Higher Education
Program Handbook

Master of Arts
in Higher Education Administration
and
Certificates in Academic Advising
Assessment & Institutional Research

College of Education
Educational Leadership
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX

Effective Fall 2013
Updated September 2018
Purpose
The purpose of the Handbook is to provide information about the higher education academic programs of Sam Houston State University to prospective students, current students, faculty, and staff of the University. Included is information concerning the admission, advisement, degree requirements, degree requirements, services available to students, and the faculty and administrative officers of the University.

Subject to Change Notice
The policies, regulations, procedures, and information in this Handbook are subject to change without notice, if necessary, to stay in compliance with State and Federal laws and/or with rules and regulations of the Board of Regents of The Texas State University System. The provisions of this Handbook do not constitute a contract, express or implied, between any applicant, student, or faculty member and Sam Houston State University or its Board of Regents.

Contacting the Higher Education Program
If you have a question but do not know to whom an inquiry should be directed, you may call the Higher Education Program located in the Department of Educational Leadership in the College of Education at SHSU, and the inquiry will be routed to the appropriate person or department.

NOTE: Although providing an overview of the program policies, procedures, and requirements, this Handbook should not be viewed as including all information. Answers to questions may be obtained from other sources including, although not limited to, the Higher Education Program faculty, the College of Education (COE), and the SHSU Office of Graduate Studies. While faculty advisors are knowledgeable about the policies, procedures, and requirements, the primary responsibility for reading and following correct policies and procedures remains with the student.

Information about Sam Houston State University can be found at www.shsu.edu.
Program Overview

The Higher Education Programs are committed to excellence in preparing and supporting instructional and administrative leaders for higher education, generating and supporting research, and delivering public service to the field of higher education. Our primary role is to prepare leaders for the American higher education arena. The program delivers teaching, research, and professional services to students, institutions of higher education, and other academic disciplines. Programs are delivered totally online and are designed to accommodate the needs of working professionals.

The **Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration** will prepare students for further doctoral studies and for mid-level administrative and leadership positions at higher education institutions. The program is designed to enhance career-related leadership and will focus on student services, academic affairs and student success, enrollment management, governance and organization of higher education, contemporary issues such as information technology, resource allocation, and other administrative functions. This degree may be completed with or without a thesis under the direction of a faculty member and committee. Students wishing to obtain a thesis must submit a prospectus in the semester following their entry into the program, work on a study under faculty guidance, prepare the written thesis, and defend their work in a committee defense. Students seeking the MA in Higher Education Administration may also opt to pursue the Academic Advising Certificate or the Higher Education Assessment and Institutional Research Certificate. Completion of a certificate will require six additional credit hours beyond the MA.

The **Graduate Certificate in Academic Advising** offers opportunities for any individual interested in working in colleges and universities to take coursework that focuses on the current trends and methodologies in student career development. The Academic Advising certificate is designed for both beginners and experienced individuals interested in academic advising for higher education institutions. This certificate will provide enhanced training for academic advising professionals and is also valuable for individuals who have supervisory or leadership responsibilities in academic advising. This certificate is also offered in combination with the MA in Higher Education Administration.

- The Academic Advising certificate has been approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and is awarded by Sam Houston State University. A minimum of 15 semester credit hours is required for certification.

The **Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Assessment and Institutional Research** develops postsecondary faculty and administrators’ abilities to access, manage, analyze, and use data in today’s complex higher education contexts. The program supports faculty and staff of all levels and from a variety of institutional types in learning about assessment, institutional research, data management, analysis, accountability, accreditation, strategic planning, and leadership among other areas of focus.

- The Assessment and Institutional Research certificate has been approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and is awarded by Sam Houston State University. A minimum of 15 semester credit hours is required for certification.
**Graduate Faculty**

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Admissions Policies & Procedures

The MA in Higher Education Administration program has three admission categories, described briefly here. The admissions categories are: (1) regular admission to the program, (2) conditional admission to the program which allows for student admission based on the presumption that ALL required documents will be received within the first semester of enrollment and such documents verify the student eligibility for program admission, and (3) probationary admission which allows a student to be admitted without meeting one of the required admission criteria.

If admitted by the Program Admission Committee, students who enroll as a probationary graduate student must maintain a 3.0 GPA through the first 12 credit hours (with no grade below a “B” in any one course) in the program while awaiting final admission results. A student admitted on probation remains on probation until the 12th credit hour is completed.

If admitted by the Program Admission Committee, students who enroll as a conditional graduate student will be allowed to enroll for one semester only while awaiting final admission results. If a conditionally admitted student does not gain regular admission after one semester, he or she will not be permitted to continue in the program and will not be allowed to register for the second semester.

Admission to the Academic Advising certificate or Assessment and Institutional Research certificate program only does not include the conditional or probationary admission option.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND POLICIES

A. Apply through the Apply Texas Application for “General Admission” to the SHSU Graduate School online at https://www.applytexas.org. Read the SHSU Graduate Catalog for admission requirements. A bachelor’s degree from Sam Houston State University or any other university does not guarantee admission to the master’s or certificate program.

B. Complete the application process and submit all required documents including:
   a. the Apply Texas application including the applicant statement of purpose
   b. the application fee,
   c. official transcripts from ALL college work,
   d. three reference forms (1-from a colleague and 2-from supervisors), and
   f. current resume

At the time of submission, the applicant will designate which specific program of higher education is preferred by indicating if he or she is seeking a master’s degree and/or certificate or both.

The standards for admission to the MA in Higher Education Administration program go beyond those for admission to the Graduate School. The Program Admission Committee considers the following as minimum criteria for a student to be considered for admission: an undergraduate GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale and a clear commitment to enter the administrative ranks of a higher education institution as demonstrated in the statement of purpose. These are minimum standards to
be considered for program admission. Although all qualified applicants are placed in a pool for admission consideration, the better-qualified applicants are likely to receive admission based on the limited number of seats available per semester. Possessing minimum standards for consideration does not guarantee admission into the master’s or certificate program. Students applying for the program are considered using a rubric for admission.

**Admissions Deadlines**

Admissions in the program are reviewed once times each semester following the application deadlines.

Since all applications must first be submitted to the SHSU Graduate School, students should allow at least 4 weeks prior to the deadline dates listed above for complete application processing. Failure to meet the admission deadlines will result in the student’s application not being reviewed until the next semester. Regular admission deadlines are:

- **July 1st** (Fall Admission)
- **November 1st** (Spring Admission)
- **April 1st** (Summer Admission)

NOTE: In addition, acceptance and completion of the Academic Advising Certificate Program or the Higher Education Assessment and Institutional Research Certificate Program **DOES NOT** guarantee admission into the Master’s Program.

**Notification of acceptance.** When all steps have been met successfully, the Program Coordinator will send a letter with the admissions results after the Higher Education program faculty review the student’s application. The Office of Graduate Studies will send the official letter of acceptance or rejection.

**Elective Enrollment of Non-Majors**

Students seeking enrollment in any master’s or certificate course who are not admitted to the Higher Education or certificate programs must receive permission to enroll in any HIED course from the Program Coordinator. Permission is only granted if seats are available after all majors have enrolled for the semester.

**Appeals process.** Applicants who are not accepted into the certificate programs and/or the Master’s program in Higher Education Administration may appeal the decision to the Educational Leadership Department Chair.
Student Policies & Procedures

Advisement

The Program Coordinator serves as the adviser for the MA and certificate program students. The Program Coordinator can aid students in registration, scheduling, and course selection decisions. The Program Coordinator is also a valuable asset for advising students about professional development opportunities, career goals, and other areas of student concern. Program faculty may also serve an advisory role in these areas.

Course Scheduling

Upon receiving admission to a higher education program, students will be provided recommended courses to register for in the first semester. The Program Coordinator will prepare a full degree plan for each student after the academic semester begins. Each degree plan will be tailored to individual student needs and provide the best sequencing possible so students can successfully complete their programs in a timely manner. Variations to the provided degree plan should be discussed with the Program Coordinator to ensure any issues are addressed and resolved.

The Program Coordinator is available for individual conference via phone, email, or video conferencing, and will assist students with understanding the designated course sequencing, enrollment requirements, etc.

Transfer credit

The applicant may request transfer credit for an equitable course that has been successfully completed with a grade of “B” or above from an accredited college or university. Only a total of six (6) approved semester hours of coursework may be transferred from another accredited university to the MA in HEA (non-thesis). Transfer courses may not include a practicum/internship course or the research course. No course on the degree plan may be over six (6) years old at the time the degree is conferred.

The Program Coordinator will review requests for transfer credit after admission to the program has been granted, a request for transfer credit is submitted in writing, and all supporting documents (transcripts and syllabi from transfer courses) have been submitted. Approved transfer credits are given for “credit” only, replacing the specific required course in the degree plan. Transfer credits are not approved or transcribed with a grade as part of the degree plan. Transfer credits cannot be used to remove a grade deficiency earned in residence at SHSU. Transfer credits are not allowed for the Academic Advising or Assessment & Institutional Research Certificates.

The maximum number of hours that may be transferred into a graduate program are as follows:
- 6 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 30 hours;
- 9 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 31 to 36 hours;
- 12 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 37 to 48 hours;
- 15 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 49 or more hours.
Students working on another master’s degree

The SHSU Graduate Catalog states that a student may seek a second master’s degree at Sam Houston State University provided the field of concentration differs from the field of concentration for the first master’s degree. Upon the written recommendation of the appropriate departmental chair(s) and academic dean, the following maximum number of credit hours may be applied to the second master’s degree:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours in Second Master’s Degree Program</th>
<th>Maximum Semester Credit Hours Applied</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-44</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or more</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students working on another master’s degree and seeking a Certificate

Students enrolled in another master’s program at SHSU can indicate their desire to add a certificate to their degree plan by contacting the Program Coordinator. Once approval is granted, the HIED program will complete the necessary paperwork to add the courses.
Academic Progress

Grades

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 on all graduate level coursework. Students who earn one grade of "F" or two grades of "C" in 500-, 600- or 700-level courses will be terminated from the program. A student cannot graduate with two grades of "C" in a graduate program.

Academic Probation and Suspension

In order to achieve and remain in academic good standing at Sam Houston State University, a graduate student must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate coursework attempted.

A graduate student who falls below a 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of any semester during which one or more semester credit hours are attempted will be placed on probation. If an enrolled student on probation fails to achieve a minimum 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of the next semester or summer school following the starting of the probation, the student will be terminated.

A committee of program faculty will review the graduate status for any student earning one grade of “C” in any combination of graduate courses. The committee will consider the advisability of the student’s continued enrollment in the graduate program.

A student who earns two grades of “C” or one grade of “F” will be terminated from graduate studies. A student who earns a second grade of “C” or a grade of “F” during the semester or summer of the anticipated graduation will be terminated from graduate studies and will not be eligible to graduate.

The appropriate academic dean may place on probation, retain on probation, or suspend any student deficient in grade points without regard to the regulations previously stated. Any appeal for a review of the termination of graduate status should be directed in writing to the appropriate academic dean.

Any appeal for a review of the termination of graduate status should be directed in writing through the Program Coordinator, to the chair of the department, to the academic dean of the college for final approval or denial, and finally to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Retaking courses

If a student receives a C grade in a course, that course can be repeated to help raise the GPA. However, all grade policies still apply. If a second C grade or a grade of F is obtained prior to retaking the first course, the student will be automatically terminated from Graduate Studies.

Incomplete grades

At the professor’s discretion, a student may be given a grade of incomplete only if extenuating circumstances exist. The mark “X” denotes “incomplete.” If the student meets the prescribed requirements of the course before the end of the next academic semester after the “X” is given, the
student will receive the grade earned; otherwise, the mark “X” will be automatically changed to an “F.”

Course Loads

To be considered a full-time graduate student, a student must enroll in and maintain enrollment in six (6) credit hours during the semester. This policy ensures course loads are more manageable for students, most of whom are working full time in higher education. Approval of the Program Coordinator is required to enroll in more than 9 credit hours during any one semester.

Continuation of Enrollment

A new application for admission must be submitted if the student fails to attend during the semester of admission, fails to attend for one calendar year, or seeks admission into a different degree program.

Any student who fails to register during any one semester period (excluding summer terms) prior to graduation, and who does not have an official leave of absence from study granted by the Higher Education Program Coordinator and the Office of Graduate Studies, will be required to apply for re-admission to the program according to the procedures and standards in effect at the time of reconsideration. Prior enrollment in the program does not guarantee re-enrollment in such instances.

Dropped Courses

Students who drop a course will be required to confer with the Program Coordinator before registering for classes for the following semester. A student who drops a third course will be blocked from registration and must confer with the Program Coordinator before being allowed to register for subsequent semesters. This policy supports the student’s timely progress toward degree completion and development.

Comprehensive Examination

Graduate students in the Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration degree program must successfully complete a comprehensive examination. This examination is usually taken during the final semester the student expects to graduate. The student must be enrolled during the semester in which the examination is taken.

The examination is offered once in the Fall semester and once in the Spring semester. There are NO summer comprehensive examinations offered by the program. If a student anticipates graduating in the summer, he or she must take examinations in the spring semester.

Comprehensive exams will occur the same semester that the Practicum Course is taken. The application for the Practicum also will serve as notice that the student intends to take comprehensive exams during that same semester. Since there are deadlines for applying to take the comprehensive examination, students are encouraged to inquire about the procedures during their last year of course enrollment.
The comprehensive examination is an important assessment of student learning and ability to apply that knowledge. It focuses on the synthesis and application of knowledge acquired during the program of study leading to the master’s degree. *Satisfactory success in course work does not guarantee successful performance on the comprehensive examination.* A student who fails the comprehensive examination may repeat it once during the same semester the exam was initially taken. A student who fails the comprehensive examination a second time is denied a master’s degree in Higher Education Administration and immediately exited from the program. For students who fail exams, the Registrar, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the College of Education are notified. Students can appeal the decision to Department Chair and then to the Dean.

When completing comprehensive exams, students:

a) are not allowed to use the writing center or any other person for assistance,
b) will be provided the questions, instructions, and the grading rubric,
c) will be instructed on the use of the grading rubric by the program faculty,
d) will be provided information on the three types of grades possible, and
e) are informed that the Program Coordinator reports the passing or failing of comprehensive exams to the registrar’s office before students are scheduled to graduate.
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

The Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration degree program offers opportunities for individuals who seek careers in middle management, teaching, and leadership positions on college and university campuses.

Non-Thesis Track:

- HIED 5360  History and Organization of HIED
- HIED 5361  Contemporary Issues in HIED
- HIED 5362  Higher Education Resource Management
- HIED 5364  Leadership in HIED
- HIED 5365  Academic Affairs in HIED
- HIED 5366  Assessment in HIED
- HIED 5367  Diverse Student Populations in HIED
- HIED 5379  Intro to HIED Research
- HIED 6360  Student Services in HIED
- HIED 6372  Practicum in Higher Education*

*Note: Practicum
The practicum enables students to acquire experience and competencies in various domains of higher education administration. The practicum plays a major role in bridging “theory and practice” and offers the context for students to develop their personal administrative and leadership style. It is through the practicum experience that students develop enhanced professional knowledge such as knowledge of people, knowledge of themselves, self-control and interpersonal sensitivity. In addition, the practicum reinforces soft skills such as independent problem solving, working collegially with fellow higher education administrators and developing professional values and attitudes. During practicum, students are mentored and guided by their Site Supervisor and the university faculty member assigned to the practicum course.

Thesis Track:

- HIED 5360  History and Organization of HIED
- HIED 5362  Higher Education Resource Management
- HIED 5364  Leadership in HIED
- HIED 5365  Academic Affairs in HIED
- HIED 5366  Assessment in HIED
- HIED 5367  Diverse Student Populations in HIED
- HIED 5379  Intro to HIED Research
- HIED 6360  Student Services in HIED
- HIED 6374  Statistics
- HIED 6387  Thesis*

*Note: Students pursuing the thesis option must have a faculty chair for their committee prior to taking the statistics course. Another methods course may be substituted for the statistics requirement if the faculty chair approves the change. Students must fulfill all university requirements for a thesis including, but not limited to: conducting independent research, using a standard template for writing, and defending the thesis in front of the selected committee.
THESIS

A student must notify the Program Coordinator upon admission that a thesis option is desired so the appropriate degree plan can be submitted to the university.

During the first semester of the program, the student must identify a HIED faculty member who will serve as the Thesis Chair and share that name with the Program Coordinator. The Thesis Chair will work with the student to help refine the topic and discuss the university process for writing and defending the thesis. Based on these discussions, the Thesis Chair will recommend a methods course for the student to take prior to enrolling in the thesis course and share that recommendation with the Program Coordinator, who will assist in placing the student in the appropriate course.

The Thesis Chair will assist the student with university policies regarding thesis format and processes as well as with the formation of a committee and preparation for the defense of the thesis.

When ready to write the thesis, the student must enroll in the designated thesis course for the HIED Master’s program. Student enrollment in the thesis course must be for the semester in which the student expects to receive the degree. If the degree in question is not awarded at the end of that semester, the student will be awarded the mark of IP and will be expected to re-enroll in the thesis course during fall, spring, and summer semesters until completion of the thesis.

CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

ACADEMIC ADVISING CERTIFICATE

The Academic Advising certificate program offers a training opportunity for individuals who already serve as academic advisors or have a desire to work in that field on college and university campuses.

Courses for the Academic Advising Certificate:

- HIED 5360 Student Services in HIED
- HIED 5367 Diverse Student Populations in HIED
- HIED 5370 Career Advising in HIED
- HIED 5390 Concepts of Academic Advising
- HIED 6372 Practicum in Higher Education*

ASSESSMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH CERTIFICATE

The Assessment and Institutional Research certificate program offers a training opportunity for individuals who already serve in assessment and institutional research roles or have a desire to work in that field on college and university campuses.

Courses for the Assessment and Institutional Research Certificate:

- HIED 5364 Leadership in HIED
- HIED 5366 Assessment in HIED
- HIED 5379 Intro to HIED Research
- HIED 6371 Fundamentals of Data Management
- HIED 6374 Statistics for the Institutional Research