



EMORY
LANEY
GRADUATE
SCHOOL

MASTER'S IN
DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

Laney Graduate School Emory University

Master's in Development Practice

2023–2024 Student Handbook

Handbook URL: <https://web.gs.emory.edu/mdp/academics/index.html>

The Handbook is the authoritative document of Master's in Development Practice (MDP) policies for students, faculty, and staff. It covers topics such as degree program requirements, standards of academic performance and conduct, grievance procedures, guidelines for graduation and various Emory University policies and regulations. In addition to the MDP policies contained in the Handbook, students, faculty, and staff are subject to applicable university-wide policies included in the Laney Graduate School (LGS) Handbook and additional university documents.

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A. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

A.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MDP DEGREE

Academic courses build student expertise across disciplines and topic areas while fulfilling MDP credit hour requirements. The MDP curriculum—and corresponding credit hour requirement—combines six required competency areas and a seventh component consisting of a set of student-selected courses. This structure ensures that all students graduate from Emory MDP with a well-integrated interdisciplinary foundation while also developing their own areas of interest.

Requirements for two competency areas — *Social Science and Integrative Analysis* and *Research and Applied Methods* — include mandatory MDP Core Courses. Of these, MDP 500 (Introductory Field Seminar), 506 (Research Methods I), 507 (Interdisciplinary Field Seminar I), 511 (Interdisciplinary Field Seminar II), and 517 (Research Methods II) must be taken in specific semesters. MDP 505 (Monitoring & Evaluation) and 510 (Gender and Development) can be taken during either year.

The other four competency areas — *Diversity and Social Justice*; *Environmental Sciences*; *Health Sciences*; and *Management Sciences* — are fulfilled through approved selections of courses that are taught across different Emory University units. Information about approved courses to fulfill these competencies can be found in the [MDP Student Hub](#).

The final curriculum component — *Student-Selected Courses* — allows students to further their expertise in specific sectors and/or skills by selecting electives of interest to them. These can include courses that are taught across Emory University (and occasionally at partner institutions) as well as academic-year internship credits.

MDP maintains a list of Emory University courses that have been offered in previous years and have been taken by previous cohorts. Students are also encouraged to consult with the designated MDP staff, faculty and other students if they have questions about specific courses.

Table A.1 MDP Course Requirements: Competency Areas, Electives, and Credit Hours

<i>Curriculum Area</i>	<i>Courses to Fulfill</i>	<i>Required Credit Hours</i>
<i>Competency Areas</i>		
Social Science and Integrative Analysis	MDP 500, 507, 510 and 511	12
Research and Applied Methods	MDP 505, 506, 517 and Approved Course Selection	12
Diversity and Social Justice	Approved Course Selection	4
Environmental Sciences	Approved Course Selection	4
Health Sciences	Approved Course Selection	4
Management Sciences	Approved Course Selection	4
<i>Electives</i>		
Student-Selected Courses	Graduate courses at 500 level or above; Academic-Year Internship Credit	10
TOTAL COURSE CREDITS TO GRADUATE		50

A.1.1 Core Courses and Approved Course Selections

Students are required to successfully complete core courses that build knowledge and competencies in the health sciences, environmental sciences, social sciences, diversity and social justice and management sciences. In addition, students receive training in research and applied Methods and in diversity and social justice. Two core courses—Interdisciplinary Field Seminars I and II—bookend the first summer field practicum experience, providing opportunities for integration among disciplines and between academic learning and practical training. Along with MDP 500 taken in fall of the first semester, these courses must be taken in sequence.

A.1.2 Elective Courses

In addition to core courses, students are required to take 10 elective credits over at least three courses. To gain admission to courses offered outside of the MDP program, students must follow the MDP Electives Enrollment Process as detailed in the [MDP Student Hub in OneDrive](#).

A.1.3 Course Exemptions

MDP students who demonstrate prior knowledge of the same subjects covered by core courses through previous coursework and/or work experience *may* be exempted from core courses. Undergraduate courses cannot serve as the basis for a graduate-level course exemption.

To request an exemption, students must submit the Course Exemption form, located in the MDP Student Hub in OneDrive, including supporting documentation to the MDP staff. Support documentation may consist of evidence of prior work experience or the syllabus and transcript from previous coursework (not undergraduate courses). Each request is first reviewed by the instructor of the course the student wants to opt out of; the instructor then makes a recommendation for approval or denial of the request to the MDP Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who makes the final determination.

A.1.4 Course Substitutions

In rare circumstances, MDP students may receive approval to substitute a core course with an alternate course of similar pedagogical value and goals. Students who wish to do so must submit the Course Substitution form (located in the [MDP Student Hub in OneDrive](#)) and a summary explaining the desired substitution, including any pertinent personal academic and professional background, and motivation. Substitutions are not granted often and must be backed by a compelling justification. Each request must be reviewed and approved by the MDP DGS.

A.1.5 Independent Study through Directed Readings

MDP students have the option of engaging in independent studies, referred to as Directed Readings, on topics of their choosing. To enroll in a Directed Reading, students must 1) consult with the MDP DGS, 2) provide a letter of support from the instructor, and 3) submit a draft syllabus outlining the objectives, readings, and assignments for the Directed Reading and 4) receive approval from the DGS. These steps must be completed prior to the end of the semester preceding the desired term for the Directed Reading

(for example, a Directed Reading planned for the fall semester would need to be approved by end of the previous spring semester).

If an MDP student seeks to engage in a Directed Reading, it is their responsibility to secure a faculty member's support to act as instructor of record for the course. MDP is not able to compensate instructors for directed reading courses.

A.1.6 Concentrations (Optional) *pending approval - expected 9/30/23*

MDP offers seven concentrations (formally referred to by the Registrar as “subplans”). These concentrations offer students the option to deepen their learning on topics or skills relevant to their career goals. Such concentrations reflect student interests and experiences, similar to a “minor” at the master’s level. Completing a concentration is not required for graduation. Students may pursue up to two concentrations. Progress toward concentrations is tracked in Degree Tracker and completed concentrations will appear on student transcripts after graduation. These concentrations titles are approved by the LGS Executive Council and cannot be amended.

The approved concentrations are:

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- Gender Justice (GJ)
- Global Health and Wellbeing (GH)
- Sustainable Environments and Livelihoods (SEL)
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)
- Program Management (PM)

The concentrations include five topics of interest (CSR, GJ, GH, SEL, WASH) and two programmatic skillsets (MEAL and PM) that can be applied across sectors. All MDP concentrations require coursework and practical components, outlined in the Subplan Overview Table in the [MDP Student Hub](#). Students will complete eight course credits, drawn from appropriate departments. To complete the practical component, students use relevant internship or practicum experiences and documented participation in events, such as guest lectures or seminars on the subplan topic. The Subplan Requirements page for each subplan includes the approved course list.

The same course cannot be used for more than one concentration. Courses that are counted toward a concentration cannot be audited or taken pass/fail (field practicums and U.S. Based Internships are the exception in that they are taken for pass/fail). Students must earn at least a B or PS in concentration courses. To complete a concentration, students must submit a concentration form, located in the MDP Student Hub in OneDrive, must be submitted before the specified deadline in the student’s final Spring semester.

A.1.7 Summer Field Practicum

To graduate, MDP students must complete the field practicum requirement. Practicums can be completed either internationally or based in the U.S. For their summer field practicums, students work with partner

organizations on projects for eight (8) to ten (10) consecutive weeks. Exceptions to location and duration of the summer field practicum may be granted in exceptional circumstances by the MDP Program Director. The specific dates for each field practicum are determined in consultation with host organizations.

Two field practicums (MDP 595R) are required, one during the summer of their first and second academic years. These practicums provide students the opportunity to gain experience with development approaches and practice in real-life settings. Students enroll in nine (9) credits of MDP 595R, for a total of 18 credits (these credits do not count toward the 50 course credits required for graduation).

To engage in the field practicums, students must be in good academic standing and maintain appropriate professional conduct. Students who are on academic probation and/or received negative reports from instructors/supervisors may be limited in terms of field practicum options.

Students may apply for an exemption from their second field practicum, which potentially allows for graduation in May of the second year rather than August. To exempt, students must a) enroll in MDP 596R: United States Based Internship during the fall and/or spring semesters of their second academic year and b) They must document 400 hours of internship work with an approved partner organization.

A.1.8 U.S.-Based Academic Year Internships (Optional)

During their two years at Emory, students may engage in a wide range of paid or unpaid practical learning opportunities in the Atlanta area. These include a) research, teaching, or graduate assistantships on the Emory campus; b) internships with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) working with underserved or vulnerable communities (e.g. refugees, low-income families, human trafficking survivors, etc.); and c) internships with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) that focus on development-related topics. To receive credit, students enroll in MDP 596R (US-Based Internship) for two (2) to four (4) credits per semester (the number of credits varies based on the number of hours that the student will work). All internship arrangements must be finalized and approved by the designated MDP personnel. Academic year internship credits can count toward elective credit hour requirements.

A.2 COURSE ENROLLMENTS

A.2.1 Signing up for Courses

MDP staff enroll students in all required MDP courses. Other Emory units (like Rollins School of Public Health or Emory Law) and specific departments have different processes. Information about the enrollment requirements for different schools and departments can be found in the Course Information folder in the [MDP Student Hub](#) on OneDrive.

Students are responsible for verifying that their course schedules remain accurate throughout each semester. Prior to enrolling for each semester, students may consult with the designated MDP staff for academic advising regarding curriculum requirements, desired concentrations, and elective options. This is not required but is highly encouraged to ensure that students fulfill all requirements for graduation and desired concentrations.

A.2.2 Course Withdrawals

Each semester, students may drop courses until the [“Schedule Change Ends”](#) (aka add/drop) date that is set by the Office of the Registrar. After that date, students must complete the LGS Withdrawal Signature Form that is available on LGS’ [Withdrawal, Leave of Absence, Parental Accommodation page](#). The withdrawal date is the last day that the student attended class. The instructor for each course must assign a grade of W, WF or WU. A grade of WF/IF/IU will be included in the calculation of the student’s GPA.

The MDP Program requires that students enroll full-time to maintain status and any tuition-remission scholarships. To stay enrolled full-time, students must ensure that they remain enrolled in at least nine credit hours even after withdrawing from a course or courses.

A.2.3 Academic Advising

Every semester, MDP students have the option to complete an academic advising session with MDP staff. In these sessions, MDP staff and students will go over degree requirements, electives, and concentrations.

While academic advising is not required, it is *highly encouraged*. A check-in every semester ensures that students are on track to complete all requirements and concentrations for graduation. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they meet all academic requirements; academic advising is a useful tool for supporting students in that responsibility.

A.3 STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND STATUS

A.3.1 Residence Requirements

MDP students enroll full-time for six (6) consecutive semesters (including two summer terms). Full residence in any semester requires satisfactory completion of a minimum of nine (9) credit hours. Students who exempt out of the second field practicum are only in residence for five (5) semesters (see section A.1.6 for more information).

A.3.2 Assessment of Professional Conduct

As professionals-in-training, MDP students are expected to perform satisfactorily in their academic work, and to always conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism. Assessment of academic performance focuses on course grades, internships and field practicum evaluations. Demonstrating strict adherence to standards of professional conduct vis-a-vis peers, staff, faculty, internship supervisors, partner organizations, potential employers, and community members is also a critical aspect of a student’s performance.

The DGS may limit course access and/or opportunities for U.S.-based internships and summer field practicums for any student whose conduct or performance does not meet the required and expected standards. Additionally, the MDP Director may recommend to the Dean of LGS the termination of any student whose behavior reflects poorly on Emory University and/or the MDP program and/or is disrespectful and/or inappropriate toward others.

A.3.3 Assessment of Grades and Grading System

Most courses are taken for letter grades (A, A-, B+, B, etc.). MDP follows the overall LGS grading system, though specific percentage points that constitute each grade may differ by course and by instructor. For a course to fulfill graduation requirements, students must earn at least a C in that course (DS, HP or PS in Goizueta Business School courses). Classes graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis cannot count toward graduation requirements or credits.

Table A.3 LGS Grading System

Grade	Meaning	Quality Points
A	Superior	4.0
A-		3.7
B+		3.3
B	Satisfactory	3.0
B-		2.7
C	Marginal	2.0
F	Failing	0.0
S	Satisfactory	
U	Unsatisfactory	
W	Withdrawal without penalty	
WF	Withdrawal while failing	0.0
WU	Withdrawal while performing unsatisfactorily	
IP	In progress	
I	Incomplete	
IF/IU	Incomplete failing/Incomplete Unsatisfactory	
AUD	Audit	

A.3.4 Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Performance

Students must maintain at least a 2.7 GPA for each semester. Unsatisfactory academic performance is defined as one or more of the following:

- GPA of less than 2.7 in any semester;
- Receipt of a grade of F, U, IF, IU, LP, NC, WF or WU in any course;
- Receipt of two or more incompletes in a semester;
- Incomplete in one 9-credit-hour course;
- Failure to conduct oneself professionally.

Students meeting any of the above conditions in a given semester will be placed on academic probation for the following semester.

A.3.5 Academic Probation

Each of the above conditions will result in the student's academic performance being judged to be unsatisfactory and the student being placed on academic probation for one semester. During the probation, the student will be restricted in elective enrollments and the number of credit hours they may undertake. To be removed from academic probation, the student must complete the following:

- a. Receive no failing grades;
- b. Earn at least a C grade in all courses that fulfill competency areas;
- c. Eliminate the incompletes according to the deadline established by the instructor of the course, which should be no later than the end of the following academic semester (unless the DGS provides approval for an extension in writing);
- d. Obtain a 2.7 GPA;
- e. Maintain professional behavior at all times.

A student who fails to meet the above conditions at the end of the second probationary semester *may be terminated* from the MDP program. Termination will happen unless 1) the DGS determines that there is valid reason for extending the probationary period and provides written justification for the student's continuation and 2) LGS grants approval.

While the LGS Handbook allows graduate students to make an appeal for a third [Leave of Absence](#) must originate with the student, be endorsed by the DGS, and submitted to the LGS Dean for consideration prior to the beginning of the semester for which the leave is requested. To be eligible, the student must be in good academic standing and resolve all incompletes. A student is eligible to request a leave of absence only after having completed at least one semester in the MDP program. Students returning from a leave of absence should request readmission at least 30 days prior to the start of the semester in which they seek to be readmitted. Students must consult with the DGS regarding their plans for a Leave of Absence to determine how this may impact the timing of required courses.

A.3.7 Time to Complete the Degree

The MDP degree is designed to be completed in six consecutive semesters. Extensions beyond this period will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. If students need additional time to complete requirements (including because of Leaves of Absence), these will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Graduate Studies and other relevant program staff. To graduate, students must complete all requirements for the MDP degree within five years of matriculation (the start of their first semester).

A.3.8 Degree Completion

To graduate, students must complete the Degree Application, Exit Survey and other degree completion documents, as required by the LGS and Emory University. For more information, visit the Graduation folder in the [MDP Student Hub](#) in OneDrive.

In compliance with Emory policy, all outstanding balances must be paid before graduation.

B. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The cost of attending Emory University includes tuition and academic fees, living expenses, health insurance, parking fees, and incidentals such as the purchase of textbooks and supplies. All tuition and fees are determined by the Board of Trustees and are subject to change without notice.

B.1 TUITION AND FEES

B.1.1 Paying Bills

After a student's schedule is entered into OPUS, [Student Financial Services](#) (SFS) generates an electronic bill that is posted in OPUS. A student is notified of this posting via email to the student's Emory email address. The Office of Student Financial Services does not mail paper statements. Student Accounts detail charges, provide anticipated aid, and track account activity.

Bills are payable upon receipt. Students should follow instructions provided by SFS on their website.

Students who pay their bills after the published deadlines must pay a late registration fee of \$150. Those who do not pay their bills and/or enroll in courses by the end of add/drop will have their registration and their financial award (tuition and/or stipend) canceled.

Students who carry a balance in any given semester are at risk of not being able to enroll in the subsequent semester. Therefore, it is essential that students communicate with MDP regarding any financial difficulties they encounter.

B.1.2 Tuition

For information on current tuition and fees, visit the MDP's [Program Costs](#) page. MDP students are required to be enrolled full-time during the degree's six semesters (fall, spring, and summer for two years). To maintain full-time status, students must enroll for a minimum of nine credit hours. When enrolled full-time, students can take more than nine credits without being charged additional tuition.

Students who are approved in writing by the DGS to complete the degree in more than six semesters may enroll part-time to complete requirements during the additional semesters. In that case, tuition may be converted to a credit-hour basis during the extra semesters.

B.1.3 Audit Course Tuition

Full-time students may audit courses without incurring additional tuition fees. Audited courses may not be established for credit by examination, nor may they be changed to credit courses after the end of the drop/add period. Audited course credits may be counted toward tuition-paid status. Audited credits do not count toward eligibility for federal financial aid.

B.1.4 Enrollment Fee

All LGS students will be assessed an Enrollment Fee each semester.

B.1.5 Mental Health and Counseling Fee

All Emory students will be assessed a Mental Health and Counseling Fee each semester. This fee supports counseling, psychiatry, health, wellness, and crisis intervention support services. For more information, visit [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).

B.1.6 Computing Fee

All LGS students will be assessed a Computing Fee each semester. This fee supports information technology and computing services, including student email, web access, and other computer- supported services. For more information, visit [Student Digital Life](#).

B.1.7 Activity Fee

All Emory students will be assessed an Activity Fee in the Fall and Spring semesters only. This fee supports student government and organizations, other organized student activities, and campus events. For more information, visit [Laney Graduate Student Council \(LGSC\)](#).

B.1.8 Athletics and Recreation Fee

All Emory students will be assessed an Athletics and Recreation Fee each semester. This fee supports recreational and athletic programs. For more information, visit the [Recreation & Wellness website](#).

B.1.9 Transcript Fee

All new degree and certificate students are required to pay a one-time transcript fee of \$70 at the time they first enroll at Emory. This is a one-time fee that pays for all future transcripts. If you already obtained a degree from Emory, you may have paid this fee already. The fee will be assessed only to students seeking their first degree from Emory. For more information visit the [Office of the University Registrar](#)

B.2 MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE

All new and continuing degree-seeking Emory University students are required to have health insurance, including international students. Students must either purchase the [Emory University Health Insurance Plan \(EUSHIP\)](#) or provide documentation of enrollment in a comparable United States-domiciled plan. New students wishing to waive enrollment in the Emory Student Health Insurance Plan will need to complete the annual waiver process via OPUS prior to the first day of classes of their first semester at Emory. All returning students must also complete the enrollment/waiver process annually prior to the first day of classes of the fall semester.

If a student has not [waived out](#) of the Emory University Student Health Insurance Plan by the date of Emory's pre-term Student Financial Services bill, the student will be billed for the Emory University Student Health Insurance Plan. However, the student will still have until the first day of semester classes to complete a waiver request and have the insurance enrollment and charge reversed. Students must complete the annual insurance enrollment/waiver process each year they are enrolled at Emory. For more information, visit [Student Health Services](#).

B.3 FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE UNIVERSITY

Students are responsible for maintaining good financial standing with the University, including timely payment of tuition, emergency loans and other fees, as well as fines that may be incurred from the libraries or parking office. Penalties for past due accounts include but are not limited to cancellation of registration, refusal to approve continued registration, refusal to release transcripts, and withholding of diplomas. For more information, visit [Student Financial Services](#).

B.4 MERIT AWARDS AND FINANCIAL AID

B.4.1 Loans and Office of Financial Aid

Student loans are an important way in which U.S. citizens and permanent residents pay for a portion of their educational costs. Loans are money that is borrowed to help pay for university tuition, books, and living expenses. These funds must be repaid. For more detailed information visit [Graduate School Financial Aid](#).

B.4.2 MDP Partial Tuition Merit-Based Scholarship

MDP offers partial merit-based tuition scholarships on a competitive basis, upon acceptance into the program. These tuition scholarships are distributed over fall and spring semesters for each student who remains in good academic standing. These merit scholarships are not negotiable once a student is enrolled in the MDP program but remain in place as long as the student maintains good academic standing.

MDP partial merit-based tuition scholarships are guaranteed for the six semesters in which students complete the MDP degree (provided students remain in good academic standing). Students enrolling beyond the requisite six semesters are not guaranteed merit-based tuition scholarships.

B.4.3 MDP Summer Term Tuition Subsidy

MDP provides a summer term tuition subsidy that covers the full tuition and fees for students in good academic standing enrolled in an International or U.S. Based Field Practicum during their first and second-year summer terms.

B.4.4 MDP Summer Field Practicum Award

MDP provides funding to students participating in approved Summer Field Practicums (international or U.S.-based) so long as those practicums adhere to the travel expense policies of MDP, LGS and Emory University. The MDP Summer Field Practicum Award covers only basic expenses directly related to the practicum. MDP does not provide funding to cover student expenses incurred in Atlanta while they are engaging in an international field practicum. Additional details can be reviewed in the MDP Field Practicum Manual.

If a student's host organization covers some or all of the expenses otherwise covered by MDP or compensates the student for their work during the practicum, the amount of funding that MDP provides will be adjusted accordingly.

C. HONOR, CONDUCT, AND GRIEVANCE

C.1 HONOR CODE ADHERENCE

[The LGS Honor Code](#), as outlined in the LGS Handbook, will apply to cases of academic misconduct by MDP students. Similarly, procedures for reporting and hearing evidence pertaining to cases of honor code violation will follow the written policies of the Graduate School.

C.2 GENERAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Students who have a grievance related to some aspect of the MDP program should report it to the DGS. The student must describe the grievance and relevant details in writing through a letter addressed to the DGS, who will try, if possible, to resolve the grievance in conversation with the student and relevant parties. If this is not successful, the MDP Director will appoint a committee of three Emory faculty and staff members or use an appointed committee, who will review the grievance and propose an appropriate response.

If it is impossible to resolve the grievance within this committee or within the framework of the MDP administrative structure, the MDP Director will forward the grievance to the Office of the Senior Associate Dean of the LGS. From this point forward, the grievance will be handled according to the Grievance Procedure outlined in the LGS Handbook. If the issue is with the MDP Director and/or DGS, the student should go directly to the designated staff of the LGS.

D. BECOMING A DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

The MDP program is a professional degree and, as such, it offers a variety of professional development resources (workshops, networking events, professional contacts, one-to-one mentorship, and access to development-related job platforms). MDP students are also encouraged to take advantage of other resources and opportunities provided by the LGS and other units of Emory University to fine-tune their job search strategy, polish their job application materials, practice networking and interviewing, and acquired critical career-relevant skills.

Students' academic record, choice of concentrations, and field practicum and internship performance are all important factors in securing professionally meaningful employment after graduation. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the DGS and/or the MDP Director early in their graduate studies for advice on structuring their curriculum and practicum experiences in ways that will help them develop a coherent professional profile and trajectory.