

Department of Educational Leadership

Master's Degree and Principal Certification

Educational Administration

STUDENT HANDBOOK



December 2008

Note: This handbook is subject to change without prior notification and updates will be available in the Educational Leadership Department. This handbook does not constitute a catalog and does not carry catalog privileges.

Revised December 8, 2008

Department of Educational Leadership
Texas A&M University-Commerce
P.O. Box 3011
Commerce, Texas 75429

December 8, 2008

Dear Prospective Master's Degree and Principal Certification Students:

Thank you for your interest in the Master's degree and/or principal certification program in educational administration at Texas A&M University-Commerce. The Department of Educational Leadership prepares graduates for leadership positions in schools, districts, and state agencies.

Please become familiar with this handbook and direct any questions to our full-time program faculty. General A&M-Commerce graduate school admissions policies are described in the Graduate Catalog at (<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/gradschool/>). Admission may be initiated at the Commerce campus Graduate Office, the Metroplex Center, or online through the Graduate School web page. Beyond the university admissions requirements, the department requires the following for full admission to *Master's degree programs and also for certification programs*: a combination of GRE scores on the verbal, quantitative, and writing portions of the graduate record examination, an undergraduate GPA, and two letters of recommendation.

A student may take the first two courses of the required core courses as a non-degree seeking student (or on provisional status) prior to taking the GRE and completing full admission. Before signing up for additional core courses, admission (either full or probationary) must be attained from the Graduate School. Successful completion of the first two core courses does not constitute full admission. Candidates must take the GRE. This needs to be completed within the first semester of coursework. Only 6 hours of coursework taken in non-degree status may be used on the Master's requirements. GRE scores must to be submitted to the Graduate School by the end of the first semester of graduate work. The Graduate School only accepts GRE scores on original report forms or directly from ETS, which administers the GRE through Prometric.

Once again, thank you for your interest in the educational administration program at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Sincerely,

Sam Roberson, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor

Master's Degree and Principal Certification Program Co-Directors

Anita Johnston, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor

OUR MISSION

The Department of Educational Leadership at Texas A&M University-Commerce prepares graduates for teaching, service and leadership roles in a variety of educational, business, government, and industry contexts.

OUR VISION

The Department of Educational Leadership at Texas A&M University-Commerce envisions exemplary programs that challenge highly-qualified students to excel in their respective disciplines and careers through engagement in a rigorous and transformative learning environment linking theory to practice while expanding the knowledge base of the learner, the profession and the respective academic discipline.

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Department of Educational Leadership
Master's Degree in Educational Administration
Program Faculty

Wayne D. Bingham, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor
University of North Texas

Casey G. Brown, Ph. D.
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Rex A. Carr, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor
University of Iowa

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Anita L. Johnston, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor and Master's Program Governance Committee Co-Chair
Stephen F. Austin State University

Jane H. MacDonald, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor and Master's Program Governance Committee Member
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Ad Interim Assistant Professor and Master's Program Governance Committee Member
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James A. Vornberg, Ph. D.
Professor and Master's Program Governance Committee Member
University of Arizona

MASTER'S DEGREE ADMISSION

UNIVERSITY-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

The admission policies of the Texas A&M-Commerce Graduate School are described in the Graduate Catalog (<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/gradschool/>). Students who apply for admission to enter the Master's program during or after the Fall 2001 semester will have three admissions options available: (1) full admission (2) admission as a non-degree seeking student, or (3) probationary admission as degree seeking student. Admission may be initiated at the Commerce campus Graduate Office, the Mesquite Metroplex Center, or online through the Graduate School website. Students admitted to begin courses without having been fully admitted to (1), (2), or (3) above are on *provisional* admission, may take no more than two courses (six hours), and **must complete** the entire admissions process before the end of the semester in order to take courses the next semester.

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

Beyond the university admissions requirements, the Department of Educational Leadership requires the following for full admission to both the *Master's Degree and Principal Certification Programs*: GRE scores from the verbal, quantitative, and writing portions of the graduate record examination; a transcript showing undergraduate GPA; and two letters of recommendation.

A student may take the first two courses of the required core courses as a non-degree seeking student (or on provisional status) prior to taking the GRE and completing full admission. However, before signing up for additional core courses, admission (either full or probationary) must be attained. Successful completion of the first two core courses does not constitute full admission.

All graduate school applicants and Principal Program candidates **must** take the GRE prior to or within the first semester of coursework. Only 6 hours of coursework taken in non-degree status may be used on the Master's degree requirements. GRE scores must be submitted by the end of the first semester of graduate work. The Graduate School only accepts GRE scores on original report forms or directly from ETS, which administers the GRE through Prometric (find them on the Web for an appointment to take the test www.prometric.com).

ORIENTATION REQUIREMENT

The department's residency requirement for the Master's degree is fulfilled by completing an Orientation Seminar. The seminar is scheduled during each EDAD 615 class as well as a separate date each semester for students who have not previously attended orientation. Students are typically informed of orientation dates through various means including, posted announcements, announcements in Educational Administration classes, and in the *Administrator Communicator*, the department's student newsletter. Orientation should be completed during the first semester of enrollment and is a requirement for graduation.

The Master's Orientation will inform students of the application and acceptance requirements, discuss the qualities and characteristics of successful students within the program, provide

information regarding degree plans and requirements for graduation and certification, and assist students in completing the Master's degree/Certification plan.

TIME LIMITATIONS FOR CREDIT

All courses credited toward degree requirements must be less than 6 years old at the time of graduation unless the Graduate Dean's approval is obtained.

ADVISEMENT

Once admitted, students may be advised by any full-time program faculty member. The advisor is the main point of contact for the student and should be consulted about questions or problems related to the academic program.

Certification plans must be filed in the Educational Leadership office along with supporting documentation requested on the plan's procedures. Until this filing is completed, your plan is subject to changes in program guidelines. The degree plan does not have catalog privileges.

THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM & REQUIREMENTS

DEGREE PLANNING BEGINNING FALL 2008

Master of Science and Master of Education in Educational Administration

The MS and MEd degree programs include 36 required hours in Educational Administration. All 36 required hours also apply to the department's Principal Certification Program. Students who are seeking the Master's degree and Principal certification should select an approved elective that align with departmental requirements for Principal certification. Students who have not been fully admitted to the program may take up to 6 hours of coursework under non-degree-seeking status while their admission status is pending. These courses are EdAd 615 and EdAd 626. No other courses may be taken until fully admitted.

Fully admitted students will take the following courses:

1. Required **Core** Courses (12 sh):

- EdAd 615—Leading Effective Schools
- EdAd 626—Using the Law in Educational Practice
- EdAd 595—Using Research for Best Practice
- EdAd 574—Developing Quality Instructional Programs

2. Required **Support** Courses (21 sh):

- EdAd 508—Facilitating Learning for Diverse Students
- EdAd 554—Leading the Learning Community
- EdAd 607—Using Evaluation and Data to Improve Learning
- EdAd 614—Leading the Learning Community Internship
- EdAd 619—Designing Curriculum
- EdAd 623—Allocating Resources for Effective Learning
- EdAd 656—Building Capacity for Effective Learning

3. Select 1 **Elective** Course from the following (3 sh):

EdAd 597—Special Topics

EdAd 612—Examining Issues and Trends in School Leadership

EdAd 618—Exploring Educational Issues Colloquium

EdAd 622—Leading and Managing Organizational Change of Improvement

EdAd 658—School Crisis Leadership

EdAd 602—(for students who have already taken this course)

Note: Students completing coursework from older degree plans may request a change to the new 36 hour Master’s degree/certification plan. Keep in mind, however, that some courses will be in excess of what is needed for the new plan (particularly when it comes to electives) and that some courses will no longer be a part of the degree/certification plan (EdAd 602).

MASTER’S COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Satisfactory performance on the department’s comprehensive examination for the Master’s degree is required. The comprehensive examination may be taken during the semester in which 36 credit hours are scheduled to be completed. The department’s retake policy coincides with that of the Graduate School (please see general requirements for the Master’s degree in the Graduate Catalog). To sign up for the exam, contact the departmental secretary at (903) 886-5520. Study guides are available each semester on the department web page to assist in preparing students for this examination. The faculty recommends that students begin preparation several months in advance and encourages students to form study groups for this preparation.

PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION

The Principal Certification Program is designed for principals, assistant principals, administrators of curriculum and instruction, and all school administrators holding a position below that of Superintendent. The certificate requires a minimum of 36 semester hours of graduate work beyond the bachelor’s degree (see Program Scope and Sequence below). In addition to completing the required coursework, applicants for certification must have a teaching certificate, a Master’s degree, 2 years of creditable teaching experience, and pass the Principal TExES certification exam. Students may pursue a graduate degree while simultaneously working toward certification. Those candidates with a Master’s degree in another field at the time of admission to the certificate program may pursue a second Master’s degree in Educational Administration.

ADMISSION TO PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION

Students seeking admission to the Principal Certification Program must meet the departmental requirements for admission to the Master’s degree program. These requirements also apply to students who already hold a Master’s degree.

PROGRAM SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The 36-hour principal certification program includes the hours required for the Master’s degree program, including the same requirements for program matriculation, sequence, and progression

based on the 3.5 grade point average. In addition to the Master's degree requirements, certification students must complete the following courses:

1. Required **Core** Courses (12 sh):

- EdAd 615—Leading Effective Schools
- EdAd 626—Using the Law in Educational Practice
- EdAd 595—Using Research for Best Practice
- EdAd 574—Developing Quality Instructional Programs

2. Required **Support** Courses (21 sh):

- EdAd 508—Facilitating Learning for Diverse Students
- EdAd 554—Leading the Learning Community
- EdAd 607—Using Evaluation and Data to Improve Learning
- EdAd 614—Leading the Learning Community Internship
- EdAd 619—Designing Curriculum
- EdAd 623—Allocating Resources for Effective Learning
- EdAd 656—Building Capacity for Effective Learning

3. Select 1 **Elective** Course from the following (3 sh):

- EdAd 597—Special Topics
- EdAd 612—Examining Issues and Trends in School Leadership
- EdAd 618—Exploring Educational Issues Colloquium
- EdAd 622—Leading and Managing Organizational Change of Improvement
- EdAd 658—School Crisis Leadership
- EdAd 602—(for students who have already taken this course)

REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL TO TAKE THE PRINCIPAL TExES (EXCET)

Students wishing to be approved for the Principal TExES must meet all eligibility requirements specified in the TExES registration bulletin. Principal certification students must (1) have an approved certification plan on file, (2) be enrolled in the certification program, (3) be completing their last semester of coursework, (4) have successfully completed (grades recorded) EDAD 615, 626, 574, 554, 607, 656, and 508, and (5) have no course older than six years (from their first course in the program until the time scheduled to take the TExES exam) to receive approval to take the Principal TExES exam.

It is recommended that students participate in a TExES review session prior to attempting the TExES the first time. The department's goal is for **all** students to be successful on the first administration of the test. Students with concerns should confer with their certification advisor about their preparation to take the TExES and then obtain the necessary approval on their application for the examination.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION OF PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION

Students must complete all requirements for the Principal Certificate during the six years immediately preceding the department's recommendation for certification. Credit for courses earned that exceed the six years prior to recommendation for certification will require written departmental approval in order to be counted toward certification. Students not completing the

program in this time period may not be approved to take the Principal TExES and may be required to complete additional coursework or satisfy other requirements to receive such approval.

PROBATIONARY (TEMPORARY) CERTIFICATION

Temporary certification is no longer available as of May 2005. Probationary certification for one year as an assistant principal or principal is currently available for students who are employed by a district for one of those positions and have successfully completed the four core courses (Ed Ad 554, 615, 602, 595). These certificates are valid for only **one year** but are twice renewable when completing the annual progress required. (See details and the application on the department web site.)

RENEWAL OF STANDARD PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATE AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Individuals who are issued the Standard Principal Certificate on or after September 1, 1999, are subject to Certificate Renewal and Continuing Professional Education Requirements, which are elaborated in Title 19, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 232. All individuals holding a valid Texas professional administrator certificate prior to September 1, 1999, and who are employed as principals or assistant principals must complete the assessment described in Title 19, Texas Administrative Code, § 241.35.

Provisional Principals Certificate: Initially successful certificate candidates completing all requirements are issued a provisional principals certificate by the TEA/SBEC. The Standard Principal certificate is issued after completing an induction period of one year in an assistant principal or principal position. Individuals seeking to enter this induction period more than 5 years after the issuance of the provisional certificate must be approved by the educator preparation program, which recommended the provisional certificate.

INTERNSHIP

The internship is designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice by building on the student's academic and experiential learning. Students planning to begin the internship should complete an application form for this experience by **July 15** preceding the Fall semester or by **November 15** preceding the Spring semester the student will begin. The student should obtain an *Internship Program Handbook* from the department and complete the necessary proposal with approval of the campus-based administrator/mentor. (This handbook is online in the department web page under student handbooks.) The application and internship proposal should be returned to the department for approval by July 15 to be permitted for Fall registration and November 15 to be permitted for Spring registration. The internship experiences may begin immediately with the principal directing the activities developed in the proposal and interacting with the intern concerning these experiences. Internship requirements include specific activities and a position application portfolio. See the *Internship Program Handbook* for details. Internships are not offered during the summer.

CREDIT FOR EXPERIENCE

Beginning September 1, 2000, students who have experience and/or professional training directly related to the Standards for the Principal Certificate (Title 19, Texas Administrative

Code, § 241.15) may petition the department to be awarded credit toward fulfilling certification requirements (but not for graduate credit toward degrees). Credit for experience is not awarded for the required core courses; these courses must be taken with the department. Credit applications may be obtained from the departmental secretary. The application requires a portfolio be prepared illustrating the student's competencies in the specific standard(s) and, once the portfolio is approved, the successful completion of a knowledge exam for credit to be awarded toward the certificate requirements. The department's Principal Certification Governance Committee evaluates applications once each semester. Students may file credit for experience petitions once during their matriculation through the certification program. Students who are on the new degree plan (starting Fall 2008) do not have additional certification required courses past the Master's degree requirement and thus will not have the credit for experience option.

STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION WEB SITE

The State Board for Educator Certification has a web site where additional information is available concerning competencies for certificates, TExES tests, and current issues. Access the Web site at <http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/>

APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION

After completion of **ALL** coursework and **passing** the TExES, students must login and apply for the certificate on-line at the SBEC web page http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/educator_howapply.asp.

If a Service Record has not already been sent, you will need to mail a copy to:

Donna Tavener
Teacher Certification
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Commerce, Texas 75429

The same procedure applies if you are applying for probationary certification (but you should confer with department before applying).

Requirements that **must** be met **prior** to filing for certification:

1. Admission to certification program (Certification Plan on file)
2. All required paperwork filed (letter of recommendation, copy of teaching certificate, [copy of other university transcripts and copy of ILD certificate, if applicable]; letter of employment from the district, if for a probationary certificate.)

Note: For those required to complete a Master's degree in pursuit of professional certification, the Master's degree must be conferred by the university **prior** to filing for your professional certificate.

Application Procedure (these may be adjusted once SBEC office is set up with TEA):

1. Login to the SBEC website at http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/educator_howapply.asp. You will need to create an account if you do not already have one.
2. Follow directions on web page to apply for certificate. If you have questions or difficulties with the web page you may call the 888 number at the top of the web page.
3. Send appropriate fee to SBEC.
4. A&M-Commerce will process your application only AFTER the state has received your fee.
5. You will receive an email confirmation from SBEC after the university has completed its recommendation.
6. Upon university recommendation, SBEC will initiate a criminal background check.
7. Please DO NOT call to check status. This can be checked on-line.
8. Once these activities have successfully been performed, SBEC/TEA will process the issuing of the certificate. The certificate will be issued and placed on the SBEC website under the "Official Record for Educator Certificates," and a paper certificate will be printed and mailed to the student at the address provided.

Note: Records that are not fully processed within 60 days will be deleted. If deleted, you will be required to file again with SBEC Online.