

WISCONSIN IDEA EXECUTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION PROGRAM, EdS

The Educational Specialist Program is most often completed by someone seeking a superintendent license. In Wisconsin, to be eligible for a superintendent license, you must either be in a PhD program and have completed preliminary exams (dissertation proposal) or hold an educational specialist degree.

ADMISSIONS

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Students may not apply directly for the Educational Specialist (EdS) in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) degree. It is available to students who entered the PhD in ELPA, but chose not to complete the final requirement of the PhD: a dissertation. As a non-admitting degree, the EdS requires a degree change (from PhD to EdS) in the student's final semester of the program. If you are interested in applying for the PhD program, please see program information here (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/educational-leadership-policy-analysis/educational-leadership-policy-analysis-phd/>).

FUNDING

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GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees (<https://bursar.wisc.edu/tuition-and-fees/>) associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirements>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policies>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW-Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirements	Detail
Minimum Credit Requirement	60 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	24 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	60 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/).
Other Grade Requirements	n/a
Assessments and Examinations	A practicum experience requiring 150 contact hours for an initial administrator license and an additional 75 hours for each additional administrative license. Practicums are completed under the guidance of department faculty.
Language Requirements	Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

Students must complete the following minimal requirements to earn the Educational Specialist in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis degree.

Code	Title	Credits
Category I		
ELPA 702		3
Category II		
ELPA 832	Resource Allocation for Equity and Social Justice	3
ELPA 846	The School Superintendency	3
ELPA 860	Organizational Theory and Behavior in Education	3
ELPA 870	The Politics of Education	3
ELPA 875	Theory and Practice of Educational Planning	3
Category III		
At least ten (10) additional courses including at least thirty (30) graduate credits selected from any courses in Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis. (A maximum of three (3) graduate credits of ELPA 990 or ELPA 999 may be included in the 30 credits.) Students seeking Superintendent Certification need to incorporate required coursework into Category III. In addition to Category II coursework, Superintendent Certification requires:		
ELPA 890	Applied Research in Educational Administration	3

Research Methods and Statistics Courses

At least two (2) courses including six (6) graduate credits of research courses distributed as follows:

1. An introductory statistics course which includes descriptive statistics, central tendency, probability, inference, and variance.
2. The research requirement for the Educational Specialist shall be satisfied by completing ELPA 824.

Supporting Courses

At least two (2) courses including six (6) graduate credits of supporting coursework in teaching and learning (typically one course in Curriculum and Instruction and one additional course). Additional courses in teaching and learning are recommended.

Total Credits **60**

Program Approval

The Educational Specialist in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Program plan (as well as any subsequent amendments and changes) must be submitted and approved by the department as soon as is practicable following admission to the program.

Specialist Paper

The department has established the following criteria as guidelines for the specialist paper:

- Derived from a current, practical problem which is researchable and limited in scope.
- Approval, cooperation, or collaboration of the governing board or administration of an educational institution when appropriate.
- Utilize applied, market, or policy research.
- Result in recommendations for action.
- Design and methodology developed by the student and major professor and reviewed and approved by a three-person faculty

committee which will also conduct the oral examination on the completed specialist paper.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 15 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to an educational specialist degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

No undergraduate credits earned at other institutions or for a UW-Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to transfer.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Refer to the Graduate School: Advisor (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232/>) and Graduate School: Committees (Doctoral/Master's/MFA) (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201/>) policies.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

For grievances that involve the behavior of a student, contact the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards in the Dean of Students Office at <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>).

For grievances about, or directed at, faculty or staff in a School of Education department, unit, or program, students should follow these steps:

1. Students are strongly encouraged to first talk with the person against whom the concern is directed. Many issues can be settled informally at this level. If students are unable to resolve concerns directly or without additional support, step 2 or 3 should be pursued.
2. If unresolved after taking or considering step 1:
 - a. If the concern is directed against a teaching assistant (TA), and the student is not satisfied, the student should contact the TA's supervisor, who is usually the course professor. The course professor will attempt to resolve the concern informally.
 - b. If the concern involves a non-TA instructor, staff member, professor, academic department, or School of Education office or unit, the student should contact the chair of the department or the director of the office or unit, or their designee. The chair or director, or their designee, will attempt to resolve the concern informally. If the concern is about the department chair or office/unit director, the student should consult the School of Education Senior Associate Dean for guidance.
3. If the concern remains unresolved after step 2, the student may submit a formal grievance to the chair or director in writing within 30 business days¹ of the alleged unfair treatment. To the fullest extent possible, a formal written grievance shall contain a clear and concise statement of the issue(s) involved and the relief sought.
4. On receipt of a written grievance, the chair or director will notify the person at whom the grievance is directed with a copy of the written grievance. The person at whom the complaint is directed may submit a written response, which would be shared with the student.
5. On receipt of a written grievance, the chair or director will refer the matter to a department, office, or unit committee comprised of at least two members. The committee may be an existing committee or one constituted for this purpose. The committee, or delegates from the committee, may meet with the parties involved and/or review any material either party shares with the committee.
6. The committee will provide a written description of the facts of the grievance and communicate recommendations to the department chair or office/unit head regarding how the grievance should be handled.
7. The chair or director will offer to meet with the student who made the grievance and also will provide a written decision to the student, including a description of any related action taken by the committee, within 30 business days of receiving the formal grievance.

School of Education Grievance Policy and Procedures

The following School of Education Student Grievance Policy and associated procedures are designed for use in response to individual student grievances regarding faculty or staff in the School of Education.

Any individual student who feels they have been treated unfairly by a School of Education faculty or staff member has the right to file a grievance about the treatment and receive a timely response addressing their concerns. Any student, undergraduate or graduate, may use these grievance procedures, except employees whose complaints are covered under other campus policies. The grievance may concern classroom treatment, mentoring or advising, program admission or continuation, course grades (study abroad grade complaints are handled through International Academic Programs (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/>)), or issues not covered by other campus policies or grievance procedures.

For grievances regarding discrimination based on protected bases (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/>) (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, etc.), contact the Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/>).

For grievances or concerns regarding sexual harassment or sexual violence (including sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation), contact the Sexual Misconduct Resource and Response Program (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) within the Office of Compliance.

¹ For the purpose of this policy, business days refers to those days when the University Offices are open and shall not include weekends, university holidays, spring recess, or the period from the last day of exams of fall semester instruction to the first day of spring semester

instruction. All time limits may be modified by mutual consent of the parties involved.

If the grievance concerns an undergraduate course grade, the decision of the department chair after reviewing the committee's recommendations is final.

Other types of grievances may be appealed using the following procedures:

1. Both the student who filed the grievance or the person at whom the grievance was directed, if unsatisfied with the decision of the department, office or unit, have five (5) business days from receipt of the decision to contact the Senior Associate Dean, indicating the intention to appeal.
2. A written appeal must be filed with the Senior Associate Dean within 10 business days of the time the appealing party was notified of the initial resolution of the complaint.
3. On receipt of a written appeal, the Senior Associate Dean will convene a sub-committee of the School of Education's Academic Planning Council. This subcommittee may ask for additional information from the parties involved and/or may hold a meeting at which both parties will be asked to speak separately (i.e., not in the room at the same time).
4. The subcommittee will then make a written recommendation to the Dean of the School of Education, or their designee, who will render a decision. The dean or designee's written decision shall be made within 30 business days from the date when the written appeal was filed with the Senior Associate Dean. For undergraduate students, the dean or designee's decision is final.

Further appealing a School of Education decision – *graduate students only*

Graduate students have the option to appeal decisions by the School of Education dean or designee by using the process detailed on the Graduate School's website (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>).

Questions about these procedures can be directed to the School of Education Dean's Office, 377 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall, 608-262-1763.

Resources

- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for discrimination based on protected classes, including misconduct) 179A Bascom Hall, 608-262-2378
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts between students, or academic integrity violations) 70 Bascom Hall, 608-263-5700
- Harassment, Discrimination and Bias Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>) (support information for students who experience or observe incidents of harassment, discrimination or bias) 70 Bascom Hall, 608-263-5700
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for graduate students who need informal advice at any level of review; for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions, see Graduate Assistant Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/>)) 217 Bascom Hall, 608-262-2433
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for UW–Madison employees, including graduate students) 523-524 Lowell Center, 608-265-9992
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving graduate assistants and other employees) 256 Lowell Hall, 608-263-2987
- Office of Human Resources (<https://kb.wisc.edu/ohr/policies/search.php?cat=4506>) for policies and procedures to address workplace conflict) 21 N Park Street Suite 5101, 608-265-2257
- Office of Student Assistance and Support (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (OSAS) (for any students needing advice or support) 70 Bascom Hall, 608-263-5700
- School of Education, Office of Student Services (<https://education.wisc.edu/about/student-services/>) (for students, particularly undergraduates, in the School of Education) 139 Education Building, 608-262-1651
- School of Education, The Center for Community and Well-Being (<https://education.wisc.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/>) 145 Education Building, 608-262-8427

OTHER

n/a

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Articulate research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the study of educational leadership.
2. Formulate ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques beyond the boundaries of knowledge within the study of educational leadership.
3. Create research or scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to the field of practice.
4. Demonstrate breadth within their learning experiences through experiences and artifacts in curriculum and instruction, leadership, personnel, and knowledge and skill development gained through field placements.
5. Advance contributions to society in the study and practice of educational leadership.
6. Communicate complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.
7. Understand the role of the Superintendent as the district's "first" educational leader.
8. Identify and view the issues and decisions inherent in district leadership through a social justice lens leading to the elimination of inequity for both students and staff.
9. Explore the many roles and perspectives of the Superintendent as educator, corporate leader and community leader.
10. Develop an understanding of the fundamental personal leadership skills necessary to lead an organization.

11. Recognize the impact that local, state, national and international events/trends (both actual and perceived) have on the office of the Superintendent.
12. Recognize the difference between leadership and management.

The requirements of this program meet certification/licensure requirements in the following states:

Wisconsin

The requirements of this program do not meet certification/licensure requirements in the following states:

Not applicable

Updated: 1 June 2025

CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE

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For educational administrator licensure, a practicum experience requiring 150 contact hours for an initial administrator license and an additional 75 hours for each additional administrative license.

Additional Department of Public Instruction Licensure Requirements

1. Completion of a state-approved educator preparation program in the licensure area.
2. A minimum of a master's degree or the equivalent. Superintendent license requires a specialist degree or equivalent; program coordinator licenses require a bachelor's degree.
3. A valid or eligibility to hold a provisional educator license in teaching or pupil services. School business administrator and program coordinator licenses are waived from this requirement.
4. Six semesters of successful full-time classroom teaching experience, or six semesters of successful experience as a pupil services professional including 540 hours of classroom teaching experience. School business administrator and program coordinator licenses are waived from this requirement.

<https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/general/administrators> (<https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/general/administrators/>)

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION/LICENSURE DISCLOSURE (NC-SARA)

The United States Department of Education (via 34 CFR Part 668 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-668/?toc=1>)) requires institutions that provide distance education to disclose information for programs leading to professional certification or licensure. The expectation is that institutions will determine whether each applicable academic program meets state professional licensure requirements and provide a general disclosure of such on an official university website.

Professional licensure requirements vary from state-to-state and can change year-to-year; they are established in a variety of state statutes, regulations, rules, and policies; and they center on a range of educational requirements, including degree type, specialized accreditation, total credits, specific courses, and examinations.

UW-Madison has taken reasonable efforts to determine whether this program satisfies the educational requirements for certification/licensure in states where prospective and enrolled students are located and is disclosing that information as follows.

Disclaimer: This information is based on the most recent annual review of state agency certification/licensure data and is subject to change. All students are strongly encouraged to consult with the individual/office listed in the Contact Information box on this page and with the applicable state agency for specific information.