**MS in Higher Education**

**Administration**

**Student Handbook**

**2023-2024**

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# Getting Started

## The Program:

The MS in Higher Education Administration prepares graduates for careers at colleges and universities and the organizations that partner with them. Our alumni are currently working in academic advising, student affairs, career services, housing and residential life, and many other academic and administrative roles. Additionally, the program equips students with a strong foundation for doctoral-level study in higher education.

We welcome both full-time and part-time students. Whether you are a new graduate or a working professional, you will be supported in achieving your graduate education goals. Funding is available for full-time students in the form of competitive graduate assistantships.

## Your Panther ID:

Each student is assigned a unique 7-digit Panther ID that is necessary for enrollment, registration, transcript requests, applications for scholarships and other curriculum activities. If you do not have your Panther ID, you can obtain it online. Go to the MyFIU webpage (https://my.fiu.edu/) and click on the Panther ID Look Up link. Then, input the required information as it appears in your University records. If your Panther ID does not come up, you can call the Office of the Registrar at 305-348-2320. Before registering for classes, you should first be able to log into the university computer system (PantherSoft). To set up your account you can go to the following link: https://myaccounts.fiu.edu/itim/self/Login/Logon.d

## Rights and Responsibilities:

The University has developed policies and procedures on the rights and responsibilities of students and a code of conduct assuring that these rights can be freely exercised without interference or infringement by others. The code of conduct, academic misconduct policies, student grievance procedures and policies on student records are reported in detail in the Student Handbook

(https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/about/student-handbook/index.php). Also, all administrative procedures and time deadlines must be met, even if they are not specifically mentioned in this document. Students must operate within the rules and guidelines of the Student Code of Conduct, the FIU Graduate Catalog and the FIU Regulations for Preparation Manual. Accordingly, graduate students should obtain copies of these publications from the Graduate Studies Office or visit the University Graduate School website (http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/) and be familiar with their contents. Particular attention should be paid to the deadlines posted annually in the University Academic Calendar.

## Active Status (UGS Policy 380.0441)

***Active status*** entitles students to utilize the University's resources and advance in their studies. All graduate students must take a minimum of one (1) credit hour per term to maintain active status in the program. Students will be automatically dismissed for non-enrollment if there is a lapse in enrollment for three consecutive terms.

***Full-Time Status***: For full-time status, the University requires nine (9) credit hours of graduate enrollment for Fall and Spring and six (6) credit hours for Summer.

The maximum number of hours which a graduate student may carry in a single term without special permission is 15. A heavier load must be approved by both the graduate program director or department chairperson and the dean of the University Graduate School.

Admitted students who are recipients of stipends from the University, whether holders of fellowships or graduate assistantships, must be full-time students in the semester they are receiving funding. Graduate assistants who receive summer funding must register for six (6) credit hours. Graduate assistants who do not receive summer funding are not required to register for coursework during the summer recess.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

**Minimum GPA:** All students must maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout their time in the program. To do so, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. Should a student’s GPA fall below 3.0, the following structure will be followed:

* **Warning:** a graduate student whose cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on warning, indicating academic difficulty. Students on academic warning may be restricted from full-time enrollment until their GPA improves.
* **Probation**: a graduate student on warning whose cumulative GPA remains below a 3.0 will be placed on probation, indicating serious academic difficulty. Students on academic probation will be restricted from full-time enrollment until their GPA improves.
* **Dismissal:** a graduate student on probation whose GPA does not rise above a 3.0 in the semester following probation will be dismissed from the program and the University. A graduate student will not be dismissed prior to attempting a minimum of 12 semester hours of coursework.

**Incomplete Coursework:** All students should complete coursework in a timely fashion. Should a student request more than one incomplete grade in a single semester, the following structure will be followed:

* **Warning:** a graduate student who requests more than 1 incomplete in a single semester will be placed on warning, indicating academic difficulty. Students on warning will be allowed to enroll full-time in the subsequent semester but must meet with the program director to discuss their timeline for completing remaining coursework.
* **Probation:** a graduate student on warning who fails to complete those courses in the following semester and/or incurs additional incomplete courses will be placed on probation, indicating serious academic difficulty. Students on probation will be restricted from full-time enrollment until all incomplete courses have been completed.
* **Dismissal:** a graduate student on probation who incurs additional incomplete courses will be subject to dismissal from the program and the University.

**Graduate Assistantships:** Contracts for graduate assistantships will be automatically cancelled once a student’s GPA falls below a 3.0. This is a University Graduate School policy.

## Time Limits for Degree Completion

Per FIU’s Time to Completion Policy, “…master’s students must complete their degree requirements within six years. All work used to meet degree requirements, including coursework and the successful defense of a thesis, must be completed within the six years prior to degree conferral. An approved leave of absence does not affect the time limits for degree completion.”

For more information, please refer to FIU’s official Time to Completion policy: https://policies.fiu.edu/files/111.pdf

## Leave of Absence (UGS Policy 380.048)

Our program does not require continuous enrollment. However, a student who does not register for coursework for three consecutive terms will be subject to UGS Policy 380.048 Leave of Absence. This policy states: “A student who finds it necessary to be excused from registration in a graduate degree program for three consecutive terms, or one term in the case of students subject to continuous enrollment, must formally request a leave of absence from the graduate program. Leave time must be requested prior to the beginning of the anticipated leave time and must be approved by the program director or chairperson of the department, the dean of the appropriate school or college and the Dean of the University Graduate School.”

Should a student fail to submit a leave of absence request and not register for three consecutive semesters, the student will be automatically dismissed from the program and will be required to submit a reapplication to the program.

## Withdrawal from the University

Students who withdraw from the University must file the appropriate paperwork. See the Student Withdrawal Form on the UGS website for additional policies/procedures related to withdrawal.

## Health Insurance

For those graduate students receiving assistantships, a university subsidized health insurance plan is included. The payments for the plan are deducted over several salary payments. If you have your own health insurance and plan to use it, you must fill out a waiver form through the university insurance provider. For step-by-step instructions and to fill out the electronic form, visit: https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students.

This opt out form must be submitted each semester. All international students in F1 status must have medical insurance that meets certain requirements in order to register and continue their studies at FIU. You may purchase medical insurance through University Health Services with a cashier’s check or money order or you may go online to http://www.collegiaterisk.com/students/fiu/fiu.html and purchase with a Visa or MasterCard credit card. If you have your own insurance, your insurance company must complete an Alternate Insurance Form. The Alternate Insurance form is available in the University Health Center Office on the Biscayne Bay Campus (HWC) and on the Modesto Maidique Campus (UHSC 101). It is also available in the ISSS office on the Biscayne Bay Campus (WUC 363) and on the Modesto Maidique Campus (GC 355). If your policy meets the University’s minimum medical insurance requirements, it will be approved.

## FIU Employee Tuition Waivers

The employee tuition waiver benefit allows eligible employees and their dependents to have tuition waived up to three times per year: spring semester, summer semester, and fall semester. The available credits are a pool to be split between the employee and dependents. The waiver covers up to six credits for employees and up to 10 credits per semester for dependents. If both employee and dependent are using the waiver, no more than six of the ten available credits may be used by the employee. The available credits are a pool to be split between the employee and dependent. More information can be found at https://hr.fiu.edu/employees-affiliates/benefits/

## Information for International Students

**ISSS Orientation**

All students at FIU in F1 or J1 student status are required to attend a MANDATORY Immigration Orientation conducted by ISSS. This is a separate orientation from other academic, departmental, or university-wide orientations and it will cover information specific to international students that you MUST be aware of. This orientation is offered at both the Biscayne Bay Campus and the Modesto Maidique Campus every semester.

During the fall semester only, an ISSS Immigration Orientation will be offered as part of the Graduate Student Orientation offered by the Graduate School at the Modesto Maidique Campus. If you are not a graduate student or if you do not attend this orientation, you will be expected to attend a separate ISSS Immigration Orientation offered for all new international students. If you are unable to attend an ISSS Immigration Orientation before the semester begins, you must schedule an appointment with an ISSS advisor at your earliest convenience to receive counseling related to your immigration status. For more information, please visit: http://isss.fiu.edu/.

# Application

## Applying

Applicants should visit FIU Graduate Admissions and follow the Steps to Apply guidelines ([Applications | Admissions | Florida International University (fiu.edu)](https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/graduate-applicant/applications/index.html).

**Application Deadline:**

* Face-to-Face Masters Program Priority Deadline: December 15th (for students seeking graduate assistantships)
* Face to Face Masters Program Regular Deadline: March 1st
* Online Masters Program: June 1st

**Application Materials**:

* A completed online application for Graduate Admission with appropriate fees;
* Official transcripts of all higher education institutions attended;
* Two letters of reference attesting to the applicant’s ability to succeed in Masters Degree Program;
* A current résumé/vita;
* A personal statement that sets forth the applicant’s interests and career goals.
* Proof of successful completion of a Bachelor’s degree, 3.0 GPA in upper level undergraduate credits.

Due to processing delays and costs for international transcripts, international applicants may email an unofficial copy of their transcript to the program for preliminary review. No admission decision can be rendered in the system until the official transcript is received, but a preliminary review can be provided.

## Application Review

The application and all supporting documentation are reviewed by program faculty using the criteria noted below. Exceptions to one or more of the stated criteria may be granted based on other compelling evidence that the applicant is likely to be successful in this program.

* A baccalaureate degree and an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in upper level undergraduate credits;
* A cumulative 3.0 GPA for all graduate work attempted.
* International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A total score of 80 on the iBT TOEFL, Duolingo English score of 110,6.5 overall on the IELTS is required. For more information on language requirements please refer to: [English-Language Requirements for Graduate School Admission | International Admissions | Florida International University (fiu.edu)](https://admissions.fiu.edu/international/graduate-school/english-language-proficiency/index.html)
* A possible interview with the Masters Admissions Committee.

Members of the program’s faculty will constitute the Masters Admissions Committee. Upon completion of the review of the applicant’s file and the interview, the Masters Admissions Committee will make recommendations to the University Graduate School.

## Application Decisions

As admission to programs is competitive, meeting minimum admission requirements does not assure admission into the program. A candidate for admission to the program will be judged not only on prior academic achievement, but also in relation to prior related experience.

# Degree Requirements/Plan of Study Graduate Catalog 2022-2023: [GD\_Educational\_Policy\_Studies.pdf (fiu.edu)](https://catalog.fiu.edu/2022_2023/graduate/College_of_Arts_Sciences_and_Education/GD_Educational_Policy_Studies.pdf)

## Minimum Number of Credits Required

The minimum number of required credits is determined by the student’s Master’s degree. Note that these are only credit minimums.

## Composition of Coursework

**Program Requirements: (36 semester hours)**

**Professional Studies: (9 hrs)**

* EDF 5481 Foundations of Educational Research
* EDH 6045 College Student Development Theory

Choice of:

* EDF 6608 Social, Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Education or
* EDF 6636 Intercultural Studies: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

**Required Courses: (15 hrs)**

* EDH 6633 Introduction to Higher Education Administration
* EDH 6061 History of Higher Education
* EDH 6404 Legal Issues in Higher Education Administration
* EDH 6943 Practicum in Higher Education

Choice of:

* EDH 6047 College Student Life and Culture
* EDH 6055 Access and Choice in US Higher Education

**Electives: (12 hrs)**

Students will select a set of electives to meet their educational and professional interests. Selection of electives can include a concentration in a particular area of higher education as well as provide a breadth of knowledge about the field.

**Required Courses**

The required courses reflect the range of basic knowledge common to all higher education professionals. Whatever the job function, it is imperative that university professionals know the law, be aware of current issues, be sensitive to the diversity of student culture and understand the core functions of administration.

**Electives**

Electives are designed to allow students to choose a path of study that reflects their immediate career goals, while maintaining program coherence. Students should consult with the program director or with a faculty mentor prior to choosing electives.

The graduation requirements include successful completion of the above required program of study.

# Performance Expectations

## Coursework and Grades

All students are expected to maintain good academic standing. Full-time students are expected to enroll in 9 credits per semester and part-time students are expected to enroll in at least 6 credits per semester. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is required. Students who fail to maintain a 3.0 may be dismissed from the program subject to the guidelines stated above.

## Incomplete Grade (IN)

An incomplete grade is a temporary designation given at the discretion of the instructor for work not completed because of serious interruption not caused by the student’s own negligence (e.g., extended illness). An incomplete may not be awarded unless the student has already completed at least 50% of the assignments for the course. Outstanding assignments should be submitted as quickly as possible. After two semesters, an incomplete grade will automatically default to an “F”. See the Graduate Catalog for additional policies/procedures related to an incomplete grade. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the faculty member has received the missing materials in a timely fashion and submitted the Change of Grade in PantherSoft.

## Expectations for Practicum

A professional degree in university administration typically allows for some guided practical experience. The practicum course allows students the opportunity to earn credit while gaining valuable hands-on experience in a variety of administrative areas. Practicum will also include an academic component designed by the Higher Education faculty and the section supervisor. Students should conduct themselves with professionalism and integrity in any practicum placement.

## Annual Evaluations of Performance

Any student placed on warning or probation must complete an annual evaluation with the program director. All other students are encouraged to meet with the program director once per year, but there is no formal annual evaluation requirement.