



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

**College of Education
& Health Professions**

**Master's of Education (M.Ed.)
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 **master of education (M.Ed.) degree program in Educational Leadership**. M.Ed. options are limited to a non-thesis M.Ed. or a thesis M.Ed. Students desiring to pursue a license in building-level administration must complete the non-thesis requirements while students who do not desire to pursue a license may choose the thesis option.

The University of Arkansas's M.Ed. 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 M.Ed. 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 M.Ed. 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 M.Ed. contains the coursework required for the Building-Level Administrator's Graduate Certificate and the Arkansas Building Level Administrator's License. Students are strongly encouraged to apply to **both** the EDLE M.Ed. program and the Building-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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Program Faculty and Specializations

Ed Bengtson, Ph.D., University of Georgia (egbengts@uark.edu)

- Principalship, Instructional Supervision, Qualitative Research Methods

Kevin Brady, Ph.D., University of Illinois (kpbrady@uark.edu)

- School Law, School Finance

Kara Lasater, Ed.D., University of Arkansas (klasater@uark.edu)

- School Community Partnerships, Effective Leadership, Qualitative Research Methods

John Pijanowski, Ph.D. Cornell University (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) M.Ed. Degree Program at the University of Arkansas. The handbook is intended to aid the student's orientation to and progress in the M.Ed. 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 Master's of Education Degree (M.Ed.) Program is an online degree housed at the University of Arkansas Fayetteville campus. Successful completion of the EDLE M.Ed. program of study fulfills the academic requirements for the Arkansas Building Level Administrator's License. It is strongly suggested that students apply for both the M.Ed. and the Arkansas Building Level Administrator Graduate Certificate (PSBLMC). The PSBLMC requires no further coursework beyond the M.Ed., 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 Bachelor's Degree is required and a valid teaching license. 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 GRE or MAT test scores to Graduate School if undergraduate GPA is < 3.0

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 (one letter must be written by your building principal)
3. Send copy of a valid teaching license to Educational Leadership Program

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

- Undergraduate GPA
- Quality of Letters of Recommendation (one letter must be written by your building principal)
- Both past and current professional experience as an educator

Options for students who enroll in the M.Ed.:

- **Option I:** students who are interested in pursuing a position in building-level leadership (i.e., Assistant Principal or Principal) and/or obtaining an Arkansas Building-Level Administrator's license, can complete the Program of Study that includes a 3 credit Internship course at the end. It should be noted that it is highly recommended that these students also enroll in the Graduate Certificate for Building-Level Administrators.
- **Option II:** students who are not interested in pursuing a position in building-level leadership can complete the same program of study (with perhaps a few alterations for research courses) with the exception of the internship. In place of the internship, the student must complete a written thesis and successfully defend that thesis in front of a thesis committee. This option is most often exercised by International students or those students who are interested in pursuing admittance to a Ph.D. program.

Any student who is choosing Option II must let the Program Coordinator know upon their initial enrollment into the program.

Other critical information on policies & practices that apply to both degree options:

- **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 M.Ed. 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 master’s 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 master’s 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>
- ***Advising:*** All students entering the EDLE M.Ed. 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:*** Independent studies are available only as an option for a unique educational experience. They are not an option to replace one of the core educational leadership courses. The following two courses can be replaced by an independent study: EDLE 5073-Research for School Leaders; EDLE 5033 Psychology of Learning. A student must obtain permission of the faculty who they would like to work with, and it is totally up to the faculty whether an independent study can and will take the place. It is important that

students understand and follow the course sequence and their program of study as independent studies to replace missed courses will not be permitted.

University of Arkansas EDLE M.Ed. Program of Study

The EDLE M.Ed. program of study requires the successful completion of 11 courses (including the internship) for a total of 33 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/_resources/pdf/edle-med-course-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 5023 and EDLE 5053. 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 with the exception of EDLE 5093 – Effective Leadership.

Course Area, No. & Title	Grade	Term	Year	Inst.	Credit Hours
EDLE 5013 School Organization & Administration		Fa		U of A	3
EDLE 5063 Instructional Supervision, Evaluation, & Planning		Fa		U of A	3
EDLE 5023 The Principalship		Sp		U of A	3
EDLE 5053 School Law		Sp		U of A	3
EDLE 5033 Psychology of Learning		Su I		U of A	3
EDLE 5083 Analytical Decision Making		Su I		U of A	3
EDLE 599V Special Topics (Bldg. Level Finance)		Su II		U of A	3
EDLE 5073 Research for School Leaders		Su II		U of A	3
EDLE 5043 Leadership Ethics (August Intersession)		Fa		U of A	3
EDLE 5093 Effective Leadership		Sp		U of A	3
EDLE 574V Internship		Sp		U of A	3
Total					33

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 M.Ed. Course Sequence

Students admitted to the EDLE M.Ed. Program can start their program of study in any of the summer 5-week mini-semesters, 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 M.Ed. course is only offered once a year with the exception of EDLE 5093 – Effective Leadership which is currently offered in both Spring and Fall semesters. Students can opt to take only one course per semester if they choose with the understanding that it will take them longer to complete their program of study. (https://edle.uark.edu/_resources/pdf/edle-med-course-sequence-and-program-of-study.pdf)

<u>Summer I Start*</u>	<u>Summer II Start</u>	<u>Fall Start</u>	<u>Spring Start**</u>
Summer I EDLE 5083 (Analytical) Summer I EDLE 5033 (Psych of Learning)	Summer II EDLE 5073 (Research) Summer II EDLE 599V (Bldg. Fin.)	Fall EDLE 5013 (O & A) Fall EDLE 5063 (Inst. Supervision)	Spring EDLE 5023 (Princ.) Spring EDLE 5053 (Law)
Summer II EDLE 5073 (Research) Summer II EDLE 599V (Bldg. Fin.)	Aug Inters EDLE 5043 (Ethics)	Spring EDLE 5023 (Princ.) Spring EDLE 5053 (Law)	Summer I EDLE 5083 (Analytical) Summer I EDLE 5033 (Psych of Learning)
Aug Inters EDLE 5043 (Ethics)	Fall EDLE 5013 (O & A) Fall EDLE 5063 (Inst. Supervision)	Summer I EDLE 5083 (Analytical) Summer I EDLE 5033 (Psych of Learning)	Summer II EDLE 5073 (Research) Summer II EDLE 599V (Bldg. Fin.)
Fall EDLE 5013 (O & A) Fall EDLE 5063 (Inst. Supervision)	Spring EDLE 5023 (Princ.) Spring EDLE 5053 (Law)	Summer II EDLE 5073 (Research) Summer II EDLE 599V (Sch.Lev.Fin.)	Aug Inters EDLE 5043 (Ethics)
Spring EDLE 5023 (Princ.) Spring EDLE 5053 (Law)	Summer I EDLE 5083 (Analytical) Summer I EDLE 5033 (Psych of Learning)	Aug Inters EDLE 5043 (Ethics)	Fall EDLE 5013 (O & A) Fall EDLE 5063 (Inst. Supervision)
Fall EDLE 5093 (Effective)	Fall EDLE 5093 (Effective)	Fall EDLE 5093 (Effective)	Spring EDLE 5093 (Effective)
Spring EDLE 574V (Internship)**	Spring EDLE 574V (Internship)**	Spring EDLE 574V (Internship)**	Spring EDLE 574V (Internship)**

*In the Summer I Start sequence there will be a gap in the Program of study between the spring and second fall semesters **if** students take four courses their first summer.

** The internship actually starts in the fall semester; however, because the internship runs from September through April, students are not to register for the internship until the spring semester. This will make the spring start sequence the most challenging as during the final fall semester students will be taking two courses in addition to starting their internship.

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, but also is embedded in much of the coursework that students take prior to enrolling in the internship. Therefore, students should consider their entire EDLE M.Ed. experience as an internship experience. 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 M.Ed. program, students need to communicate with their building Principal 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 school
 - 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 Principal (preferable) or Assistant Principal.
- **K-12 certification requirements:** The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) requires internships to span from elementary to high school levels. If a student is teaching at the secondary level, part of their internship experience must occur at the elementary level. If a student is teaching at the elementary level, they must have some of their internship experience at the secondary level.
- **Internship related course assignments:** As mentioned above, there will be certain course assignments that will count toward your internship experience. The following courses will likely have assignments that you will complete at your school site under the mentorship of a practicing administrator:
 - EDLE 5013 – Organization & Administration
 - EDLE 5023 – Principalship
 - EDLE 5043 - Ethics
 - EDLE 5053 – School Law
 - EDLE 5063 – Instructional Supervision, Evaluation, & Planning
 - EDLE 5093 – Effective Leadership
- **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 M.Ed. 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 M.Ed. 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 M.Ed.
- ***Completion of internship:*** This requirement will be fulfilled upon successful completion of the EDLE M.Ed. provided the student has not exercised the thesis option explained on page 5 above.
- ***Minimum number years of prior experience:*** Students must provide evidence that they have a minimum of 4 years as a licensed classroom teacher, school counselor, or library media specialist
- ***Passing score on SLLA exam:*** Students must receive a passing score on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) before approval for license. We recommend students take the SLLA at the end of their EDLE M.Ed. experience.

The following documentation must be provided:

- Current Arkansas Standard Teaching License (applicant will need to contact ADE in terms of other states' licenses being accepted)
- Documentation of at least 4 years as a licensed classroom teacher, school counselor, or library media specialist. Documentation of experience may be a letter or an official personnel record verifying employment and specifying the number of years as a classroom teacher, school counselor, or library media specialist. The document must exhibit the Superintendent's (or Designee's) signature.
- Official College/University Transcripts reflecting the Master's Degree/Master's level program of study or higher.
- Passing scores for the School Leaders Licensure 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 Master’s 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/masters-committee.pdf
- All students must have a Master’s 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/progress-record-masters.pdf
- Students who are completing the M.Ed. through the thesis option must have all of the necessary forms filled out and signed. The thesis chair is responsible for the completion and filing of these forms with the Graduate School. The following forms must be completed and submitted in addition to the two forms listed above:
 - Master’s Thesis Title: https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/masters-thesis-title.pdf
 - Intellectual Property Disclosure: https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/intellectual-property-disclosure.pdf
 - Thesis/Dissertation Submission Form: https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/thesis-dissertation-submission.pdf