



University of **Sioux Falls**

Fredrikson School of Education



Leaders

Graduate Education  
Handbook

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# Graduate Programs in Education

## GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

### Environment

The environment of the University of Sioux Falls encourages all students to achieve their full potential. The faculty and staff of the university challenge and support students to grow academically and spiritually and to develop a commitment to responsible service.

### Curriculum

The curriculum of the University of Sioux Falls provides undergraduate and graduate education that is based on the liberal arts, assists students in the development of a Christian worldview, and helps them acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be responsible servant-leaders in their chosen fields and communities.

### Faculty

The faculty of the University of Sioux Falls are committed to its mission and to their vocation of teaching, advising, and mentoring students. They enrich their teaching by scholarly participation in their fields of expertise and by their service to the church and the community.

### Students

The students of the University of Sioux Falls are diverse with respect to age, experience, and religious tradition. They are challenged to develop a greater appreciation for other cultures, a more global perspective on current issues, and a commitment to a life of service. The university welcomes all students who are serious about pursuing their educational goals in a Christian context.

The graduate program focuses primarily on the first of the department's accompanying goal statements:

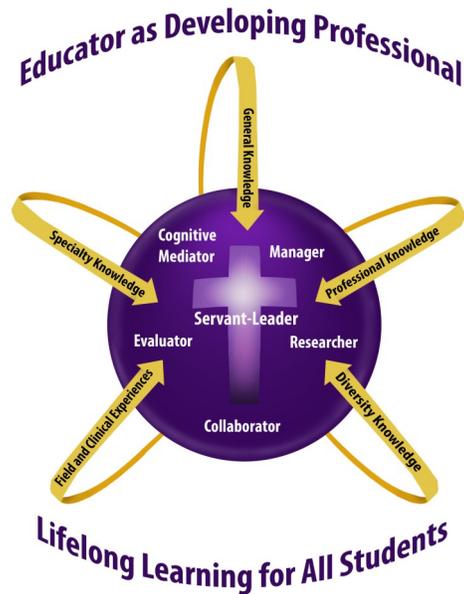
The department seeks to assist each student in developing intellectual acumen for discerning truth and meeting human needs as service to God, including the following:

- 1) sound thinking skills basic for perceptive interpretation, critical evaluation, and clear communication of ideas;
- 2) capacity in problem solving through techniques of inquiry and discovery;
- 3) competence in a particular discipline which may lead to a career change, professional growth, or further study;
- 4) practical skills in the application of acquired knowledge.

In addition, the program focuses on synthesis and integration of knowledge from courses, fellow students and research as well as provides advanced preparation for practitioners. Learners will be able to analyze, synthesize and creatively apply the existing body of research and literature within the scope of an area of specialization. Emphasis is placed upon quality and breadth of study.

## FSoE Conceptual Framework Model

Within the "Teacher As a Developing Professional Model (TADPF)," this course will emphasize the components of *cognitive mediator (cm)*, *manager (m)*, *researcher (r)*, *collaborator (c)*, *evaluator (e)*, and *servant-leader (sl)*.



As **COGNITIVE MEDIATOR**, the teacher helps students to become independent learners who construct meaning by combining new information with their own background knowledge.

As **RESEARCHER**, the teacher seeks to improve educational practices within the school setting, using an inquiry approach to serve students more effectively.

As **SERVANT-LEADER**, the teacher is able to integrate research on the development of moral reasoning, values and ethical sensitivity into the classroom while following the model of empathetic personal interaction provided by Jesus Christ.

As **EVALUATOR**, the teacher maximizes students' learning by using a full range of formal and informal information-gathering processes in order to respond appropriately to student individual differences.

As **COLLABORATOR**, the teacher is skilled in modes of communication that will enable effective communication and collaboration with other educators, parents, and families.

As **MANAGER**, the teacher plans and organizes the learning environment, establishes and maintains a positive learning climate and implements effective intervention strategies.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The information which follows is a guide to the Graduate Education Programs at the University of Sioux Falls. Additional information regarding graduate education programs is included in the USF Academic Catalog. USF's education programs are aligned with state and national standards, meeting accreditation guidelines. Certification requirements for SD educators are subject to change and are determined by the South Dakota Department of Education. If students are pursuing authorization other than South Dakota certification, program participants are encouraged to access certification information in their particular state to be sure of specific course needs for certification. The Graduate Policies Committee (GPC) is the governing body for graduate programs, and the following information reflects GPC policies and procedures.

### General Information

The Fredrikson School of Education is nationally accredited through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) to offer graduate educator programs leading to the Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree with five major areas of concentration and the Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree with two major areas of concentration. Additionally, the USF Center for Professional Development offers an extensive workshop program focused on professional development for K-12 educators.

The Master of Education (M.Ed.) offerings include five areas of study. **Masters of Education in Reading, Educational Leadership, and Technology and Personalized Learning** are offered to those applicants who currently have a valid teaching certificate. **The M.Ed. in Teaching** is available to holders of a baccalaureate degree who are seeking secondary teacher certification. In addition, USF offers the **M.Ed. in Educational Administration/Adult and Higher Education** which is available to candidates with a baccalaureate degree.

The Education Specialist (Ed.S.) program offerings include two areas of study. The **Ed.S. in Educational Administration/Superintendent** program prepares candidates for district-level leadership and certification as a superintendent. Candidates completing the full 30-hour Education Specialist degree program are eligible for the Career School Superintendent Certification. **The Ed.S. in Educational Administration/Principal** program prepares candidates for school leadership and certification as a K-12 principal.

### Process for Admission

Students may apply for admission to graduate study at the University of Sioux Falls by completing the application form. Applications for the degree programs should be submitted online using the online web-based form.

Along with completing the online application, applicants must submit official transcripts of all their college/university coursework. In addition, two people indicated as references on the candidate's application must complete recommendation forms and submit them online using the web-based form. Upon receipt of all completed application materials, the Director of Graduate Education will act on the applicant's admission for M.Ed. applicants and the Ed.S. Coordinator will act on the applicant's admission for Ed.S. applicants. The online application web-based form can be found on the USF website. The recommendation web-based form is sent through the web-form system shortly after the application is submitted online using the contact information submitted for references by the applicant.

## **PROGRAM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **I. M.Ed. in Reading, Educational Leadership or Technology and Personalized Learning,**

#### **A. Regular Admission – The applicant must have**

1. a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education;
2. 3.0 undergraduate GPA or a 3.0 GPA in six or more graduate credits already taken;
3. a valid teaching certificate;
4. completion of the required application and recommendation forms; and,
5. at least one year of teaching experience.

#### **OR**

#### **B. Provisional Admission may be granted**

1. If the applicant fails to meet GPA standards in previous work
  - a. but has demonstrated potential to be successful in graduate work; and,
  - b. has 2 positive references from professionals in a position to judge the student's potential for success;
2. If the applicant doesn't have a valid teaching certificate
  - a. but is working toward teacher certification commensurate with graduate course work, or,
  - b. is advised of certification limitations and understands additional requirements and understands that the certification officer cannot sign off on certification forms for any candidate who is not eligible;

The Director of Graduate Education is responsible for determinations of provisional admission and makes final decisions in each case for M.Ed. applicants; whereas, the Ed.S. Coordinator makes these determinations for Ed.S. applicants. Students admitted provisionally based on GPA may enroll in coursework limited to nine semester hours. If the student earns at least a 3.0 GPA in the designated nine semester hours, full admission will be granted. If the student does not meet a 3.0 GPA, additional coursework may not be taken. In the case of other provisions, full admission will be granted for coursework according to any requirements set forth in the provisional admittance; however certification limitations will continue in accordance with SD regulations.

### **II. M.Ed. in Teaching**

#### **A. Regular Admission – The applicant must have**

1. a bachelor's degree with an academic major that is taught at the secondary level or in a related area.
2. 3.0 cumulative undergraduate GPA for unconditional entrance;
3. completion of the required application and recommendation forms that address the applicant's potential disposition as an educator.
4. Completion of the Praxis II exam in the applicant's undergraduate major content area, taken within the first nine-semester hours of graduate coursework.

#### **OR**

#### **B. Provisional Admission – The applicant fails to meet GPA standards in previous work, but has**

1. 2.6 undergraduate GPA or appropriate disposition and demonstrated knowledge and skill in a related field; and,
2. has positive references from 2 professionals in a position to judge the student's potential for success.

Upon completion of 9 semester hours with a minimum 3.0 GPA, full admission will be granted.

### III. M.Ed. in Educational Administration/Adult and Higher Education

- A. Regular Admission – The applicant must have
1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited, degree-granting institution.
  2. A minimum of a 3.0 grade point average for full admission;
  3. **Two references** on USF recommendation forms that address the applicant's potential as a master's degree candidate.

**OR**

- B. Provisional Admission – The applicant fails to meet GPA standards in previous work, but has
1. 2.6 undergraduate GPA or appropriate disposition and demonstrated knowledge and skill in a related field; and,
  2. has positive references from **2 professionals** in a position to judge the student's potential for success.

Upon completion of 9 semester hours with a minimum 3.0 GPA, full admission will be granted.

### IV. Ed. S. in Educational Administration/Superintendent or Principal

- A. Regular Admission – The applicant must have
1. three years of verified experience on a valid certificate in an accredited K-12 school, one year of which includes classroom teaching experience or direct services to students;
  2. master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
  3. minimum 3.0 G.P.A. from master's degree work; and
  4. completion of the required application and recommendation forms,

**OR**

- B. Provisional Admission may be granted
1. If the applicant fails to meet GPA standards in previous work
    - a. but has demonstrated potential to be successful in graduate work; and,
    - b. has positive references from 2 professionals in a position to judge the student's potential for success.
  2. If the applicant doesn't have a valid teaching certificate
    - a. but is working toward teacher certification commensurate with graduate course work, or,
    - b. is advised of certification limitations and understands additional requirements and understands that the certification officer cannot sign off on certification forms for any candidate who is not eligible;
  3. If the applicant lacks 3 years of teaching experience or direct service to students
    - a. but will have the 3 years necessary experience for certification, or,
    - b. is advised of certification limitations and understands that the certification officer cannot sign off on certification forms for any candidate who is not eligible.

#### Students with Visas

For individuals seeking student visa status, acceptable scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are required before admission to the graduate program is granted. Visa information and processes will be completed through the USF Admissions and Financial Aid offices. All expenses of the test and obtaining a visa are to be borne by the applicant.

#### Degree Plan

A degree plan will be developed as a cooperative effort between the student and USF graduate education faculty. This plan is an important tool for future planning in regard to registration and for use as a degree completion auditing tool. In addition, the degree plan clearly indicates any approved transfer credits. All transfer credits must be approved by the Director of Graduate Education or Ed.S. Coordinator. After considering sample plans of study and course sequence information, the student should contact the graduate education office to initiate the development of a

degree plan. In order to avoid schedule conflicts or program gaps, students need to understand their plan of study prior to the beginning of the first course in the program. The final degree plan as well as any subsequent revision(s) must be approved by the Director of Graduate Education or Ed.S. Coordinator (Ed.S. Programs). A full list of program courses can be found on the USF Website.

### **Financial Aid**

Federal financial aid requires students to be enrolled in at least 4.5 credit hours per term to be considered as part-time students for eligibility. Most courses are 3 credit hours which would mean a student would need to take 2 courses to meet financial aid enrollment requirements. Some M.Ed. and Ed.S. student plans cannot accommodate two courses each semester. In addition, other factors such as transfer hours, length of program, and use of electives, among other aspects, may prevent students from receiving financial aid every semester.

Coursework to accommodate financial aid is not guaranteed. However, private financing may exist that has comparable loan provisions and allows for student borrowing when a student is registered for less than 4.5 credit hours. Graduate students applying for financial aid are required to file a FAFSA with the financial aid office at their earliest convenience after personal annual income taxes are completed in January. Students should further be aware that they must be formally admitted into the graduate program before they become eligible to receive financial aid. For more information about financial aid for graduate programs, contact the USF Financial Aid office at (605) 331-6623.

### **Full-Time Student Status**

Nine semester hours shall be considered a full course load during the fall and spring semesters, as well as, the summer session.

### **Minimum GPA**

A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 is required for all work in the M. Ed. program and 3.0 in the Ed. S. program. Probationary status will be assigned for one semester or course period if the GPA falls below the minimum established level. A graduate student will not be allowed to continue in the program if the GPA remains below the required level after the probationary period. A student on academic probation who raises his or her GPA above stated minimums will automatically be released from probationary status.

### **Repeating Courses**

Any course in which the student has received a grade of "C" may be repeated. If a student receives below a "C," the course must be repeated. Both enrollments will be recorded on the student's official transcript with the second final grade used in calculating the GPA. USF does not discriminate against qualified students on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin, physical handicap or age.

## **PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS**

### **I. M.Ed. in Reading, Educational Leadership and Technology and Personalized Learning**

These Master of Education programs include a minimum of 33 semester hours, as outlined in the graduate catalog and represented by individual plans of study:

- A. Two semester hours of electives for the M.Ed. in Reading Program, and three semester hours of particular elective credits for the M.Ed. Technology and Personalized Learning Program.
- B. Successful completion of the capstone project or additional designated coursework.

In addition to completion of the course requirements, students must provide evidence of three years of classroom teaching experience or direct services to students on a valid certificate in order to be eligible for obtaining additional certification on their teaching license as outlined in the SD Administrative Rules within their selected area of expertise.

### **II. M.Ed. in Teaching**

The Master of Education in Teaching program includes

- A. Successful completion of 34-35 semester hours of coursework;
- B. Possible additional coursework in the major as identified from performance scores on the Praxis II content area exam, taken at the undergraduate level or as specified by the Director of Graduate Programs in Education or the USF Certification Officer;
- C. Completion of the Praxis II Exam in the content area of major taken within the first 9 semester hours of graduate coursework.
- D. Successful completion of the professional semester which includes student teaching. It is strongly encouraged students view the Student Teaching Manual for more information about the professional semester. The manual can be found on the Graduate Education Orientation pages within MyUSF on the Campus Life tab.
- E. Successful completion of Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching.

Candidates applying for certification in any state will need passing scores on the two required Praxis II exams (the specific content test for each major and the Principles of Learning and Teaching test.)

### **III. M.Ed. in Educational Administration/Adult and Higher Education**

- Successful completion of 11 courses (33 semester hours) which includes culminating internship experience.

### **IV. Ed.S. in Educational Administration/Superintendent (Career Certification)**

- A. Successful completion of the ten required courses (30 semester hours).
- B. Successful completion of the comprehensive portfolio submitted as the culminating project after completion of the 30 semester hours required in the degree program.

### **V. Ed. S. in Educational Administration/Principal**

- A. Successful completion of the ten required courses (30 semester hours).
- B. Successful completion of internship requirements blended within three courses.

### **Capstone Project in M.Ed. in Reading, Educational Leadership, and Technology and Personalized Learning**

The capstone project is completed during the final practicum/internship experiences. Students receive instruction in basic research techniques and are required to apply and synthesize learning from the entire program. The project must benefit the school/district; requires a synthesis of knowledge, skills, and dispositions set forth in the USF Educator as Developing Professional Curriculum Model and program standards; and present a review of current literature relevant to the

topic. In addition, the project should be focused on creating positive change in the school leading to increased student achievement, as well as providing valid recommendations for future research.

### **Application for Graduation and Commencement**

Graduate students anticipating completion of their program(s) in spring or summer must submit an application to the Registrar Office prior to the designated date (see graduation information on Registrar's webpage for specific date) to be eligible for graduation in May. Commencement ceremonies are only held in the spring at which time diplomas are awarded publicly. Those anticipating finishing all coursework at the end the fall semester, who would like to have a conferred degree noted on transcripts prior to the spring commencement, must apply prior to the designated date for graduation in December. However, there are no commencement ceremonies held in December. Students must file an application for graduation in the Registrar's Office and will be billed for the fee covering graduation processes and documents. Students who will complete their last classes in the summer semester may participate in commencement ceremonies, but will not receive transcripts or documents indicating program completion and graduation until all official coursework and requirements are completed.

### **Second Major**

For those students who have already completed a master's degree in Educational Leadership, Reading, Technology, or Technology and Personalized Learning Program from the University of Sioux Falls, a second major may be earned by completing the remaining 21-22 semester hours required for the second major. Factors such as the age of the first degree and coursework alignment will be considered by the Director of Graduate Education, who will assist the student in devising an approved plan of study.

### **Time Limit**

A student has seven years to complete a program from the date of the first course accepted in the program, which includes any transfer work. It should be noted that some programs are offered with courses scheduled specifically for a 2-year plan of study. Students who decide to delay their program completion are advised that course scheduling is not guaranteed beyond the initial plan of study. However, USF graduate program faculty are committed to advising students and will assist in program planning and determining what options will be available when circumstances require a student to delay program completion. In cases where program coursework has aged in excess of a year beyond the allowed range, students must submit a written request to the Graduate Policies Committee for determination of program continuation. If program continuation is granted, students will be advised of requirements that reflect current program requirements and additional provisions set by the Committee.

### **Transfer Credit**

Nine semester hours of graduate credit earned at other regionally accredited, degree-granting institutions may be transferred into a graduate program at the University of Sioux Falls. However, the Director of Graduate Education or Ed.S. Coordinator (Ed.S. Programs) must analyze official transcripts and make the final determination of course transfer eligibility. In some cases, due to the course replication or redundancy there may be an exception to the nine semester hour limitation of transfer credits. In using transfer credits for reading specialization, additional and ongoing supporting coursework is expected to insure up-to-date knowledge of effective practices in reading instruction. The director will make determinations based on program requirements as aligned to accreditation standards and in keeping with USF program characteristics and integrity. Specific questions regarding transfer credits should be addressed to the Director of Graduate Education or Ed.S. Coordinator Position. Transfer allowances are determined on a case-by-base basis and may reflect changes in catalogues, state or university requirements, and/or updated curriculum specifications.

**Right of Appeal on Academic Issues**

University of Sioux Falls education students have the right to appeal academic decisions. Students who have a grievance about an instructor, course or other academic issues should discuss the concern with the instructor involved. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution of the issue, the student should discuss the matter with the Director of Graduate Education (or the chair of FSoE if the situation of concern involves the director as part of the issue).

In a case where the student finds the director's or chair's decision unacceptable, an appeal may be made to the Graduate Policies Committee (GPC). Such an appeal should be submitted in written form to the chairperson of that committee. The student should prepare a letter clearly explaining the appeal. There is no form, so letters should be well-written and provide relevant information. The letter should include the student's name, USF ID, mailing address, email address, and phone number. Letters of appeal must be written and signed by the student. A student wishing to appear before the Graduate Policies Committee must include that request in the letter of appeal. The GPC meets once a month during the regular school year and would convene if necessary during the summer to consider a student appeal.

**Program, Unit and University Accreditation and Evaluation**

An ongoing, systematic internal program evaluation is practiced so that the Fredrikson School of Education (FSoE) conducts ongoing program and department improvement. Candidate self-assessments towards program standards, data from focus groups, course assessment data and additional feedback are collected for periodic departmental review and for accreditation purposes. A survey is sent to recent graduates of the program and to employers of graduates. Assessment results are reported to the Graduate Policies Committee (GPC). Program revisions and improvements are generated as a result of information attained in the program review. In addition, FSoE is CAEP accredited and the University of Sioux Falls completes accreditation processes as a member of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

**Workshop Credit**

No more than two semester hours of graduate credit received in workshops may be applied to M.Ed. in Reading program, and no more than three semester hours of particular graduate credit may be applied to the M.Ed. in Technology & Personalized program. Such credits must be approved by the Director of Graduate Education. The workshops accepted must be conducted under the auspices of a regionally accredited graduate degree-granting institution.

**Workshops and Special Topic Courses**

A workshop shall be defined as a practical learning experience, offered in a condensed amount of time, and for which evaluation may be PASS/NO CREDIT. All workshops and instructors are subject to approval by the Director of Graduate Education prior to the designation of "graduate credit." Special topic course shall be defined as any non-workshop, non-catalog course.

**Enrollment of Seniors in Graduate Courses**

Undergraduate students who are seniors and have a 3.0 or better GPA may register for graduate courses by completing a special request form and by securing the permission of the Director of Graduate Education. In some cases, special circumstances may warrant that consideration be made for permission when a student has less than a 3.0 GPA. In these cases, consultation between the Director of Graduate Education and the Registrar will occur to determine a final decision. Credit may not be used toward both an undergraduate and a graduate degree.

**Concurrent Coursework in Advanced Degrees**

Coursework taken concurrently may occur in some instances such as when a graduate student is on the verge of completing an M. Ed. but desires to start the Ed. S. program rather than waiting a complete 2-year cycle to begin. However, coursework used to complete one degree may not be used towards completion of a higher degree. A second degree at the same level may incorporate coursework from an already earned degree of the same level. (See section in handbook on "Second Major").

Graduate coursework taken at any time could be considered for endorsement purposes; however all decisions regarding any authorizations by the USF Certification Officer are subject to state laws and regulations. The Director of Graduate Education and the USF Certification Officer reserve the right to make decisions on coursework accepted or denied for any sign offs on certification and endorsement paperwork that would signify USF approval or acknowledgement of preparation.

**Freedom of Access and Opportunity to Higher Education**

Admission requirements and policies are determined by the university, but under no circumstances will a student be barred from admission on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin. Thus, within the limits of our facilities, the University is open to all students who are qualified according to our admissions standards.