

**Letter of Intent to RUSO
for Ed.D. in Transformative Leadership and Learning**

INSTITUTION AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

Institution Name: University of Central Oklahoma

Official Degree Designation and Program Title: Doctor of Education in Transformative Leadership and Learning

Official Degree Program Options: Transformative Leadership and Learning

Location(s) where program will be offered: Online

Requested Instructional Program Code: NEXT AVAILABLE NUMBER FROM OSRHE

CIP Code: 13.0499

Discipline-specific Accreditation: The program will not seek any discipline-specific accreditation

Proposed Implementation Date: Fall 2026

Final Approval Date: May 2030

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Chief Academic Officer: Dr. Charlotte Simmons

Email of Chief Academic Officer: cksimmons@uco.edu

Are you the Chief Academic Officer: No

If no, Name of Individual Completing LOI: Dr. Lee Anne H. Paris

Email of Individual Completing LOI: lparis@uco.edu

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Purpose:

The proposed Ed.D. program is an extension of the current master's degree program in Educational Leadership offered through the Donna Nigh Department of Advanced Professional and Special Services in the College of Education and Professional Studies at the University of Central Oklahoma. The proposed Ed.D. also extends the reach of the current Educational Leadership department beyond the PK-12 context. Titled "Doctor of Education in Transformative Leadership and Learning," the proposed Ed.D. will seek to prepare leaders for positions not only in education but also in public and private non-profit organizations and community agencies. The proposed Ed.D. will produce graduates that embody the six tenets of transformative learning at UCO and are prepared to fill demand for leaders in the metropolitan area, the State of Oklahoma, and beyond.

The major objectives for the Ed.D. program are:

1. Provide highly knowledgeable and skilled graduates with transformative mindsets to leadership positions.
2. Increase research funding and visibility for the University of Central Oklahoma and the College of Education and Professional Studies.
3. Create community connections and build collaborative partnerships with metropolitan school districts, community organizations, and industry leaders.
4. Recruit and retain highly qualified faculty in educational and community leadership.

In addition, the major student learning objectives (SLOs) for the program are:

1. Advanced Oral and Written Communication - Students will demonstrate advanced proficiency in oral and written communication, particularly in conveying complex leadership theories, research findings, and strategic initiatives to diverse stakeholders.
2. Collaborative Leadership and Teamwork - Students will exhibit the ability to lead and collaborate within teams, applying leadership theories to foster inclusive, ethical, and collaborative environments in educational or community settings.
3. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving - Students will utilize advanced critical and creative thinking skills to identify and address complex issues in educational leadership and community development through innovative solutions.
4. Ethical Leadership and Decision-Making - Students will critically assess ethical challenges in leadership, demonstrating an ability to make informed decisions that are grounded in ethical frameworks, political understanding, and cultural sensitivity.
5. Transformative Learning and Leadership - Students will engage in and promote transformative learning experiences that foster personal and professional growth, community engagement, and a global perspective in their leadership practice.
6. Research and Inquiry in Educational Leadership - Students will design, conduct, and evaluate qualitative and quantitative research that contributes to the body of knowledge in educational leadership, community development, and transformative learning.
7. Program Evaluation and Improvement - Students will demonstrate the ability to apply program evaluation techniques and utilize data-driven strategies to assess and improve educational and organizational programs and policies.
8. Organizational Development and Culture - Students will demonstrate an understanding of how to develop and sustain a positive organizational culture that supports learning, collaboration, and innovation in educational and community contexts.
9. Leadership in Diverse Contexts - Students will exhibit leadership competencies tailored to diverse educational settings, including PK-12 administration and community development, with an emphasis on equity, inclusion, and social justice.
10. Capstone Research and Practical Application - Students will complete a dissertation or capstone project that demonstrates their ability to synthesize theoretical knowledge, research methods, and leadership practices in addressing a significant issue within their professional context.

Program Rationale and Background:

UCO's institutional mission is to "empower students to become ethical, creative and engaged citizens and leaders through our commitment to transformative learning experiences." Further, the vision of UCO is to "prepare future leaders to positively impact local, state, and global communities." The proposed Ed.D. is poised to fully support the institutional mission and vision by combining future PK-12 leaders with future leaders of public and private non-profit organizations and community agencies. UCO prepares students to become community competent — collaborating across contexts to positively impact the larger society. The innovative structure of the Ed.D. program is structured to provide transformative learning experiences throughout the program, providing relevant coursework with quality online learning experiences, focusing students on real-world problems of practice, and producing a scholarly dissertation project that will contribute to research and practice.

As Oklahoma's only designated public metropolitan university, UCO is focused on serving the greater Oklahoma City metropolitan area. UCO strives to be recognized as a visionary and top-performing metropolitan university and to cultivate unique and valuable relationships with Oklahoma City metropolitan communities and partners. The Ed.D. program would, first and foremost, recruit students from the larger metropolitan area as well as seek out internships for students within the communities in which they live and work. The Ed.D. program would serve as a conduit linking a high-quality, rigorous, scholarly doctorate degree from UCO to the demand of metropolitan organizations and industries for competent and innovative leaders. In this way, UCO is achieving its mission of increasing educational access while promoting collaboration across communities and deepening its commitment to action for improvement of not only the University, but also the larger metropolitan area.

The proposed Ed.D. of Transformative Leadership and Learning would be a 34-month, 60-hour, fully online program with an embedded dissertation, that is, students would begin working on their dissertation in the second semester of coursework and continue writing the dissertation throughout the duration of the program. Students will complete their dissertation with their coursework requirements. The program is designed for working adults, so the courses will be offered fully online in a 16-week or 8-week format to ensure students are not taking more than two courses at a time during any semester. The unique structure of this Ed.D. program admits one cohort of students each fall and requires all students to take classes together for the 15 core hours of coursework, 12 hours of research coursework, and 15 hours of dissertation. Students also separate into their cognate areas and take 18 hours of specialized courses. The proposed Ed.D. includes two initial cognate areas: Leadership for PK-12 Administration and Leadership for Community Development. This structure allows the University to add additional cognates to the Ed.D. as its mission or demand allow.

Total Number of Credit Hours Required for the Program: 60

Productivity Criteria and Final Review:

This program will enroll a minimum of **10** students in the **Fall 2029** (year) and graduate a minimum of **6** students in the **2029-2030** (academic year).

Employment Demand for the Proposed Program:

Oklahoma currently has granted over 5,000 emergency certifications and 2,500 adjunct instructors across the state (OSSBA, 2024). The teacher shortage has implications for the pipeline to school leadership. In fact, current data show that demand for education administrators is higher than the national average. In Oklahoma in 2023, there were 52 job postings for superintendents and 206 postings for principals. K-12 education administrators are also identified by the State of Oklahoma as a critical occupation. Beyond K-

12 education, Oklahoma has a critical need for leaders who would enroll in the Leadership for Community Develop Ed.D. program. General and Operations managers top the list of critical occupations for Oklahoma (2022-2023) which also includes supervisors and managers. The proposed Ed.D. of Transformative Leadership and Learning would provide additional education and, in some cases, certification to address a number of occupations that are deemed critical by the state of Oklahoma and the region.

Duplication and Unmet Need:

The proposed Ed.D. program will recruit students primarily from the metropolitan area, but also from other regions of Oklahoma, across the United States, and international enrollment. The Ed.D. program also plans to recruit students who not only want a future in education administration, but also those seeking leadership positions in public and private non-profit organizations and community agencies. It is expected that the cohorts of students enrolled in the proposed Ed.D. program will represent a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds and bring with them multiple perspectives on shared issues and challenges.

Recruitment of students will begin with the most immediate demand. This includes students who are current master's level graduate students at UCO; current building-level administrators in the OKC metropolitan area who want to earn a district-level superintendent certification and pursue a terminal degree; current leaders of public and private non-profit organizations and community agencies in the OKC metropolitan area who are seeking pathways to promotion and wish to pursue a terminal degree; non-metropolitan area students who are looking for the convenience of a fully online program with an accelerated coursework and dissertation model; and international students.

The EADM program at UCO has consistently had a healthy enrollment of master's level graduate students. In the 2022-2023 academic year, 74 students were enrolled in the program. In the 2023-2024 academic year, 119 students were enrolled in the program. UCO has also consistently scheduled master's level cohorts within school districts partnering with Choctaw Public Schools, Deer Creek Public Schools, Edmond Public Schools, Mustang Public Schools, and Oklahoma City Public Schools to offer master's programs for district educators.

Post graduation from UCO, these master's level students often seek out district-level certification or terminal degrees. These graduates often contact UCO faculty via email as their first choice for an additional degree, but currently UCO does not offer a district-level certification pathway or a degree beyond the master's degree. These UCO alumni then seek out opportunities at other Oklahoma institutions or at out-of-state fully online programs accessible to Oklahoma students.

In fact, data show that 95 students completed a PhD or EdD in 2023 in Oklahoma (IPEDS, 2023). Completions of these degrees have grown 188% between 2019 and 2023 (IPEDS, 2023). Approximately 50% of these completions occurred in a private, non-profit institution with an accelerated, embedded dissertation models. These completions were more than double those of public Oklahoma institutions with a more traditional PhD/EdD model. It is clear from the data that students are interested in a more innovative, student-centered doctoral degree approach.

MODALITY INFORMATION

Method of Delivery: Online Only

IPEDS INFORMATION

Choose One – All, Some, None: All

This program has a mandatory onsite component Y/N: No

This program has a non-mandatory onsite component Y/N: No

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Major Curricular Components

Core Courses – 15 hours

- ADED 6883 Transformational Learning for Leaders
- EADM 6753 Ethics, Influence, and Politics
- EADM 6XX3 Foundations of Organizational Leadership
- EADM 6XX3 Developing Community and Workplace Culture
- EADM 60X3 Doctoral Seminar in Research Writing

Research Courses - 12 hours

- ESFR 6013 Research Design and Methodology
- ESFR 6403 Advanced Educational Statistics
- ESFR 6XX3 Qualitative Research Methods
- EADM 6XX3 Program Evaluation

Dissertation Hours - 15 hours

Cognate (select one) - 18 hours

Leadership for PK-12 Administration

- EADM 6713 Strategic Leadership and Direction Setting
- EADM 6723 District Level Instructional Leadership
- EADM 6733 District Level Organizational Leadership: Operations, Finance, and Facilities
- EADM 6743 Community Collaboration and Engagement
- EADM 6XX3 Superintendency Internship
- EADM 6XX3 District Governance and School Law

Leadership for Community Development

- EADM 6743 Community Collaboration and Engagement
- EADM 6713 Strategic Leadership and Direction Setting
- ADED 6073 Managing Organizations and Community Programs
- ADED 6163 Organizational Communication and Change
- ADED 6323 Coaching and Mentoring for Learning and Professional Development
- ADED 6523 Creative Supervision for Collaborative Leadership

The following table includes an example of what a course rollout could look like for a cohort of students entering in Fall 2026 and enrolling in the Ed.D. in Transformative Leadership and Learning with a cognate in Leadership for PK-12 Administration.

Semester	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3
Fall 2026	ESFR 6013 (16wk)	EADM 6883 (8wk, B1)	EADM Org Theory (8wk, B2)
Spring 2027	ESFR 6403 (16wk)	EADM 6753 (8wk, B1)	EADM Dev Culture (8wk, B2)
Summer 2027	EADM Seminar (4wk)		
Fall 2027	ESFR Qual (16wk)	Diss 3 hour (8 wk, B2)	EADM 6713 (8wk, B1)

Spring 2028	ESFR PEval (16wk)	Diss 3 hour (8 wk, B2)	EADM 6723 (8wk, B1)
Summer 2028	Diss 3 hour (8wk)		
Fall 2028	Diss 3 hour (16wk)	EADM 6733 (8wk, B1)	EADM 6743(8wk, B2)
Spring 2029	Diss 3 hour (16wk)	EADM Law (8wk, B1)	EADM Intern (8wk, B2)

The following table includes an example of what a course rollout could look like for a cohort of students entering in Fall 2026 and enrolling in the Ed.D. in Transformative Leadership and Learning with a cognate in Leadership for Community Development

Semester	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3
Fall 2026	ESFR 6013 (16wk)	EADM 6883 (8wk, B1)	EADM Org Theory (8wk, B2)
Spring 2027	ESFR 6403 (16wk)	EADM 6753 (8wk, B1)	EADM Dev Culture (8wk, B2)
Summer 2027	EADM Seminar (4wk)		
Fall 2027	ESFR Qual (16wk)	Diss 3 hour (8 wk, B2)	EADM 6713 (8wk, B1)
Spring 2028	ESFR PEval (16wk)	Diss 3 hour (8 wk, B2)	ADED 6073 (8wk, B1)
Summer 2028	Diss 3 hour (8wk)		
Fall 2028	Diss 3 hour (16wk)	ADED 6323 (8wk, B1)	EADM 6743 (8wk, B2)
Spring 2029	Diss 3 hour (16wk)	ADED 6523 (8wk, B1)	ADED 6323 (8wk, B2)