

Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change

Program Description

Harness the power of education and use it to create hope and value for humankind.

— *Daisaku Ikeda, 2014*

The Soka University of America (SUA) MA Program in Educational Leadership and Societal Change answers the need for global leaders with the practical skills and experience, foundational knowledge, and ethical commitments necessary to achieve lasting and effective societal change through harnessing the power of education. Education takes place across many institutions – social, cultural, political, and economic – and requires the participation of all people. The MA program fosters educational leaders who can work collaboratively and democratically with their colleagues to advance their shared educational objectives in these various contexts.

The program takes an expansive approach to education, nurturing students committed to living contributive lives. When students experience the power of education, they can enact societal change. They are emboldened to become leaders who can create value in their communities.

In SUA's MA program, students study and research educational policies and problems as well as the relationship between educational philosophies and practices. They do so in the context of contemporary political, economic, and cultural currents that may or may not work for or against specific curricular trends but nevertheless provide critical background knowledge for educational leaders. Students explore an interdisciplinary curriculum that includes comparative and international education, history and philosophy of education, educational psychology, leadership, and educational law.

The two-year program is research-focused and covers various methods with an optional summer fieldwork component (see [summer research program](#)). Projects that entail human subjects research go through the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Under the supervision of a principal faculty advisor, all students produce a master's thesis for graduation.

The program is designed to prepare students for multiple pathways, including advanced degrees (e.g., Ph.D. or Ed.D.) and leadership roles in public and private schools, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the entrepreneurial sector worldwide.

Please note: This program is not a credential program. It does not qualify students for the State of California Teaching Credential or for the State of California Administrative Services Credential.

Mission and Learning Objectives

The SUA Graduate School strives to provide an academic setting that nurtures students from various cultural and national backgrounds. The Graduate School trains educational leaders who are, first and foremost, lead learners and critical thinkers. To this end, the MA program adopts a traditional cohort model. It emphasizes small class sizes that cultivate close and informal relationships between teachers and students, rigorous academic endeavors, free and open dialogue, and an appreciation for human diversity.

The mission of Soka University of America's Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change program is to provide graduate-level students with broad interdisciplinary knowledge, research skills, and practical experience for cutting-edge leadership in the all-inclusive world of education, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Upon completion of the MA in Educational Leadership and Societal Change program, students are expected to be able to:

1. Assess barriers to school change and develop strategies to overcome them through practices that are sensitive to wide variations in local needs and actors;

2. Take demonstrable leadership, informed by an understanding of the historic relations between school and society, for the improvement of education and educational systems in an increasingly global, interdependent world;
3. Assess models of education and leadership past and present;
4. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills conducive to learning environments that value diversity, lifelong learning, mentorship, innovative, democratic, and ethical decision-making at all levels, and student's holistic growth and development;
5. Conduct advanced research (secondary as well as primary; qualitative as well as quantitative) that can draw lessons, historical or otherwise, for contemporary educational policies and practices, especially as they entail and/or inhibit societal change both nationally and internationally.

Pedagogical Methods

Regular semester-long courses – lectures, group work, discussion, in-class activities, and library research. These courses are taught in a more-or-less traditional graduate seminar format in which students read and discuss both common and individual readings, pursue a research project under the direction of a professor/mentor, and provide regular progress reports to the class as a whole for commentary and input.

General Information

This is a full-time program – i.e., students are enrolled on a full-time basis (9 or more credits per semester). It will take two years to complete this program.

The courses in the program are offered in a traditional semester system (fall and spring) as well as in a unique block system – i.e., semester-based credit courses in 15-week semesters and 2 to 3-week block sessions.

Subject: [Graduate School Courses](#)

Type: Master of Arts

Year One Fall Block (August)

Item #	Title	Units
EDU 501	Educational Leadership & Societal Change: A Comparative Perspective	3

Year One Fall Semester (Sept.-Dec.)

Item #	Title	Units
EDU 503	History & Philosophy of Education	3
EDU 505	Educational Leadership: Theory and Research	3
EDU 515	Psychology of Education	3

Winter Block (January)

Item #	Title	Units
EDU 502	Educational Leadership: Practice and Inquiry	3

Spring Semester (Feb.-May)

Item #	Title	Units
EDU 504	International and Comparative Education	3
EDU 506	Societal, Organizational, & Institutional Change	3
EDU 508	Research Methods in Educational Settings	3

Summer

Item #	Title	Units
Summer Research (Optional)		0

Year Two Fall Semester (Sept.-Dec.)

Item #	Title	Units
EDU 507	Law, Policy and Ethical Decision-Making	3
EDU 513	Program Development, Management, & Evaluation	3
EDU 511	MA Thesis I	1
EDU 517	Educational Assessment: Learners, Curricula, and Programs	3

Year Two Winter Block (January)

Item #	Title	Units
EDU 519	MA Thesis II	3

Year Two Spring Semester (Feb.-May)

Item #	Title	Units
EDU 520	MA Thesis III	6
	Total credits:	43