

2025-26

STUDENT HANDBOOK

M.Ed. in Higher Education



College of Education

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Welcome

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS) in the University of Houston’s College of Education! By joining our graduate, certificate, and accelerated certification programs, you become part of a Tier One research community dedicated to preparing compassionate, transformative leaders who improve educational outcomes for every learner. Whether you aspire to lead a school, district, university office, community organization or policy initiative, ELPS offers the rigorous curriculum, scholarly expertise and richly diverse Houston partnerships to help you advance your career and serve the public good.

This Student Handbook complements—yet does not replace—the University of Houston and College of Education policies and procedures outlined in their official documents (including the College’s Graduate Student Success Handbook). Here you will find ELPS- and program-specific expectations, milestones, resources and support services to guide your academic and professional journey. Because policies evolve, the information in this handbook is subject to change; your program will keep you informed of any updates, and individual programs may issue additional handbooks for specialized requirements.

We are thrilled to welcome you to our vibrant community of students, faculty and alumni committed to leading equitable, evidence-based change across the educational pipeline. We look forward to learning with you and celebrating your accomplishments!

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Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS) Team

The ELPS Department supports students from application to graduation—and beyond—as you grow into a transformative leader and Coog alum!

The Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies provides leadership and ongoing support for our graduate programs, faculty, and students. Our goal is to foster excellence in all aspects of the graduate experience, including teaching, advising, scholarship, and professional development. We serve as a hub for communication, guidance, and advocacy within the department and act as a liaison between our students, program faculty, and the College of Education. We work closely with the College's Graduate Student Success team and the UH Graduate School to help ensure our students have access to the resources, services, and support needed to achieve their academic and professional goals.

Team members

- Dr. Kristen Hassett – Department Chair & Clinical Professor, khassett@cougarnet.uh.edu
- Dr. Keith Butcher – Associate Chair for Certification & Accreditation, kbutche2@cougarnet.uh.edu
- Dr. Vincent Carales – Associate Chair for Research & Development, vcarales@cougarnet.uh.edu
- Dr. Charlotte Carp – Associate Chair for Curriculum & Student Success, clcarp@cougarnet.uh.edu
- Mr. Norquezdan Florence – Program Manager 2, njfloren@cougarnet.uh.edu
- Ms. Deborah Gary – Program Coordinator 2, dagary@cougarnet.uh.edu

Contact us

- McElhinney, Suite 3001
- Email ELPS: delps@cougarnet.uh.edu

Higher Education Faculty

Additional information about the Higher Education program faculty is available on our website:

<https://www.uh.edu/education/departments/elps/faculty/>.

Institutional and College of Education Resources

For information about university-wide and college-level resources, please refer to the Graduate Student Success (GSS) Handbook. The following section provides department-specific resources and guidance relevant to students in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies.

Higher Education Listservs and Microsoft SharePoint and Stream

All students are added to a program listserv using their UH email and are expected to regularly read emails. Program faculty share important information via the listserv, e.g., program deadlines, funding opportunities, professional development events, announcements, etc.

All students also have access to the [HELPS Community SharePoint and Stream](#) platforms through Office365. The SharePoint site serves as a repository for resources related to our program. Students should bookmark this page to reference often as program documents and links are accessible through the site. The Microsoft

Stream site includes video recordings of past professional development sessions. Students should be automatically added to these platforms but can also [request access](#).

Grievances

Students may grieve any faculty decision or action that affects their progress through the program. If the student chooses to grieve, he or she must follow the formal grievance procedures as specified in the [ELPS Student Grievance Policy](#), the [College of Education Student Grievance Policy](#), and in the [UH Graduate Studies Catalog](#).

Student Benchmarks

M.Ed. Classifications

- **Full-time students** in the master's program engage in a cohort-based, on-campus learning environment and typically hold a graduate assistantship within a university student or academic affairs office. The full-time curriculum is typically completed in two (2) academic years (fall and spring semesters).
- **Online students** in the master's program participate in a cohort model that enables students to earn their master's degree in six successive semesters (approximately two years). The online M.Ed. follows an 8-week course model to help students focus and maintain momentum through the fall and spring semester - with students taking two courses per semester. In the online cohort, students are expected to enroll in two courses per academic term including summer terms. During the summer, students enroll in two courses over the full summer term, usually 10 weeks. The online format makes earning a master's degree in Higher Education possible for students who are place-bound, or who have existing family or work obligations that make it difficult to regularly attend face-to-face class meetings.

Students admitted into one program delivery format must stay enrolled in that format, registering for classes offered only in that delivery format. All deviations must be requested by graduate petition and approved by the ELPS Associate Chair for Curriculum & Student Success.

Internship in Higher Education Leadership

All students pursuing the M.Ed. must complete at least one internship for academic credit during their academic program according to their prescribed course sequence. The internship provides an opportunity for students to gain supervised practical experience that will complement their learning experiences in the classroom while diversifying their professional experiences. Internship requirements include goal setting, project responsibilities, development of a professional philosophy, problem solving, conflict management, and integration of theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Learning experiences in a professional environment can serve as an important component to development, which occurs when the learning opportunities are experienced, reflected upon, and synthesized. In addition to the experiential learning opportunity, all internships include in-class academic components.

Students can pursue internship opportunities in a wide array of functional areas and at a variety of institutional types. Past internships have been completed at Rice University, University of Houston Downtown, Houston City College, St. Thomas University, Houston Christian University, San Jacinto College and LoneStar College.

Students are encouraged to seek out internship placements that align with future career goals and identify internship supervisors who are willing and able to provide appropriate job supervision, periodic evaluation, and timely skill assessment. Internships must be approved by the ELCS 6393 Internship in Higher Education instructor prior to course enrollment. The specific number of required experiential hours of internship-related activities varies according to your full-time higher education experience.

- All M.Ed. program students are expected to complete 100 experiential hours.
- The internship requirement is optional for students who currently work in higher education and have more than 5 years full-time, higher education experience prior to enrolling in the Higher Education program at UH. In lieu of the internship course, students will choose an additional elective.

Students may participate in an additional internship experience beyond the one required by enrolling in an additional section of the ELCS 6393 Internship in Higher Education course. For this course, students are expected to complete approximately 100 experiential hours of internship-related activities and complete a culminating, reflective course project.

Culminating Experience – Comprehensive Exam

In addition to completing required coursework, students must complete the Comprehensive Exam. The comprehensive examination provide students an opportunity to organize and synthesize their learning while in the program. Students are expected to cite sources or authorities to support their answers. Evaluation is based on six criteria: a) evidence of content and knowledge of the literature, b) proper citation of scholarly resources to support one's position, c) integration of theory concepts with practice, d) organization and clarity of written response, e) completeness of response, and (f) quality of writing.

The comprehensive examination is a take-home writing and research assignment completed over a 5 day period. The exam is distributed on a Thursday at 12 pm CT and must be returned no later than the following Tuesday at 12 pm CT. Students with documented academic accommodations should submit all paperwork to the ELPS Program Manager in advance of the exam administration.

The exam consists of 3 core questions that address key content areas across the M.Ed. in Higher Education Program curriculum. The 3 content areas covered on the exam are:

1. Higher Education Leadership and Administration
2. Student Development and Student Services
3. Assessment, Evaluation, and Research

The examination is offered once a year – in the Spring semester. Students must have completed at least 24 required hours and should apply for the exam through MyAdvisor. Application deadlines and exam dates are scheduled each year and are listed in the Dates to Remember document which is located in the student HELPS Community Sharepoint folder. Under exceptional circumstances, students may petition to take the comprehensive examination outside of the Spring semester, but it must be requested by graduate petition and approved by the Higher Education program faculty.

Approximately one month prior to the exam administration, an information session will be held to provide students with guidance on preparing for the exam. Faculty will provide students with appropriate review

materials, but students will not be given an exact question that will appear on the exam. After being approved to take the exam, students will receive detailed exam instructions, along with the grading rubric faculty will use to score the assignment. For each question, students will prepare a 5-7 double-paged response and may use available resources (e.g., course books and readings, journal articles) in doing so. The paper must adhere to APA guidelines and include a list of references (minimum of 10 scholarly sources per question) used in the development of the exam responses. Students will submit their exam to TurnItIn, an online plagiarism detection website, via Canvas. At least two full-time Higher Education faculty members will score each question of the exam through an identity-hidden process. Each faculty member is responsible for scoring the exam and returning it within 15 working days. There are three possible outcomes for scoring each question: High Pass, Pass or No Pass.

The Department notifies the student of the results of their examination. Ultimately, students must pass all three questions with a passing score to pass comps and fulfill this academic benchmark within the program. If students do not pass one of the questions on the initial administration, they will be asked to participate in an oral or written remediation within the same semester. If students must remediate, a meeting will be scheduled with a member of the Higher Education faculty shortly after the exam results are shared to discuss feedback on responses before the remediation. If a student does not pass two of the three questions on the initial administration, they must retake all sections of the comprehensive exam at the next administration, which will be during the next academic year. The process of grading for remediation is the same as it is for initial exam evaluation. However, if the student fails the examination at a second administration (as a result of failing their first examination attempt or failing remediation in their first attempt) they shall be ineligible for a master's degree in the College of Education at the University of Houston.

Required Courses

- ELCS 7338 - Cultural Foundations of American Education
- ELCS 6322 - Org & Admin Stud. Support Serv
- ELCS 6332 - Student Develop/Student Affairs
- ELCS 6334 - Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education
- ELCS 6338 - American Higher Education
- ELCS 6342 - Critical Issues in Higher Education
- ELCS 6371 - Research Methods in Higher Education
- ELCS 6380 - Educational Planning & Policy
- ELCS 6393 - Internship in Higher Education
- ELCS 7330 - Admin of Higher Educ I
- ELCS 7354 – Leadership for Change
- Elective (course must be 6000-level or higher; consult with advisor)

Course descriptions are available in the Graduate Catalog, located at <https://publications.uh.edu/>.