



SMU | ANNETTE CALDWELL SIMMONS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Department of Education Policy and Leadership

FAQ's for The Accelerated School Leadership Program

Why study educational leadership?

There is a significant body of research that underscores the critical role of the principal in creating effective schools. The principal and other instructional leaders are responsible for creating the environment which encourages teachers, students, families, and communities to work together to achieve the vision of the school.

What will I learn in SMU's program? What is the basis for the curriculum?

Through study and research in the core areas of Instructional Leadership, Building Human Capital, Executive Leadership, School Culture, and Strategic Operations, ASLP students are prepared to serve in a variety of leadership positions in schools or other educational organizations.

There are many educational leadership programs offered in the area. Are there any unique features of SMU's program?

- Field-based projects (internship experiences) are integrated throughout the program and completed on each student's campus of employment, so that all learning is immediately applied.
- The schedule enables students to complete the M.Ed. program in 14 months as part of a cohort.
- The program has a strong focus on ensuring that all graduates have the leadership, knowledge, and skills to impact the schools and communities they serve.

Can I earn certification as a principal?

Yes, this program is designed in accordance with SBEC Principal Certification Competencies. Candidates must also pass the Texas Principal as Instructional Leader Certification Assessment (268), as well as the Performance Assessment for School Leader (PASL) assessments to be eligible to apply for certification. The certification is valid for PK-12 principal and assistant principal positions in Texas for any type of school (public, private, charter, urban, suburban, rural). **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Candidates for this program are required to have two years of teaching experience in an accredited school. Although teacher certification is not required for admission to the program, it is a requirement if the candidate wishes to apply for Texas principal certification. (This is a state requirement.)

What if I want to be in a leadership role but don't want to be a principal?

Other career options available to candidates completing this degree include a wide variety of instructional leadership positions such as curriculum director, instructional coach, dean of students, department chair, program director, and director of professional development.

Is this program only for public school teachers?

No. The ASLP is open to teachers or other professional educators from a variety of school settings. As indicated above, the Master's Degree in Educational Leadership prepares educators for leadership positions in all types of pre-K through grade-12 settings. The program is intense and rigorous; therefore, it is intended for educators who demonstrate a high level of commitment, initiative, and focus, in addition to the leadership traits and dispositions identified in state and national standards.

Who is on the faculty?

Our permanent faculty is comprised of distinguished leaders and scholars with a broad base of expertise and practical experience and a strong personal commitment to excellent teaching.

Are courses scheduled so that full-time teachers can take them without missing school?

Yes! Students begin the program in the summer as part of a cohort. Classes are taught on the main campus. Internship experiences are integrated throughout the program and are completed on each student's campus of employment. As previously mentioned, it is an intense program and requires careful planning in order to balance academic work, personal/family needs, and professional commitments.

Is there a thesis requirement? What about comprehensive exams at the end of the program?

In lieu of a thesis or comprehensive exams, this program requires a field-based project which integrates competencies from the five core strands of Instructional Leadership, Building Human Capital, Executive Leadership, School Culture, and Strategic Operations. The project is carried out throughout the program and tracked in an electronic portfolio. The project is finalized during the summer session at the end of the program.

What if I want to be in a leadership role at a community college or a university?

The M.Ed. program in Higher Education is available in our department to serve educators at this level.

Is there a doctoral program for principals who wish to pursue a doctorate?

Yes. The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership is designed for educational leaders who work full-time.
<https://www.smu.edu/simmons/Academics/PK-12SchoolLeadership/EdDEducationalLeadership>

What is the cost of the program? Is financial aid available? Are scholarships available?

Current published tuition rates are \$700 per credit hour. Financial aid is available. Students interested in applying for financial aid should complete and submit the FAFSA, which can be done even before applying for program admission. Information on financial aid and completing the FAFSA is available at http://smu.edu/financial_aid/. Scholarships are also available. Students interested in scholarships must indicate their interest in the online application.

How do I apply?

The application for admission is located on the program website.

<https://www.smu.edu/simmons/Academics/PK-12SchoolLeadership/MEdAcceleratedSchoolLeadership>

Please note that the GRE is required for any applicant whose GPA is below 3.0. (See <http://www.ets.org/gre/>)

Can I transfer credits from another institution? Can I take courses as electives without being enrolled in the program?

Because this is such a unique program with an integrated curriculum, opportunities to transfer credits from other programs are very limited and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. At this time, only students who are accepted into this program and are enrolled in the program on a full-time basis may take courses.