

IDEAL PROGRAM

Master's and Specialist Degree
in Educational Leadership (K-12 School Leaders)



PROGRAM Overview



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The IDEAL Program Educational Philosophy and Practice

Mission

The IDEAL School Leaders' Master's Degree Program develops, implements, and improves the professional learning of school leaders to provide the best public and private education for students, families, and the community.

In keeping with the transformative principles of adult learning (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2015), the IDEAL Program has been designed to meet the needs and aspirations of emerging school leaders who work full-time while they manage multiple personal commitments. In addition, the curriculum's delivery model is designed for both local and distant learners and is therefore offered in a synchronous distributed eLearning format. This means that students attend a pre-determined class schedule over six semesters as a cohort and with their instructor in real time (on Saturday mornings, and Tuesday and Thursday evenings) but do ¹so from wherever they may be. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and until further notice, all classes, including the three-semester internship, are conducted remotely via Zoom.

The Florida Atlantic University (FAU) College of Education's (COE) Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology (ELRM) has as its mission to contribute to the personal and professional growth of current and potential leaders who serve educational agencies or individuals in a variety of settings. The Master's Degree in Educational Leadership, which we have called IDEAL (for Inclusive Development of Educational Administrators and Leaders) has been designed to provide aspiring school leaders with the rigorous, research-based, and job-embedded preparation required of equity-driven, instructional and transformative leaders of public, charter, private, religious, and international schools. The IDEAL Program seeks also to develop and sustain a commitment to positive social change; excellence in both understanding the need for, and implementing, the expert decision making and people skills associated with leadership in education; a belief in the power of lifelong learning, inclusion and human dignity; and exemplary standards of ethical and professional behavior.

Completion of this degree, and passing the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE), leads to Florida Educational Leadership Certification (Level I), which qualifies an individual to serve as a public school assistant principal, intern assistant principal, intern principal, or interim principal.

In addition to the leadership domains of knowledge and experiential learning considered as world class by the profession, the IDEAL Program includes learning the Florida Educational Leadership Standards (FELS) which are measured through the FELE, and the national Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). It also complies with the program

¹ Knowles, M., Holton III, E., & Swanson, R. (2015). *The Adult Learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Routledge.

reaccreditation requirements specified by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Our faculty are dedicated to the success of each and every student by building strong relationships through personalized advising, coaching, and mentoring. They comprise full-time, qualified, experienced higher education professors, researchers, and top school administrators with a background in public and private education. We also require that each student be supported and mentored by a school administrator at their school for the duration of the program.

For more information on the program and applications process, please contact Dr. John Hardman, IDEAL Program Coordinator, at whardma1@fau.edu, or fill out our contact form on the [program website](#).

Program Description

The IDEAL Program has several important features that candidates need to consider when applying:

- The full-time program spans 24 months or six semesters, beginning in the spring of each year and ending in the fall of the second year.
- We follow a cohort model, where students complete the entire program together following an established curriculum.
- Classes are delivered in real time by our faculty, but are offered only virtually via Zoom on Saturday mornings (8:30 AM – 12:30 PM), and Tuesday and Thursday evenings (4:30 – 7:00 PM).
- Our highly qualified faculty comprises higher education faculty and qualified school and district administrators with doctorate degrees.
- Attendance to all classes is required, though justified exceptional circumstances will be considered when they arise.
- Missing any courses will require reapplication to the program, and students can take up where they left off with the next cohort in the following year.

Admissions

Admissions are conducted the year round, so candidates may apply at any time. The recommended first step is for prospective students to contact Dr. John Hardman, the program coordinator, at whardma1@fau.edu, to obtain guidance on the process as a whole.

Requirements

Before applying, prospective students should be aware of the following requirements:

- They must provide evidence that they have a minimum of three years' teaching experience, and hold a current professional teaching certificate.
- They must be currently working at a school, which may be public, private, religious, international, alternative, etc.
- They must have secured the support of a school administrator as a mentor who will commit to working with the candidate for the duration of the program. While the recommended mentor is the school principal, on occasion an Assistant Principal may be acceptable. Mentors will be invited to participate in four professional learning sessions on Coaching and Mentoring provided by the Department throughout the program. In recognition of this commitment, mentors will receive a certificate of participation for 6 graduate credits that they can apply towards any graduate degree of their choice within the Florida State University System.
- They must schedule an information session with the Program Coordinator, to which their mentor must also attend.

Application Process

This consists of two distinct processes, the program's internal application and the formal application to the Graduate College.

Internal Application Process

Candidates wishing to apply to the program will work with the Program Coordinator to complete the following:

- Submit two essays (two pages, double spaced each):
 - Essay 1: Describe an intervention conducted in response to a student learning challenge. Candidates have one week to complete the essay.
 - Essay 2: Response to a behavioral case. Candidates will be asked to complete this essay 24 hours prior to their personal interview.
- Personal Interview with the candidate (conducted via Zoom)

Graduate College Application

Formal application to the program is completed online at <https://gradcas.liaisoncas.org/apply>. The required documentation to be submitted includes the following:

- Three years' teaching experience by program start
- Letter of application on personal goals
- Resume
- Undergraduate GPA of 2.5 and Graduate GPA of 3.0*

- Two letters of recommendation (one from the school administrator/mentor)
- School administrator commitment form (online)

*GRE requirement waived

Tuition Breakdown

The IDEAL program consists of 14 courses of 3 credits each, totaling 42 credits. In addition, students will complete four non-credit law modules and two non-credit seminars. These can be seen in the curriculum model below.

The tuition breakdown (Grad – Resident or Grad – Non Resident), can be found at <https://www.fau.edu/controller/student-services/tuition-breakdown>. The Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology also offers small scholarships based on merit and student demographics. See more at <https://www.fau.edu/education/students/scholarships/el>

Financial Aid

Because the program is considered full-time, students can apply for federal financial aid by completing the FAFSA application. Information on applying for aid can be found at the FAU Financial Aid office at <https://www.fau.edu/finaid>.

IDEAL Curriculum



