

Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and Societal Change

Program Description

The 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 within the field of education, including but not limited to the classroom learning environment. Education takes place across a multiplicity of institutions – social, cultural, political, and economic – all of which have a profound bearing on our schools and the type of future citizens they produce.

The program takes an ecological approach to education, one that, as Lawrence Cremin (1976) wrote over thirty years ago, “views educational institutions and configurations in relation to one another and to the larger society that sustains them and is in turn affected by them.” As such, the MA program, like its home institution, Soka University of America, recognizes the symbiotic relationship between formal learning and the surrounding world in which we live.

Students study and conduct research into the historical roots of educational policies and problems as well as on the relationship between educational philosophies and practices. They do so in the context of contemporary social, political, economic and cultural currents that may or may not work for or against specific curricular trends, but that nevertheless provide critical background knowledge for educational leaders. Related areas of study include comparative and international education, multicultural education, educational psychology, gender and education, school administration policy and practice, and educational law.

The two-year program includes a summer fieldwork/research option (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, students integrate their fieldwork and educational research to produce a master’s thesis for graduation.

The program is designed to prepare students for advanced degrees (e.g., Ph.D. or Ed.D.) and for leadership roles in public and private schooling, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and in the entrepreneurial sector, particularly in the growing area of educational publishing and other media. Graduates are in excellent positions to initiate leadership in K-12 classroom settings, pursue supplementary state credentialing requirements for managerial positions as principals and vice principals or as administrators at the district-level, and work in public policy institutions around the world.

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 a variety of cultures and national backgrounds, who seek to learn from shared experiences. The Graduate School also strives to develop critical thinking skills and to foster a commitment to lifelong learning, educational leaders as first and foremost lead learners. To this end, the Graduate School emphasizes small class sizes that cultivate close and informal relationship 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 the 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 and manage barriers to school change – including legal policies, curricular practices, traditional learning theories, relations between teachers and administrators, parents and schools, schools and society – and develop strategies to overcome them, including case methods of societal change that are sensitive to wide variations in local needs and concerns, actors and agents;

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. Grasp the social and psychological relations of education broadly construed, assuming leadership around shared learning, teaching, and administrative goals and objectives;
4. Assess and measure the relative strengths and weaknesses of alternate models of school administration and leadership past and present;
5. Demonstrate in written, oral, and visual forms of communication the knowledge and skills conducive to learning environments that value diversity, lifelong learning, the mentoring skills of teachers, innovative and ethical decision-making at all levels, and the successful achievement of all school-aged youth;
6. 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.

Program Highlights

Through their studies students:

- Learn to utilize networks and coalitions for broad-based, popular initiatives and reforms;
- Analyze past and present models of administrative leadership for their effectiveness in promoting equality of educational opportunity and greater workplace democracy;
- Learn to promote meaningful collaboration among and between parents and school administrators; and
- Develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to create and maintain learning environments that value diversity, critical inquiry, curiosity and imagination, instructional leadership, innovative and ethical decision-making, reflective practice, and the successful achievement of all school-aged youth.

Pedagogical Methods

Regular semester-long courses – lecture, group work, discussion, 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 2 years to complete this program, which requires 41 semester credits to graduate.

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 14-week-semester and 2 to 3-week-block sessions.

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. Those students seeking teacher and/or administrative credentialing in California or elsewhere may consult the Program Director.

Program: [Graduate School Courses](#)

Type: Master of Arts

Year One Fall Block (August)

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

Year One Fall Semester (Sept.-Dec.)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 503	History and Philosophy of Education and Leadership	
EDU 505	Leadership: Theory and Practice	
EDU 515	Psychology of Education	

Winter Block (January)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 502	Ethnographies of Educational Leadership	

Spring Semester (Feb.-May)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 504	International and Comparative Education	
EDU 506	Democratic Theory and Organizational Change	
EDU 508	Quantitative and Mixed Methods in Educational Settings	

Summer

Item #	Title	Units:
Summer Research (Optional)		

Year Two Fall Semester (Sept.-Dec.)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 507	Law, Policy and Ethical Decision-Making	
EDU 511	The MA Thesis Proposal	
EDU 517	Educational Assessment: Learners, Programs, and Institutions	

Year Two Winter Block (January)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 512	Educational Leadership and Societal Change: The Distinguished Practitioners Series	

Year Two Spring Semester (Feb.-May)

Item #	Title	Units:
EDU 513	Curriculum: Status, Issues, and Trends	
EDU 520	MA Thesis	
Total credits:		41