Thank you for your interest in the Cultural Foundations of Community Engagement and Education master’s program in the Educational Policy and Community Studies department of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This document contains some basic information about commonly asked questions to help you learn more about how our program works and what to expect if you apply and matriculate in our program.

**Online and Face-to-Face Options**

Courses are offered in online and face-to-face formats. See the course matrix for courses we promise to offer in each format each semester (the matrix lists the minimum, and more will be offered as well). **We guarantee that students can complete the program in two years if they take all on-line courses. Students may finish sooner if they take a mix of online and face-to-face courses.**

**Application Process**

Our program is a **rolling admittance** program, meaning that you can apply at any time. Prospective students should expect that it will take **6-8 weeks** after their online grad application is completed before a decision can be made on their application. For example, if a prospective applicant hopes to gain admittance in the spring, they should start the process in November or early December to be safe. It might not take quite this long, but this will ensure they will be able to arrange for financial aid in time for the semester in which they hope to start. There are several components of the online application, including requesting letters of recommendation, transcripts, writing a personal statement, paying fees ($56), calculating in-state or out-of-state tuition, etc. The entire application must be completed, not just initiated, in order for the department and the graduate school to act on your application.

**Minimum GPA:** Successful applicants must meet the minimum GPA requirements set by the Graduate School -- 2.75, or 3.0 in the final two years of undergraduate study. However, there are options for students who may need to prove their ability to complete graduate study if their GPA falls below this level in order to meet the requirements for admission to the program. Please contact the Graduate Representative, Marie Sandy ([sandym@uwm.edu](mailto:sandym@uwm.edu)) for more details.
Preparing for the Academic Workload/Number of Courses in which to Enroll

Many students are curious about how many classes in which to enroll during their first semester as a master’s student. If you enroll in 4 credits or more, you will likely be eligible for financial aid – check with the financial aid office for more details: http://www4.uwm.edu/financialaid/.

Many of our students work full-time and/or have family care responsibilities. Only you can determine the course load that is most appropriate for your life circumstances. The master’s level workload is definitely more intense than at the Bachelor’s degree level, and you should plan to spend 9 hours per week outside of class to prepare for every 3-credit class in which you are enrolled. Be prepared to spend 12-15 hours per class during midterms and finals.

Most students find that 6 credits (2 classes) is comfortable during the first semester, but 9 to 12 credits may be doable for you if you are able to devote yourself to full-time study. We do not recommend taking more than 12 credits, particularly during the first semester of enrollment.

What if I’m out of state student taking fully online classes and I see a weird (and expensive) non-resident fee in my PAWS? Out-of-state enrollments are updated by a School of Education administrator, and the accounts will be administratively settled on a weekly basis. If the charge persists on your account for more than 2 weeks, contact the EDPOL department.

Can Undergrad Courses Count Toward My Degree? What about Master’s Level Courses from another Program?

Courses you took as an undergraduate student cannot count toward your 30-credit master’s degree program, even if the course number was 500-level or above in the EDPOL department. In most instances, your graduate-level coursework begins after you have been formally admitted into the Cultural Foundations of Education Master’s of Science program. Undergraduate and graduate-level workloads for the same course vary significantly, and no course can count toward two different degree programs.

Graduate-Level Transfer Credits: If you have taken graduate-level courses from another department or institution while enrolled as a graduate student with that department, or as a graduate non-degree student in the EDPOL department, some credits may be able to be transferred in to our department if: 1) your advisor deems they are related to the content of our department; 2) you earned these credits within the past 5 years; and 3) you earned a B or
above in those courses. Typically, students may transfer in about 9 credits that meet these criteria. The transfer of credits does not happen automatically!

In special instances, credits older than five years since your enrollment in the master’s program can be accepted if the content is deemed relevant by your academic advisor. This requires completing the transfer form as well as a special request for exception form that is provided by the Graduate Representative. If you took EDPOL courses as a non-degree student as part of a continuing education requirement, for example, they are not automatically included as part of your program.

Make no assumptions about the transfer of credits until you see them posted in PAWS as part of your degree program.

Step1) Communicate with your advisor about this option

Step 2) complete the transfer credit form and forward this request to the EDPOL Graduate Representative. This form is then signed by the Graduate Representative and then submitted to the Graduate School, which makes the final decision regarding all transfer credits: http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/forms-and-downloads/students/transfer-credit-evaluation-form.pdf

Step 3) Receive confirmation of the approval from the Graduate School and in your PAWS account.

Transfer credits typically count as electives in our department.

**Required Courses**

You may already be familiar with the UWM Graduate School webpage for Cultural Foundations of Education master’s program: http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/prospective/areas-of-study/cultural-foundations-of-education/

Note that there are **15 credits of core courses** that you must take:

- **EdPol 702** Cultural Foundations of Education Graduate Seminar* approved Spring, 2014
- **EdPol 705** Sociology of Education (3)
- **EdPol 710** Research Methods in Cultural Foundation (3)
- **EdPol 740** Modern Philosophies of Education (3)
- **EdPol 750** History of American Education (3)
You also have **9 credits to develop a focus area** in Cultural Foundations in the area of your choice, and an additional **6 credits of electives** that can be taken in any department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Your 9 focus area credits must be taken in the EDPOL department, and you choose which ones to take. You may choose to take your 6 credits of elective courses in the EDPOL department or in another department or school altogether.

Try to select focus area and elective courses around a specific concentration, such as alternative education, race relations, youth work, gender and education, community engagement and partnerships, etc. Or, you can create your own student designated concentration. See the website for a more detailed description of focus areas:  
http://www4.uwm.edu/soe/academics/ed_policy/cfe.cfm

Consider taking your 6 credits of electives at one of our sister institutions. There are options for enrolling in classes at Marquette or the Medical College of Wisconsin through reciprocal institutional agreements. Approval must be granted by both institutions before a student may participate in the program. For more information about the procedures for participation, please feel free to contact Chris Parks in Graduate School @ ccp2@uwm.edu. Some details can also be found online at:  
http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/current/cooperative-special/registration/

**Planning Your Schedule of Courses**

Some students wish to complete their core before moving on to electives, but others take a mix of focus area/electives and core courses throughout their program. The core courses for the program are offered only during the regular fall and spring semesters, and are offered in face-to-face and online formats in alternate years. Core courses are offered in the Fall and Spring semesters only. A variety of graduate-level courses that can be used to fulfill your particular focus area courses or electives are offered during the summer, fall, and spring semesters.

**Summer**

Electives and EDPOL focus area courses only – students select these based on their interests and availability of courses offered.

**Fall**

As a new student, you are strongly advised to **enroll in EDPOL 702 Cultural Foundations of Education Graduate Seminar, during your first fall semester** to ensure your success in the program. You should also note that **EDPOL 740, Modern Philosophies of Education**, is offered only during the fall semesters, so that may be a priority for you as well, depending on your particular timeline for completing the program. **EDPOL 710, Research Methods**, is another core course to take in the fall.
Spring

EdPol 750, History of American Education, and EDPOL 705 are usually offered only in the spring.

Embark! Enrolling in Classes

Here is the link to the schedule of classes:  http://www4.uwm.edu/schedule/  Be sure you click on the link for Educational Policy and Community Studies to find the list of classes. Graduate courses are any courses numbered 500 and above. You can also search for classes in your PAWS account.

You can find helpful hints if you click the "Student" link above the PAWS login screen. Your PAWS account will list the courses in which you are successfully enrolled. The Registrar’s office can help you if you need further assistance: http://www4.uwm.edu/registrar/students/index.cfm

Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements

You must sustain a GPA of 3.0 or above to remain enrolled in the program at all times, and you must have at least a 3.0 to graduate from the program. If your GPA falls below a 3.0 at any time, you risk academic dismissal from the program. A hold will be put on your PAWS account, and you will be unable to register for courses.

If there are unforeseen circumstances that prevent you from achieving grades to meet these GPA requirements, please contact your advisor and the graduate representative as soon as possible to discuss your situation. We may be able to work with you to develop a plan for probationary re-admittance to the program.

Exit Requirements for Graduating Semester: Final Paper, Final Project, or Master’s Thesis

Looking further down the road, you will need to complete a final paper, project or master’s thesis during your final semester in the program. You should expect that the required capstone final paper or project will involve the same amount of work as a regular 3-credit class, even though the final paper option does not require that you enroll in an actual course for it.

The final paper option is the most common, and requires that you have a chair and a second reader working with you to demonstrate mastery in a given subject area by completing this 20—25 page paper with 15 or more references (see the handout on the final capstone
requirement for more details). Most students report that they were most likely to complete the final paper in a timely manner and stay on top of their classes if they took 6 credits or fewer during their last semester.

The final project option requires that students enroll in the 3-credit EdPol 791 Action Research Capstone Seminar during the semester in which you plan to graduate. This course will guide you through the completion of a final project that often involves original work/research in the field and an accompanying capstone paper.

If you select the master’s thesis option*, this will likely require considerably more work than a 3-credit class. You will typically work with your thesis committee for 8 months to a year to complete and publish your original research.

All three of these options require a final exit interview with your chair and second reader where you will present your work.

You must be a currently enrolled student in order to graduate. Some students require an extra semester to complete the final paper after their regular coursework is completed. You will be asked to enroll in at least one credit course – an 899 independent study with your final paper chair is the most common. Keep in mind that financial aid is not usually available for fewer than four credits, so some students pay out-of-pocket for the completion of their capstone paper in the semester in which they graduate. It is possible to arrange to take four credits within the department during the completion phase of your final paper – please contact your final paper chair and graduate representative. See the student handbook for more details about the exit requirements. Basic information about this requirement is also listed on the grad school website: http://graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/prospective/areas-of-study/cultural-foundations-of-education/

What if life circumstances prevent me from completing a course?

Hopefully, your course of study will be smooth sailing. Just in case, here is the university’s incomplete policy, which you can find on the graduate school website:

“An Incomplete is appropriate only when the following conditions are present:

1. You have done satisfactory work in a substantial fraction of the course requirements prior to grading time and provide the instructor with evidence of potential success in completing the remaining work.
2. Extraordinary circumstances, not related to class performance, such as illness or family emergency, have prevented you from finishing the course requirements on time.
An Incomplete will not be given to enable you to do additional work to improve a grade.

It is your responsibility to initiate a request for an Incomplete. If approved, the instructor will indicate the conditions for the removal of the Incomplete, including the dates for submitting all remaining work. The instructor may deny a request for an Incomplete and assign a letter grade based on the work completed at that point.

You are responsible for seeing that the Incomplete is removed before the agreed deadline and that the instructor has reported the grade to the Graduate School. The instructor may change the I to a letter grade (including an F) or to a PI (Permanent Incomplete) if you fail to meet the deadline for completion.

Please note that all incompletes automatically become Permanent Incompletes after 1 year by the Graduate School, and in most cases, cannot be changed to a letter grade after that point. A Permanent Incomplete will not impact your GPA, but will result in your having to retake the course, if it a core course, or another course, if it is an elective or focus area course.

**Ta Da! Graduation**

Find the graduation procedures here: [http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/masters-graduation/](http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/masters-graduation/)

1) Your first step is to submit your intent to graduate application online in the semester in which you plan to graduate (and pay the $40 fee).

2) You must be enrolled in at least 1 credit during the semester during which you plan to graduate. If you are finishing up your final paper, you can request to take EDPOL 888 with your final paper chair.

3) The Graduate School and the Graduate Representative will check to make sure you fulfilled all of the credit requirements, have no incompletes on your record, and that you have earned a 3.0 GPA or better. Once there is sign-off on your capstone final paper, project, or thesis by your chair, you will be recommended for graduation.

4) Walk in the Graduation Ceremony! Your diploma is usually sent to you by mail four to six weeks after final materials are submitted.
Request a copy of the Cultural Foundations of Education Student Handbook for our department. It outlines the basic policies, codes of conduct, and the description of the process for the required capstone final paper, project, or master’s thesis. You’ll get there sooner than you think!

Here is the Graduate School’s link for available financial support: http://graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/financial-support/

Here is the Graduate School’s link for resources for new students: http://graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/prospective/admitted/

Campus resources for students who are parents: https://www4.uwm.edu/lifeimpact/MeetTheTeam.cfm

If you have any questions, contact your academic advisor or the Graduate Representative, Dr. Marie Sandy (sandym@uwm.edu)

Sincerely,

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Check the program website for exit requirements regarding capstone final papers, final projects, and master’s theses, along with their accompanying exit interviews.

http://graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/prospective/areas-of-study/cultural-foundations-of-education/