

Welcome to the Teacher Leadership Masters Degree Program at Penn State

Our Beliefs about Teacher Leadership

Teacher leaders are intellectuals who embrace scholarship, inquiry and reflection as they demonstrate sound teaching practices, high degrees of professionalism, and deep understandings of school structures and policy. Teacher leaders use these understandings, beliefs, and dispositions to advocate for children, teachers, schools, and communities. Teacher leaders contribute to equitable, safe, and productive learning environments for all students and foster an active engagement in learning with multiple opportunities for achievement.

Penn State's Teacher Leadership Program provides opportunities and experiences for teachers to develop their leadership potential, deepen their knowledge of schools, teachers, and student learning, and renew a passion for their work on behalf of public education in a democratic society.

Our Program: How We Frame Teacher Leadership

The Penn State M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership program is organized around five strands of leadership (and accompanying competencies) that thread through and connect all parts of our program. Students will be exposed to the competencies for each strand through multiple means, including course readings, discussion groups, assignments, and field experiences, as well as multiples times in completing the program.

- Leadership as the exercise of responsible influence, recognizing its distributed and relational characteristics;
Core competencies: understanding the three domains of relational leadership knowledge and action-- the interpersonal, cognitive, and intrapersonal; planning to lead, learn, and reflect; and, assessing leader learning leadership.
- Leadership in understanding the internal organization of schools, as well as the wider connections with parents and the community;
Core competencies: connecting school organization, policy, and practices; understanding and developing linkages beyond the school; addressing diversity in the school and wider community; and understanding the moral and ethical dimensions of leadership.
- Leadership in support of on-going professional growth and development for teachers at varied professional stages;
Core competencies: facilitating professional learning communities, faculty study groups, etc.; developing professional portfolios; and developing and implementing instructional coaching and mentoring roles.
- Leadership in support of powerful curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices, especially culturally responsive approaches to teaching and learning; and,
Core competencies: developing deep pedagogical content knowledge and general curriculum knowledge; understanding and knowing when to apply different instructional approaches; understanding interdisciplinary curricula and the uses of technology to

facilitate teaching and learning; developing an understanding of learning theory; understanding and developing different assessment practices and strategies and becoming proficient in analyzing and using data (evidence).

• Leadership as practice-based inquiry grounded in reflection and action research.
Core competencies: understanding how to conduct an action research project (from identifying the problem to developing the questions to identifying and collecting data, analyzing data, reaching conclusions, and evaluating the results); understanding the role of evidence in interpreting formal research; becoming proficient in analyzing and using data/evidence; and using action research as a means of facilitating continuous improvement.

We believe that these organizing principles provide a powerful conceptual framework for the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership with an option in Teacher Leadership.

FAQs

What courses should I take? Because of the rigorous requirements of Penn State University and the high expectations for this program, we recommend students take one course in their first semester in order to get a sense of the amount of work and time required for high quality coursework. Students are required to take Tier One courses first before registering for Tier II courses. The three Tier I courses can be taken in any order but must be completed before to Tier Two courses. Similarly, Tier Two courses must be completed before moving on to Tier III courses.

Can I transfer in courses taken in other programs or substitute courses? On occasion, it may be possible to substitute an alternative course for one of the required courses listed above. However, there are certain conditions that must be met.

(1) All course substitutions must be approved by the student's assigned academic advisor for the Teacher Leadership program when a candidate first applies for and is accepted to the Teacher Leadership program. No course substitutions will be allowed once a student is admitted to the Teacher Leadership Option and has started taking courses.

(2) No course substitutions are allowed for any of the Tier One or Tier Two courses.

(3) It is the student's responsibility to present evidence as to why an outside course should be transferred into and replace a listed course. This evidence must include a copy of the course syllabus and an official transcript from an accredited institution with the student's grade.

What is the Capstone Course? This is the program's culminating project that incorporates and draws upon coursework throughout all the tier levels. This is not an academic paper but an action research project, informed by the coursework and additional research and conducted by the student in an educational setting. The student's final project will meet the following expectations:

- Inquiry research methods are clear and rigorous
- The research topic is clearly aligned with coursework

- The research topic is agreed upon by the student and advisor after completion of Tier One and Tier Two courses.
- The final project will be presented publicly in a variety of methods to be determined by the student and advisor.

Who will be my advisor? After students are accepted into the program, they will be assigned an academic adviser from the Educational Leadership faculty. Each student is responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with this individual. For the capstone project, students may also work closely with an additional faculty member who has expertise in the area of study.

Can I take a study leave? We assume that all students will maintain continuous registration status. This means taking a minimum of three courses per academic year (one in the fall semester, one in the spring semester, and one in the Summer Session). If for some reason you are unable to maintain continuous registration status, you will have to complete a “Resume Study” petition to the Penn State Graduate School. As stated in the Graduate Handbook, “A student may meet the degree requirements by either full- or part-time enrollment and by attendance in any combination of semesters and summer sessions. The student who interrupts the continuity of registration faces the possibility of not being granted permission to return.”

Can I take courses as a non-degree student? Students can take up to a maximum of three (3) Tier 1 courses as a non-degree student. Any additional courses taken as non-degree will **not** count toward the M.Ed. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate application procedures with the Graduate School and with the Educational Leadership program. See (<http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/>) Students must matriculate in order to take Tier Two and subsequent courses in the program.

I am interested in the program but have not yet applied. What should I do next?

First, read over the information on the Teacher Leadership program provided on the Penn State World Campus website (<http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/master-of-education-degree-educational-leadership.shtml>). Then, contact Dr. Gerry LeTendre, the head of the program, if you have questions. If you are ready to apply to the program, go to <http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/eps/edldr/graduate-degrees/how-to-apply> and follow the steps: apply to the Graduate School and then apply to the Educational Leadership program which administers the Teacher Leadership program. Then, go to World Campus and apply to the Teacher Leadership Program through the World Campus “Apply Now” link at <http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/master-of-education-degree-educational-leadership.shtml>. You may apply to the Graduate School, the Educational Leadership Program, and to World Campus simultaneously.

More questions? Contact Dr. Gerry LeTendre (gk1103@psu.edu) or Becky Contestabile, staff assistant for the Educational Leadership program (rqc2@psu.edu).