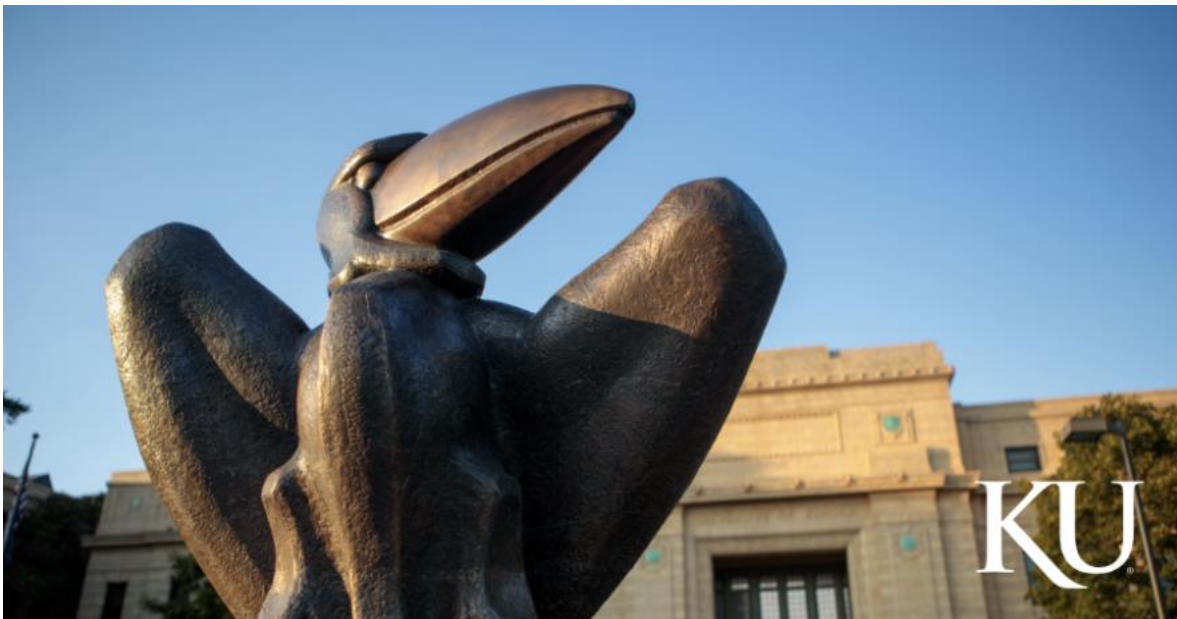


Online Graduate Certificate in District Leadership

Student Handbook



University of Kansas

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Website: [Online Graduate Certificate in District Leadership](#)

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
Denise Brubaker	Administrative Associate ELPS Department	brubaker@ku.edu	785-864-7973
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Dr. Jennifer Bessolo	Professor of Practice Program Director and Advisor	jbessolo@ku.edu	785-864-2095
Dr. Barbara Bichelmeyer	Professor		
Dr. Zak Foste	Associate Professor Department Chair	zfoste@ku.edu	785-864-6279
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Dr. Bryan Mann	Associate Professor	bryanmann@ku.edu	785-864-2097
Dr. Amanda Mollet	Associate Professor	amollet@ku.edu	785-864-1467
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Admission

The licensure-only route in the School of Education at KU is designed for individuals who have completed a master's and/or doctorate in educational administration/leadership and are now considering being licensed as a district level administrator. Upon successful completion of the program and successful passing of a required Kansas state district leadership licensure exam, students will be eligible to add the district leadership endorsement to their license. Completion of a graduate certificate is not a guarantee of licensure or endorsement of any kind. It is highly recommended that students pursuing this program from outside of Kansas seek guidance from the appropriate licensing agency before beginning an academic program to ensure they know what is needed to obtain the license/certification/registration in the state in which they intend to practice and/or seek licensure. Please see our [Licensure Disclosures](#) page for more information.

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

- Have a current teaching license with 3-5 years of experience in schools.
- Currently hold a master's or above degree from an accredited program in an educational administration/leadership.
- Submit completed [graduate application](#).
- Pay the application fee.
- 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. Recommendations are collected via the online application system, and references will receive an email link with instructions to complete a letter of recommendation and survey.
 - Applicants are welcome to submit additional letters of recommendation, but this is optional.
- Submit a personal statement showing a clear understanding of how the degree will fit into the applicant's career plan.
- 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 program begins in the summer semester. The application opens in early September with a deadline in May. Questions regarding the application process or application status should be directed to Denise Brubaker (brubaker@ku.edu).

Program Description and Objectives

Online Graduate Certificate in District Leadership Program Learning Goals

The District Leadership Graduate Certificate prepares building administrators for the next step in their careers: leadership at the district level. Students gain a deep understanding of educational policy, finance, ethics, and human resources while developing the skills to guide complex educational organizations.

The program includes 27 credit hours, including an extensive field-based practicum with mentorship and a comprehensive digital portfolio as a culminating project, which represents three-quarters of the coursework required for KU's Ed.D. in Educational Administration. Students can complete the certificate in as little as two years.

Faculty are experienced practitioners and leading scholars in district and building leadership. Classes meet once a week via live video conference, with additional asynchronous coursework that supports the schedules of full-time educators.

Learning Outcomes

Successful completers in the Online Graduate Certificate in District Leadership will be able to:

- understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and social-emotional well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary 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 change process, data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.
- understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and social-emotional well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and demonstrate the capacity to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate and enact professional norms.
- understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote and advocate for the social emotional well-being of each student and adult and promote the current and future success of each student and adult, by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture.
- understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by adapting and applying emerging the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, develop, and implement coherent instructional leadership including: leading change; curriculum; instruction; assessments; support systems; technology integration; and data systems throughout the district.
- understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and engage, communicate, and intentionally collaborate with families, communities, and other constituents in the work of schools and the district and to advocate for district, student, and community needs.
- understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by adapting and applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to lead change, 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.
- understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the present and future success and well-being of students and district personnel by adapting and applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to cultivate relationships; lead district transformation, collaborative

decision making, and governance; and, represent and advocate for district needs in broader policy conversations.

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](#)

Communicating with Students and Professors

The program uses a dedicated Canvas “course site” as a repository of program-related documents and as a vehicle for you to submit documents.

All students will be enrolled in a section of the Canvas Course specific to your cohort. It should appear on your Canvas dashboard as *EdD Educational Administration Cohort ____*.

We will also communicate with you via e-mail using your KU email address or the one that you have registered with KU. Please either check your KU email account regularly or have KU email forwarded to the email account you check frequently. (Tip: you might add KU.edu to your safe sender lists to be sure KU email is not blocked.). The program is not responsible for you not reading your email messages. Please check with KU IT support if you need help setting this up: 1-785-864-8080.

AI Policy

The following are general guidelines applicable to certificate 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.

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 certificate 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.

Students seeking to submit a petition should first consult with the Certificate Program Director to discuss the request and determine the appropriate petition process. This ensures that the student receives guidance on required documentation, applicable policies, and any additional steps needed for petitions that extend beyond the ELPS department. Some petitions relate to program-level requirements and may be reviewed and decided internally within the department. Other petitions involve School or University policies and therefore require additional review or approval by offices outside the department. When applicable, the program will advise students on the appropriate process and required approvals.

For petitions requiring School or University review, students will be directed to the appropriate office or provided with the most current form and submission instructions. To ensure accuracy and compliance with current policies, School and University forms are not reproduced in this handbook.

Course Expectations and Engagement

Success in this program depends on your active engagement and consistent preparation. As a doctoral student, you are expected to take responsibility for your learning and contribute meaningfully to the learning community.

Students are expected to:

- Carefully read and follow each course syllabus, including assignment requirements, grading criteria, and course policies.
- Submit all assignments on time and communicate proactively with faculty if challenges arise.
- Attend all synchronous class sessions, arrive on time, and remain engaged for the duration of the class.
- Come to class prepared, having completed assigned readings and coursework.
- Actively engage in asynchronous learning activities, including discussions, peer feedback, and other course requirements.
- Contribute thoughtfully to both synchronous and asynchronous interactions with faculty and peers.

Learning in this program is cumulative and collaborative. The quality of your experience is directly related to the level of effort, preparation, and engagement you bring to your coursework and interactions with others.

Expectations for Synchronous Class Sessions (Zoom/Teams)

To support a productive and respectful learning environment, the following expectations apply to all live class sessions:

- Check your sound and video before class begins.
- Mute your microphone when not speaking.
- Join class from a space that allows you to focus and participate fully.
- Do not attend class while driving.
- Be on time.
- Come prepared to engage with course material and discussion.
- Be visible during class so that faculty and peers can interact with you. If you have concerns about being visible, speak with your instructor in advance.
- Add a profile photo to your Zoom/Teams account so your presence is still visible when your camera is off.
- Use the chat function for class-related purposes (e.g., comments, questions, resource sharing), except for informal conversation at the beginning and end of class. Maintain a respectful and professional tone at all times.

Netiquette for Online Interactions

The following guidelines support respectful and productive engagement in an online learning environment:

- **Participate:** Active participation strengthens your own learning and contributes to the success of the class.
- **Be mindful of communication:** Use clear, respectful, and professional language. Avoid comments that may be perceived as offensive, dismissive, or culturally insensitive. Written communication lacks tone and body language—be intentional in how you express your ideas.
- **Respect privacy:** Do not share others' personal information without permission.
- **Stay on topic:** Contribute meaningfully to discussions and keep posts aligned with the purpose of the activity.
- **Maintain academic integrity:** Do not plagiarize.

- **Use credible sources:** When referencing information, cite reputable sources and provide appropriate attribution.
- **Keep an open mind:** Engage with differing perspectives respectfully. When disagreements arise, approach them constructively.
- **Follow KU policy:** In accordance with KU's electronic mail policy, students may not use course platforms to solicit, advertise, or communicate for personal financial gain.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

This course is designed to ensure regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty, as required for high-quality online learning.

During synchronous sessions, faculty will provide focused lectures, facilitate discussion of key concepts, guide collaborative engagement among students, and respond to questions about course material.

During asynchronous periods, faculty will provide structured learning activities, such as recorded lectures, discussion boards, peer review, and applied exercises. Faculty will monitor participation, provide feedback, and respond to student questions to support ongoing learning.

Advising

Program Advisor

The program director, Dr. Jennifer Bessolo, serves as the program advisor to students, assisting with enrollment, program plans, communication, concerns with classes, and support with program milestones such as the district field experience internship, or help with finding resources or program petitions for exceptions. The program advisor stays in constant communication with students throughout the program through Canvas, email, course contacts, and individually.

Advising Assignment

All students are assigned to the program director as their advisor throughout the program at the start of their program and will remain with the same contact throughout the time in the program.

Changing Advisors

Our program does not have multiple advisors working with graduate students in this capacity. If there are concerns or conflicts with present advising that cannot be resolved, the department chair can be contacted for further assistance or a request for an alternative advising arrangement.

Regular and Timely Feedback

Students will receive regular and timely feedback through coursework and through their multi-term district field experience internship. In the district field experience that occurs over the course of the program, students have benchmarked requirements to complete where the field experience supervisor (also serve as the Advisor and Program Director) provide monthly check-ins and face to face contact along with written feedback on progress and quality of work completed.

Annual Student Progress Review

At the end of the first year of the program, students will be administered a Self-Assessment Qualtrics Survey and will be contacted if they share any concerns about the program or personal struggles. Professors rate students each year with the Disposition survey and will be contacted with concerns. Students receive consistent support and feedback from dissertation advisors and the program director, including annual advisement for enrollment, milestone preparation, and performance.

Enrollment

The typical full-time enrollment for a graduate student is 6 credit hours per semester (fall/spring) and 6 credit hours in the summer as laid out in the program course sequence guide. It is the enrollment pattern required to receive financial aid.

For a variety of reasons, students occasionally wish to drop down to one course per semester for the entire program, or one semester. Any modification to the typical full-time enrollment pattern must be discussed and approved by the program director and the student's academic advisor. 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.

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](#).

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 give a student additional time to complete course assignments or extra credit unless there is indication that the specified circumstances prevented the student from completing course assignments on time.

Per SOEHS policy, all 'I' and 'WG' grades must be resolved prior to enrolling in the ELPS 995 Internship course, where the culminating portfolio is completed.

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 which 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.

Online Graduate Certificate in District Leadership 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.

Graduate Certificate Course Requirements

The online Graduate Certification in District Leadership at the University of Kansas School of Education and Human Sciences consists of 27 credit hours of coursework, including an extensive field-based practicum with mentorship and a comprehensive digital portfolio as a culminating project.

Course List

Courses are delivered online with class connections once a week throughout the semester. The program is designed specifically for working practitioners in the field, with rich projects, collaborative opportunities, and progressive assignments applicable to licensure and district leadership. All courses listed are worth 3 credits.

A list of the required coursework can be found below.

Table 3 Course Listing

Course #	Course Title
ELPS 951	Supervision of Instruction
ELPS 953	District Human Resource Management
ELPS 954	Sociology of Educational Organizations
ELPS 955	District Business Management
ELPS 956	District Leadership
ELPS 957	Educational Policy, Ethics and Law
ELPS 960	Political and Social Dimensions of Education

ELPS 995	Field Experience in:
C&T 903	Curriculum Supervision

This represents the current schedule of courses effective Fall 2026.

Field Experience

The field experience is a developmental experience for students to put program standards to practice in a supervised district leadership experience under the guidance of a licensed superintendent or assistant superintendent. This internship requires 150 hours service in seven 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. These identified areas the student will log experience in are as follows:

1. Leadership Area 1: Strategic Leadership and Board Relations
2. Leadership Area 2: Supervision of Instructional Programs, Learning Resources, and Student Services
3. Leadership Area 3: Operational Management of the School District (Fiscal, Human, Nutrition Services, Maintenance, and Transportation)
4. Leadership Area 4: External Relationships, DEIB Efforts, and Community Partnerships
5. Four (4) District-wide Meeting of Administrators
6. Four (4) Board of Education Meetings
7. Long Range Project

There is a requirement to obtain a minimum of 15 hours in each of the 7 areas above. Hours are expected to be completed through the 3 hours of ELPS 995, spread out over 3 semesters in the third year of the program. Several classes in the program will offer projects that provide opportunities for hours towards the 150-hour field experience. There are additional opportunities to gain hours in the field experience areas as will be explained in the first class of the program. However, a signed field experience form needs to be signed before hours can be counted towards the required internship. The 150-hour field experience is required as a component of this program. If seeking district leadership certification outside of Kansas, please reference your state department of education to ensure all requirements can be met.

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” towards 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.

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](#)

[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](#)

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

The University offers a variety of [Approved Graduate Certificate Programs](#) to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate

should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate program requirements.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria](#)
- [Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

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 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.