



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

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College of Education  
& Health Professions

**Education Specialist (Ed.S.)  
In Educational Leadership  
Student Handbook**

November, 2018

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## Introduction

The Educational Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas offers graduate studies at the master's (M.Ed.), specialist (Ed.S.), and doctoral (Ed.D.) levels. In addition to these degree programs, the University of Arkansas Educational Leadership Program (EDLE) offers graduate certificate programs which are designed to prepare students for licensure at the building and district levels in K-12 settings in the state of Arkansas. The EDLE programs are online programs serving students from across the United States. The program strives to provide a balance of practical experience, research, and theory to prepare tomorrow's dynamic K-12 educational leaders and researchers of leadership in educational settings.

This handbook describes the **education specialist (Ed.S.) degree program in Educational Leadership**. Students pursuing a license in district-level administration will be eligible to do so once they have completed the requirement for the Ed.S. and passed the School Superintendent Assessment (SSA).

The University of Arkansas's Ed.S. in Educational Leadership has several unique features:

- ***Nationwide Program Delivery***

Students from around the country have the opportunity to apply for admittance to the EDLE Ed.S. The program is delivered online in a synchronous fashion using the technology provided by Blackboard. Professors hold live class sessions using Collaborate, an application that enables students and professors to interact in live class sessions that are streamed over the internet using video conferencing technology. The ability to share experiences from a wide variety of contexts helps prepare students for leadership in an ever-changing world.

- ***A Practitioner-Scholar Approach***

The EDLE Ed.S. combines the best of both worlds – research/theory and practice. Students will learn how to explore existing theories and research and apply it to practice through the various assignments and activities that the faculty provides throughout coursework. We believe that strong educational leaders think in much the same way as strong researchers. They look at their world through the lens of sound inquiry, ask the right questions, and seek solutions to complex problems that demand rigorous examination and thoughtfulness.

- ***Alignment with Certification Program***

The EDLE Ed.S. contains the coursework required for the District-Level Administrator's Graduate Certificate and the Arkansas District-Level Administrator's License. Students are strongly encouraged to apply to **both** the EDLE Ed.S. program and the District-Level Administrator Certificate Program.

## Contact Information

This handbook and all application materials for the Educational Leadership Master's Degree are available on the EDLE website <https://edle.uark.edu/>.

For more information:

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340 N. Campus Drive  
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1 University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
Phone: 479-575-4401  
Email: [gradinfo@uark.edu](mailto:gradinfo@uark.edu)

## Program Faculty and Specializations

**Ed Bengtson, Ph.D.**, University of Georgia ([egbengts@uark.edu](mailto:egbengts@uark.edu))

- Principalship, Instructional Supervision, Qualitative Research Methods

**Kevin Brady, Ph.D.**, University of Illinois ([kpbrady@uark.edu](mailto:kpbrady@uark.edu))

- School Law, School Finance

**Kara Lasater, Ed.D.**, University of Arkansas ([klasater@uark.edu](mailto:klasater@uark.edu))

- School Community Partnerships, Effective Leadership, Qualitative Research Methods

**John Pijanowski.**, Cornell University ([jpijanow@uark.edu](mailto:jpijanow@uark.edu))

- Leadership Ethics, Ethics in Research, Decision Making

## Purpose of the Handbook

The handbook serves as a guide for faculty and students in the Educational Leadership (EDLE) Ed.S. Degree Program at the University of Arkansas. The handbook is intended to aid the student's orientation to and progress in the Ed.S. program.

It is the student's responsibility to follow the procedures and guidelines outlined in this handbook and to stay informed about program changes, requirements for the degree, and the policies and procedures of the Graduate School.

As used in this handbook:

- ***“College of Education and Health Professions (COEHP)”*** refers to the University of Arkansas college that houses the EDLE program at the Fayetteville Campus. (<https://coehp.uark.edu/>)
- ***“Department of Curriculum and Instruction (CIED)”*** refers to the academic unit within the COEHP that houses the EDLE program. (<https://cied.uark.edu/>)
- ***“Educational Leadership Program (EDLE)”*** refers to the academic unit that specializes in training educational leaders through three different degree programs (M.Ed., Ed.S., & Ed.D.) as well as two Graduate Certificate Programs. (<https://edle.uark.edu/>)
- ***“The Graduate School and International Education”*** refers to the academic and administrative unit overseeing all graduate programs at the University of Arkansas. (<https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/>)
- ***“Global Campus”*** refers to the University of Arkansas unit overseeing all online programs and courses.
- ***“Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)”*** monitors educator preparation programs and oversees all educator licensure processes in the state. (<http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/educator%20effectiveness/educator-licensure>)

## Program Overview

The University of Arkansas's Educational Leadership Education Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) Program is an online degree housed at the University of Arkansas Fayetteville campus. Successful completion of the EDLE Ed.S. program of study fulfills the academic requirements for the Arkansas District Level Administrator's License. It is strongly suggested that students apply for both the M.Ed. and the Arkansas District-Level Administrator Graduate Certificate (PSDLMC). The PSDLMC requires no further coursework beyond the Ed.S., and yet you get an additional certificate from the University that officially signifies that you have fulfilled the academic requirements for licensure in the state of Arkansas.

## Admission Requirements:

An earned Master's Degree and a building-level certification is required. Two applications are required, one to the Graduate School and one to the Educational Leadership (EDLE) Program.

### Graduate School Application Information

1. Complete online application at: <http://application.uark.edu>
2. Send Official Transcripts to Graduate School
3. Send test scores to Graduate School
4. For the Ed.S. either the GRE, MAT **or** the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA). If submitting the SLLA in lieu of the GRE, you must contact the Graduate School.

### Educational Leadership Program Application

1. Complete online application at: <http://edle.uark.edu/applications-and-forms/educational-leadership-application.php>
2. Send three (3) letters of recommendation to Educational Leadership Program
3. Send Copy of Valid Teaching/Administrative License to Educational Leadership Program
4. Send Autobiographical Sketch to Educational Leadership Program
5. Send Academic Writing Sample to Educational Leadership Program

All applications are reviewed by EDLE faculty. Careful attention is paid to the following:

- Past GPA
- Exam Scores (GRE, MAT, or SLLA)
- Quality of Letters of Recommendation
- Quality of Academic Writing Sample
- Quality of Autobiographical Sketch
- Both past and current professional experience as an educator

### **Other critical information on policies & practices that apply to the EDLE Ed.S.:**

- ***Use of email:*** Students are required to regularly use their University of Arkansas email account for correspondence with program faculty and other university personnel and offices. "I do not check my uark email account regularly" is not an accepted excuse.
- ***Class attendance:*** Students are required to attend online class sessions via Collaborate. Absences from class can result in reduction of course grade. While students are expected to have occasional conflicts with their professional responsibilities, these must be kept to a minimum as the courses are designed around the constructs of social learning. If you are not in class, you cannot be a contributor (or recipient of) the learning process. Students should let their professors know ahead of class meeting times if they have a conflict with the upcoming class session.
- ***Incomplete course work:*** Professors may allow for an "Incomplete" (given as an "I") to be earned at the end of a course if the student has not completed all course work. Whether an "I"

is given or an “F” is up to the professor; however, it should be noted by all students that if the “Incomplete” is not addressed within 12 weeks after the semester ends, it automatically changes to a failing grade (“F”). This is then the final grade for the course and cannot be changed except for extreme circumstances. This includes grades for the internship. The following is the policy of the registrar on incomplete grades:

A mark of “I” may be assigned when a legitimate good cause has prevented the student from completing all course requirements, and the work completed is of passing quality. It is the discretion of the instructor that determines what qualifies as a legitimate good cause. It is recommended that the instructor, prior to the assignment of an “I” mark, document the legitimate good cause and conditions for completing course requirements. An “I” so assigned may be changed to a grade provided all course requirements have been completed within 12 weeks from the beginning of the next semester (excluding summer semesters) of the student’s enrollment after receiving the “I.” If the instructor does not report the grade within the 12-week period, the “I” shall be changed to an “F.” When a mark of “I” is changed to a final grade, the grade points and academic standing are appropriately adjusted on the student’s official academic records.

- **Unacceptable grades:** Grades of “D” or “F” are not acceptable and will not be counted toward degree completion. There is no grade forgiveness policy at the graduate level. If a student repeats a course, both the original and repeated course grade will be computed in the cumulative grade point average. Students in master’s programs may take only 6 hours in addition to degree requirements in an effort to raise the grade point average necessary to graduate. If a student first encounters academic difficulty after he/she has already completed six credit hours for the degree beyond the minimum degree requirements, no additional courses may be taken.
- **GPA requirement:** All EDLE Ed.S. students are required to maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above. Students with a GPA lower than 3.0 will not be eligible to graduate.
- **Time to degree completion:** All requirements for a specialist degree must be completed within six consecutive calendar years from the first semester of enrollment in that program.
- **Annual review of student performance:** It is the policy of the Graduate Council that is convened by the University of Arkansas Graduate School that every specialist student will be reviewed annually by his/her degree program for progress toward the degree. At a minimum, the review will cover progress in the following: a) completing courses with an adequate grade-point average; b) completing the thesis or internship requirements; c) completing all of the required examinations; and d) completing other requirements for the degree. When the review of each student is completed, the review form will be signed by the graduate student and the department/program head/chair, as well as other appropriate individuals as designated in the program review policy. This review will be forwarded to the Graduate School, to be included in the student’s file.

- ***Student's right to appeal:*** Students have the option to appeal a course grade. The expectation is that a resolution is to be met at the most immediate level of involvement. Students should first communicate their concern with the professor, and if there remains an issue, then students should refer to the student grievances and appeals policy at: <http://catalog.uark.edu/undergradcatalog/academicregulations/studentacademicappeals/>
- ***Withdrawal from classes:*** Withdrawing from the University means withdrawing from all classes that have not been completed up to that time. A student who leaves the University voluntarily before the end of the semester or summer term must officially withdraw by logging onto the student information system and completing a brief online interview. Students choosing not to complete the exit interview must notify the Registrar's Office by signed, written request. Withdrawal must occur prior to the last class day of a semester. Students who do not withdraw officially from a class that they fail to complete will receive an "F" in that class.
- ***Graduate Student Handbook:*** All graduate students at the University of Arkansas are encouraged to download a copy of the Graduate Student Handbook that is provided by Graduate School and International Education at: [https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/\\_resources/forms/graduate-handbook.pdf](https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/graduate-handbook.pdf)
- ***Advising:*** All students entering the EDLE Ed.S. program must work with the advisor assigned to them throughout their program of study. It is as much the responsibility of the student to communicate with their advisor as it is the advisor's responsibility. In other words, communication is a shared responsibility between student and advisor.
- ***Independent Study:*** A student must obtain permission of the faculty of the course that he/she would like to enroll in an independent study. This is not encouraged by the EDLE program; and it is totally up to the faculty whether an independent study can and will take the place of a regular scheduled course or not. For this reason, it is important that students understand and follow the course sequence and their program of study.



## University of Arkansas EDLE Ed.S. Program of Study

The EDLE Ed.S. program of study requires the successful completion of 10 courses (including the internship) for a total of 30 graduate credit hours. The Graduate School will allow up to 6 credit hours (two graduate courses) to be transferred in upon the approval of the EDLE faculty. Below is a copy of the program of study form which can also be found at: <https://edle.uark.edu/degrees/edle-eds-couse-sequence-and-program-of-study.pdf>. Students are expected to take the courses in sequence that matches when they start the program. For example, if a student starts in the Spring, the first two courses they should enroll in are EDLE 6103 and EDLE 6433. The course sequence for each start time is on the following page. If students take two courses a semester, they can complete the program in 18 months. When completing their program of study, students are reminded that courses are only offered once a year.

Course Area, No. & Title	Grade	Term	Year	Credit Hours
EDLE 6093 School Governance		Fa		3
EDLE 699V Legislative & Political Issues		Fa		3
EDLE 6103 School Finance		Sp		3
SPED 6433 Legal Aspects of Special Education		Sp		3
EDLE 6023 School Facilities Planning & Management		Su I		3
EDLE 6173 School Business		Su I		3
EDLE 680V Ed.S. Project		Su II		3
EDLE 6053 School Community Relations		Fa		3
EDLE 6333 Advanced Legal Issues		Fa		3
EDLE 674V Internship		Sp		3
			<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

**List approved transfer course(s)** (6 hours maximum – these must be approved by the EDLE Graduate Advisor):

Course Area, No. & Title	Grade	Term	Institution	Credit Hours

## University of Arkansas EDLE Ed.S. Course Sequence

Students admitted to the EDLE Ed.S. Program can start their program of study in any of the summer 5-week mini-semester, the fall semester, or the spring semester. The following is the course sequence for each of those starting times. Students are required to complete the Program of Study form below indicating what they plan on taking based on the appropriate sequence. Each EDLE Ed.S. course is only offered once a year. Students may opt to take only one course per semester in the Spring and Fall if they choose with the understanding that it will take them longer to complete their program of study. It should be noted that starting in the Spring and Fall semesters will most likely result in taking the internship prior to the completion of courses.

<b><u>Summer I Start</u></b>	<b><u>Summer II Start</u></b>	<b><u>Fall Start</u></b>	<b><u>Spring Start</u></b>
<b><u>Summer I</u></b> EDLE 6023 Facilities EDLE 6173 Business	<b><u>Summer II</u></b> EDLE 680V Ed.S. Project	<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6093 Governance EDLE 6333 Adv. Legal Issues	<b><u>Spring</u></b> EDLE 6103 Finance EDLE 6433 Legal Aspects of SPED
<b><u>Summer II</u></b> EDLE 680V Ed.S. Project	<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6093 Governance EDLE 6333 Adv. Legal Issues	<b><u>Spring</u></b> EDLE 6103 Finance 6433 Legal Aspects of SPED	<b><u>Summer I</u></b> EDLE 6023 Facilities EDLE 6173 Business
<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6093 Governance EDLE 6333 Adv. Legal Issues	<b><u>Spring</u></b> EDLE 6103 Finance 6433 Legal Aspects of SPED	<b><u>Summer I</u></b> EDLE 6023 Facilities EDLE 6173 Business	<b><u>Summer II</u></b> EDLE 680V Ed.S. Project
<b><u>Spring</u></b> EDLE 6103 Finance 6433 Legal Aspects of SPED	<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6053 Community EDLE 699V Legislative & Political Issues	<b><u>Summer II</u></b> EDLE 680V Ed.S. Project	<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6093 Governance EDLE 6333 Adv. Legal Issues
<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6053 Community EDLE 699V Legislative & Political Issues	<b><u>Spring</u></b> 674V Internship	<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6053 Community EDLE 699V Legislative & Political Issues	<b><u>Spring</u></b> EDLE 674V Internship
<b><u>Spring</u></b> 674V Internship	<b><u>Summer I</u></b> EDLE 6023 Facilities EDLE 6173 Business	<b><u>Spring</u></b> 674V Internship	<b><u>Fall</u></b> EDLE 6053 Community EDLE 699V Legislative & Political Issues

## Internship

The internship is traditionally seen as the most important experiences students have in preparing to be a school leader. The University of Arkansas EDLE program looks at the internship experience as one that is not only found at the end of the program of study. Students should be familiar with the following key points:

- **Internship context:** Except in rare cases where the student is a full-time graduate student, students complete their internship in the school system where they currently work.
- **The importance of mentorship:** Upon entering the EDLE Ed.S. program, student need to communicate with their Superintendent to let them know the following:
  - You are enrolled in an educational leadership program at the University of Arkansas
  - Throughout your coursework, you will be doing various assignments that are also part of your overall internship experience which might require you to be engaged as a leader in your system.
  - In the final spring semester of your program of study, you will be required to do intensive work with a mentor who holds either the position of Superintendent (preferable) or Assistant/Associate Superintendent.
- **Final internship course:** The final internship course will involve the student engaging in leadership activities under the mentorship of both a practicing administrator in their district and an EDLE faculty member. During this time, the student, their mentor, and the EDLE faculty will communicate periodically to determine strengths and weaknesses of the student. There will also be opportunities for students to communicate with other students who are also enrolled in the final internship course.
- **Internship completion:** As in all coursework, students are required to complete their internship assignments before the end of the semester that they enroll in the internship class. A grade of “I” (incomplete) may be awarded in special circumstances; however, it is up to the instructor if an “I” or “F” should be awarded. If a student receives an “I” and does not complete the work within 12 weeks after the semester that the “I” was posted, then the grade turns to an “F.” At this point, this is the final grade for the course.

## Culminating Assessment

The Graduate School requires all students completing a graduate degree at the University of Arkansas to successfully pass a culminating evaluation. The EDLE Ed.S. program has several culminating assessments for faculty to choose from. They include:

- **The Comprehensive In-Box Assessment:** This activity is designed to evaluate how well students engage in the decision-making process as they address issues found in their in-box as they start their day as a school Principal. This is a timed assessment designed so that students cannot address all of the issues and must prioritize their actions.

- ***The Written Comprehensive Exam:*** This activity reflects the more traditional means to assess a student's acquired knowledge. In this assessment, each faculty member creates questions that are related to the course(s) they teach in the Ed.S. program. Students are then given two weeks to respond in writing to each professor's question.
- ***The Culminating Portfolio:*** This activity requires student to present a portfolio that contains all artifacts from their coursework to a committee of faculty and other professional educators. This presentation involves meeting with the review committee and answering questions based off the portfolio and any other material that might be of interest to the committee.
- ***Internship Final Assessment:*** This culminating activity is the final assessment of the internship and will only serve as culminating assessment if the student is enrolled in the internship during their final semester. This culminating assessment combines assessments from the internship mentors as well as the university internship supervisor.

The EDLE program at the University of Arkansas has traditionally used the third option listed above (culminating portfolio) as the final assessment of a student's mastery. However, the program faculty has determined that there might be a better approach to the final assessment. Periodically, the EDLE faculty will re-visit the final assessment practice to determine which approach is best given the nature of student performance through their program of study. It is important to note the following:

- Successfully passing the culminating assessment is required for degree completion.
- All culminating assessments must be done during the final three weeks of the Fall or Spring semesters. There are no culminating assessments given during the summer semester. If a student is scheduled to graduate in the summer, they must complete the culminating assessment during the final three weeks of the Spring semester. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule the culminating portfolio with his/her advisor. Failure to do so will result in the student not being able to graduate.
- Only one form of culminating activity will be used to assess students during any given semester (unless a student enrolls in the internship before their final semester). In other words all students scheduled to graduate in a particular Spring or Fall semester and have completed the internship prior to that semester will be given the same assessment.

## **Licensure**

Students completing the EDLE M.Ed. also complete the course requirements toward the Arkansas Building-Level Administrator License. It is important to note that there are other requirements in addition to the course requirements that must be met. All licensure requirements are established by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).

- ***Completion of program of study that is based on current leadership standards:*** This requirement is fulfilled upon the successful completion of the EDLE Ed.S.

- ***Completion of internship:*** This requirement will be fulfilled upon successful completion of the EDLE Ed.S.
- ***Prerequisite license:*** Students must hold an Arkansas Standard Building Level Administrator License or an Arkansas Standard Curriculum/Program Administrator License.
- ***Minimum number years of prior experience:*** Students must provide evidence that they have a minimum of 1 year as a licensed building level leader or curriculum/program administrator.
- ***Passing score on SSA exam:*** Students must receive a passing score on the School Superintendent Assessment (SSA) before approval for license. We recommend students take the SSA at the end of their EDLE Ed.S. experience.

The following documentation must be provided:

- Current Arkansas Standard Building Level Administrator License or an Arkansas Standard Curriculum/Program Administrator License. (applicant will need to contact ADE in terms of other states' licenses being accepted)
- Documentation of at least 1 year as a building level administrator or a curriculum/program administrator. Documentation of experience may be a letter or an official personnel record verifying employment and specifying the number of years as a building level administrator or a curriculum/program administrator. The document must exhibit the Superintendent's (or Designee's) signature.
- Official College/University Transcripts reflecting the Specialist Degree/Specialist level program of study or higher.
- Passing scores for the School Superintendent Assessment.

Licensure Application forms can be found at:

<http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/educator%20effectiveness/educator-licensure>. All licensure forms must be processed through the University of Arkansas EDLE Program Coordinator (signature required) and COEHP licensing officer.

## Graduation

Students must complete all degree requirements before they can participate in commencement ceremonies. Students can graduate in any of the three major semesters: Spring, Summer, or Fall. Commencement ceremonies are held at the end of each Spring and fall semester. Those students who graduate in the Summer semester will participate in the commencement ceremony the following spring.

### Important information regarding graduation for students:

- Students should review all graduation information on the Graduate School website: <https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/graduate/current-students/commencement-graduation.php>
- Students must be “cleared” for graduation by the Program Coordinator prior to being eligible to graduate.
- Students must pass the culminating activity before being cleared to graduate.
- All coursework must be completed in full and a grade of “C” or above must be earned in all courses to be eligible to graduate.
- A GPA of 3.0 or higher must be earned before a student is eligible to graduate.
- Students must apply for graduation with the Graduate School.

### Important information regarding graduation for faculty:

- All students must have a completed Educational Specialist Advisory Committee Form on file with the Graduate School. This is the responsibility of the advisor. The form can be found at: [https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/\\_resources/forms/educational-specialist-committee.pdf](https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/educational-specialist-committee.pdf)
- All students must have a Educational Specialist Record of Progress (ROP) form filled out and signed by the committee on file with the graduate school before the student will be permitted to graduate. Again, the advisor is responsible for the completion of this form. The form can be found at: [https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/\\_resources/forms/eds-progress-record.pdf](https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/eds-progress-record.pdf)