

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

MA in HIGHER EDUCATION &
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

STUDENT HANDBOOK | 2023-2024

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PROGRAM MISSION

The Higher Education Program (HEP) at George Mason University prepares individuals for positions of leadership in teaching, research, and administration at community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities around the globe. The interdisciplinary, graduate-level curriculum focuses on leadership, the scholarship of teaching and learning, administration, and assessment. This 36-credit-hour master's degree prepares students for positions in academic and student affairs as well as in associations, government agencies, and industries whose activities relate to or impact higher education. Students in the Higher Education Program come from varied professional backgrounds in college teaching, university administration, business, the performing arts, and government, and bring a vast spectrum of experience to their studies.

The degree's core coursework provides essential knowledge about the higher education enterprise. This includes the evolving nature of higher education and its foundational characteristics, students and their development, the management and administration of programs and services, and data driven practices, all in the context of the digital age. The current digital age provides extensive opportunities to communicate, teach, and learn through digital sources. Core courses provide a foundation in social sciences, quantitative reasoning, history, and digital media (e.g., pre and post refereed web writing, wikis, social media, open source learning, data visualization, digital textbooks, Google resources) with an emphasis on graduates' capacity to apply course content and build skills to enhance educational opportunities in a budget-constrained environment.

Upon completion of the program, students will:

- Understand and apply concepts of leadership, teaching, administration, and assessment within the context of the complex higher education enterprise. Leadership, teaching, administration, and assessment are studied through an interdisciplinary lens using emergent technologies with a focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- Become socialized members of a community of higher education professionals in which they will contribute to and lead scholarly conversations by consuming, critiquing, and creating scholarship.
- Understand and employ effective pedagogical approaches.
- Value assessment, understand its role, and be skilled in enacting processes of analysis.
- Reflect on themselves as cultural beings, analyze the ways in which their cultural identity influences their work in higher education, value diversity, and meet multicultural competencies.
- Use theory as a base from which they ground their practice of effective and ethical leadership, teaching, and administration.
- Be prepared to implement programs and services that support the institutional mission while adhering to oversight and accountability requirements.

FACULTY & STAFF DIRECTORY

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PROGRAM PROCEDURES

How the Program Communicates with Students

The Higher Education Program communicates with students through the HEP email listserv. Every week, HEP sends out a weekly announcement email. All students in the program should receive and read these announcement emails as they often include important deadlines, program news, and opportunities in areas including publication, funding, and employment. Per university policy, the program communicates exclusively with students through their Mason issued email addresses. This includes any electronic correspondence from faculty and HEP staff. Consequently, it is crucial that students check their Mason email addresses regularly. *If a student is not receiving emails from the listserv, they should notify the academic coordinator to be added to it.*

Process for Paperwork

All paperwork should be emailed to the academic coordinator. Students should keep copies of all paperwork for their personal records. The initiation and circulation of forms to individuals for signature is the responsibility of the student.

THE ROLE OF THE HEP DIRECTOR

1. Oversees academic advising of students in the program.
2. Serves as the final signatory approval within the program for student forms. This includes but is not limited to substitution waivers, program of study forms, travel scholarship requests, thesis proposal approval forms, signature pages, independent study requests, practicum requests, and research apprenticeship requests.
3. Serves as a liaison between HEP and the institution.
4. Oversees modifications to the curriculum as needed.
5. Expands program enrollment through recruitment and marketing of the program to the public. Meets with and encourages prospective students to apply to the program and admitted students to enroll in the program.

THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC COORDINATOR

1. Advises master's and certificate students.
2. Serves as a liaison between HEP and the CHSS admissions liaison.
3. Communicates program announcements, deadlines, and updates through the HEP listserv and weekly announcement emails.
4. Serves as curriculum manager and submits curriculum modifications as needed.
5. Expands program enrollment through recruitment and marketing of the program to the public. Meets with prospective students and encourages them to apply to the program; engages in outreach to admitted students to enroll in the program.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT

1. Maintains an up-to-date program of study. Reviews their program of study each semester and submits an updated program of study whenever they change courses from their original document.
2. Reads and familiarizes themselves with their catalog year requirements. This includes the university policies section for graduate level students. The current catalog and archived catalogs can be found at <https://catalog.gmu.edu/>. The university graduate policies can be found at <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>.
3. Reads and familiarizes themselves with CHSS policies and requirements. Information for current CHSS graduate students can be found at <https://chss.gmu.edu/graduate>. This link includes college policies, forms, and a graduation checklist.
4. Reads and familiarizes themselves with the HEP expectations and guidelines document. See [APPENDIX A](#) for a copy of this document.
5. Conducts semesterly degree audits in Patriotweb to ensure that they are maintaining adequate progress to meet their degree requirements within their 6-year graduation deadline.
To conduct a degree audit, log into <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/> and click on the “Student Records” link under the “Student Services” tab. Click on Student Records” link and then click on the “Use the Student Profile to access Degree Works” link. If courses are not counting correctly towards their degree in the Degree Works screen, students should contact the academic coordinator. Often, it is just a matter of submitting some paperwork to get this corrected.
6. Checks their Mason email address regularly and reads correspondence from the program and HEP faculty and staff. Additionally, if they are in a course that uses Blackboard, checks their MyMason Blackboard account regularly for any announcements or messages from their instructor.
7. Initiates and circulates all required paperwork. Maintains a personal file with copies of all paperwork that they submit to the HEP office.
8. Maintains an awareness of relevant deadlines and works to meet those deadlines (this includes but is not limited to deadlines for course registration, practicum, and graduation).
9. At time of graduation, reviews and follows the steps on the appropriate CHSS graduation checklist at <https://chss.gmu.edu/graduate/graduation-checklist>.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

All students should refer to their specific catalog year to ensure they are meeting all their degree requirements.

The M.A. in Higher Education and Student Development is a 36-credit-hour degree with thesis and capstone option. Students can choose to follow either the Student Affairs Administration Track or the Higher Education Leadership Track. In each track, students will follow a core and then choose to pursue the thesis option or the capstone option. Electives for each track can be taken across the institution and must be approved by their advisor.

STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION TRACK

Core Courses: 30 Credits

- HE 606 Cultural Pluralism in Higher Education (3 credits)
- HE 610 Research Designs in Higher Education (3 credits)
- HE 624 Finance and Fiscal Management in Higher Education (3 credits)
- HE 644 Organization and Administration of Student Affairs (3 credits)
- HE 645 The Contemporary College Student (3 credits)
- HE 646 Student Development Theory (3 credits)
- HE 685 Practicum (6 credits)*
- HE 703 Higher Education in the Digital Age (3 credits)
- HE 721 History of Higher Education (3 credits)

Capstone Option: 6 credits

- Elective (3 credits)
- HE 797 Higher Education Capstone (3 credits)

Thesis Option: 6 credits

- One additional research methods course (3 credits)
- HE 799 Thesis Option (3 credits)

*CAS standard requires students to complete two practicums that provide distinct experiences. Students who are working full-time in higher education may substitute the 2nd practicum with an elective course.

See page B-2 in [APPENDIX B](#) for the program of study form. See the following sections for more specific descriptions of [HE 610](#), [HE 685](#), [HE 797](#), and [HE 799](#).

HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP TRACK

Core Courses: 21 Credits

- HE 606 Cultural Pluralism in Higher Education (3 credits)
- HE 610 Research Designs in Higher Education (3 credits)
- HE 624 Finance and Fiscal Management in Higher Education (3 credits)
- HE 645 The Contemporary College Student (3 credits)
- HE 685 Practicum (3 credits)
- HE 703 Higher Education in the Digital Age (3 credits)
- HE 721 History of Higher Education (3 credits)

Specialization: 9 credits

- Students should work with their advisor to select three courses (9 credit hours) either in the Higher Education Program or in another discipline that fits the students' career goals.

Capstone Option: 6 credits

- Elective (3 credits)
- HE 797 Higher Education Capstone (3 credits)

Thesis Option: 6 credits

- One additional research methods course (3 credits)
- HE 799 Thesis Option (3 credits)

See page B-3 in [APPENDIX B](#) for the program of study form. See the following sections for more specific descriptions of [HE 610](#), [HE 685](#), [HE 797](#), and [HE 799](#).

RESEARCH METHODS REQUIREMENT

HE 610 – Research Designs in Higher Education (3 credits)

The Research Designs course provides an introduction to higher education research methodologies, analysis, and decision-making through introduction of basics of research design including problem identification, literature review, method selection, data collection and analysis, application, writing, and ethics.

Additional Research Methods (3 credits) for Thesis Students

Students who choose the thesis option are required to take an additional research methods course outside the Higher Education Program. This research methods course should be in the method that the student plans to use in completing their thesis. Possible departments in which to take the additional research methods course include but are not limited to Women and Gender Studies, Sociology, Cultural Studies, and Psychology. Students may need to gain permission from the department offering the research methods course in order to enroll.

PRACTICUM REQUIREMENT

HE 685 – Practicum (3 credits)

Pre-requisites: 9 credits of HE coursework

The practicum involves a supervised on-the-job experience in an approved college or university setting or public agency involved in higher education and provides an important educational experience that complements the student's academic program. During the practicum, the student develops skills applicable to college-based higher education and student development management and administration. The practicum requires a minimum of 150 hours of work. The practicum can be completed in the Fall, Spring, or Summer semester.

Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to locate an appropriate practicum site and make arrangements for working within an organization. The student may seek help in locating a suitable position by emailing hepadmin@gmu.edu. A current job may not be used for practicum credit. If the student moves to a new position within their organization or takes on special, new responsibilities, they may petition for these to be used for a practicum.

Once the practicum site has been determined, an agreement should be made regarding the work to be completed during the practicum experience. Practicum students will work under the direction of a supervisor/mentor, usually a professional staff member at the practicum site who will complete a written evaluation of the individual's performance.

Proposal Approval and Registration

Plans for the practicum should be completed during the academic semester prior to beginning the practicum. Students write a proposal and submit it to hepadmin@gmu.edu along with the Request for Approval of Practicum Form, which must be signed by the student's advisor and the practicum supervisor.

Proposals are due by the following deadlines:

- Deadline for Fall: July 1
- Deadline for Spring: November 1
- Deadline for Summer: March 1

Once the proposal has been approved, the student will receive permission to enroll in the practicum course. The student can then register for the practicum on Patriotweb.

The proposal form can be found in [APPENDIX C](#).

Practicum Types

Administrative Practicum

Students work in an organization in higher administration. Examples of placements:

- American Association of Community Colleges Research Office
- The Office of the Virginia Secretary of Education
- Virginia Community College System/Richmond
- School of Integrative Studies, George Mason University
- Career Development Services Office, George Mason University
- Foundation Office, George Mason University
- BIS Office, George Mason University
- NOVA/Manassas Community Orchestra, NVCC
- Provost's Office, Annandale Campus, NVCC
- Dean's Office, Manassas Campus, NVCC
- Center for Teaching Excellence, George Mason University
- Higher Education Study Abroad Tours

Community-Based Practicum

Students work in an organization that works to advance education, but not directly in an institution that offers degrees. Examples include:

- Professional association
- Non-profit concerned with education policy
- Service Learning

Teaching Practicum

Students are expected to co-teach at least one three-credit or four-credit course in their discipline under the direction of a mentor from the faculty of the practicum site. At a minimum, students need to help design a syllabus, teach the course, and utilize classroom research techniques to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

Supervisors

Practicum supervisors allow students to attend, observe, and assist in the assigned undergraduate course or administrative duties. The supervisor serves as a mentor and completes a written evaluation of the student's performance and sends it to the practicum coordinator. This evaluation is also included in the practicum portfolio. Specific criteria for evaluation by the supervisor are agreed upon at the time of proposal submission. The evaluation may include the following, as appropriate. Student's ability to:

- Envision a course or administrative responsibilities as a whole

- Understand the dynamics of the administrative workplace environment, goals, mission
- Prepare clear, concise reports, electronic communications, etc. for the mentor/administrator
- Place course material in a larger context
- Understand effective pedagogical approaches
- Create or choose assessment approaches and instruments for either classroom or workplace
- Communicate clearly and repeatedly about course elements
- Understand various learning styles
- Respect diversity

Practicum Portfolio

The practicum portfolio gives students an opportunity to summarize practicum experiences and document insights gained. In the practicum portfolio, students describe and evaluate the practicum experience. Students should create a portfolio with an eye for external readers. Practicum portfolios will be presented in an interactive electronic format. Students will submit the practicum portfolio to the instructor of the practicum course immediately after the completion of the practicum on an agreed upon date.

Portfolio Components

The portfolio should include the following, at a minimum:

- Weekly journal entries that document learning experiences and lessons, as well as reflections and goals for problem situations
- Materials developed as part of the practicum experience including syllabi, tests, reports, or policy memos
- Additional evidence of meeting learning objectives, such as video of classroom interactions, web sites, PowerPoint presentations, overheads, sample tests, readings, and other materials, etc.
- 3-4 page paper reflecting on how this experiential learning opportunity has helped develop awareness of issues in higher education (references to higher education coursework are expected)
- Written mentor evaluation

Evaluation

Grades for practica are based on two factors:

- Written evaluation of the mentor
- Practicum portfolio

In addition to the required practicum portfolio, students will be required to complete a structured course with peers online. See [APPENDIX D](#) for practicum guidelines and sample practicum evaluations.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

HE 897 – Directed Readings (1-3 credits)

Students who wish to complete an independent study should enroll in the HE 897 Directed Readings course. The course is variable credit, meaning a student can choose to have an independent study between 1 and 3 credits. Students should plan for 60 hours of work for each credit of an independent study.

Student Responsibilities

1. Secure a faculty member who is willing to serve as an advisor for the independent study
2. Submit a proposal to the faculty member outlining the nature of the study and the resources to be used to support the topic
3. Obtain approval for the independent study from the Higher Education Program by submitting a proposal to the program director. See below for proposal requirements.
4. Develop a unique 30 character title (including spaces) for the course.
5. Discuss with the faculty member the criteria used for grading the independent study (e.g., length of paper(s), project, and readings).
6. Periodically meet with the faculty member to discuss their progress and obtain instructor feedback.

Proposal Requirements

1. A statement of purpose and rationale for independent study.
2. List/description of learning outcomes.
3. A description of assignments and list of proposed readings.
4. Proposed frequency of contact with supervisor/mentor or faculty member and the nature of discussions at those meetings.
5. A description of how learning outcomes will be accomplished.
6. A rubric or criteria describing how student learning will be assessed.

Proposals are due to the director one month before the start of the semester.

Once a student receives approval from the director, they should email the academic coordinator to request the creation of their independent study section.

CAPSTONE

HE 797 – Higher Education Portfolio (3 credits)

Pre-requisite: Taken during the last year of coursework

This capstone course guides students in the creation of a learning and professional practice portfolio. The portfolio is a compilation of academic work and other forms of educational evidence assembled for the purpose of (1) evaluating coursework quality, learning progress, and academic achievement; and (2) determining whether learning standards or other academic requirements for courses and the program have been met. The capstone course is traditionally offered in spring semesters.

Registration

To register for HE 797, the student must be in the last academic year of their course work. The student must also have an up to date, completed program of study on file. The student will need to email hepadmin@gmu.edu a copy of their program of study at least 4 weeks prior to the beginning of the semester to gain permission to enroll in HE 797.

THESIS

HE 799 – Higher Education Thesis (3 credits)

Pre-requisites: 27 credits completed including HE 610

Students who select the thesis option will complete an additional 3-credit research methods course offered at Mason with approval from their advisor.

Registration

To register for HE 799, the student must have an approved proposal and signed Thesis Proposal Committee Approval Form on file with all three signatures of their committee members as well as the program director's signature. Signed Thesis Proposal Committee Approval Forms are due a minimum of four weeks before the beginning of the semester for which the student wishes to enroll. The student must also have an up to date, completed program of study on file and they must have successfully completed 27 credits towards the degree. Theses often require two or more semesters to complete. Per university policy, students are required to register for three thesis credits their first semester of HE 799 and they must maintain continuous enrollment in HE 799 until they graduate (excluding summer semesters). This means that if a student does not graduate the first semester they enroll in HE 799, they must continue to register for at least 1 credit of HE 799 every fall and spring semester until they graduate. The student will need to email hepadmin@gmu.edu every semester that they wish to enroll in HE 799.

Committee Requirements

Students who select the thesis option will select a chair from a HEP approved list of graduate faculty. Students must select the chair before completing their core thesis credits. The chair will direct the thesis. In consultation with the committee chair, students will select two additional committee members who are also graduate faculty. Students are required to defend their thesis proposal and thesis at an oral defense. Whether the student passes or fails the thesis is agreed upon by the thesis committee before the oral defense. Students cannot enter an oral defense until committee members agree to pass the thesis.

Graduation

When a student prepares to graduate, they should familiarize themselves with the University Dissertation and Thesis Services office. Information about UDTS deadlines, formatting rules, and processes can be found at <https://library.gmu.edu/udts>. Note: The thesis signature sheet requires signatures from multiple offices, including the dean's office. Students should factor time for gathering all required signatures into their plans when scheduling a defense date.

See [APPENDIX E](#) for the Thesis Proposal Committee Approval Form. Students should format their Thesis defense signature sheets in accordance with UDTS guidelines.

GRADUATION

Once a student is in their final semester and has met all degree requirements, they should apply to graduate on Patriotweb. This will initiate a paperwork process in which the registrar's office, with the assistance of the academic coordinator, audits the student's record to ensure all degree requirements are met. Students should reference the appropriate CHSS graduation checklist (found at <https://chss.gmu.edu/graduate/graduation-checklist>) to ensure they meet all steps to graduate.

In order to graduate, students must:

1. File their intent to graduate on Patriotweb by the deadline stated on the registrar's website.
2. Perform a degree audit in Patriotweb to ensure they have met all degree requirements. If something is not filling in correctly, they should contact the academic coordinator to have the issue resolved.

Steps 3-8 for thesis students only:

3. Defend their thesis.
4. Have committee members and the program director sign two copies of their signature sheet after a successful defense. Students then submit one copy to the HEP academic coordinator.
5. Take one copy of signed signature sheet to the dean's office for the dean's signature. Submit this copy to the UDTs office.
6. Follow all formatting and submission guidelines from the UDTs office which can be found at <https://library.gmu.edu/udts>.
7. Submit a copy of their final thesis to the HEP office. Theses can be sent by email to hepadmin@gmu.edu.
8. Important! Confirm that final grades for HE 799 have been submitted by their chair and that all "IPs" on their transcript have been changed to "S."
9. Attend graduation and celebrate!!

FREQUENTLY USED FORMS

Students will need a variety of forms to complete paperwork for the degree. Below is a list of common forms and their functions. If a student has any questions about paperwork, they should contact the academic coordinator for assistance. Many of these forms can be found in the appendices of this handbook.

Program of Study Form

The program of study form serves as a contract between the student and the program and states what courses the student must take to complete their degree. Completed program of study forms are submitted by the program to the registrar's office to ensure electives and coursework fill correctly in a student's degree audit. If a student changes their coursework plans, the student needs to submit an updated program of study form for program approval. A blank program of study form can be downloaded from HEP's website and can also be found in [APPENDIX B](#) of this handbook.

Substitution/Waiver

For various reasons, students are sometimes allowed to substitute a required course within the program for another course. When a student receives approval for a substitution, they must notify the academic coordinator. The academic coordinator will complete and submit a substitution/waiver form on behalf of the student once the grade for the course has been posted.

Practicum Approval Form

A practicum proposal must receive approval before a student may register for the practicum. The approval form can be found in [APPENDIX C](#) of this handbook.

Graduate Transfer Request Form

Students who take non-degree courses or courses at other institutions before enrolling in the program may sometimes receive permission to transfer these courses into their degree. If this is the case, the student should contact the academic coordinator to request the appropriate paperwork be submitted to the dean's office for transfer approval.

Study Abroad with an External Program

Many students in the program study abroad with other institution programs. If a student wishes to take a study abroad course through another institution, they must receive permission to take the course with the external program. More information about that process can be found at https://masonabroad.gmu.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=10141.

Consortium Request

Mason students have access to a consortium of local universities. This form allows students to take courses at a consortium university while paying Mason tuition and receiving Mason credits. It can be found on the registrar's office at <https://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Consortium-Registration-Form.pdf>.

Full-time Equivalency Status Form

Students who take longer than one semester to complete their thesis have the option to apply for full-time status while only enrolling in 1 credit of thesis credit after the initial semester of thesis registration. This request must be submitted each semester. It can be found on the registrar's office here <https://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/MTR.pdf>.

FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The David W. Rossell Scholarship

David W. Rossell was an associate provost for 23 years and was a strong advocate for Mason and Higher Education. He earned his Doctorate of Arts degree in 2000. He and his heirs have established a scholarship for a HEP student. The recipient must be a CHSS HEP student, may be full- or part-time, in-state or out-of-state, demonstrate a financial need, and be academically successful. The scholarship is renewable as long as the recipient continues to meet the criteria. A call for applications is sent out annually on the HEP listserv. The recipient is selected by the HEP scholarship committee.

HEP Student Support Scholarships

Funds permitting, HEP offers Student Support Scholarships to support student travel to present at conferences. To apply for a support scholarship, students should forward conference acceptance letters in an email with a written request including the conference, the title of the accepted presentation, and statement of how presenting at the conference will support the student's scholarly pursuits to the director; the academic coordinator should be copied on this email. The number of HEP scholarships offered each year is dependent upon fund availability.

Funding Opportunities from National Associations and Policy Organizations

Occasionally, HEP will receive news about various funding opportunities from national associations and policy organizations. These opportunities are sent out on the HEP listserv in the weekly announcement email.

Graduate Student Travel Fund

Mason offers funds to graduate students to help offset travel costs associated with their research and development outside of the classroom. To apply for these funds, visit <https://graduate.gmu.edu/financial-support/conference-travel-funding>.

CONNECT WITH HEP SOCIALLY

The program offers various ways to connect outside of the classroom.

Follow the program's official page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/HigherEd.GMU> and on Twitter at @GMUHigherEd.

Students are active in informal social gatherings, writing groups, and research groups. Information about some of these events and groups is sent out on the HEP listserv in the HEP Weekly Announcement emails.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
COMMITTEE GUIDELINES AND
PROCEDURES

Higher Education Program
COMMITTEE GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES
Updated August 24, 2017

The thesis or dissertation is a professional product that not only represents the student's level of achievement, but also the scholarship generated by the program, department, college, and George Mason University. The committee works to ensure the product demonstrates original research that contributes new knowledge and/or a reinterpretation of existing knowledge to the area of investigation. Students are to work closely with their committees throughout the proposal, research, and writing process. The student is responsible for scheduling meetings with committee members, and staying in close contact with his or her committee.

ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chairs serve as the major advisor and mentor to students as they research and write their thesis, project, or dissertation. Chairs are responsible for following all program, department, college, and university procedures. **PhD in Education students, do not assume your portfolio chair is your dissertation chair.** Portfolio committees disband after portfolio III. Expectations of the chair include:

Proposal

- Consult and meet with the student on a regular basis. Chairs are to be available monthly, but students are obligated to initiate appointments.
- Communicate with committee members about student's progress.
- Advise on topic selection (e.g., appropriateness, academic value).
- Guide the student in the proposal writing process (e.g., clearly defined problem statement, precise research questions, viable methodology, focused literature review, and thorough bibliography).
- Counsel student on expectations of reliability, validity, fidelity, and/or trustworthiness of data-gathering methods, their execution, and subsequent findings. Note that the chair may defer to the committee methodologist for issues specific to methodology.
- Provide students with and instruct them to review good samples before completing the proposal.
- Ensure that all research activities involving human subjects directed by a GMU faculty or staff member or conducted by a GMU student (including thesis and dissertation work), or that involve GMU students as participants, are submitted to the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (ORIA) for review and approval. Refer to the website <http://oria.gmu.edu/> for information. All research activities will be reviewed by ORIA prior to implementation of the research activities. The Committee Chair will serve as the principal investigator (PI) for the research and assumes oversight for the legal and ethical conduct of the work. Note that HEP prefers that applications for human subjects approval **not** be submitted by students **until after** the thesis or dissertation proposal defense.
- Facilitate committee discussions about creating and improving the proposal.

- Uphold academic rigor by not allowing the project to move forward unless it meets high research standards.
- Follow University and CHSS/CEHD/MAIS policies on timelines. Note, extensions must be recommended by the HEP director to the Dean's Office. Extensions are granted for substantial life changing circumstances only (e.g., life threatening illnesses rather than too busy at work).
- Hold a proposal defense meeting to discuss expectations with the entire committee and the student.

Completed Document

- Uphold academic rigor by not allowing the project to move forward unless it meets high research standards.
- Provide guidance and evaluation during the research and writing stages and offer recommendations for revisions.
- Hold students to a high standard of research excellence.
- Prepare student for what is to occur at defense meeting.
- Clarify with students **that three weeks** should be expected for chairs and committee members to read and respond to complete drafts of theses or dissertations.
- Discuss any problematic issues with the committee, student, and program director/academic coordinator.
- With the concurrence of the committee members, approve the final draft. Whether the student passed or failed the defense is agreed upon by the committee **before** the oral defense. Students cannot enter an oral defense until committee members agree to pass the defense.
- Remind student to meet with the library thesis/dissertation coordinator for a format review.
- Attend and supervise the dissertation defense in person.
- Attend graduation convocation and for doctoral students, hood graduates.

ROLE OF THESIS OR DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The thesis or dissertation committee members work with the chair to provide advice and consultation to the student throughout the process of research and writing. Some expectations of the committee members are:

Proposal

- Meet with the student.
- Advise on topic selection (e.g., appropriateness, academic value).
- Offer expertise in the area of study.
- Read and review chapter drafts within two weeks of submission and three weeks for entire proposal.
- Discuss any recommendations for revisions with the committee chair and student.

Completed Thesis or Dissertation

- Meet with the student to provide guidance and evaluation during the research and writing stages.
- Review thesis or dissertation drafts in a timely manner (respond within three weeks).
- Offer recommendations for revisions.
- Discuss any problematic issues in the thesis or dissertation with the committee chair and student **before** the defense.
- In consultation with the other committee members, approve the final draft for the defense. Members of the thesis or dissertation committee are expected to be present in person at the defense. At most, one member of the committee may attend a defense virtually, and this should occur only in unusual circumstances.

ROLE OF STUDENT

- Work closely with the committee throughout the proposal, research, and writing process.
- Make monthly appointments with the chair and communicate regularly with chair regarding progress.
- Be familiar with and comply with policies and procedures outlined in the catalog and the timelines on the Registrar's website. This includes ORIA procedures and signature sheets.
- Read examples or other materials provided by chair or committee members.
- Schedule student-committee contacts (e.g., proposal defense, final defense). Note: students often underestimate the difficulty in finding an open two-hour block for four busy people. Keep in mind that most faculty are 9-month employees.
- Students must give committee members and chairs **at least two weeks** to review and offer feedback to chapter drafts and **three weeks** to respond to drafts of a complete document. All work should be submitted first to the committee chair, revised based on feedback, and then returned to the chair. When approved by the chair, the work should be given to committee members. This may require multiple drafts. Also note, students often underestimate the time required to make revisions based on committee feedback. Students are expected to engage with feedback in an open and respectful manner.
- Professionalism is expected during all aspects of the process.
- Students are required to make timely progress as outlined by the chair. Not making progress may result in the chair stepping down from the role of a student receiving a NP (no progress grade). Note, extensions must be recommended by the HEP director to the Dean's Office. Extensions are granted only for substantial life changing circumstances.
- Students should write like a scholar and use language of a scholar. This acknowledges that writing multiple drafts is an important part of the scholarly writing process; hence students should expect to write several drafts of each chapter.
- Defenses cannot be scheduled until all committee members have reviewed and approved the draft document. Whether the student passed or failed the defense is agreed upon by the committee **before** the oral defense. Students cannot enter an oral defense until committee members agree to pass the defense.
- Students are discouraged from bringing gifts and food to defenses.

APPENDIX B:
PROGRAM OF STUDY FORM

**MASTER OF ARTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION TRACK
PROGRAM OF STUDY**

STUDENT NAME

STUDENT G#

CATALOG TERM

CORE COURSES (30 CREDITS):

Course	Title	Semester	Grade	Credits
HE 606	Diversity in Higher Education			3
HE 610	Research Designs in Higher Education			3
HE 624	Finance and Fiscal Management in Higher Ed			3
HE 644	Organization and Admin of Student Affairs			3
HE 645	The Contemporary College Student			3
HE 646	Student Development Theory in Higher Ed			3
HE 685	1 st Practicum ¹			3
HE 685	2 nd Practicum			3
HE 703	Higher Education in the Digital Age			3
HE 721	History of Higher Education			3

CHOOSE EITHER THE CAPSTONE OR THESIS OPTION:

CAPSTONE OPTION (6 CREDITS)²

Course	Title	Semester	Grade	Credits
	Elective:			3
HE 797	Higher Education Capstone			3

THESIS OPTION (6 CREDITS)

Course	Title	Semester	Grade	Credits
	Additional Research Methods Course: ³			3
HE 799	Thesis Committee:			3

Total Degree Credits: 36

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

¹ CAS standards require students to complete two practicums that provide distinct experiences. Students who work full-time in higher education may substitute the 2nd practicum with an elective course.

² Capstone students complete 3 credits of elective coursework. Electives can be HE courses or taken across the institution. They must be approved by the advisor.

³ The additional research methods course must be approved by the advisor.

**MASTER OF ARTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP TRACK
PROGRAM OF STUDY**

STUDENT NAME	STUDENT G#	CATALOG TERM
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CORE COURSES (21 CREDITS):

Course	Title	Semester	Grade	Credits
HE 606	Diversity in Higher Education			3
HE 610	Research Designs in Higher Education			3
HE 624	Finance and Fiscal Management in Higher Ed			3
HE 645	The Contemporary College Student			3
HE 685	Practicum			3
HE 703	Higher Education in the Digital Age			3
HE 721	History of Higher Education			3

SPECIALIZATION⁴: _____

SPECIALIZATION COURSES (9 CREDITS):

Course	Title	Semester	Grade	Credits

CHOOSE EITHER THE CAPSTONE OR THESIS OPTION:

CAPSTONE OPTION (6 CREDITS)⁵

Course	Title	Semester	Grade	Credits
	Elective:			3
HE 797	Higher Education Capstone			3

THESIS OPTION (6 CREDITS)

Course	Title	Semester	Grade	Credits
	Additional Research Methods Course: ⁶			3
HE 799	Thesis Committee:			3

Total Degree Credits: 36

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

⁴ Students should work with their advisor to select three courses (9 credit hours) either in HEP or another discipline that fits their career goals.

⁵ Capstone students complete 3 credits of electives. Electives can be HE courses or taken across the institution and must be approved by their advisor.

⁶ The additional research methods course must be approved by the advisor.

APPENDIX C:

PRACTICUM PROPOSAL FORM

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF PRACTICUM
HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Students should submit signed form, written proposal and current resume to hepadmin@gmu.edu.

Deadlines: Summer: March 1/ Fall: July 1/ Spring: November 1

Student Name	Student G#	Proposed Semester/Term
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Proposed Practicum/Internship Site

Site Address

Practicum Site Supervisor (Name/Title)

Credentials (Degrees/Length of time at site)

Phone Number/Email

Attach to this form a formal written proposal that includes the following:

1. A statement of purpose and rationale;
2. List of learning outcomes
3. A description of workplace responsibilities;
4. A description of how the purpose of the practicum or internship will be accomplished;
5. A rubric laying out criteria against which the supervisor/mentor will evaluate the practicum or internship; and
6. A plan of work (minimum of 150 hours)

Required Signatures:

Student	Date
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Supervisor (<i>I understand that I am required to provide one hour of supervision per week</i>)	Date
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Practicum Instructor	Date
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APPENDIX D:
PRACTICUM GUIDELINES
AND SAMPLE EVALUATIONS

HE 685 Practicum Guidelines

Introduction

The practicum (HE 685) is an essential part of the Higher Education degree program. It is a supervised on-the-job experience in an approved college or university setting or public agency involved with higher education.

Such experience can include:

- Gaining experience in a particular higher education unit
- Assisting with or attending higher education study abroad tours
- Participating in academic community outreach; or
- Participating in field work such as grant-funded research data collection

This document assists the student and the supervisors in managing the practicum by describing practicum requirements, procedures for applying for practicum placement, policies, roles and responsibilities of those involved, and the practicum seminar component and by providing forms and materials. It also ensures that the University supervisor, the student and the on-site supervisor are aware of both legal and academic aspects of a practicum.

The Higher Education Program practicum is based on the most current Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education criteria for Master's programs in Student Affairs. A practicum takes place in an approved educational setting under the supervision of the practicum coordinator and a qualified site supervisor. The practicum site supervisor must be a qualified practitioner in student affairs administration or higher education. The practicum experience should draw on current research, practice, policy and ethical guidelines for the profession to enhance student learning. This training provides students with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge and develop an understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. Practicum also introduces the student to the work environment and current educational issues and trends; provides an opportunity to develop professional and personal competencies important to the identity of a higher education/student affairs professional; and helps clarify professional employment and educational goals.

Practicum Requirements

Prerequisites:

- Prior to a practicum, the student must have earned a minimum of 9 credits of Higher Education courses.

These courses must be completed with a grade “B” or higher. In order to begin the practicum, you must be a student in good standing.

Practicum Proposal:

All decisions pertaining to the planning and conducting of a practicum experience must be completed in consultation with a site supervisor, the practicum course instructor, and the student’s advisor. The following are guidelines as you consider your practicum proposal:

- Develop a resume to share with potential practicum site supervisors.
- Identify a potential practicum site and site supervisor.
- With the site supervisor’s assistance, complete the *Request for Approval of Practicum* form. This proposal will lay out the agreement between the student and the supervisor, defining the learning outcomes and expectations, proposed site work schedule, schedule for supervision, training requirements, and how the student will be evaluated. (Full-time employees as well as Graduate Assistants will need to be particularly thoughtful about planning an experience that provides a different/new set of learning outcomes.)
- Schedule an appointment to meet with advisor to discuss proposed practicum.
- Submit resume and *Request for Approval of Practicum* form for approval to hepadmin@gmu.edu by one of the following deadlines:
 - Summer: March 1**
 - Fall: July 1**
 - Spring: November 1**
- Upon approval from the program, register for the Higher Education Practicum, HE 685.

Identifying a Practicum Site:

- A student must satisfy the practicum requirement by completing a minimum of 150 hours of field experience at one site.
- Sites must be aligned with learning and career goals and/or student’s past experiences
- Students are responsible for finding their own practicum placement sites. The Higher Education program maintains a list of college/university departments or offices that have expressed interest in practicum students or have had practicum students in the past. Practicum sites must have a qualified professional on-site supervisor and must offer a supervised experience that meets the program criteria and the student’s personal and professional goals. Criteria for approved sites are listed below. Upon obtaining a tentative commitment from the site supervisor, the student completes and submits a Higher Education Practicum Application to hepadmin@gmu.edu. *Final approval of a practicum site is made by the practicum course instructor.*

Possible practicum sites:

Academic advising

Academic departments

Admissions

Learning services

Assessment	Student affairs/university life
Career services	administration
Dean of students	Student athlete advising
Disability services	Student involvement
Diversity programs and services	Student leadership
Education association headquarters	Service learning
Faculty research	Student support and advocacy
Financial aid	Student unions
Housing/Residential Life	Study abroad
International programs and services	Title IX compliance
Off-Campus Student Services	Wellness/violence/alcohol education
Orientation and Family Programs	Women's center
Student activities	

Criteria for Approved Sites:

- The site demonstrates a commitment to training, education, and development, and a clearly articulated philosophy, which includes ideas about how to introduce “novice” practitioners to new knowledge and skill areas, how to assess students’ progress, and how to address possible concerns.
- The site has developed or works with the student to create a position description for the field experience that includes the types of services, activities, and projects and the nature of the clients with which the student will be involved. The agency must assure that students will have breadth as well as depth of experience in higher education administration or student affairs.
- The site and those designated as supervisors are in compliance with professional ethics standards and practice guidelines published by the Council for the Advancement of Standards and by the association representing their particular profession. A set of those professional standards must be provided to and reviewed with the student.

Criteria for Approved Supervisors:

- The site supervisor must have an earned master’s degree in higher education or a related field.
- The supervisor provides a minimum of at least one hour of on-site individual supervision per week.
- Supervisor has to have been at site for at least one year
- Ideally supervisor would not directly supervise practicum student at place of employment (Discuss any questions with practicum coordinator).

Restrictions on Sites and Practicum:

- Students may not train in settings in which they are employed. If the student is employed by a large agency or organization, the practicum may be completed in that agency. The student may be asked to provide an organizational chart illustrating the reporting structure.
- Students may receive compensation for their practicum activities.

Student Evaluations:

Students will be evaluated by their supervisors at the culmination of their practicum experience. The evaluations are returned to the practicum course instructor by the supervisor after the student and supervisor have had an opportunity to review the form together. The student must sign the evaluation form; the signature is an indication that the student has reviewed and received the evaluation.

Site Evaluations:

Students will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their practicum site.

Student Responsibilities in the Practicum

1. Complete and submit by deadlines all practicum forms and materials.
2. Adhere to principles and practices for professional, legal and ethical conduct. Consult the *CAS Standards* as well as current practice guidelines for the profession with which the site is affiliated.
3. Develop respectful relationships with staff and clients.
4. Report on time and maintain the agreed upon work schedule. Clear vacation or other leave times with the supervisor in advance and with sufficient notice. Contact the supervisor as soon as possible when an unexpected absence or delay in arrival occurs. Discuss expectations surrounding academic breaks.
5. Maintain a log of practicum hours. Complete the requisite number of hours during the agreed upon time period. Have the site supervisor sign this log.
6. Actively solicit feedback from the supervisor and/or others involved with the training and learning experience. Engage in self-reflection of performance and learning experiences.
7. Maintain weekly journal entries.
8. Prepare a final portfolio, including the following components:
 - Weekly journal entries that document learning experiences and projects, as well as reflections and goals for problem situations
 - Materials developed as part of the internship experience
 - Additional evidence of meeting learning objectives
 - 3-4 page paper reflecting on how this experiential learning opportunity has helped develop awareness of issues in higher education (references to higher education coursework are expected)
 - Written mentor evaluation (rubric developed with practicum coordinator)
9. Immediately inform supervisor and/or practicum coordinator if they encounter any difficulties.
10. Make effective use of supervision by preparing for supervision sessions, bringing relevant materials to sessions, and formulating discussion questions. Be responsive to direction, guidance, and constructive feedback from the supervisor and integrate the guidance and feedback into work at the site.

HEP PRACTICUM EVALUATION – ADMINISTRATION

Student's Name:

Please use the following scale to evaluate the intern's ability to:

Criteria	4 Exceeded Expectations	3 Met Expectations	2 Minimally Met Expectations	1 Did not Meet Expectations	0 Not Observed or not applicable
Envisions administrative responsibilities holistically and in the larger institutional context (understands the big picture)					
Understands the interplay of the administrative workplace environment, goals, mission					
Prepares clear, concise reports, electronic communications, etc. for the mentor/administrator					
Communicates clearly and effectively with stakeholders in order to advance the work of the administrative unit					
Respects and promotes diversity					
Works well with a variety of others					
Completes tasks as proposed					
Is open to feedback and new learning					
Uses theory to guide work					
Contributes to an ethical and professional environment					
Recognizes ethical dilemmas					
Adds positively to the work of the team					
Completed required hours					

Comments:

HEP PRACTICUM EVALUATION-TEACHING

Student's Name:

Please use the following scale to evaluate the intern's ability to:

Criteria	4 Exceeded Expectations	3 Met Expectations	2 Minimally Met Expectations	1 Did not Meet Expectations	0 Not Observed or not applicable
Understands the dynamics of the institution's goals and mission					
Envisions the course responsibilities holistically within the larger institutional context					
Recognizes ethical dilemmas					
Contributes to an ethical and professional learning environment					
Plans course according to student learning outcomes					
Demonstrates effective pedagogical approaches					
Creates or chooses appropriate classroom assessment approaches					
Communicates clearly and repeatedly about course elements					
Understands various learning styles					
Works well with a variety of learning styles					
Varies teaching strategies to accommodate various learning styles					
Respects and promotes diversity					
Is open to feedback and new learning					

Uses theory and research to guide teaching					
Promotes learning in the class					
Demonstrates best practices related to instructional, technology, pedagogy, and assessment in the internship setting					
Completes proposed tasks					
Completed required hours					

Comments:

APPENDIX E:
THESIS PROPOSAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL
FORM

THESIS PROPOSAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM
MASTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

This form must be submitted to the Higher Education Program at least four weeks before the first day of the semester that the student wishes to register for HE 799: Thesis.

Student Name	Student G#	Proposed Semester/Term
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Committee

Committee Chair (please print)

2nd Committee Member (please print)

3rd Committee Member (please print)

Required Signatures:

By signing this form, all committee members indicate that they have reviewed and approved the student's thesis proposal, and that the student is ready to register for thesis credits. *As a reminder, all chairs and all thesis committee members must be members of graduate faculty.*

Student	Date
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Committee Chair	Date
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2 nd Committee Member	Date
----------------------------------	------

3 rd Committee Member	Date
----------------------------------	------

Director, Higher Education Program	Date
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