly depending upon the assistantship type and the details of the individual circumstances. Please speak to your supervisor at the beginning of your appointment to clarify what these expectations are.

## International Students

For information about the types of employment available to international students, and the requirements and restrictions based on visa type, see the International Services Center's website: [global.ucf.edu/](http://global.ucf.edu/) > Students > Employment.

## Graduate Student Associations

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/). For individual department or graduate program organizations, please see program advisor.

For a listing of organizations for students in the education disciplines visit the [Clubs and Organizations webpage](#) on the [College of Community Innovation and Education website](#).

## Professional Development

### Instructor Training and Development

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. They offer several programs for the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UCF.

- **GTA Training** (mandatory for employment as a GTA)  
This training provides information and resources for students who will be instructors in a two-day workshop. The seminars cover a variety of topics, including course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic freedom. Those interested in additional training can also attend an optional training session that normally follows the mandatory training.
- **Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty Program**  
This certificate program (12-weeks) consists of group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors. Textbooks and materials are provided.

For more information: [fctl.ucf.edu/](http://fctl.ucf.edu/) > Events > GTA Programs or call 407-823-3544.

## Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit [graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/).

## Graduate Research Forum

The Graduate Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF's diverse colleges and disciplines. It is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information, contact [researchweek@ucf.edu](mailto:researchweek@ucf.edu).

## Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

**Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant** – This award is for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)

**Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching** – This award is for students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

**Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis** – It recognizes graduate students for excellence in the master's thesis. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field.

For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see the College of Graduate Studies website [graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/).

## Other

Students should take opportunities to present a poster or a topic of research at a conference. To obtain financial support to present at a conference (other than through your program) or to engage in comparable creative activity at a professional meeting, visit the Graduate Travel Fellowship section at [graduate.ucf.edu/fellowships/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/fellowships/).

For information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, see their website: [csgs.org/](http://csgs.org/) > Awards.

For grant-proposal writing resources: [uwc.cah.ucf.edu/](http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/).

For information regarding clinical experiences for students in the education discipline, visit the [Office of Clinical Experiences webpage](#) on the [College of Community Innovation and Education website](#).

## Job Search

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at [career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/).

For specific services or resources provided by the academic program, please contact the graduate program director or academic advisor.

## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

## Useful Links

- [Educational Leadership EdS](#)
- [College of Community Innovation and Education](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [College of Community Innovation and Education Office of Research](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

# Grad Faculty

**Asterisk** = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as vice chair

## **Alexander-Snow, Mia**

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