Educational Administration K-12 Instructional Leadership Online Leadership Studies CANDIDATE Handbook

Policies, Procedures, and Requirements for Application & Admission into the UTK Educational Administration MS & EdS Degrees and Instructional Leadership Graduate Certificate Programs

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE

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Greetings Prospective Students!

We're excited you're considering joining our program! The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies' instructional leadership programs are designed to enrich the knowledge, skills and values requisite to effective leadership in educational practice settings. The department views leaders as stewards and servants of organizations; designers of the social and cultural climate in which we do our work; teachers who facilitate human growth and development; change agents who continually examine the effectiveness of their organizations; and conceptual provocateurs who challenge ideas and assumptions on which practice and policy are built.

As standards and the demands for excellence in leadership increase, a preparation program that offers rigor and relevance for the future leaders of Tennessee schools is a priority for us. This resource handbook is intended to give you an overview of our program, available pathways, and admissions requirements.

The ELPS Educational Administration Online Leadership Studies Team

Online Leadership Studies – Program Overview

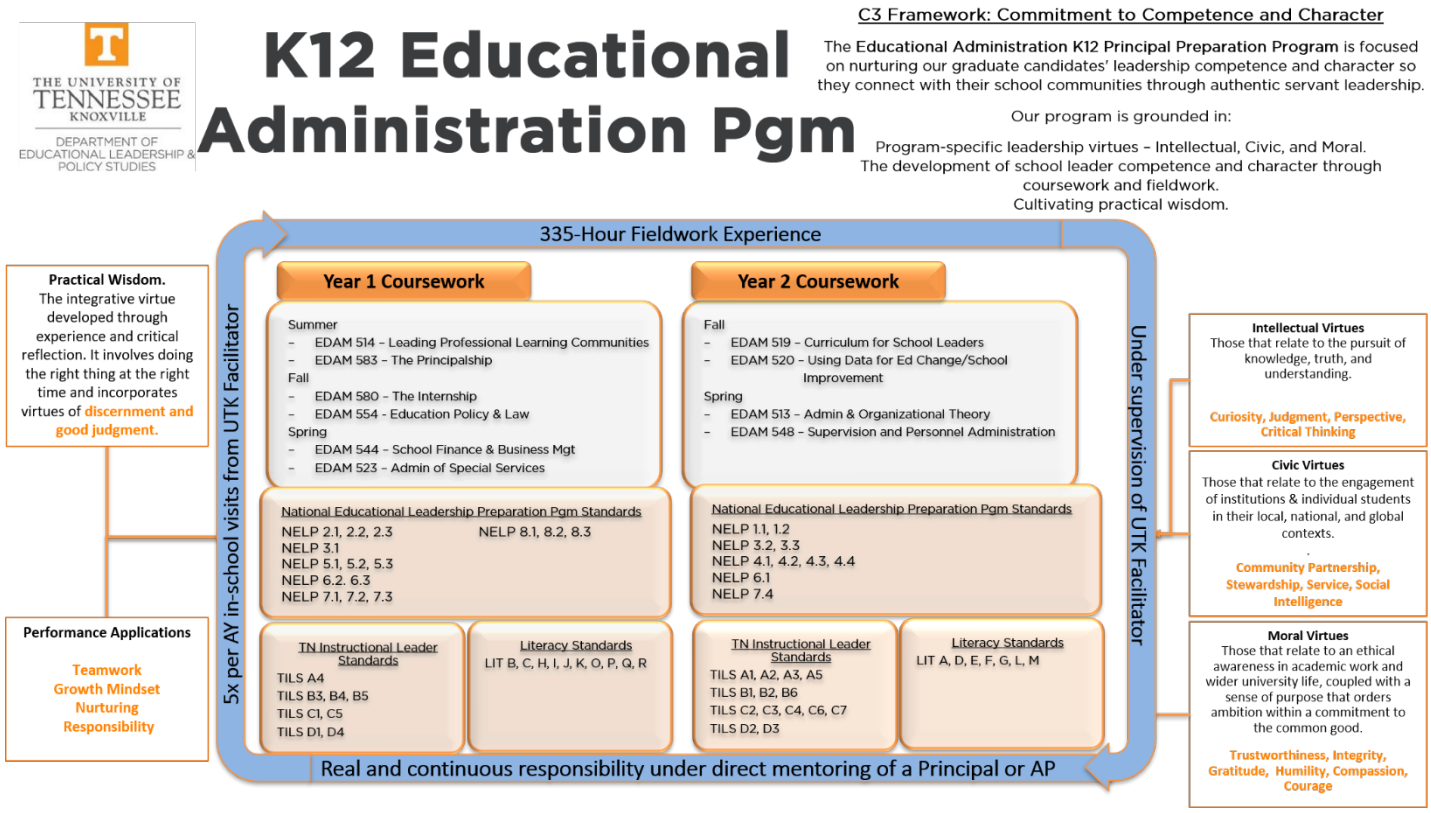
The Online Leadership Program is a hybrid asynchronous/synchronous, distance education Master's, Education Specialist, and Graduate Certificate program, which prepares candidates for an instructional leader license. The 30-credit-hour Master's program, 36-credit-hour Education Specialist Program (with a research component), and the 21-credit-hour Graduate Certificate program, involve both coursework and a 335-hour Instructional Leader Fieldwork Clinical Practice.

The pathways are standards-based – the profession's standards (NELP), and the State of Tennessee's standards (TILS), as well as TN Literacy Standards. As the candidates approach their Instructional Leader Fieldwork Clinical Practice, grounding the opportunities in professional standards allows them to view the experiences as the work of leadership, rather than coursework assignments. Moreover, standards-based assignments are not solely University of Tennessee defined but are a collaborative effort of the mentor, the facilitator, and the candidate. Thus, the candidate may take the lead on problem solving or constructing a response to an issue or a need at the school where they perform their fieldwork. The pathways include a fieldwork course which is taken concurrently with the candidate's field experiences. The course is designed to help bridge the gap between theory and practice, and allows candidates to understand the skills and dispositions required to lead schools, and the standards under which they will work, while adding to their knowledge through standards-based projects.

The OLS program coursework is aimed at preparing each candidate to successfully lead a school and the implementation of Tennessee academic standards. Our experienced educational leader faculty deliver courses which examine the principalship, leading professional learning communities, educational law and policy issues, the administration of special services, school finance and budgeting, educational change, organizational theory, leading curriculum & instruction, using data for school improvement, as well as supervision and personnel administration.

K12 Educational Administration Program

Below is a high-level overview of our program depicting the typical Master's degree pathway. The course of study for each of our pathways is tailorable for individual students



General Program Information

Coursework

Cohorts begin in the Summer term.

Program Options – there are four options available in the online program.

1. **Master of Science, Educational Administration Major**

   This 30-credit hour program includes a requirement for 335-hours of fieldwork experience and leads to a Tennessee Instructional Leadership license - Beginning (ILL-B) once all elements of the program are successfully completed. Students will be required to take the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) and score above the state established cut-off score to be recommended for licensure as a Tennessee instructional leader.

2. **Specialist in Education degree, Educational Administration Concentration**

   This 36-credit hour program includes a requirement for 335-hours of fieldwork experience and leads to a Tennessee Instructional Leadership license - Beginning (ILL-B) once all elements of the program are successfully completed.

   A master's degree is required for entry into this program. Students will be required to take the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) and score above the state established cut-off score to be recommended for licensure as a Tennessee instructional leader. Students in the EdS program will be required to present a field research project at the comprehensive exam defense.

3. **Master of Science degree or Specialist in Education degree, Non-Licensure track**

   This program includes either 30 (Master's) or 36 (Specialist in Education) credit hours of coursework but does not lead to Tennessee principal licensure. The program of study includes the same coursework as the masters and specialist degrees leading to licensure but does not include a fieldwork experience.

   Note: Out of state students are only eligible for the non-licensure track.

   Because our programs lead to a **Tennessee** Instructional Leader license, candidates must complete fieldwork in a Tennessee public school. Since out of state students are not able to complete this requirement, the Online Leadership Studies program can offer a degree but cannot recommend an out of state candidate for a Tennessee Instructional Leadership license.

4. **Instructional Leadership Graduate Certificate**

   Students who currently hold a Master's or Specialist in Education degree in K-12 Education, or a related K-12 field, may apply for admission to the certificate program and seek a Tennessee Instructional Leadership license. A 335-hour fieldwork is required. This program does not lead to a degree but a certificate in Instructional Leadership is awarded upon completion. Because this is a certificate program and not a degree program, no transfer credit can be accepted for this program. Students will be required to take the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) and score above the state established cut-off score to be recommended for a Tennessee Instructional Leadership license - Beginning (ILL-B).

Admission Requirements

All candidates for admission must complete a University of Tennessee Graduate School application https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/

You will need to have:

- an earned undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher; graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- a copy of your transcripts from each previous college or university attended, available in electronic format (MS Word or PDF) to complete the application (unofficial copies will suffice initially). Once admitted to the program you will be required to submit official copies of your transcripts.
    - The preferred method of delivery is electronic submission of official transcripts over a secure network from a service such as **Parchment**, National Clearing House, Digitary, or your institution's electronic delivery system. If using one of these services, please have transcripts delivered to **gradtranscripts@utk.edu**.
- a $60 non-refundable admission application fee
    - If you have previously been admitted to the Graduate School, you need only to file a Readmission and/or Request for Change of Graduate Program ($30 non-refundable application fee).

In addition, all candidates for admission must submit supplemental application documents per the instructions below.

All Pathways – MS, EdS, Instructional Leadership Graduate Certificate

Candidates for admission must submit the following supplemental portfolio to the Program Coordinator, Tammy Knierim at tknierim@utk.edu:

1. A copy of your current and valid Tennessee educator license (you must have at least two (2) years of qualifying experience as an educator as defined by the TN Department of Education)
    a. *This requirement does not apply to students in the non-licensure program.*
2. Your 2 most recent rating forms from current, immediate supervising administrators.
3. At least 2 letters of recommendation: (1) your current principal and (2) another present or former principal or assistant principal (these can be the same references requested by the Grad School application process – please make sure you ask your references to upload an actual recommendation memo when they receive the link from the UTK Grad School).
4. A signed mentor-agreement form from a principal or assistant/vice principal who is willing to serve as your mentor for the fieldwork experience. Also include contact information for your District leadership.
5. A current resume.
6. Personal statement which includes the following:
    a. Professional goals (Explain how this preparation program would assist you in reaching these goals. Please provide a response that is detailed and specific).
    b. Most recent professional development activities.
    c. Professional activities involving leadership roles.
    d. Professional organizations.
    e. Professional honors received
    f. A description of a personal experience where knowledge of curriculum and instruction was used to improve student achievement.

g. A description of any personal experience(s) where collaboration, cooperation, and/or relationship building in a professional environment was demonstrated. Attach evidence of this experience, if applicable.

Interviews

Upon receipt of a complete portfolio, the program admissions panel will review all materials and forward a recommendation for interview. If you are recommended for an interview, you will be contacted by the Program Coordinator to schedule an interview with the Admissions Board. Interviews will take place via video conference. Applicant interviews are required and held by appointment only.

Admission Decisions

Following interviews, the Admission Board will forward a recommendation regarding an offer of admission to the Graduate School Admissions Office. Offers of admission will be followed by additional paperwork that must be completed before the beginning of the initial semester and returned to the Program Coordinator. **Cohorts begin with summer sessions.**

Cost

Tuition and fee information (*current as of Summer 2025*)

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
SCHEDULE OF MAINTENANCE, TUITION AND FEES
Graduate Online Program Fee
Summer 2025 Semesters
GRADUATE ONLINE RATE

Credit Hours	Maintenance Fee	Online Support**	Library Fee	In-State Total	Out-of-State Tuition	Out-of-State Total*
1.0	$639.00	$100.00	$5.00	$744.00	$75.00	$819.00
2.0	$1,278.00	$200.00	$10.00	$1,488.00	$150.00	$1,638.00
3.0	$1,917.00	$300.00	$15.00	$2,232.00	$225.00	$2,457.00
4.0	$2,556.00	$400.00	$20.00	$2,976.00	$300.00	$3,276.00
5.0	$3,195.00	$500.00	$25.00	$3,720.00	$375.00	$4,095.00
6.0	$3,834.00	$600.00	$30.00	$4,464.00	$450.00	$4,914.00
7.0	$4,473.00	$700.00	$35.00	$5,208.00	$525.00	$5,733.00
8.0	$5,112.00	$800.00	$40.00	$5,952.00	$600.00	$6,552.00
9.0	$5,734.00	$900.00	$40.00	$6,674.00	$675.00	$7,349.00

*Out-of-State Total is calculated by adding the following fees: Maintenance, Online Support, Library and Out-of-State Tuition.

**The online support fee is not capped per credit hour

Differential Tuition:

Engineering Courses	additional $117 per credit hour (change effective Fall 2024)
Nursing Courses	additional $250 per credit hour (effective Fall 2024)
Architecture and Design Courses	additional $113 per credit hour (effective Fall 2024)

Some departments charge a Special Course Fee. Please check with the department for the specific course.

All fees are subject to any changes approved by the Board of Trustees prior to the beginning of a term.

The Instructional Leader Fieldwork Clinical Practice

Instructional Leadership Fieldwork Clinical Practice Hour Requirement

Tennessee instructional leaders are evaluated upon and held accountable to the profession's standards -- the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Program Recognition Standards, the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS), and the Tennessee Literacy Standards. Therefore, aspiring leaders will be given opportunities to master these standards during the fieldwork experience.

Students are required to complete 335 hours using the NELP standards, TILS, and TN Literacy Standards. Per TNDOE policy, clinical practice sites may include Tennessee public schools, including public charter schools and Tennessee state special schools, or Category 1, 2, or 3 non-public schools. Category 4 and 5 schools shall not be used as placement sites.

The Candidate Log Book will be checked prior to, or during, each visit to the school site to assist in understanding the tasks the candidate has completed.

School Site Visits

Each candidate will be assigned a University of Tennessee School Site Facilitator. The facilitator is a veteran TN educational leader and serves as the liaison among the University, the mentor, and the candidate.

The facilitator will visit the school site at least five times a year, with specific objectives for each visit. The facilitator is responsible for scheduling visits with the candidate, who should coordinate appointments with the mentor as needed and ensure that selected times are conducive to the school calendar and daily schedule. The candidate is responsible for informing the mentor when these visits will take place.

After each visit, the facilitator submits a site visit report to the UTK Lead Facilitator.

APPENDIX A: *Typical* Program of Study (this is tailorable to specific student needs)

Ed.S.	M.S.	Certificate
1st SUMMER TERM		
EDAM 514 Leading Professional Learning Communities	EDAM 514 Leading Professional Learning Communities	EDAM 514 Leading Professional Learning Communities
EDAM 583: Educational Leadership-Principalship	EDAM 583: Educational Leadership-Principalship	EDAM 583: Educational Leadership-Principalship
1st FALL TERM		
EDAM 520: Using Data for School Improvement	EDAM 520: Using Data forSchool Improvement	EDAM 519 Curriculum forSchool Leaders
EDAM 580: Internship in Educational Administration	EDAM 580: Internship in Educational Administration	EDAM 580: Internship in Educational Administration
EDAM 554: Issues in Educational Law		EDAM 554: Issues in Educational Law
1st SPRING TERM		
EDAM 544: School Finance andBusiness Management	EDAM 544: School Finance andBusiness Management	EDAM 548: Supervision andPersonnel Administration
EDAM 523: Administration ofSpecial Services	EDAM 523: Administration of Special Services	EDAM 544: School Finance andBusiness Management
EDAM 521: Statistics for Educators		
2nd FALL TERM		
EDAM 519 Curriculum for School Leaders	EDAM 519 Curriculum forSchool Leaders	
EDAM 592: Field Problems in Educational Administration and Supervision	EDAM 554: Issues in Educational Law	
2nd SPRING TERM		
EDAM 513: Administrative and Organizational Theory	EDAM 513: Administrative and Organizational Theory	
EDAM 548: Supervision andPersonnel Administration	EDAM 548: Supervision andPersonnel Administration	

APPENDIX B: Expectations – Professional Dispositions

All instructional leader licensure candidates at UTK are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the profession's standards, the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS), and the Educational Leadership Dispositions for a School Leader. Program expectations are that these standards and dispositions will be demonstrated in all coursework (as applicable) related to the principal preparation program and during fieldwork experiences. Failure to develop and maintain acceptable demonstration of the expected competencies, attitudes, and dispositions can result in removal from the principal preparation program, regardless of academic performance. Candidates should exhibit dispositions such as those listed below, which are adapted from the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards.

Administrator Dispositions

1. I believe learning is life-long for me and others.
2. I believe all students are entitled access to the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults.
3. I believe there are a variety of ways in which students can learn.
4. I believe a safe and supportive learning environment is essential.
5. I believe schools should prepare students to be contributing members of society.
6. I believe administrators should work with faculty, staff, and students to develop a caring school community.
7. I am committed to the right of every child to a quality education.
8. I believe schools must hold high standards of learning.
9. I believe schools are an integral part of the larger community.
10. I believe there are a variety of ways in which teachers can teach.
11. I am committed to high-quality standards, expectations, and performances.
12. I am committed to ethical principles in the decision-making process.
13. I believe student learning is the fundamental purpose of schooling.
14. I believe one should accept the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions.
15. I believe all people can learn.
16. I believe education is the key to opportunity and social mobility.

Community-Centered Subscale

1. I express verbal and/or non-verbal recognition of feelings, needs, and concerns of others.
2. I am committed to collaboration and communication with families.
3. I communicate necessary information to the appropriate persons in a timely manner.
4. I deal appropriately and tactfully with people from different backgrounds.
5. I generate enthusiasm and work to influence others to accomplish common goals.
6. I believe in the involvement of stakeholders in management processes.
7. I motivate others to change behaviors that inhibit professional and organizational growth.
8. I acknowledge achievement and accomplishment of others.
9. I continuously do the work required for high levels of performance for myself and the organization.

10. I respond in a timely manner to others who initiate contact with me.
11. I believe administrators should develop alliances and/or resources outside the school that improve the quality of teaching and learning.
12. I am committed to the inclusion of all members of the school community.
13. I believe it is important to dialogue with other decision-makers affecting education.
14. I am committed to an informed public.
15. I anticipate responses of others and act to reduce negative impact.
16. I believe families are partners in the education of their children.
17. I believe diversity brings benefits to the school community.
18. I believe in mobilizing community resources to benefit children.
19. I believe administrators must take risks to improve schools to make them safer and more efficient and effective.