

CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION, MS

The Department of Educational Policy and Community Studies offers a master's program for educators, community leaders, and those working in community-based organizations. Students deepen their knowledge about urban education and the contexts of urban communities. The program enhances participants' ability to critically analyze education and processes of community change, and courses focus on the causes of inequality and oppression and explore approaches for fostering change.

Our courses are offered in the evenings, online, hybrid, and on weekends to serve working students. All in-department courses required for the degree are offered online, and students are able to complete all of their departmental courses online over a two-year cycle as space permits.

A core of five courses provides a foundation in writing, sociology, history, philosophy and research.

Students are encouraged to develop and understand their own frameworks of values and theoretical perspectives as applied to the realities of urban education and urban communities. A faculty advisor will assist the student through the program, balancing flexibility and structure according to professional needs. Common focus areas include the following:

- Alternative Education/At-Risk Students
- Child Care
- Community Organizing for Social Change
- Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Educational Policy
- Race Relations
- Urban Education
- Youth Work

Because our program is very flexible, allowing 9 credits of electives within the department as well as 6 credits that can be chosen from across the university, students often create their own unique informal focus areas, which have included: Latino Studies, Working-Class Studies, Educating Hmong Students, Global Education, Comparative Education, Race and the Police, Education and the Homeless, and more.

A wide variety of professionals seeking to understand the urban context of education and community change have found this program useful. Graduates work in a range of fields: directors of non-profit and community-based agencies; teachers and principals in public, private, and alternative schools; administrators of child care centers; directors of social action organizations; managers of programs serving youth; administrators in health service facilities; community organizers; elected government officials; police officers; administrators of group homes; doctoral students; professors; and more. To discover more about what alumni do after graduation, visit the Cultural Foundations MS program website at uwm.edu/culturalfoundations. Click on the "Careers" tab to see a list of actual jobs taken by alumni, and click on the "Alumni" tab to watch some short videos of alumni talking about their experiences in the program.

Admission Requirements

Application Deadlines

Application deadlines vary by program, please review the application deadline chart (<http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/program-deadlines/>) for specific programs. Other important dates and deadlines can be found by using the One Stop calendars (<https://uwm.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/>).

Admission

An applicant must meet Graduate School requirements **plus**, submit a written statement of educational and professional goals with desired area of concentration to be considered for admission to the program.

Credits and Courses

The program in Cultural Foundations of Community Engagement and Education requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits, divided among the following: required core courses (15); focus work (minimum 9 graduate credits), electives (minimum 6 graduate credits).

Code	Title	Credits
Core Courses ¹		
ED POL 702	Cultural Foundations of Education Graduate Seminar ²	3
ED POL 705	Sociology of Education and Community Engagement	3
ED POL 710	Research Methods for Education and Community Engagement	3
ED POL 740	Modern Philosophies of Education and Community	3
ED POL 750	History of Education in American Communities	3
Focus Work in Cultural Foundations		
Select 9 credits in the Department of Educational Policy and Community Studies ³		9
Electives		
Select a maximum of 6 graduate credits of electives ⁴		6
Total Credits		30

¹ Each of these required courses has a set of major questions that guide the instructor and the students.

² ED POL 702 must be taken in the first two semesters after a student enrolls in the program.

³ May be focused in the following areas:

- alternative education
- multicultural education
- peace education
- urban education
- educational policy

They will select this focus with the help of an advisor.

⁴ In order to individualize the program, a maximum of 6 graduate credits of electives is selected in consultation with the advisor to enhance the specific professional goals of the student. These credits may be selected from courses within the Department, courses in other departments in the School of Education, or courses outside of the School of Education. A maximum of 3 credits of Independent Reading and 3 credits of fieldwork may be included in the program.

Additional Requirements

Major Professor as Advisor

The student must have a major professor to advise and supervise the student's studies as specified in Graduate School regulations. A student who is not assigned to an advisor at time of admission should immediately contact the Department Chair.

Capstone Paper/Project or Thesis

All students in the Cultural Foundations of Community Engagement and Education program must complete either a final paper, final project, or thesis as part of their degree requirements. Each option is completed under the direction of a faculty supervisor, who may not be the student's initially assigned academic advisor.

Final Paper Option

The final paper option generally begins with a research paper written in one of the student's classes. This paper is then brought to a more complete form with the support of a faculty supervisor. This option provides an opportunity to refine one's research and writing skills and to develop a fully thought-out analysis of a topic a student is especially interested in understanding. It also can serve as a writing sample for future graduate school applications. Students do not generally take extra credits to complete this option unless they are writing an entirely new paper. Note that this is NOT a thesis, which is a much more intensive and formalized research effort.

Final Project Options

The final project option is generally for students who are interested in more practice-oriented work, and who may not be planning to go on for further graduate study. The final project often involves action research: collecting data on some change made on their job or on another effort, and concluding with a report and presentation about what was learned. However, final projects can take a range of forms depending on what is negotiated with a faculty supervisor and may require enrollment for credit. Final projects are less writing intensive than final papers.

Thesis Option

A thesis represents a much more substantial research project that is submitted formally to the Graduate School. Students pursuing the thesis option may take up to 6 credits of ED POL 990 Research or Thesis.

Exit Interview

Students completing any of the above options will also end with a final exit interview with two faculty members from the program.

Time Limit

The student must complete all degree requirements within five years of initial enrollment.

Accelerated Program Option

This program is offered as part of an accelerated graduate program. For more information, see Accelerated Graduate Degrees (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/opportunities-resources/accelerated-graduate-degrees/>).