



## Student Handbook

MASTER'S, EDUCATION SPECIALIST & GRADUATE CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

2025-2026 EDITION

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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For additional information, please contact your Student Success Coach, listed online at [gsehd.gwu.edu/student-success](http://gsehd.gwu.edu/student-success). Important forms are also available on the [Student Success Resources](#) page and the [Registrar's site](#).

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD) is committed to providing the highest quality education. We develop innovative research programs, contribute in diverse ways to local communities and the nation, and actively participate in the international community of scholarship. Our unique location in the nation's capital, a vibrant, multicultural and multinational center, offers a broad range of resources and opportunities to our diverse students and faculty. We believe that continuous self-examination and improvement are fundamental to the education and human development professions.

The mission has been translated into four bridging concepts that guide the work of the faculty in the design of programs:

- Research and Scholarship: Research and scholarship are prerequisite to the improvement of educational practice.
  - Leadership in the Educational Endeavor: Leadership is critical in the development and design of education and human services at all levels.
  - Reflective Practitioners: Building reflective practitioners through the integration of theory and practice is a priority of all programs.
  - Service to the Multicultural, Multinational, and International Community of Diverse Learners: A community of diverse learners is prerequisite to success in the education and human service professions.
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## REGISTRATION AND COURSEWORK

### Program Plan of Study

Your program plan of study, which is listed in the [University Bulletin](#) and on [DegreeMAP](#), is your contract with the university. Students must successfully complete all courses and requirements and any deficiencies outlined on the official program plan to have their certificate or graduate degree conferred on the official GW transcript.

In addition to completing all required coursework, degree programs preparing students for **teacher licensure** require completion of the Educational Testing Service PRAXIS teacher assessments as specified by the District of Columbia Public Schools, Educational Credentialing, and Standards Branch.

### Adjustments to Program Plan

To request a change in the program plan, students must discuss the proposed change with their faculty advisor. If the advisor approves, a completed [Program Plan Change Form](#) must be sent by their advisor to the program's Student Success Coach for the record to account for this change during graduation clearance.

### Transferring to an Individualized Master's Degree Program

In consultation with an advisor, students may request to change their official program plan to a 30-credit individualized master's degree program. Students must meet the requirements of the individualized program as outlined in the [University Bulletin](#). This program plan change must be approved by the student's advisor and the dean.

### Residency Requirements

- Master's degree programs require a minimum of 30 graduate credits. GSEHD requires that students complete a minimum of 24 credit hours of coursework (including internships) at GW or, if eligible, at other DC-area institutions through the [GW Consortium](#).
- Education specialist programs require a minimum of 60 graduate credits. GSEHD requires that students complete a minimum of 21 credit hours of coursework (including internships) at GW or, if eligible, at other DC-area institutions through the [GW Consortium](#).

### Registration Policies and Procedures

Students are required to register each fall and spring semester. In most cases, registration during the summer semester is optional, except for students in cohort programs. Students must be registered in the summer if they were admitted for the summer term, are taking the comprehensive examination, or are graduating in that term.

- Students register for classes using the online [GWeb Information System](#) ([see registration instructions here](#)).
- Students who register for classes late, after the online registration system has closed, or who encounter technical difficulties can register using a [Registration Transaction Form](#).

### Tuition Billing

Students will be billed for tuition by the Student Accounts Office after registering for courses. Course tuition rates for GSEHD students are determined by the program and the campus to which the student was admitted. For example, students admitted to Foggy Bottom campus programs pay the on-campus tuition rate for any courses they register for, regardless of course format or location. Tuition rates for students enrolled in graduate programs are posted on the [Student Accounts webpage](#). Their "[Fees and Charges](#)" page details additional financial obligations.

### Adjustments to Course Schedule

If a student finds it necessary to make any adjustments to their course schedule after the Web registration period has ended (to add or drop courses), a [Registration Transaction Form](#) is required. The completed form should be submitted to the student's GSEHD Student Success Coach.

Students should be aware of the financial penalties of dropping courses during and after the first week of courses. A refund schedule with specific dates for each semester can be found on the [Office of the Registrar webpage](#). Students should note that refund schedules for off-campus/distance programs and for all students during the summer semester have unique dates. Any withdrawals after the eighth week of classes require a petition to the Dean's Office.

Failure to submit a Registration Transaction Form and to receive approval to withdraw from a course will result in a grade of "Z" (Unauthorized Withdrawal) on the student's official transcript. Students may not be cleared for graduation with a "Z" on their academic record.

### **GW Consortium**

The [Washington Metropolitan Area Consortium of Universities](#) is a cooperative arrangement in post-secondary education that is designed to permit the sharing of academic resources by member institutions and to offer qualified students the opportunity to enroll at other institutions for courses not available on their own campus.

Participation in the [Consortium program](#) is restricted to main campus (Foggy Bottom) degree candidates in good academic standing. Non-degree students and students in off-campus programs are ineligible to take courses through the Consortium program.

- **Maximum Credits:** Degree-seeking students may enroll in approved courses through the Consortium to the extent that the total number of credit hours does not exceed nine (9) hours for a master's program.
- **Transcript:** Consortium courses count toward the residency requirement and appear on your GW transcript automatically; you do not need to apply for transfer credit for a Consortium course.
- **Drop/Withdraw:** Students requesting to drop or withdraw from Consortium courses must obtain approval from their department chair/faculty advisor and the Dean's Office on the [Consortium Drop Form](#).
- **Tuition and Fees:** Tuition for courses taken under the Consortium arrangement is assessed at the current GW tuition rate. Course fees are charged by and paid to the visited institution. Dropped courses are subject to the on-campus refund schedule.

Please refer to additional policies and the procedures for Consortium registration on the website of the [Office of the Registrar](#). (Please note: Consortium registration requires approval of the student's faculty advisor before submitting the form to the Student Success Coach for Dean's Office approval. Once the form has both sets of approvals, the Student Success Coach for the student's program will submit the form to the Consortium Director in the Office of the Registrar for final processing.)

### **Concurrent Enrollment**

Students cannot register concurrently in this University and another institution during the fall and spring semesters except for courses taken through the [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#). Except for students enrolled in an approved dual or joint

program, registration in more than one school of the University requires the prior permission of the faculty advisor and GSEHD Dean's Office. To request approval, please contact your [Student Success Coach](#).

Registration in individual courses at other GW schools, or through the [GW Consortium](#) system, is permitted and is not considered concurrent enrollment.

## **Enrollment Status**

Once enrolled in a certificate or degree program, students must be continuously enrolled and actively engaged in fulfilling the program requirements every fall and spring semester of the academic year until such time as the certificate or degree is conferred.

Students occasionally have a semester in which they are not enrolled in coursework but are engaged in approved activities required for program completion (ex: taking the comprehensive exam or completing an incomplete course). There are also cases in which students may need to request a temporary leave for personal or professional reasons. In these instances, they will need to enroll in either Continuous Enrollment or Leave of Absence (explained below) to remain in active status with the University.

Failure to enroll in either classes or one of the following designations will result in broken enrollment. Students who break enrollment are removed from degree status and must apply for readmission to continue. Students who apply for readmission to the University will be subject to the admissions standards in place at the time the application is submitted.

### **Continuous Enrollment**

Continuous Enrollment (CE) may be used for completion of outstanding work in courses in which a grade of Incomplete ("I") was received. CE also may be used by students who are preparing to sit for the comprehensive examination. In certain circumstances, CE also may be used for attendance at another institution with prior approval to have coursework transferred back to GSEHD. International Students are not eligible to register for CE.

Students must submit a [Leave of Absence/ Continuous Enrollment Registration form](#) to their Student Success Coach to be considered for CE enrollment. Students may only be registered for a total of two (2) semesters of CE during the course of their certificate or degree program. Students who request one year of CE must submit a [Leave of Absence/ Continuous Enrollment Registration form](#) for each of the two semesters. After reaching the limit, students who wish to register for CE status in additional semesters must seek approval from the Master's Appeals Committee.

### **Leave of Absence**

A student who, for personal reasons, is temporarily unable to continue their program of study may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for a specific period of time, not to exceed two (2) semesters during the total period of certificate or degree candidacy. The student

must submit a [Leave of Absence/ Continuous Enrollment Registration form](#) to their Student Success Coach to be considered for LOA enrollment. Students who request one year of LOA must submit a [Leave of Absence/ Continuous Enrollment Registration form](#) for each of the two semesters. After reaching the limit, students who wish to register for a Leave of Absence in additional semesters must seek approval from the Master's Appeals Committee.

Students who are U.S. government employees assigned out of the United States for official duties or are in the military and actively deployed are exempt from LOA limitations that count toward degree completion.

### **Full-/Half-Time Certification**

Students who intend to register for less than the number of credit hours required in the fall and spring semesters (full time = 9 or more credit hours; half-time = 4.5-8.5 credit hours), and who need to be certified as in full or half-time status must complete the [Full-/Half-Time Certification Form](#). The requirements and limitations of this certification are listed on the first page of the form. This form should be completed and submitted to the Student Success Coach after the form has been signed by the faculty advisor and the student has registered.

### **Degree Completion Time Limits**

- All master's degree requirements must be completed within six years, whether study is full-time or part-time. An additional (or seventh) year is allowed in the case of a student who breaks enrollment and is subsequently readmitted.
- A maximum of five calendar years is allowed for completion of the education specialist degree program.
- All certificate program requirements must be completed within 3 years.
- U.S. government personnel officially assigned out of the area and military personnel on active duty may exceed these limitations with faculty advisor approval.

### **Adjustments to GSEHD Program or Location**

If a student is considering a change from one GSEHD program to another GSEHD program, they should consult with their faculty advisor as well as with the coordinator of the program to which they would like to be admitted. To request a change in programs, they must submit a new application for admission and a statement of purpose relevant to the new program of interest. Additional application requirements may be required if deemed necessary by program faculty. An application fee is not required if the student has maintained continuous enrollment and is in good academic standing.

If a student is considering a change in the location of their program of study, they should be sure to confirm that the program is offered at the desired campus location. Note that the other campus may have a different schedule of classes as well as an adjusted tuition rate. The student should contact their academic advisor for more information. Once the student and his or her



advisor have come to agreement on a location change, they should work with their Student Success Coach to complete a [Program Plan Change Form](#).

### Readmission to GSEHD

To apply for readmission, students must submit a new application for admission by the application deadline for the semester in which they wish to be readmitted. Former students must submit an updated statement of purpose, application fee (if required), resume, and new standardized test scores (if requested). Also, former students are required to interview with the program faculty to determine whether they will be permitted to continue the program as indicated on the original program plan or if there will be additional requirements to be completed. Subsequent readmission is subject to new conditions and regulations that have been established by the School. Any questions regarding the readmission process should be addressed to the Office of Admissions.

Please note that when a student is readmitted, any previous coursework will be subject to the transfer credit policy. This means that in order for prior coursework completed in GSEHD to count towards the readmitted program, the courses must have been completed within five years of readmission.

### Withdrawing from the University

If a student finds it necessary to withdraw from GW prior to completing their degree program, they should notify their faculty advisor and their Student Success Coach. A [Complete Withdrawal Form](#) should be submitted in the event a student wishes to completely withdraw from the university.

The deadline for complete withdrawal from ALL courses without academic penalty is the end of the eighth week of classes. After this deadline, program changes are not possible unless the student submits a written request to the Office of Student Life and receives permission to withdraw. If approved, the student then submits the Complete Withdrawal Form for processing.

All charges for courses from which the student withdraws are subject to the refund policy listed on the [Withdrawals and Refunds page](#) on the website of the Office of the Registrar.

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## TRANSFER CREDITS

### Non-Degree Coursework and Transfer of Credit

Students who would like to take coursework at GSEHD but who have not been admitted to one of our programs may apply for admission as a non-degree student through the GW Office of Non-Degree Students. **Students may enroll in coursework at GSEHD in non-degree status for one semester only** (excluding the summer semester). Students interested in enrolling in additional coursework must submit a complete application packet to the GSEHD Office of Admissions by

the published deadlines. Completing coursework as a non-degree student at GW does not guarantee admission to a GSEHD degree program. Students taking courses in non-degree status are subject to all numerical limits included in the section on Transferring Credits.

### Content or Transfer Coursework

Content that is acceptable to the Program Plan of Study through life experience (e.g., employment, military experience) is eligible for substitution. However, this substitution does not reduce the number of credit hours required to complete the degree program.

### Transferring Credits into GSEHD Master's or Education Specialist Programs

Graduate coursework taken at another institution, earned at GW in non-degree status, or while in another degree program at GW is considered transfer credit when applied towards any degree program at GSEHD and does not count towards residency requirements. Graduate coursework may be approved for transfer only if it meets ALL of the following criteria:

- It was completed at a regionally accredited college or institution.
- It has been approved as part of the student's Program Plan of Study.
- It was completed within five years of the date of first enrollment as an admitted certificate, master's or education specialist student.
- It was completed with a grade of "B" or better.
- It has not been used to fulfill the requirements of another degree program (specific exceptions regarding coursework completed in a GSEHD certificate program are outlined below).

### Transfer Credit Limits

- Students admitted to a master's program requiring completion of 36 or more credit hours are eligible to transfer **up to 12 credit hours**.
- Students admitted to a master's program requiring completion of 33 credit hours are eligible to transfer **up to 9 credits hours**.
- Students admitted to a master's or education specialist program requiring completion of 30 credit hours are eligible to transfer **up to 6 credit hours**.
- The exception to this rule is students moving from a doctoral program to an Ed.S. or M.A. Students who move from a doctorate to an Ed.S. program are eligible to utilize any doctoral coursework approved by the advisor towards the Ed.S., regardless of the number of credits being applied.

### Applying Coursework from a Certificate Program into a GSEHD Degree Program

Students who have completed coursework in a certificate program at GSEHD may apply for admission to one of our degree programs through the Office of Admissions. Applicants who have completed coursework in a certificate program at GSEHD are not guaranteed admission to one of our degree programs.

All coursework taken as part of a GSEHD certificate program may be counted towards a subsequent degree program, assuming the coursework meets ALL the following conditions:

- Course was completed with a grade of “B” or better.
- Course was completed within five years of beginning the new degree program.
- Course is approved by the faculty advisor as part of the official Program Plan of Study.
- If a student applies 12 or more of the credits from a GSEHD certificate program to the new degree program, the student may not transfer in any additional non-GW credits including coursework taken in non-degree status and at other institutions. Coursework transferred into the certificate, however, can be applied as part of the certificate to a master’s or education specialist degree.

### **Transferring Credits into a GSEHD Certificate Program**

Graduate coursework taken at another institution, earned at GW in non-degree status, or while completing a degree program at GW, is considered transfer credit when applied towards any certificate program at GSEHD and does not count towards residency requirements. Graduate coursework may be approved for transfer if it meets ALL of the following criteria:

- It was taken at a regionally accredited college or institution.
- It has been approved as part of the student’s Program Plan of Study.
- It was completed within five years of the date of first enrollment as an admitted certificate, master’s or education specialist student.
- It was completed with a grade of “B” or better.
- It has not been used to fulfill the requirements of another degree program (specific exceptions regarding coursework completed in a GSEHD program are outlined below).

Students admitted to a GSEHD certificate program are eligible to transfer up to a total of 1/3 of the number of credits hours required to complete the program. **No course can count towards more than one certificate program**. Please carefully read the policies outlined below regarding transferring credit into a certificate program. For questions about how they might apply to your particular situation, please contact your faculty advisor or Student Success Coach.

**Coursework completed at another institution:** At most, one 3-credit hour graduate level course from outside GW can be transferred into a certificate program with the approval of the program or department. If approved, this coursework would count towards the transfer credit limit of 1/3 of the credit hours required to complete the program.

**Coursework completed at another school at GW:** Students who would like to transfer coursework completed at another school within GW must have the approval of the GSEHD Senior Associate Dean. If approved, this coursework would count towards the transfer credit limit of 1/3 of the credit hours required to complete the program.

**Coursework completed at GSEHD:** The following policies guide transferring coursework completed within the last five years at GSEHD to a certificate program: Students who were previously enrolled in a GSEHD degree program may elect to apply completed coursework to a certificate program **provided the degree was not conferred and the coursework was approved by the faculty advisor**.

### Transfer Credit Limits

The following policies guide the number of credit hours students are eligible to transfer into a certificate program.

- Students admitted to a certificate program requiring completion of 18 credit hours are eligible to transfer **up to 6 credit hours**.
- Students admitted to a certificate program requiring completion of 15 credit hours are eligible to transfer **up to 5 credit hours**.
- Students admitted to a certificate program requiring completion of 12 credit hours are eligible to transfer **up to 4 credit hours**.

Note: Students may transfer in credits from different sources to include coursework completed in non-degree status or from another institution; provided that the coursework follows the guidelines outlined above.

### Advanced Standing

Advanced standing is granted for approved courses taken at other regionally accredited institutions, but a minimum of 24 credit hours must be completed in GSEHD as a master's candidate. A maximum of 12 credit hours taken in non-degree status may be credited toward the master's degree.

Advanced standing is not granted for work completed five or more years before application for admission or readmission to master's candidacy. All work accepted for advanced standing must have been earned with a grade of "B" or better and must be approved for acceptance by both the advisor and the dean. *Credit, Satisfactory, Audit*, or other non-letter grades are not acceptable.

### Second Master's Degree

Persons seeking a second master's degree must complete all core and specialization requirements and a minimum residency requirement of 24 credit hours.

### Research Course Requirement

All GSEHD master's programs require the completion of a program-approved 3-credit research course to satisfy research requirements.

If a student's plan of study requires EDUC 6112 Foundations of Assessment, Testing, and Measurement in Education, EDUC 6114 - Introduction to Quantitative Research, or EDUC 6116 - Educational Statistics, and they wish to waive this requirement because they have taken an equivalent course outside of GW, they must seek approval through their faculty advisor. They should be prepared to submit an official transcript and a syllabus that includes a description of the equivalent course. If the student's advisor and a member of the research methods faculty agree that EDUC 6112, EDUC 6114, or EDUC 6116 should be waived, their advisor should submit a [Program Plan Change Form](#), cosigned by the chairperson of Research Methods or their designate, to the student's Student Success Coach to that effect. **A waiver of the required**

research course does not reduce the number of credit hours required to complete the degree program.

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## GRADING

### Academic Requirements

An overall grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 is required for graduation. Students who have a cumulative GPA below 3.0, receive a grade of “C” or below in more than 6 credits, or receive a grade of “F” will have an academic hold placed on their account and may be subject to program removal. Students must meet with a representative of the Dean’s Office before enrollment in further coursework is permitted.

Students who earn a grade of “Z” for “Unauthorized Withdrawal” must formally request to withdraw from the course before further registration is permitted, as students cannot graduate with grades of “Z” on their record.

### Incomplete (I) and In Progress (IPG) Policies

At the discretion of the instructor, the symbol “I” (Incomplete) may be recorded if a student, for reasons beyond the student’s control, is unable to complete the work of the course, and if the instructor is informed of, and approves, such reasons before the date when grades must be reported. This symbol may only be used if the student’s prior performance and class attendance in the course have been satisfactory and if the student is in good academic standing. Incomplete cannot be granted retroactively, so students should communicate with advisors as early as possible to request an “Incomplete.”

If the instructor agrees to give the student an “I”, a [Contract for Completing Assignments in a GSEHD Course](#) must be completed and signed by both the student and the course instructor and then submitted to the Student Success Coach. The contract will outline all remaining assignments and the date by which these assignments must be submitted to the course instructor. The coursework must be completed within the designated time period agreed upon by the instructor and the student, but no more than one calendar year from the end of the semester in which the course was taken. If the work is not completed within the designated time, the grade will be automatically converted to “F” (Failure), 0 quality points, and the GPA and academic standing recalculated.

In many cases students are required to take an internship as part of their graduate program. However, students often are unable to complete the required number of internship hours in one semester. In these instances, the instructor may assign an “IPG” (In Progress) for the course. Once all requirements are met, the instructor will change the “IPG” to “CR” or a letter grade.

## English Language Requirements for International Students

Applicants who are not citizens of countries where English is the official language or who do not hold a degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution of higher learning are required to submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the Pearson Test of English–Academic (PTE). English language scores are valid for two years. The most recent test scores will be used for applicants who submit multiple scores. Specified possible exemptions from this policy can be found on the [Graduate Admissions](#) website.

Students with the following English language test scores are exempt from taking English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses: TOEFL, 600 paper-based or 100 Internet-based; IELTS, overall band score of 7.0 with no individual band score below 6.0; DuoLingo overall score of 120. Students with test scores below these minimums must register for an EAP course during their first semester. Students assigned EAP courses should anticipate additional tuition expenses as well as a possible extended period of time required to complete their degree program. EAP courses do not count toward degree requirements.

Students required to take an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course must earn a minimum grade of “B-” in the course. Students who do not earn a “B-” or above in their first course must take an additional EAP course in the subsequent semester. Students who earn an “F” in an EAP course must repeat the course and are subject to the process described above.

## Grade Reporting

Grades will be available on the [GWeb](#) system after the close of each semester. Please note that grade reports are not mailed. Student records can be accessed on GWeb, including term grades and an unofficial transcript.

## Provisional Admission Status

Students who have been admitted in provisional status must achieve an average GPA of 3.0 or better in their first 9 credit hours taken in degree status – with no grade below “B-”. A symbol of “I” (Incomplete), “IPG” (In Progress), or “Z” (Unauthorized Withdraw) is unacceptable during the provisional period.

The provisional status will be lifted once the student has successfully completed these requirements. Please note that the provisional status does not require the student to take all nine credit hours in their first semester.

Students in provisional status who do not meet the requirements of the provisional status within the first nine credits of coursework may be subject to academic discipline up to and including removal from the program.

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Successful completion of a comprehensive exam is required for many GSEHD programs. Check with your faculty advisor to determine if this is a requirement of your program.

### Eligibility

To be eligible to sit for the comprehensive exam, students must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be currently registered in courses or CE;
- Be in good academic standing;
- Have successfully completed all coursework or currently registered for the last semester of coursework;
- Have no grades of "I", "Z", or "IPG" (In Progress) from a previous semester.

### Scheduling Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive exams may be administered by your program or by the GSEHD Office of Student Success (OSS); please check with your program to see which applies to you.

Programs that administer their own exams set individual exam dates. OSS administers examinations once per semester, usually in December, April, and July.

Regardless of who administers the exam, all students must apply to take the comprehensive exam by submitting an online application by the following deadlines:

Semester of Exam	Application Deadline
Spring	February 1
Summer	June 1
Fall	October 1

If a student experiences a compelling reason preventing him/her from sitting for the comprehensive examination on the regularly scheduled date, s/he may request a special sitting by completing a [Special Sitting Request Form](#). This form must first be approved by the Faculty Advisor and then submitted to OSS at least 10 business days prior to the date of the requested examination. The advisor will coordinate a separate date for the student and arrange for proctoring if necessary.

### Retaking the Exam

Master's students who have completed all coursework may prepare for and sit for the comprehensive examination while in Continuous Enrollment (CE) status. Should a retake of the examination be necessary, Master's students who have already reached their two semester limit for CE are required to sign up for the 0920-Continuing Research course, which carries a fee equivalent to one credit hour of tuition.

Students who have failed to pass the Master's comprehensive examination twice may not sit for the exam a third time without the approval of the Master's Appeals Committee.

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## GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT

### Eligibility for Graduation

Degrees are conferred in January, May, and August. To be eligible for graduation, a student must have completed satisfactorily the scholarship, curriculum, residence, and other requirements for the degree as stated in the program plan; filed an application for graduation by the published deadline date; and be free from all indebtedness to the university. Enrollment is required for the semester or summer at the close of which the degree is to be conferred, and all degree requirements must be completed by the last day of final examinations for that semester.

### Participation in the Commencement Ceremony

Participation in the annual commencement ceremony held in May is open to students who have applied to graduate in the current spring semester, or who graduated the preceding fall or summer semester. Master's and education specialist students **who need no more than nine credit** hours to complete their degree requirements may participate in the May commencement ceremonies if there is a reasonable expectation that they will be able to obtain the needed credits during the following summer. The maximum of nine credit hours is firm and not subject to petition.

### Final Graduation/Completion Clearance

The Office of Student Life clears all GSEHD students for graduation. Please note that degree clearance for everyone other than doctoral students usually occurs after the official degree conferral date. Degree conferral cannot occur until final grades are posted and confirmation of fulfillment of all other requirements on your program plan (comprehensive exams, program plan changes, PRAXIS exams, minimum 3.0 GPA, etc.) has been received by the Office of Student Life.

Please note:

- If your program requires PRAXIS for graduation, you are required to designate GW as a score recipient when enrolling for the exam (institution id: 5246).
  - If all of your grades are not posted, please check with your instructor(s).
  - According to the Office of the Registrar, degree conferral “may take anywhere from 6-8 weeks after your graduation date.”
  - Official transcripts and diplomas will reflect the official degree conferral date, regardless of clearance date, if all program requirements have been completed. Students can verify that their degree has been conferred via their unofficial transcript on [GWeb](#).
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## THE STUDENT APPEALS PROCESS

All students have the right to appeal an academic decision (i.e., residency requirements, admissions decisions, grade appeals, and decisions that alter a student's status) from GSEHD. Students should first attempt to resolve issues informally and, if necessary, may appeal to the appropriate committee:

- The Master's Appeals Committee (MAC) for certificate and Master's students
- The Post Master's Appeals Committee (PMAC) for Education Specialist, Post-Master's Certificate, and Doctoral students

### Informal Resolution

Prior to appealing a decision through the appropriate committee, **the student first should attempt to resolve the matter with the faculty member(s) most directly responsible**. If no resolution results, the student should then consult with the individual at the next administrative level, for example, the director of the program or the chair of the relevant department.

If there continues to be no resolution, the program director, chair, or student may contact the Senior Associate Dean and solicit assistance to ensure that adequate steps are taken to resolve the issue at an informal level without the complaint escalating to the status of a formal appeal. If no resolution is achieved as a result of these informal attempts, the student may appeal to the Master's Appeals Committee (MAC) or the Post Master's Appeals Committee (PMAC) as appropriate. **Any such informal attempts will not extend the six-month period during which an appeal may be filed.**

### Formal Appeal

#### Justification

For matters not resolved informally, students may appeal the following:

- An admissions or academic matter on the basis of a violation of GSEHD policies or procedures. The student must submit clear evidence of divergence from prescribed procedures to the Committee. This most frequently consists of appealing a grade or appealing for a second retake of the comprehensive examination.
- An academic matter on the basis of extenuating circumstances that would render the application of established policies and procedures unfair. Extenuating circumstances are generally an event or series of events that are beyond the student's control that prevented the student from fulfilling degree requirements consistent with GSEHD policies and procedures. To prevail on an appeal, a student must submit clear evidence of extenuating circumstances. This most frequently consists of seeking an additional Leave of Absence or seeking an extension of the eight-year program time limit.

#### Process

In order for an appeal to be considered by the Master's Appeals Committee (MAC) or Post-Master's Appeals Committee (PMAC), students must adhere to the following process:

- Submit the appeal and supporting documentation in writing to the MAC or PMAC through the appropriate Student Success Coach **no later than six months from the decision being appealed**. The letter requesting an appeal must include the following information:
  - **Student Statement of Appeal**: An explanation of the policy, procedure or decision being appealed, the circumstances leading to the appeal, the progress made, and factors which will lead to successful resolution.
  - **Student Timeline**: An outline of the exact steps which will be taken to complete any pending requirements successfully, if requesting an extension of time.
  - **Two faculty letters of support from Program faculty**. (*Note: Educational Leadership & Administration students are required to submit one Program Support Letter in lieu of the faculty support letters.*)
  - The Student Success Coach will provide additional guidance should other materials be required.
    - All documents relevant to the case (e.g., student statement, faculty member statement, transcript of coursework, and all other related documentation) must be submitted to the Student Success Coach **at least two weeks prior to the committee meeting date**.
- Once the student has properly submitted all case materials, the Office of Student Life will place the appeal on the MAC's or PMAC's agenda for the next meeting during the academic year. The student will be notified in writing of the date and time of the meeting by their Student Success Coach.
- The student and faculty have the option of attending the meeting to explain the appeal.
  - If planning to attend the meeting, the student must inform the Student Success Coach in writing **no later than one week prior to the meeting**.
  - The student may have another individual present for support, but that person will not be permitted to speak or participate in the meeting. If the individual is an attorney, the student must inform the committee chair **no later than one week prior to the meeting**.
  - Faculty opposing the appeal may also be invited to attend at a separate time from the student's appearance.
- Students who choose to attend will be allotted an appropriate amount of time (to be determined by the committee chair) to present the case. The presentation will be followed by questions related to the case from committee members.
- In the event a student does not attend, the committee will base their decision on the written documentation in the case file.
- The student will be notified in writing of the committee's decision by his or her Student Services Coach within 10 business days of the meeting. The Office of Student Life shall keep a copy of all written records along with the committee's rulings, recommendations, and justifications for the decisions. Decision letters become a part of the student's official student record.

### **Committee Overview**

- MAC Structure: One representative from each GSEHD department. Committee members

serve staggered two-year terms and may be re-elected. A representative of the Dean's office will serve as a non-voting member.

- PMAC Structure: One representative from each doctoral program and one representative from the research methods faculty comprise the PMAC. Committee members serve staggered two-year terms and may be re-elected. A representative of the Dean's office will serve as a non-voting member.
- The Office of Student Life coordinates communication between the student, the faculty advisor(s), the Office of the Dean, the MAC/PMAC Chair, and when necessary, other parties associated with the appeal.
- The Committee Chair is responsible for the conduct of the hearing, including allotting time should a student or faculty member appear in person.
- The Committee will conduct a confidential discussion to reach a decision attained by majority vote. Any Committee member involved in supporting the appeal must recuse themselves from the Committee's proceedings, deliberations, and decision. The Committee has the prerogative to include in their decision conditions or terms required of students to remain in the program.

### Final Appeal

The student may appeal the decision of the MAC or PMAC by submitting a written appeal to the Dean of GSEHD. The appeal must be written and submitted within 30 calendar days of the date on the appeals decision letter. A delay in filing an appeal may constitute grounds for rejection of the appeal. The decision of the Dean is final.

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## FINANCIAL AID POLICIES

GSEHD admission decisions are made without regard to financial need. Descriptions of available financial assistance are provided on the [GSEHD website](#) (including information about Graduate Assistantships, merit scholarships, endowment awards, and other funding sources). University-wide funding opportunities are available on the [GW Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships](#) website. Students enrolled at other campuses or in online programs should contact their program faculty to determine if there is tuition support available. All students can also contact GW's [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) with specific questions.

### Maintaining Federal Student Loan Eligibility

Federal regulations require students to maintain good academic standing and make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to remain eligible to receive federal student loans. For more information on SAP, please refer to the [GW Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) website. The website also includes information on Evaluation of SAP and the appeals process.

### Half-Time/Full-Time Certification

Students typically must be enrolled at least half-time to receive federal financial aid. In the fall

and spring semesters, GW considers 9 credits to be full-time study and 4.5 credits to be half-time. In the summer, full-time status requires 6 credits and half-time status requires 3.

Students in the following situations are eligible to complete the [Half-Time/Full-Time Certification form](#), which will allow the university to certify the student as full- or half-time despite being enrolled in fewer than the normally required number of credits:

- Students enrolled in an internship required by their program
- Students taking the comprehensive exam (limited to 2 semesters)

Please note that this form must be completed each semester, as registration is required before it can be approved. The student is responsible for completing the form, obtaining advisor/chair signature, and then submitting the form to their Student Success Coach for dean-level signature.

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## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Academic Integrity

The George Washington University (GW) Code of Academic Integrity is available on the [Conflict Education & Student Accountability \(CESA\) site](#). This code is designed to promote academic honesty and describes how violations of the GW's Code of Academic Integrity are handled.

### Change of Personal Information

An official request for changing a name, address, social security number, date of birth, or legal sex should be made at the Office of the Registrar by submitting a [Biographical Update form](#). Students may update their address online through [GWeb](#). Failure to do so may result in a delay in receiving important correspondence from GSEHD and GW.

### Immunization Requirement

All students under age 26, regardless of program of study, location of study, part-time or full-time status, or degree or nondegree status, must comply with the immunization requirement as set forth by the Law of the District of Columbia. You can find more information about the immunization requirement on the [GW Student Health website](#).

### Privacy of Records

GSEHD complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), commonly referred to as the "Buckley Agreement." Students should refer to the [CESA site](#) for information regarding this policy. All applications and supporting documents become the property of GW once received and cannot be returned.

### Student Conduct

The [CESA site](#) includes the Code of Student Conduct and details the process through which disciplinary action is taken by GW when students are charged with violations of its provisions.

Students who are charged with serious offenses may have their cases heard by boards that include students as members of the hearing panels; those charged with minor offenses are subject to a disciplinary conference.

### **Equal Opportunity Policy**

GW does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on any basis prohibited by federal law, the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, or other applicable law, including without limitation, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, and procedures of the university, including admission to education programs and employment.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

GW is committed to maintaining a positive climate for study and work, in which individuals are judged solely on relevant factors, such as ability and performance, and can pursue their activities in an atmosphere that is free from coercion, intimidation, and violence. The [university's mission](#) provides that the university "values a dynamic, student-focused community stimulated by cultural and intellectual diversity and built upon a foundation of integrity, creativity, and openness to exploration of new ideas." The university is committed to free inquiry, free expression, and the vigorous discussion and debate on which advancement of its mission depends. Sexual harassment is destructive of such a climate and will not be tolerated in the university community.

Sexual harassment of students by faculty or administrators or of employees by those in a position to affect their employment status or by other employees in the work unit is inimical to such an atmosphere and will not be condoned.

If you have any questions about the university's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures, please direct them to the university's Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, who also serves as the university's Title IX Coordinator, at [diverse@gwu.edu](mailto:diverse@gwu.edu) or (202) 994-7440. You may also contact the university's Assistant Title IX Coordinators identified in the section entitled "Contacts" in the [Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy](#). Additional information can be obtained from visiting the university's [Title IX website](#).