

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration Program Handbook

2024

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Department of Organization and School Leadership Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

Department's Vision Statement

The Department of Organization and School Leadership will be nationally recognized for preparing educational leaders to transform schools into culturally responsive learning communities.

Departments Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Organization and School Leadership is to continuously improve leadership development through teaching, research, and service, including the cultural and linguistic history of the Texas-Mexico border.

Program Overview

The Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration program within the Department of Organization and School Leadership at UTRGV will prepare those who aspire to leadership positions in crucial college or university administrative areas with the required knowledge, skills, and competencies that higher education administrators need to enter such positions. The preparation of students focuses on the comprehensive and social justice-oriented preparation of leaders for entry and advancement in higher education, student affairs, and school-to-university transition. The program will integrate classroom-based and field-based learning. Program graduates can be employed in various post-secondary institutions, including community and technical colleges, research universities, liberal arts colleges, and minority-serving colleges and universities.

The MA in Higher Education Administration comprises 30 credit hours of required coursework, including an approved practicum course that will expose students to the field and its various specializations. Program graduates can assume positions or promotions in administrative areas like Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and Advising, Recruitment and Outreach, Admissions and Financial Aid, Housing and Residential Life, Career Services, Student Retention, and Student Success Programs such as Institutional Research, Policy, and Planning.

Through relevant coursework, research opportunities, experiential learning, and professional developmental activities, graduates will:

- Thrive in the diverse, fast-paced, and often uncertain contexts unique to colleges and universities.
- Exhibit leadership qualities grounded in theory and effective practice.
- Positively influence student adjustment to college, academic performance, and ultimately, degree completion.
- Realign campus support services aligned to student needs through meaningful strategic planning and policy analysis.
- Become change agents whose efforts ultimately increase access and success for students, particularly those from less advantaged backgrounds.

The MA in Higher Education Administration will be offered as an Accelerated Online Program (AOP), providing students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to advance in a college or university setting.

Admission Requirements

Graduate College Admissions: To be admitted to a graduate program at UTRGV, the student must meet all requirements for admission to UTRGV. The application for admission to the university must be submitted online and is available at:

www.utrgv.edu/gradapply

Requirements for Graduate Admission

1. Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution in the United States or a recognized international equivalent in a similar or related field.
2. Undergraduate GPA of 3.0 in the last 60 semester credit hours for clear admission.
3. Official transcripts from each institution attended (must be submitted directly to UTRGV from the awarding institution).
4. Statement detailing professional goals, campus leadership experience, and reasons for pursuing a Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration.
5. Resume including educational background and work experience.

The program coordinator reviews all applications and determines acceptance into the program. Following their policy, the UTRGV Graduate College will offer an official

admission. The Department of Organization and School Leadership will also send the applicant an offer letter for admission into the program.

Procedure for Applying to the Program

Step #1: Submit a UTRGV Graduate Application at utrgv.edu/gradapply. There is no application fee.

Step #2: Request your official transcripts to be sent electronically to gradapps@utrgv.edu or mailed to:
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
The Graduate College
Marialice Shary Shivers Bldg. 1.158
1201 W. University Drive
Edinburg, TX 78539-2999

*Please Note: If you are a graduate of UTPA, UTB, or UTRGV, you do not need to request an official transcript to be sent to the Graduate College.

Course Descriptions

Course Descriptions and Prescribed Sequence of Courses

EDHE 6301 - Research Methods in Higher Education

The course focuses on studying research processes, using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches to formulate problem statements, research questions and hypotheses, and appropriate research designs.

EDHE 6302 - Organizational Theory and Leadership in Higher Education

This course is designed to examine basic organizational theories and models of leadership and management. It emphasizes shared leadership in professional organizations, communication skills, systems thinking, and organizational change. Practical applications in higher educational settings will be made.

EDHE 6303 - Critical Issues in Higher Education – Seminar/Social Issues in HSIs

This course focuses on current issues facing Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Students will demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical basis for current issues in higher education. They will research current problems and practices impacting college students in HSIs. Some study areas may include student development, diversity and access, demographic trends, multiculturalism, leadership and governance, and community colleges.

EDHE 6304 - College Student Development: Theory and Practice

This course introduces theories and research on college student development. In particular, participants will examine selected theories describing patterns of growth and development during the college years and explore how these theories can be applied to student affairs and higher education practice.

EDHE 6305 - Organizational Ethics

This course prepares students to meet ethical challenges in modern educational institutions, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. This course will address moral issues at every organizational level—personal, interpersonal, group, and system-wide. This course covers a variety of topics such as identifying personal mission and values, developing character, faith in the workplace, ethical perspectives, moral reasoning and decision-making formats, ethical organizational communication and influence, ethical group behavior and leadership, creating an ethical organizational climate, and global corporate social responsibility.

EDHE 6306 - Student Affairs

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the field of student affairs and its role in higher education. The content covered in this course will help introduce students to the nature of student affairs as a field of study and a profession, as well as major functional areas within student affairs. It will also help students become familiar with the professional competencies required for good student affairs practice. This course will examine organizational structures, leadership, and management processes associated with college and university student affairs administration.

EDHE 6307 - Access and Equity in Higher Education (HSI)

This course is designed for students to develop an understanding of the educational and public policy issues that promote and/or hinder access to higher education, with a particular focus on Hispanic-serving institutions. This course will attempt to develop a complex, comprehensive understanding of access and equity in higher education.

EDHE 6308 - Strategic Talent Development in Higher Education

This course is designed to help leaders align talent development strategy with universities' missions. It focuses on coaching practices, developing and managing talent, and developing talent systems at the system, department, and individual levels. This course will have an institutionally guided project sponsored by students who are sponsoring higher education institutions.

EDHE 6309 - Budgeting and Finance in Higher Education

This course will introduce students to important concepts, theories, and fiscal practices of higher education budget and finance. It will review the primary political, economic, and social issues influencing higher education finance, examine revenue streams and expenditure patterns, survey tuition and financial aid policies, help

students develop the ability to examine and analyze financial information and assess the budget as an instrument of strategic planning, resource allocation, and control.

EDHE 6310 - Graduate Practicum

This course is designed to provide exploratory experiences for students in different functional areas of higher education, such as student affairs, business affairs, academic affairs, or institutional development. This supervised field experience will provide exposure to different functional areas and will allow the student to gain perspective of the breadth and depth of the division.

Course Sequence

Spring, Mod. 1

EDHE 6301
EDHE 6302
EDHE 6305
EDHE 6306

Spring, Mod. 2

EDHE 6305
EDHE 6306
EDHE 6307
EDHE 6308

Summer 1

EDHE 6301
EDHE 6302
EDHE 6309
EDHE 6310

Summer 2

EDHE 6303
EDHE 6304
EDHE 6305
EDHE 6306

Fall, Mod. 1

EDHE 6305
EDHE 6306
EDHE 6307
EDHE 6308

Fall, Mod. 2

EDHE 6303

EDHE 6304
EDHE 6305
EDHE 6306

Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will apply comprehensive systematic inquiry to analyze a research problem, review related literature, analyze research methodologies, and identify research findings and implications for higher education administration. (6301)
2. Students will synthesize and apply organizational theory scholarship in higher education administration. (6302)
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse perspectives in higher education administration by outlining the key views held by at least two key subgroups. (6303)
4. Students will synthesize and apply student development knowledge in higher education administration. (6304)

University Policies for Graduate Students

Academic Responsibilities and Appeals

Students wishing to appeal final grades or misunderstandings in academic standards should first discuss the matter with the individual instructor of the class. Suppose no resolution occurs, and the student wishes to pursue the matter further. In that case, he or she should appeal in writing to the department chair involved within one year after the disputed grade is issued or the misunderstanding occurred. The department chair will respond in writing to the students within ten class days of receiving the student's written appeal. Pursuant appeals will be written and directed within ten class days of the date of the department chair's decision to the school, college, or division Academic Appeals Committee. The committee will consist of a panel of three faculty members, two of whom may not be from the department where the appeal originated. The dean/director will appoint the panel members upon receipt of the written appeal and notify the student in writing of the date, time, and location of the hearing and the names of the panel members. The hearing will occur within ten class days of the dean's/director's receipt of the student's written appeal. The student and the faculty member may appear before the panel and present evidence and/or witnesses. The hearing will be closed to the public, and no person other than the student, the faculty member involved, or panel members may be present. No person may represent the student or the faculty member.

After the Academic Appeals Committee has heard the appeal, it will deliberate and come to a decision. The committee's decision will be written and mailed or delivered in person to the student and faculty member within ten class days of the close of the hearing.

The student may appeal in writing to the dean/director within fourteen class days. The dean/director's decision will be final and must be mailed or delivered in person to the student within fourteen class days of receiving the student's written appeal.

<https://utrgv.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/student-policies/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-responsibilities-and-appeal/>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: (1) turning in work as original that was used in whole or in part for another course and/or instructor without obtaining permission; (2) turning in another person's work in part or in whole, as your own; (3) copying from professional works without citing them; and (4) any form of cheating on exams or quizzes.

Academic integrity/honesty violations may result in a zero on the assignment, an "F" in the course, and/or possible suspension or expulsion from the University. Academic integrity/honesty is a matter of professional ethics for anyone involved in the field of education.

<https://www.utrgv.edu/srr/students/academic-dishonesty/index.htm>

<https://www.utrgv.edu/srr/students/academic-dishonesty/avoiding-academic-dishonesty/index.htm>

Academic Probation and Suspension

Academic Standings – Defined

Graduate students must regularly monitor their academic standing in [ASSIST](#) to ensure they meet academic requirements. The three academic standing statuses are defined as below:

Good Standing - A status of **good standing** means that you are excelling academically and fulfilling all the academic requirements established by the university. To remain in **good standing**, you must maintain a minimum cumulative and term GPA of 3.0 for master's students or [3.25 for doctoral students and the other requirements set by the university](#).

Probationary Status - This warning status alerts you that your cumulative and/or term GPA has fallen below the 3.0 GPA requirement for master's students or 3.25 for doctoral students. This warning means you must demonstrate you can handle the academic rigors of your graduate program, including maintaining a GPA of at least 3.0 for master's students/3.25 for doctoral students.

Probationary students who do not raise their GPA to a minimum of 3.0 GPA at the end of the probationary semester or module are suspended for the following semester or module.

Suspension Status – A **suspension status** means that you have been dropped from your enrolled courses and will be prevented from registering for future courses. You are placed on **suspension** if any of the following scenarios occur:

- Cumulative GPA falls below the minimum (3.0 for master's students/3.25 for doctoral students) for two consecutive terms
- Term GPA falls below the minimum (3.0 for master's students/3.25 for doctoral students) for 2 consecutive terms
- Receiving an 'F' grade in any course results in automatic suspension (*Note: your Academic Standing may not immediately update to Suspension.*)

A student who receives an F in any course is suspended for the following semester or module without a probationary semester or module, regardless of cumulative GPA.

[Appeal for Reinstatement Instructions](#)

See <https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-new-and-current-students/academic-probation-suspension/index.htm>

Student Accessibility Services

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Services office for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities fully or to meet course requirements. Students who receive accommodation services must register with the Student Accessibility Services, University Center #108, 665-7005 or sas@utrgv.edu

<https://www.utrgv.edu/accessibility/>

Faculty Concerns about a Student

According to H.O.P. policy, when a faculty or staff member observes concerning, disruptive, or threatening student behavior, they will call the Student Concern Intervention Team (SCIT) at 665-5375. SCIT will assess the situation and coordinate a response that protects the safety and rights of everyone within the university community.

Suppose faculty or staff members receive a credible report that a student has engaged in or threatened suicidal behaviors. That student will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students.

[https://www.utrgv.edu/studentlife/resources/faculty-staff/helping-students/index.htm#:~:text=Let%20the%20student%20know%20that,\)%20665%2D5555%20for%20consultation.](https://www.utrgv.edu/studentlife/resources/faculty-staff/helping-students/index.htm#:~:text=Let%20the%20student%20know%20that,)%20665%2D5555%20for%20consultation.)

<https://www.utrgv.edu/student-life/report-it/index.htm>

Grades/ Grade Changes/Incomplete Grade Policy

General Grade Information

GRADES

Students may view their grades online in ASSIST and see them on unofficial transcripts available there as well, provided they have no holds on their accounts. Unofficial transcripts are only available to active UTRGV students. (Former students must request official transcripts)

GRADE CHANGES

If an error in computation, evaluation, or recording warrants a grade change, the instructor of record (IOR) may initiate a grade change form through the department chair, program director, or college dean. In the event that the university no longer employs the IOR, the academic dean will make a good-faith effort to contact him or her before deciding whether to change the grade. In cases where a grade of NR (Not Reported) was administratively assigned to a student for a class, the IOR or designee should follow this same grade change process.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

An incomplete (I) grade is a temporary grade given only after the final official drop date for the term and only if:

- The student is passing the course to date.

- The student will not have completed the required coursework or exam within the allotted time of a regular semester or summer session, and
- The instructor determines that the reason for the work being incomplete is valid and that the grade of "I" is justified.

Incomplete grades are not to be awarded to students who failed to attend or stopped attending classes.

A written agreement between the student and the instructor specifying the work to be made up and the deadline for its accomplishment should be filed in the office of the Department Chair when the "I" is submitted. The work agreed upon between the instructor and the student must be satisfactorily completed, and the "I" changed no later than the end of the following long term (Fall or Spring) from the date the "I" was submitted (unless an extension is requested by the instructor and communicated to the Office of the University Registrar) or the grade will convert to a failing grade unless the faculty member identifies an alternate grade to be assigned at the time of submitting the written agreement between the student and faculty member.

Faculty members wishing to assign an Incomplete grade may do so during the regular grading period via ASSIST; otherwise, a grade of NR (Not Reported) will appear as the student's grade. Grades of NR may negatively impact students' eligibility for financial aid.

<https://utrgv.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/student-policies/academic-policies-and-procedures/grades/general-grade-information/#:~:text=GRADE%20CHANGES,program%20director%2C%20or%20college%20dean.>

Earning an "F"

Scholastic Probation and Suspension For a degree-seeking student in a master's program to remain in good academic standing, the student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (3.0=B on a 4.0 scale). *A student whose overall GPA falls below 3.0 in each semester is automatically placed on academic probation the following semester.*

Master's students are ineligible to continue if they receive a grade of C or lower in 9 semester hours of credit attempted for graduate credit, regardless of the student's classification, whether in repeated courses. A student whose overall GPA falls below 3.0 in each semester is automatically placed on academic probation the following semester. Within the following nine semester credit hours, the overall GPA must return to 3.0, or the student will be suspended for at least one semester.

A student who receives an F in any course is automatically dismissed from the graduate program.

A suspended graduate student may petition for readmission. To petition for readmission into a graduate program, the suspended student must submit a written request through the "Submittal System" for appeal for reinstatement consideration, which will then be forwarded to the Master's Program Coordinator and the Department Chair. The Department Chair will then forward it to the Office of the Dean. The Graduate College Dean may approve or deny admission to the graduate program.

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/<https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-new-and-current-students/academic-probation-suspension/appeal-for-reinstatement-instructions.pdf>

<https://www.utrgv.edu/ucentral/grades-and-transcripts/index.htm>

Reporting Sexual Misconduct or Discrimination

The University condemns sexual harassment of or by its students, staff, and faculty. The University is committed to the principle that the learning and working environment of its students, employees, and guests should be free from sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is illegal. Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment are unprofessional behaviors. Such conduct is prohibited as a matter of institutional policy and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students who believe they are victims of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately report the incident to the Dean of Students, the EO/AA Officer, or the supervisor of the accused individual. The Dean of Students, or his or her designee, will work in consultation with the EO/AA Officer to resolve the complaint.

<https://www.utrgv.edu/otixeo/services/report/index.htm#:~:text=UTRGV%20is%20committed%20to%20maintaining,a%20report%20of%20sexual%20misconduct.>

<https://www.utrgv.edu/police/crime/information/sexual-assault-awareness/index.htm>

Student Conduct and Discipline

UTRGV students are expected to behave responsibly and with integrity. All students should be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://www.utrgv.edu/compliance/_files/documents/utrgv-standards-of-conduct-guide.pdf

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/stu-02-100.pdf

Transfer of Graduate Credits to UTRGV:

Ordinarily, all work for the master's degree must be completed at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Under some circumstances, up to nine (9) semester credit hours of appropriate graduate work earned at an accredited institution or international equivalent and in which the grade is A or B may be transferred to the program of study. Individual graduate degree programs may accept fewer hours or have additional requirements. Transfer of graduate credit is not automatic. The student must submit a written request for approval of transfer to the director/coordinator of the graduate program. A graduate student seeking to use coursework completed at another institution must provide an official transcript, the official explanation of the institution's course numbering system and grading system, and the course description from the institution's catalog. Along with these documents, the Transfer of Graduate Credit Towards a Graduate Degree form should be completed and submitted by the director/coordinator for approval by the chair/director of the department/school, the college dean, and the dean of the Graduate College. The decision by the dean of the Graduate College is final.

A course may be transferred only if:

1. The student is in the current graduate degree program and has good academic standing.
2. The course is equivalent to a graduate-level course at UTRGV or is appropriate for elective credit at the graduate level within the student's degree program; the grade for the course is not less than B.
3. The course was not taken at such a date that it would extend the student's time for achieving the degree beyond the approval limit for the graduate program (seven years for a master's program and 10 years for a doctoral program).
4. Courses have not been used toward another degree program.
5. Coursework earned on the quarterly system is generally calculated at two-thirds of the credit for courses offered on a semester basis. Thus, a three-credit-

hour course taken on the quarter system may be transferred as no more than two credit hours.

6. UTRGV will not accept thesis courses for transfer to fulfill the thesis hour requirement for a degree. The Graduate College dean will consider courses delivered in a distance learning format on a case-by-case basis. However, correspondence or extension courses are not transferable.

All petitions should be processed and approved no later than the semester before the anticipated graduation. To ensure acceptance of transfer credit toward the graduate degree, the student must obtain prior written approval for any courses to be taken at another institution after the student has matriculated to UTRGV. Exceptions to these transfer policies may be granted only by petition to the dean of the Graduate College. All documents submitted to the university for transfer purposes become part of the university's official files and cannot be released or returned to the student or another institution.

<https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-new-and-current-students/transfer-of-graduate-credit/index.htm>

University Email

University policy requires all electronic communication between the University and students to be conducted through the official university-supplied systems. Students must use their assigned mail or Blackboard account to correspond with UTRGV faculty and staff.

<https://support.utrgv.edu/TDClient/1849/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=86647#:~:text=UTRGV%20issued%20email%20is%20the,Retention%20Policies%20and%20Security%20requirements>.

<https://support.utrgv.edu/TDClient/1849/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=158165>