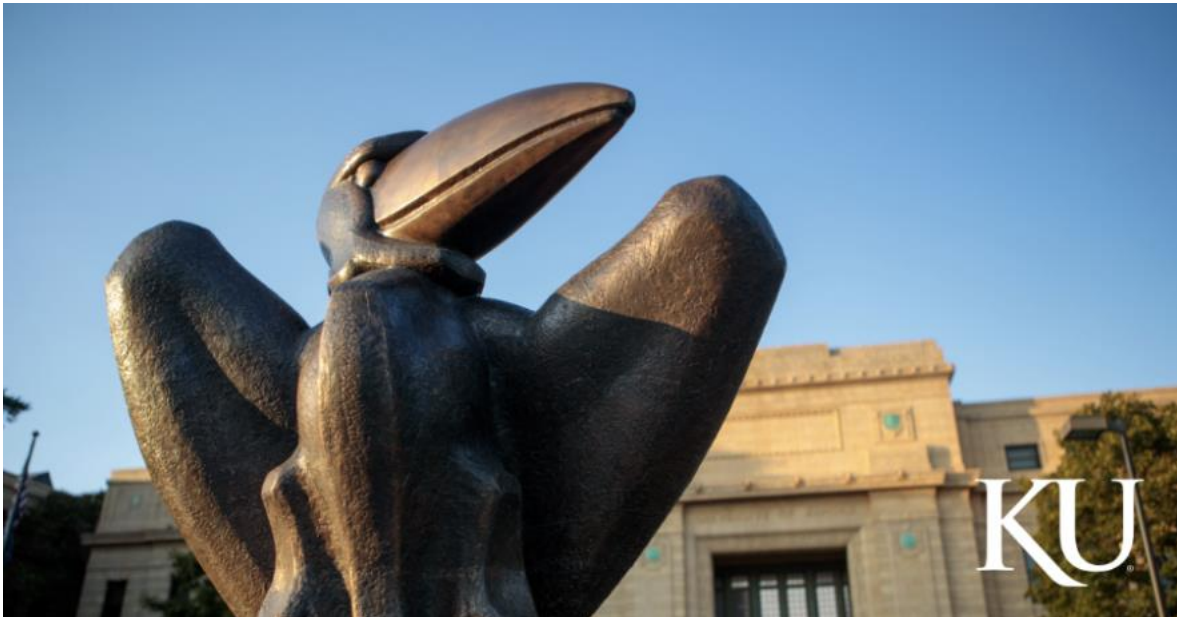


Online MSE in Educational Administration (PK-12)

Student Handbook



University of Kansas

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Website: [Online MSE in Educational Administration \(PK-12\)](#)

Note: Policies, procedures, and requirements change over time. This version of the handbook was updated and approved for Fall 2026.

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Program Faculty and Staff

Table 1 Program Faculty and Staff

Faculty/Staff Member	Position	Email	Phone
Erin Tarnowicz	Administrative Assistant ELPS Department	etarnowicz@ku.edu	785-864-0353
Allison Molina	Everspring Student Success Coordinator	allison.molina@ku.edu	785-727-1204 ext. 336
Dr. Lena Batt	Assistant Professor	lenabatt@ku.edu	785-864-5996
Dr. Jennifer Bessolo	Professor of Practice Program Director and Advisor	jbessolo@ku.edu	785-864-2095
Dr. Marcy Cassidy	Lecturer	marcy1@ku.edu	
Dr. Thomas DeLuca	Emeritus Associate Professor, Lecturer	tadeluca@ku.edu	785-864-4458
Dr. Dan Gruman	Lecturer	dangruman@ku.edu	
Dr. Brad Kempf	Lecturer	brad.kempf@ku.edu	
Dr. Michael Koonce	Lecturer	mkoonce@ku.edu	785-864-2097
Dr. Bryan Mann	Associate Professor	bryanmann@ku.edu	785-864-2097
Dr. Carrie Mugridge	Lecturer	cmugridge@ku.edu	
Dr. Joe Novak	Lecturer	joehawk58@ku.edu	
Dr. Diane Perbeck	Lecturer	dperbeck@ku.edu	
Dr. Dean Richards, IV	Assistant Teaching Professor, C&T Dept	d768r434@ku.edu	
Dr. Martin Stessman	Lecturer	mstessman@ku.edu	

Admission

In addition to meeting the requirements outlined in the [Admission to Graduate Study policy](#), applicants must:

- Have 3-5 years of teaching experience in a state-accredited school while holding a professional level teaching license.
- Submit completed [graduate application](#).

- Submit official transcripts of all degree-granting post-secondary institutions you have attended and an official transcript for each degree earned. Copies of official transcripts are acceptable for admissions purposes.
- Submit one letter of recommendation from a current supervisor.
- Submit a personal statement declaring your interest in the program and its relationship to your graduate course or study and/or career objectives.
- Submit a current resume or CV.

For international applicants, the following additional requirements apply:

- [Proof of English proficiency](#)
- English translation of transcripts
- In most cases, KU can evaluate international transcripts internally. In cases where Graduate Admissions cannot, the applicant will be asked to produce an external evaluation through a service such as WES.

The MSE program has Fall, Spring and Summer term start dates. Applications generally open in September with deadlines shortly before the term start; applications are reviewed on a rolling basis for these terms. Questions regarding the application process or application status should be directed to Erin Tarnowicz (etarnowicz@ku.edu).

Program Description and Objectives

MSE Program Learning Goals

The online Master's degree in Educational Administration (PK-12) at the University of Kansas School of Education and Human Sciences consists of 30 credit hours of coursework, including an extensive field-based practicum and a comprehensive interactive digital portfolio for licensure candidates, and a comprehensive exam for non-licensure candidates - all of which can be completed within two years. For licensure candidates, the Internship Gateway course opens halfway through the program after a student completes five courses. This allows the graduate students to start internship hours earlier than the final internship ELPS 895 course. While completing the remaining five courses for the master's program, students will meet with their mentor and faculty instructor to discuss the internship requirements as they finish their 175 hours of field internship experience and build a digital portfolio to complete the program.

This program fulfills the academic requirements necessary for Kansas state licensure at the school (building) level and is designed to accommodate working educators who currently hold initial teaching licensure and work in the classroom (or other positions such as instructional coach) in their schools. Depending on students' educational administration career aspirations they will develop a demonstrated understanding of content and skills that have been aligned with the National Educational Leadership Preparation building level standards, which can be found at <https://www.npbea.org/>.

Graduate students will learn from expert scholars and practitioners, as well as fellow classmates, who bring diverse leadership experiences to the principal preparation program at KU. The rigorous program

stresses fundamental knowledge and educational policy development necessary for effective leadership. Taught by a mix of full-time tenure track faculty members who are experts in their field and by practitioners who were leaders in their schools, graduate students enrolled in this program, can expect to:

- Extend their knowledge of pedagogy and leadership
- Enlarge their understanding of schooling & develop an appreciation of the political, economic and social forces that influence the decisions of educational leaders
- Share in-depth analyses and discussions of theory for application to real-world experiences in an online forum
- Build upon the skills and knowledge acquired in the previous terms with progressive sequence of coursework
- Develop and submit a digital portfolio during their final practicum experience to illustrate personal perspectives and experiences
- If seeking non-licensure, the candidate will complete a comprehensive exam during their final semester demonstrating their competencies in educational leadership

Learning Outcomes

Successful completers in the MSE program for educational administration will be able to:

- Collaboratively lead, design, and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.
- Understand and demonstrate the capacity to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate and enact professional norms.
- Develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture.
- Evaluate, develop, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, and assessment.
- Engage families, community, and school personnel in order to strengthen student learning, support school improvement, and advocate for the needs of their school and community.
- Improve management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems to develop and improve data-informed and equitable school resource plans and to apply laws, policies, and regulations.
- Build the school's professional capacity, engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture, and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning.

Concentrations – Building Leadership and Non-Licensure

There are two concentrations for this program:

The **online master's in educational administration building leadership concentration**, which includes an internship for students who intend to acquire a license as a principal or other building leader, either immediately following the program or at some point in the future. For licensure candidates, we require students to experience a field-based practicum and create a digital portfolio that serves as a progressive tool to apply for administrative positions.

The **online master's in educational administration non-licensure concentration** substitutes coursework for the internship requirement with the expectation that participants want to earn their Master's and gain knowledge about leadership but are not pursuing a license. For non-licensure candidates, we require a comprehensive exam.

General Information

Technology

Students are expected to have good internet connections and access to Microsoft Word products. All KU students may download Office 365 from KU at no cost.

Canvas is the KU approved learning management system and all courses will have Canvas shells. Students are able to make use of Canvas support. If you have issues or questions about Canvas, contact the Educational Technologists.

- Available Monday-Friday (8am-5pm)
 - itedtech@ku.edu
 - 785-864-2600
- [Report an issue in Canvas](#)

AI Policy

The following are general guidelines applicable to MSE students. Students should note that faculty members will vary in their approach. Students are encouraged to review individual faculty members' expectations. The general guidelines are:

1. Ask questions about course policies and make sure expectations around the use of generative AI in assignments and courses are clear.
2. Avoid use of generative AI in ways that conflict with course and University policies.
3. Disclose use of generative AI and in what ways AI was utilized.
4. The use of AI to generate papers or discussion posts is generally prohibited unless specified by the course instructor.

Additional Recommendations

- Students should learn to use generative AI responsibly and ethically. This includes understanding how large language models are created; how they generate output of text, code, and media; why the output must be scrutinized and its use evaluated through an ethical lens; how generative AI is being used in various disciplines; why there are times we should not use generative AI; and how generative AI should be cited when it is used.
- Students should be free to ask AI-related questions. They should be encouraged to ask instructors about AI-related policies, procedures, and use in their classes, and they should not be treated with suspicion when they do.
- Students must join in trust-building efforts with faculty.

Grievance Procedures

The Educational Leadership & Policies Studies Department follows the [School of Education and Human Sciences Grievance Procedure](#).

Note: This procedure does not apply to graduate students in matters related to their employment as teaching assistants. A separate grievance procedure outlined in the [Memorandum of Agreement](#) between the University of Kansas and the Board of Regents and the Kansas Association of Public Employees is available for that purpose.

Petitions

The program recognizes that, in limited circumstances, students may wish to request exceptions to program requirements or policies. Students may submit petitions to request consideration of such exceptions.

Petitions will be submitted to the program director and reviewed by program faculty within the department. Many petitions require both department and further administrative approval outside of the department such as committees or associate deans. Signature lines on these petitions will articulate if additional signatures are required outside of the immediate program faculty.

Advising

In this program, you will be assigned a Student Success Coordinator (SSC) upon admission to the program who will assist you with program planning, enrollment, and serve as a resource for questions, additional forms, and similar matters. Your Student Success Coordinator's contact is listed below:

Allison Molina
Student Success Coordinator
Phone: 785-727-1204 ext. 336
[Schedule a Call](#) | [LiveChat](#)
Email: allison.molina@ku.edu

You may also reach out to the following program contacts for questions and concerns. Dr. Jennifer Bessolo serves as the faculty advisor and program director

Dr. Jennifer Bessolo
Program Director
Phone: 785-864-2095
Email: jbessolo@ku.edu

Ms. Erin Tarnowicz
Administrative Assistant
Phone: 785-864-0353

Email: etarnowicz@ku.edu

Changing Advisors

If you have any concerns with your Student Success Coordinator or have additional academic advising needs, please reach out to the program director/faculty advisor for additional support and resources.

Regular and Timely Feedback

In the licensure-based MSE program, the culminating activity is a capstone project (digital portfolio) due at the end of the field experience internship. Students meet monthly with their internship instructor, who will continue to provide regular and timely feedback on their progress and culminating portfolio project. Students will also receive feedback from their clinical supervisor (principal or assistant principal in the field throughout this process. All students receive written feedback on this final project through a comprehensive evaluation rubric aligned with program standards. Students will also receive check-ins with their Student Success Coordinator each semester for program progress.

In the non-licensure MSE program, students do not complete an internship or digital portfolio. These students will take a written comprehensive exam at the end of the program as their capstone activity. Students will receive regular and timely feedback through coursework and semester check ins with their Student Success Coordinator regarding program progress.

Annual Student Progress Review

Students are contacted each year of the program by the Student Success Coordinator (often more frequently) to review their individual program plans and monitor their academic progress. In addition, program instructors assess students each semester through a disposition survey. If concerns are identified by faculty, the student is contacted by the program director and/or faculty advisor to discuss the concern and develop appropriate support strategies.

The Student Success Coordinator also meets monthly with the program faculty advisor/Program Director and communicates concerns or updates regarding students. Any concerns regarding academic performance, dispositions, or program progress are communicated to students in a timely manner to ensure they receive the support needed for success.

Enrollment

The typical full-time enrollment for a graduate student is 6 credit hours per semester (fall/spring) and 3 credit hours in the summer as laid out in the program course sequence guide. This is the path expected in order to complete the required course sequence in 2 years. It is the enrollment pattern required to receive financial aid. This program is designed for professional working graduate students with a full-time job. If you would like to make a special request to take additional hours, please reach out to Dr. Jennifer Bessolo at jbessolo@ku.edu.

For a variety of reasons, students occasionally wish to drop down to one course per semester for the entire program, or one semester. Additionally, the program faculty may have agreed to count a previously taken course toward the MSE program. No more than 3 prior courses may be counted and those must not have been used for a prior degree. Students in this situation will petition to have the total number of hours required for the program reduced. Any modification to the typical full-time enrollment pattern must be discussed and approved by the program director and the student's SSC. Modifications may affect eligibility for federal financial aid.

Course Enrollment Procedures

The University course enrollment process is completed entirely online. The schedule of courses for upcoming semesters is available on the Schedule of Classes website at <https://classes.ku.edu/>. All active students are notified by the University as the enrollment period approaches. Subsequent changes in enrollment are handled online through add/drop procedures, or with the use of paper forms after the first few weeks of the semester.

Students should be mindful of enrollment deadlines listed on the [Academic Calendar](#). Failure to enroll in at least one course before 12:00am on the first instructional day of the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters for full-term courses is considered enrolling late and students will be charged a [late enrollment fee](#). As such, it is important for students to be aware of issues such as enrollment holds that might inhibit or postpone enrollment.

If a student needs to make a change in enrollment that impacts their enrollment status (such as a Leave of Absence), they should speak to their advisor as well as review the [Considerations and Impacts of a Drop or Withdrawal](#). Enrollment may impact financial aid eligibility and enrollment in locations or courses outside the School of Education and Human Sciences may have a different tuition and fee cost.

Leaves of Absence

If a student does not wish to or is not able to enroll in courses for a given semester or year, the student must request a [leave of absence](#) using the [Leave of Absence Request form](#) found on the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs website. A leave of absence may be granted when circumstances temporarily prevent a student from continuing graduate study (e.g., cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military service), due to family responsibilities, or when a student wishes to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals. A student leave of absence is typically approved for up to one year, but extensions may be granted for extenuating circumstances. All requests for a leave of absence should be discussed and submitted to the program advisor. While the student is the one to request a leave of absence, a faculty member may be the one to reach out and suggest a leave of absence when the faculty member believes the student is not in a position to make satisfactory academic progress. The choice to take a leave of absence is ultimately made by the student. The program, however,

can opt to dismiss a student for failure to make progress if the student remains enrolled. It is the student's responsibility to make "satisfactory academic progress" when enrolled.

A leave of absence pauses the time limits set for the program to be completed. This means students are also unable to make progress and access the library, writing center, computer applications, and other KU-provided resources in addition to their advisor. It is understood that students on a leave of absence will not be making progress on their academic degree.

To request a leave of absence, please contact the program director at jbessolo@ku.edu with this request. From here, there is a form that is completed and reviewed.

Time Limits

The University sets time limits on enrollment for graduate students. Most master's degrees (excluding some professional terminal degrees) should be completed in two (2) years of full-time study. However, master's degree students are allowed seven (7) years for completion of all degree requirements. Additionally, the Graduate Division has the authority to grant a 1-year extension for compelling reasons, on recommendation of the department/committee. If more than 8 years are requested, the appropriate appeals body of the school considers petitions for further extensions. Students who require additional time to complete the degree must submit a petition for program time extension using the School of Education and Human Sciences [Petition for Time Extension form](#).

Good Academic Standing

Students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 (B) GPA in order to be in good academic standing. Students earning less than a 3.0 cumulative GPA will be placed on academic probation and will normally be given a semester to improve their GPA to a 3.0. Two continued semesters with a GPA below 3.0 may result in dismissal although in cases where improvement is noted, the student may be given an additional semester to raise their GPA. See University policy on probation and dismissal [here](#).

If seeking principal certification, it is recommended to check with your state department of education for GPA requirements for certification as this may be higher than the 3.0 GPA minimum that KU requires for this program.

Grading

The program uses the traditional SOEHS grading scheme: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, etc. We expect students to earn Bs and As in order to remain in good academic standing. Although grades of C+ and C will count for graduate credit, a course grade of C- will not. Any student who earns a C- in a course must repeat the course.

Table 2 Grading Scheme

Letter Grade	Percentage	GPA
A	93–100%	4.0
A–	90–92%	3.7
B+	87–89%	3.3
B	83–86%	3.0
B–	80–82%	2.7
C+	77–79%	2.3
C	73–76%	2.0
C–	70–72%	1.7
D+	67–69%	1.3
D	63–66%	1.0
D–	60–62%	0.7
F	0–59%	0.0

Incomplete Grades

Faculty *may* assign an 'I' (Incomplete) grade if students are unable to complete some portion of the assigned coursework because of a significant unanticipated illness, accident, work-related responsibility, family hardship, or verified learning disability. An Incomplete grade is not intended to provide additional time to complete course assignments or extra credit unless there is an indication that the specified circumstances prevented a student from completing course assignments on time.

Per SOEHS policy, all 'I' and 'WG' grades must be resolved prior to enrolling in the ELPS 895 Internship course, where the culminating portfolio is completed (if in the building leadership concentration).

Graduate Student Responsibilities

All graduate students are responsible for informing themselves of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs requirements and policies. Students should visit the [Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs website](#) for the most up-to-date requirements and policies. Graduate students are also expected to be familiar with the regulations and requirements of their Graduate Divisions and of their home academic departments and programs. Members of the Graduate Faculty and staff members in the Graduate Divisions are expected to be ready to answer questions and offer counsel.

It is each graduate student's responsibility to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to the graduate degree program the student is pursuing. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception be granted because students plead ignorance of, or contend that they were not informed of, requirements, regulations, procedures, and deadlines. Responsibility for following all policies and meeting all requirements and deadlines rests with the student.

Academic Integrity & Misconduct

The Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies expects students and faculty members to demonstrate academic integrity in conducting their coursework and research. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in our program. An instructor may, with due notice to the student, treat as unsatisfactory any student work that is a product of academic misconduct. Cases of academic misconduct may result in any or all of the following penalties: reduction of grade, admonition, warning, censure, transcript citation, suspension, or expulsion. The following information about Academic Misconduct is discussed in Article II, Section 6 of the rules and regulations of the University Senate. "Academic misconduct by a student shall include, but not be limited to, disruption of classes; threatening an instructor or fellow student in an academic setting; giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations or in the preparation of notebooks, themes, reports or other assignments; knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work; unauthorized changing of grades; unauthorized use of University approvals or forging of signatures; falsification of research results; plagiarizing of another's work; violation of regulations or ethical codes for the treatment of human and animal subjects; or otherwise acting dishonestly in research." Please know that inappropriate use of AI to generate course material that violates the course policy for AI use falls under the category of academic misconduct and academic integrity issues.

MSE Academic Program Information

The [University Academic Catalog](#) is the definitive source for requirements and regulations for every academic program; students are subject to the requirements in the catalog of the year they are admitted. The degree requirements listed in the Catalog have been approved by established University Governance procedures. Degree and program requirements and course descriptions are subject to change. This handbook serves as a supplement to provide further details on the requirements, policies, and procedures described in the Catalog.

Students should consult the university catalog and program advisor for the most up-to-date information regarding the required sequence of courses. An example sequence of courses is provided below.

MSE Course Requirements

The Master of Science in Education in Educational Administration program is designed to prepare experienced teachers for leadership roles at the building level. The program emphasizes fundamental knowledge in educational leadership and educational policy development essential for effective leadership. This program consists of 10 comprehensive graduate courses totaling 30 credit hours that provide experiences and opportunities for participants to extend their knowledge of instructional pedagogy and evaluation, engage in policy studies and applied leadership theories, promote professional and instructional leadership practices, and develop an appreciation of the political, economic, and social forces that influence the decisions of educational leaders.

Students in this program have the unique opportunity to learn through the use of Jayhawkville, a simulated school district that allows students to engage with school data, policies, and through leadership scenarios.

To complete this program, students will create a digital portfolio demonstrating their learning from their field experience internship. In the non-licensure program, students will complete a summative comprehensive exam at the end of the program.

Building Leadership Course List

The online master's in educational administration, Building Leadership Concentration, includes an internship for students who intend to acquire a license as a principal or other building leader, either immediately following the program or at some point in the future. For licensure candidates, we require our students experience a field-based practicum and digital portfolio that serves as a progressive tool to apply for administrative positions.

Fall and spring term courses last 8 weeks or one-half of the 16-week semester and are scheduled both halves of the semester. A typical fall schedule has a class scheduled Fall A (first 8 weeks) and another Fall B (second 8 weeks), for example. The summer term is also 8 weeks, and students enrolling in multiple classes take them concurrently.

A sample sequence of courses is listed below.

Table 3 Sample Course Sequence

Course #	Course Title	When
ELPS 750	Principalship	Fall A – Year 1
ELPS 853	Staff Evaluation and Development	Fall B – Year 1
ELPS 755	Human Resource Management	Spring A – Year 1
ELPS 752	Education Law	Spring B – Year 1
ELPS 756	Data-Driven Leadership	Summer 1
SPED 756	Special Education Leadership	Fall A – Year 2
ELPS 852	School Resource Management	Fall B – Year 2
EPSY 715	Understanding Research in Education	Spring A – Year 2
ELPS 757	Education in American Society	Spring B – Year 2
ELPS 895	Internship	Summer – Year 2

This represents the current schedule of courses effective Fall 2026. The order may change.

Field Experience

The field experience is a developmental experience for students in the Building Leadership concentration to put program standards to practice in a supervised building leadership experience under the guidance of a licensed principal or assistant principal. This internship requires 175 hours of service in identified areas that align with the National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards. The student will put a digital portfolio together that demonstrates their experience, hours, logs, and reflections completed.

Students participating in the field experience are required to attend at least one district-wide meeting of administrators and at least one board of education meeting of the district in which they are conducting their field experience. Since the building-level license is applicable to all school levels, some time must be spent observing operations in elementary, middle/junior high, and high school. A final requirement is that at least six hours of the field experience be spent in buildings at levels other than the main school where the major field experience occurs. These six hours represent a minimum requirement; at least three hours must be spent in each of the other two levels under the supervision of the principal or designated administrator of those schools.

In possible conjunction with the immediate above requirement or as a separate activity, it is a requirement that each student participating in the field experience spend at least 3-6 hours in a school that is significantly different (demographics, diversity, etc.) from the school in which the student is doing the field experience.

The 175-hour field experience is required as a component of Building Leadership concentration. If seeking building leadership certification outside of Kansas, please reference your state department of education to ensure all requirements can be met.

Non-Licensure Course List

The online master's in educational administration Non-Licensure Concentration* substitutes coursework for the internship requirement with the expectation that participants want to earn their Master's and gain knowledge about leadership, but are not pursuing a license. For non-licensure candidates, we require a comprehensive exam.

Table 4 Non-Licensure Program Course Sequence

Course #	Course Title	When
ELPS 750	Principalship	Fall A – Year 1
ELPS 853	Staff Evaluation and Development	Fall B – Year 1
ELPS 755	Human Resource Management	Spring A – Year 1
ELPS 752	Education Law	Spring B – Year 1
ELPS 756	Data-Driven Leadership	Summer 1
SPED 756	Special Education Leadership	Fall A – Year 2
ELPS 852	School Resource Management	Fall B – Year 2
EPSY 715	Understanding Research in Education	Spring A – Year 2
ELPS 757	Education in American Society	Spring B – Year 2
Elective		Summer – Year 2
Elective Choices		
C&T 801	Planning for School Improvement	
C&T 803	Differentiating Curriculum and Instruction	

SPED 854	Family and Interprofessional Collaboration in Special Education
SPED 856	Transition Education and Services from Childhood through Adulthood
SPED 857	Career Development for Youth
SPED 861	Blending Academics and Transition
SPED 863	Student Engagement in School and Community

This represents the current schedule of courses effective Fall 2026. The order may change.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included. Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

GENERAL POLICIES

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

Admission

Degree or non-degree seeking applicants must have a bachelor’s degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Admission to Graduate Study](#)

English Proficiency Requirements

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are multiple ways to prove English proficiency:

- Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.
- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via

the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to graduateadm@ku.edu for verification.

- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU [Applied English Center](#) (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.
- US Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' [Spoken English Competency page](#).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study](#)
- [Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, Kansas Board of Regents Policy](#)

Enrollment

For graduate students, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the department level. While individual units may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full-time (e.g. students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full-time enrollment it as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). *See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment;

- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a Competency-Based Education (CBE) program.

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s);
- Enrollment in 6 competencies for students in a CBE program.

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

Students not enrolled by 11:59pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must submit a [Permit to Re-Enroll](#) to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the department of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the "Withdraw from the University" option. Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current [Academic Calendar](#).**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on [Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript](#).

Your graduate program coordinator (or similar title) is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. In order to avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

Related Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

Graduate Credit (Including Transfer Credit)

The University's Graduate Credit [policy](#) defines KU's conditions for the following:

- Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course "counting" toward a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;
- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for Master's students;
- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate seeking student toward another graduate degree.

Transfer Credit

The transfer credit option allows master's students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper-level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours that can be counted toward a KU master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the Ph.D. In circumstances where students enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the Ph.D. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced hour degree master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced credit hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify. A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript.

Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below. In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS. Students must also provide

documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the Ph.D., reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Related Policies:

- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#) (on Reduced Hour Master's Degree)

Credit/No Credit

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC [online request](#) form. Elections and changes to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found on the current KU [Academic Calendar](#). Please keep in mind, short courses may have [alternate dates](#).

The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)

Probation & Dismissal

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making [satisfactory progress](#) toward completing their degree. The department initiates the probation

process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative [GPA](#) dropping below a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale). In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

Individual Schools/the College may set more stringent GPA requirements.

Students may also be placed on probation by their departments for other reasons that constituting a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis, dissertation, or capstone project
- Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams)
- Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)
- An unsatisfactory result in their department's annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the [Good Academic Standing policy](#) for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress.

Individual programs may also have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their department graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, and in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

Grading

The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs' (GPA) [Grading policy](#) governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in [Article II](#) of the University Senate Rules and

Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of GPA.

Students should also consult their advisor and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on course work counted toward any of the master's degrees at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Course work counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Related Policies:

- [University Senate Rules & Regulations](#)
- [Grading](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)

Time Limits

The University expects that master's degree should typically be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six-seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that individual schools/the College/degree programs may require Mentoring Agreements for students who are nearing their maximum time to degree.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams](#) (on exam expiration and recertification)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time to Degree Information](#)
- [KU CLAS Mentorship Agreement Template](#)
- [Univ. Michigan Rackham Graduate School Mentoring Plan Templates](#)
- [KU Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs IDP template](#)

Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a

temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework while remaining in good standing with the University and the department and while “stopping the clock” on their time to degree. When a student is on Leave of Absence status it is understood that they have temporarily suspended their graduate work and therefore will not make use of University resources, including faculty time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director of Graduate Studies and review their department’s internal petition procedures. Units or the Director of Graduate Study may request documentation to support the student’s need for a leave of absence.

In order for a Leave of Absence to be approved, the student must be withdrawn from all active and/or future enrollment. Withdrawal for the purposes of Leave of Absence is still subject to all Registrar deadlines, required forms, and applicable tuition and fees.

Students on Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the KU [Academic Calendar](#) for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If at any time plans change and a student wishes to return and enroll before leave was supposed to end, they may contact their department to be reactivated early.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Leaves of Absence](#)

[Required University Milestones](#)

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

- Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for Master's degree
- Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Exam
- Doctoral Final Exam/Dissertation Defense

*A final culminating effort is not required for departments with an approved coursework-only master’s degree option in the Academic Catalog (note that programs with a capstone are considered coursework only).

Before a student is allowed to complete any of these three exams, pre-approval from the school/College is required in advance of the exam date. This pre-approval request will be submitted on the student’s behalf by their department after the exam date has been scheduled. The school/College reviews the student record and verifies all University requirements have been fulfilled. The full list of these requirements may be found via the link in the heading above. Students should work with their departments well in advance of their planned exam date, to schedule their exams in a timely fashion and to ensure that all University policies relating to oral exams are being followed.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (Master's & Ph.D.)

In addition to all program requirements, students [planning to graduate](#) must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

GRADUATE & POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS' GRADUATION CHECKLISTS ([Master's](#) | [Doctoral](#))

These graduation checklists provide a comprehensive list of all University requirements for graduation and should be consulted by every graduating master's or doctoral student as soon as graduation is expected. Submission of the final draft of the thesis or dissertation is done electronically. Students must comply with all University requirements for [formatting](#) and [electronic submission](#) of the thesis or dissertation. There is no University requirement that students provide a bound or printed copy of the draft.

We strongly encourage students to submit an Application for Graduation as early as possible; ideally prior to the 20th day of classes of the semester they intend to graduate.

GRADUATE STUDIES FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs (GPA) offers funding opportunities in several different categories. Students interested in applying should direct inquiries to the department's Director of Graduate Studies or to GPA. Some of the available funding includes:

[Summer Research Scholarships](#): intended primarily for post-comp doctoral students.

[Graduate Student Travel Fund](#): intended for graduate students presenting a paper at a national or regional meeting of a learned or professional society. A student may receive an award (max \$750) only once per academic year, with priority given to students who have not received the fund previously. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

[Doctoral Student Research Fund](#): Designed to support KU doctoral students who need assistance to carry out research that advances progress toward the degree. Applications for this fund are accepted only for a limited time as funding is available. Students are eligible to receive one award from this fund during their doctoral career. Students should check the link above for additional information and restrictions.

Policies Regarding Freedom of Expression on Campus

Kansas State Law (HB2333) requires postsecondary educational institutions in Kansas to publish in their handbooks and orientation programs the institution's policies, regulations, or expectations of students regarding free expression on campus.

Per KU General Counsel, this includes the following two policies:

- [KU Public Assembly Policy](#)

- [Kansas Board of Regents Statement on Free Expression](#)

Note that the two policies listed above apply to ALL members of the campus community; they are not specific to graduate students.