2025-2026

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Accelerated Principal Certification

College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

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Principal Certification Only Program

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Handbook
This Handbook is intended for students in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS) in the College of Education (COE) at The University of Houston (UH). It provides an overview of program requirements, policy, rules, and regulations. The information included is designed to facilitate students' progress toward the attainment of their program objectives.

The purpose of this handbook is to supplement and clarify – not supersede – policies and procedures provided at the College of Education or University of Houston level.

Goals of the Program
The Principal Certification Only Program provides a strong foundation of knowledge, skills, real-world experience, and innovative research intended to prepare students to serve as effective equity centered educational leaders and local change agents. Graduates fill an essential need in the community, serving in diverse positions in both public and private educational institutions. The degree fulfills requirements for the Texas Standard Principal Certificate.

Successful progress through the program requires academic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and professional skill development. Participation in the program necessitates students balance their personal commitments (e.g., current employment, family, personal health, finance) with the professional development commitments associated with the program.

University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Graduate Catalog
It is important for all students to read the catalog and be familiar with the requirements and policies currently in effect for all graduate students at the University of Houston. The catalog is available online at www.uh.edu/grad_catalog.

Specifically: It is the responsibility of students to be aware of rules and regulations. As such, please view the *Graduate Catalog* to review all policies regarding, but not limited to (each of the terms below are hotlinks to University websites providing additional information):

Academic Honesty	Plagiarism (Definition of)
Dropping Courses	Time Limitations on Completion
Examinations	of Degree Requirements
Leave of Absence	Transfer Credit
Low Grade Policy	Withdrawal

University of Houston Website

The UH website available at http://uh.edu/ contains policies in regard to student business services including tuition/fees amounts, payment options with due dates, and refunds; academic calendar; enrollment schedules; and more.

COE Office of Graduate Studies Website
The COE Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) provides leadership and continuous support for all graduate programs, faculty, and students in the College of Education. COE policy information is available on the OGS website.

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Website
Please visit ELPS information about the department, mission, degree programs, faculty and staff, ELPS centers and institutes, testimonials, and more.

MyUH
The University of Houston is a student-focused, yet self-service, academic community. As such, students are empowered to complete many administrative actions themselves. Through the *myUH* portal, students may check admission status, register for classes, reserve parking, reset passwords, add classes, view financial aid, make payments, download 1098Ts, and much more by visiting *my*UH

As personal contact information such as phone numbers, mailing addresses, and destination email addresses change, students are required to update MyUH.

Graduate/Faculty Advisor & Office of Graduate Studies
The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) Graduate Advisor and administrative staff within the OGS Department, and the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (ELPS) serve as resources and will provide guidance on how to access additional information about particular University of Houston, College of Education, Graduate Studies, and ELPS policies and procedures. Information about these policies and procedures as well as program requirements not described in this handbook can be discussed with your Graduate Advisor. The Program Director serves as the advisor for the Principal Certification Only Program of studies.

Departmental Staff
Visit the ELPS website to access faculty and staff contact phone numbers and email addresses.

Core Faculty
Detailed core faculty information is available on the ELPS Faculty website. Adjunct faculty vary by semester, given the subject matter of the specific course offered at the time.

II.   TEXAS PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATE ONLY PROGRAM

Last Name:	First Name:
PeopleSoft ID#:	UH Email Address
Master's Degree Held:	Faculty Advisor:
Institution:	Total Hours Completed:
Year Awarded:	Total Hours in Progress:

COURSE Requirements (18 GCH	GRD	SEMNR	GRAD TRANS. CRED. (Sem.Nr./Course/Institution)
ELCS 6301: Leadership for Equity in Diverse Schools			
ELCS 7320: Instructional Leadership I			
ELCS 6370 Research for School leaders			
ELCS 7302: Data Informed Decision Making for School Leaders			
ELCS 7321: Instructional Leadership II			
ELCS 7391: Practicum in the Principalship			

Additional Requirements: (a) Texas Teaching Certificate, (b) Minimum of two years of credible teaching experience in an elementary or secondary school, (c) Completed an approved practicum program of study (d) Master's degree in an education related field from an accredited university, (e) Passing score on the TExES 268, Principal as Instructional Leader, and (f) Passing score on the TExES 368, Performance Assessment for School Leaders exams.

Note: Coursework, including transferred courses, cannot exceed 5 years at the time of certification. It is highly recommend you complete the required coursework within a two-year period.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Approved by
Program Certification Director: _____ Date: _____

Program Area Lead: _____ Date: _____

Course Information

UH Course Listing
The *UH Course Listing* allows students to search for, and receive, information regarding available courses for each semester.

Course and Benchmarks Inquiries
Contact your Program Director regarding questions related to course sequence and benchmarks.

Course Registration via MyUH Assistance
Contact your Program Director regarding assistance with course registration in *MyUH*. Students must make appropriate payments in order to register if a financial hold is posted in *MyUH*. Contact the Office of Student Business Services with questions related to financial holds. Students may register once the financial hold is cleared.

Enrollment Schedule
Students can begin planning the registration timeline by viewing courses and enrollment.

Practicum Requirements
Students seeking the Standard Principal Certificate must complete a structured, field-based practicum focused on actual experiences with each of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) standards. The established practicum courses are not a checklist of activities, but an opportunity to plan, produce, participate in, and **reflect** upon campus leadership. By establishing an environment of opportunities, students learn how to self-analyze their strengths and weaknesses throughout these critical developmental stages. The design of the field-based experiences utilizes and enhances the **knowledge**, **skills**, and other **attributes** and **attitudes** (KSAs) emphasized in the courses of the Principal Certificate program components. This collaborative design encompasses the students, mentors, school community, and university supervisor in order to assimilate the organization and leadership essential to a schools' success. The practicum requirements include 160 school leadership practicum hours, three (3) field observations with a combined time of at least 135 minutes, two (2) site supervisor program reports, and two (2) candidate self-progress reports.
The Practicum is limited to those students that have enrolled as students for the M.Ed. in Administration and Supervision or the Principal Certification Only program. The year-long practicum experiences aim to provide the student with a deepened understanding of the year-long operations and commitment that a principal makes to the school community. The practicum serves as the cumulating experience in the Principalship program. It concludes at the end of the year with a capstone portfolio.

Certification Services and Application
The COE Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) administers all certification matters for graduate and post-baccalaureate students seeking initial educator certification and professional educator certifications. The TExES *Principal as Instructional Leader* certificate is offered through the M.Ed. in Administration and Supervision degree program. Students are expected to complete all pre-requisite courses and benchmark requirements for the degree and certification. Students should consult with the Program Certification Director and the UH COE Certification Officer - for details about degree plan progress and obtaining certification. Information is available at the Certification Office.

It is important to remember the TExES Principal (268) Certification exam is used as the M.Ed. comprehensive exam. As such, students are required to pass this examination. Per university rules, students are allowed two (5) attempts to pass comprehensive exams before being removed from their program of studies. If a student fails the examination on the first attempt, candidates must provide a copy of their exam scores with a study plan to address areas of needed improvement. Candidates how do not pass the TExES 268 on the first attempt must also take the practice principal exam available through *Certify Teacher* or *240* and submit a passing score. All certification questions should be directed to the program director.

Texas Principal Exam Approval
To be eligible to take the Texas Principal Certification Exam(s), a University of Houston candidate must score 70% or higher on the program qualifying exam and have completed:
- a bachelor's degree,
- two creditable years of teaching as defined by TEA,
- twelve (12) course hours toward completion of a principal certification program,
- eighty (80) principal practicum hours, and
- one (1) successful field supervisor's observation, and
- hold a valid Texas teaching certificate.

Texas Probationary Principal Certificate
To be eligible for the Texas Probationary Principal Certificate, a University of Houston candidate must be currently enrolled in a principal certification program and hold at a minimum:
- a bachelor's degree,
- a valid Texas teaching certificate,
- two creditable years of teaching as defined by TEA,
- twelve (12) course hours toward completion of a principal certification program,
- eighty (80) principal practicum hours,
- one successful field supervisor's observation,
- employment by a school district in an administrative position, and
- have passed all required state exams for principal certification in Texas.

Having met all requirements, educators must apply for a probationary certificate through the TEA SBEC website, creating an online account, and requesting the certificate through the "Applications" menu. The educator preparation program at the University of Houston will recommend the candidate online for the appropriate certificate. The educator must pay the required fee for the recommended certificate. The probationary certificate is initially issued by for one calendar year, but can be reissued for two additional calendar years, provided the candidate is enrolled in a certification program and is employed in an appropriate administrator position. An administrator with a probationary principal certificate must remain enrolled in a certification program until the degree and/or certification program has been completed. Mentoring and supervision are required throughout the validity period of the probationary certificate.

III.   ACADEMIC POLICIES

The University of Houston Graduate Catalog intends to reflect current academic policies, procedures, degree offerings, course descriptions, and other information pertinent to graduate study

at the University of Houston. Please view the Graduate Catalog to view transfer credit policy information.

IV. ACADEMIC ADVISING, ANNUAL REVIEW, GRIEVANCE, AND DISMISSAL POLICIES

Advising and Valid Contact Information

Upon admission to the program, all students are assigned a Graduate Advisor located within the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). The student's relationship with his or her Graduate Advisor and Program Director is one of the primary means by which the program monitors and facilitates student progress through the program and professional and personal competency development. Students are expected to maintain regular contact with their Graduate Advisors throughout their matriculation, keep their Graduate Advisors apprised of any problems or concerns that may affect their academic work, complete degree plans in close consultation with their Graduate Advisor and Program Chair, and seek the consultation of the Graduate Advisor and Program Director as appropriate.

Students must keep their *myUH* accounts updated with their UH email address and/or destination email address, mailing address and telephone number that will enable the Graduate Advisor and Program Chair to reliably contact the student. Failure to maintain valid contact information is a serious issue since time-sensitive and/or important information will be delivered to the student. Failure to maintain valid contact information is a serious deficiency that may lead to the development of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), at any time the faculty determine that the contact information is not valid.

Faculty Advisor Communication

Students having difficulty communicating with their Graduate Advisor should alert the Program Director. If the Program Director is unable to resolve communication issues, the students should bring this matter to the attention of the ELPS Department Chair.

Dismissal Policies and Procedures

The dismissal of a student from the program is a significant event for the student, the program, and the program faculty. Student dismissals represent the conclusion of the faculty that the student has not demonstrated appropriate, consistent matriculation; has engaged in academic dishonesty; has not met multiple program milestones; has been charged with or convicted of a criminal offense; has failed to demonstrate an adequate level of professional or personal competency, or for other serious reasons (e.g., has been disruptive to the education and training process). Dismissal action is typically the outcome of careful inquiry and collection of data from multiple sources as well as communication with the student regarding her or his unsatisfactory performance in basic or, where appropriate, remedial work, as outlined in a Performance Improvement Plan. However, immediate dismissal may occur under dangerous (e.g., threat of bodily harm, slander, libel), unusual, or other serious circumstances.

Grievance Policy and Procedures

Students may grieve any faculty decision or action that affects their progress through the program. If the student chooses to grieve, he or she must follow the formal grievance procedures as specified in the College of Education Student Grievance Policy and in the UH Graduate Studies Catalog.

V. PETITIONS

The student is the responsible party for enrolling and dropping coursework using the online system or completing the appropriate forms and petitions for other administrative requests. Forms can be found at the Graduate School Forms and Procedures website.

These forms typically should be completed with the assistance of your Graduate Advisor:
>   Annual Report Form
>   Graduate Petition
>   Submit/Change Degree Plan
>   Request Change of Advisor

This form must be completed online at *my*UH:
>   Graduation Application

***Forms/petitions must be submitted to the COE Office of Graduate Studies in Farish Hall, Room 256.

VI. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The ELPS program is situated within a university that offers students a wide array of support services sponsored by several campus offices and facilities. This section describes some of these services and resources.

Academic Calendar
Important dates for each semester is listed in the UH Academic Calendar.

Costs, Fellowships, Assistantships, Financial Aid, Payment Due Dates, and Refunds
Information about these programs is available through the University of Houston Office of Student Business Services at Graduate Financial Information.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to the demands of a professional program, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.

Problem-Solving Resources/Ombudservice
The Ombuds Service directly assists students in resolving problems or refers them to the office or person who can help resolve a particular problem. The student legal advisor provides advice and counsel to students for problems of a legal nature. Students will be advised of steps that can be taken without a lawyer. When an attorney is required, referrals to agencies and other legal services are provided.

Student Life Resources/Wellness
A world-class education extends beyond the classroom. At the University of Houston, we support your success with wellness programs, counseling services, professional police service, and much more. The University of Houston also offers specialized programs for international students and students with disabilities. More information is available at Student Resources.

Technology
Center for Information Technology (CITE) at the COE
This department offers multi-faceted technology services to the entire College of Education.

University Information Technology (UIT)
UIT services cover issues about email accounts and other general technology.
Additional information is available at https://www.uh.edu/infotech/.

UH General Overview of Resources and Quick Links
Please visit http://www.uh.edu/students/index.php for details regarding multiple resources available to students at the University of Houston.

VII. OBTAINING TEXAS RESIDENCY FOR TUITION PURPOSES

If not a Texas resident, tuition at the University of Houston can be costly relative to the resident rate. Therefore, nonresident students are urged to take steps during their first year to obtain residency. For more information, consult the *Graduate Catalog*.

VIII. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Are you looking to join and participate in a student organization within the College of Education, such as the Graduate Student Organization (GSO)? Please visit GSO for more information.

WITHDRAWAL FORM

Name: _____   ID Number: _____
        (Please Print)   **(PeopleSoft)**

Telephone Number: _____   Email Address: _____

I, _____ request to withdraw from the program at this time.

1. I understand that I *have not* completed an educator preparation program, and UH will not recommend me for certification.
2. I understand that **I will not** be allowed to register for certification exams, and all previous approvals will be **removed** from my TEA account.
3. I understand that if I regain admission to the UH Educator Preparation Program at a later date, I will be subject to any new regulations and requirements (which could include additional coursework) in effect at that time.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read and understood <u>all</u> requirements to withdraw from the Educator Preparation Program.

_____   _____
Student Signature   **Date**

_____   _____
Academic Advisor Signature   **Date**
□ Approved   □ Disapproved   Comments:

_____   _____
Director of Educator Preparation Program Signature   **Date**
□ Approved   □ Disapproved   Comments:

_____   _____
Certification Officer Signature   **Date**
□ Approved   □ Disapproved   Comments:

<div align="center">**Exit Policy**</div>

19 TAC §228.20(h) requires all Educator Preparation Programs to have an exit policy for the dismissal of candidates published, reviewed, and signed by candidates when they are admitted to the program.

Dismissal from the Educator Preparation Program

A candidate may be removed from the Educator Preparation Program in the event he/she demonstrates behavior not consistent with the professional and ethical expectations of an educator in Texas. Dismissal from the Program may be based on grounds including but not limited to:
1. Failure to meet coursework requirements.
2. Failure to abide by policies and/or procedures established by the University of Houston Educator Preparation Program and/or program requirements established by the State Board for Educator Certification as published in the Texas Administrative Code.
3. Failure to contact your field supervisor for your formal observations.
4. Any action deemed a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, and/or;
5. Any action deemed a violation of the University of Houston Student Code of Conduct; and/or;
6. Any action deemed a violation of school district and/or campus policy during field-based experiences or clinical teaching or practicum.

Dismissal from the program is determined by a committee comprised of the program faculty and program lead. This may occur at any time. If a candidate is dismissed from the College of Education, he or she will also be automatically dismissed from the Educator Preparation Program. All decisions of dismissal can be appealed through college policies.

Withdrawal from the Educator Preparation Program

A candidate who decides to voluntarily withdraw from the Educator Preparation Program needs to send a written notice of that intent from a University of Houston email account including their PeopleSoft ID. The candidate also needs to submit a signed Withdrawal Form. Withdrawal from the College of Education translates to withdrawal from the Educator Preparation Program.

Re-entry into the program will be considered on an individual basis. Program requirements change over time because of revisions in licensing rules or educator standards; therefore, re-admittance could mean that there are new criteria that the re-admitted candidate would have to meet.

I have read, understand, and agree to meet the responsibilities outlined within this policy.

Signature	PeopleSoft ID	Date

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