



EMORY
LANEY
GRADUATE
SCHOOL

MASTER'S IN
DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

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.

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

EEO Statement

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A. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

A.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MDP DEGREE

Academic courses build student expertise across disciplines and subject matter, thereby fulfilling credit hour requirements for the MDP degree. The MDP curriculum — and corresponding credit hour requirement — combines six required competency areas and a seventh component consisting of student-selected elective courses. This structure ensures that all students graduate from Emory MDP with a well-integrated interdisciplinary foundation, while also developing expertise in 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), MDP 506 (Research Methods I), MDP 507 (Interdisciplinary Field Seminar I), MDP 511 (Interdisciplinary Field Seminar II), and MDP 517 (Research Methods II) must be taken in specific semesters. MDP 505 (Monitoring & Evaluation) and MDP 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 taught across multiple Emory University units. Information about courses that are pre-approved 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. Credits in this category can be fulfilled through courses taught across Emory schools (and occasionally at partner institutions) and academic-year internship credits.

Students should consult with the designated MDP staff 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>
Competency Areas		
Social Science and Integrative Analysis	MDP 500, 507, 510 and 511	12
Research and Applied Methods	MDP 505, 506, 517 and Approved Quantitative Methods 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
Electives		
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

Two core courses—Interdisciplinary Field Seminars I and II—bookend the first summer field practicum experience, providing opportunities for integration among disciplines and across academic learning and practical training. These two courses as well as MDP 500 - which is taken in in the fall semester of the first year - must be taken in sequence. MDP 506 and MDP 517 are also taken in sequence during fall and spring semesters of the first year.

A.1.2 Elective Courses

In addition to core courses, students must take 10 credits through at least 3 elective 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 knowledge of subjects covered by core courses, acquired through previous coursework and/or work experience *may* be exempted from select 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](#), including supporting documentation to the MDP staff.

Support documentation may consist of evidence of prior work experience or the syllabus and transcript from previous graduate coursework (undergraduate courses do not count). Each request is first reviewed by the instructor of the course the student wants to opt out of; the instructor then recommends approval or denial 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 that has similar content and pedagogical value. Students who wish to do so must submit the Course Substitution form - located in the [MDP Student Hub](#) - where they provide a summary explanation for the desired substitution as well as any pertinent personal, academic, and professional context. Substitutions are rarely granted and must be backed by a compelling justification. Each request is reviewed and approved or denied by the DGS.

A.1.5 Independent Study (Directed Reading)

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 regarding their proposed topic, 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 before the end of the semester that precedes the academic term during which the desired Directed Reading is to occur. For example, a Directed Reading planned for the fall semester should be approved by the end of the preceding spring semester.

MDP students who seek to engage in Directed Reading are responsible for securing a faculty member's agreement to serve as instructor of record for the course. MDP is not able to compensate instructors for directed reading courses.

A.1.6 Concentrations (Optional)

MDP students who wish to deepen their learning on topics or skills relevant to their career goals may

obtain one or two optional concentrations (formally referred as “subplans”). Progress toward concentrations is tracked in Degree Tracker and completed concentrations will appear on student transcripts after graduation.

Concentrations titles are approved by the LGS Executive Council and cannot be amended. Currently, the MDP program offers the following concentrations, including five that are focused on sectoral interests (CSR, GJ, GH, SEL, WASH) and two centered on programmatic skillsets (MEAL and PM).

- 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)

All concentrations require coursework and practical components, outlined in the Subplan Overview Table in the [MDP Student Hub](#). Students will complete eight credits, drawn from courses in relevant departments. For the practical component, students can use relevant internship or practicum experiences and documented participation in events, such as guest lectures or seminars on the subplan topic. The same course cannot be used for more than one concentration. Courses that are counted toward a concentration cannot be audited or taken as S/U. 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](#). This form must be submitted before the specified deadline in the student’s final Spring semester.

A.1.7 Summer Field Practicum

Two field practicums (MDP 595R) are required for graduation, to be completed in the summer of a student’s first and second academic years. During their summer practicum, students are enrolled in MDP 595R (9 credits per summer). These credits do not count toward the 50 credits required for graduation.

Practicums can consist of international or U.S.-based practicums. For international field practicums, students work full time for eight (8) to ten (10) consecutive weeks, while embedded in partner organizations’ project teams located in the Global South. For U.S.-based practicums, students are required to complete an approved number of hours during the summer term. 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 the host organizations.

Students may be exempted from their second summer field practicum, which enables them to graduate in May rather than August of their second year. To do so, students must: a) enroll in MDP 596R: U.S.-based Internship during the fall and/or spring semesters of their second academic year; and b) complete 400 hours of internship work with a partner organization. For additional details, contact the DGS and/or the Assistant Director.

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

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

During the academic year, MDP students have the option of engaging in paid or unpaid practical learning opportunities, either remotely or based 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 marginalized communities (e.g. refugees, low-income households, unhoused people, etc.); and c) internships with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that focus on issues related to development.

To receive credit, students enroll in MDP 596R (U.B. Based Internship) for two (2) to four (4) credits per semester (the number varies according to number of hours served). Academic year internship credits can count toward elective credit hour requirements for graduation.

All internship arrangements must be finalized and approved by the designated MDP faculty or staff.

A.2 COURSE ENROLLMENTS

A.2.1 Signing up for Courses

MDP staff enroll students in all required MDP courses. Various Emory units (e.g. Rollins School of Public Health, Emory Law School, Goizueta Business School, Candler School of Theology) and specific academic departments may have their own specific policies and procedures. 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. They are also encouraged to check the academic calendars of the Emory units where they are housed for accurate information regarding deadlines for enrollment, add/drop/sway, withdrawals, etc. For example, Emory Law School courses often begin prior to LGS and therefore have different deadlines.

Prior to enrolling for each semester, students may consult with the designated MDP staff about curriculum requirements, desired concentrations, and elective options. This is not required but highly encouraged to ensure that students meet 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/sway) 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 student’s GPA calculation.

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 for the semester even after withdrawing from a course or courses.

A.2.3 Academic Advising

Every semester, MDP students are *highly encouraged* to attend an academic advising session with designated MDP faculty or staff to review their progress in completing requirements for graduation and desired concentrations. While not required, academic advising is a useful tool for ensuring that students are on track in meeting these requirements. Ultimately, however, it is the student’s responsibility to make sure they fulfill the program requirements.

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 at least nine credit hours. Students who exempt out of the second summer field practicum are only in residence for five 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 or Program Director 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, including showing disrespectful and/or inappropriate behavior or speech 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 LGS grading system. Cutoffs for specific grades vary by course and by instructor. For a course to fulfill graduation requirements, students must earn at least a C in all courses. For Goizueta Business School, students must earn a DS, HP or PS for the courses to count toward degree requirements. Classes graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis cannot count toward graduation requirements or credits.

Students may be able to audit courses at the instructor's discretion. An audited course cannot be changed to credit after the end of the drop/add/swap period. Audited courses do not count for completing degree or concentration requirements.

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 to remain in good standing. 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.

A.3.5 Academic Probation

Meeting any of the above conditions in a given semester will result in the student's academic performance being judged to be unsatisfactory. The student will be placed on academic probation for the semester following the condition. During the probation, the student may 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:

- Maintain at least a 2.7 GPA
- Receive no failing grades
- Earn at least a C grade in courses that fulfill competency areas
- Eliminate any prior "incompletes" (I)
- Always maintain professional behavior

Incompletes must be resolved by the deadline established by the course instructor. The deadline should be no later than the end of the following academic semester. The only exception would be if the DGS approves an extension in writing before the instructor's deadline.

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.

A.3.6 Leave of Absence

A leave of absence (LOA) of up to one calendar year may be granted because of medical necessity, full-time employment, receipt of an external award, or other acceptable reasons. A [LOA request](#) must originate with the student, be endorsed by the DGS, and be submitted to the LGS Dean prior to the start of the semester for which the leave is requested.

To be eligible, the student must be in good academic standing, having resolved any outstanding incompletes. A student can request a LOA only after completing at least one semester in the MDP program. Students returning from a LOA must request readmission at least 30 days before the start of the semester in which they seek to return. Students must consult with the DGS regarding their LOA plans, including how it may affect the sequencing of core 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 may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the DGS and other relevant MDP and LGS faculty and staff, if warranted by extraordinary circumstances.

To graduate, students must complete all MDP degree requirements within five years of matriculation (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, students should 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

Attending Emory University includes tuition and academic fees, living expenses, health insurance, parking fees, and incidentals like 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 Emory Bills

Each semester, after a student's schedule is entered into OPUS, the [Student Accounts and Billing Office](#) 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 Student Accounts and Billing Office does not mail paper statements. Student Accounts detail charges, provide anticipated aid, and track account activity. Students may pay the bill upon receipt by following the instructions on the Student Accounts website.

Students who pay their bills after the published deadlines may be liable for fees. Those who do not pay their bills and/or enroll in courses by the end of add/drop/swap will have their registration and their financial award (tuition and/or stipend) discontinued and thereby be ineligible to use university resources.

Students who carry a balance in any given semester may not be able to enroll in the subsequent semester. Therefore, it is essential that students [email](#) the Student Accounts and Billing Office in advance regarding any potential late payments and outstanding balances.

B.1.2 Tuition

MDP tuition is charged by academic term rather than by credit. If students are enrolled full-time (nine credits per term), they can take additional credit hours without being charged increased tuition.

Students 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, at the discretion of the Program Director, tuition may be converted to a credit-hour basis during the extra semesters.

For information on current tuition and fees, visit the MDP's [Program Costs](#) page.

B.1.3 Audit Course Tuition

Full-time students may audit courses without incurring additional tuition fees. Audited credits do not count toward eligibility for federal financial aid.

B.1.4 Enrollment Fee

As with all LGS students, MDP students will be assessed an Enrollment Fee each semester.

B.1.5 Mental Health and Counseling Fee

All Emory students must pay 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 must pay a one-time transcript fee of \$70 when 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 [Records and Transcripts](#) page on the Office of the Registrar's website.

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 U.S.-domiciled plan. New students wishing to waive enrollment in the EUSHIP Plan must complete the annual waiver process via OPUS before the first day of classes of their first semester at Emory. All returning students must also complete the enrollment/waiver process annually before the first day of classes of the fall semester.

If a student has not [opted out](#) of the EUSHIP Plan by the date of Emory's pre-term Student Financial Services bill, the student will be billed for it. However, the student will 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, and fines incurred from the libraries or parking office. Penalties for past due accounts include 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 can be 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 Remission Scholarships

MDP offers competitive partial tuition scholarships, which are communicated upon acceptance into the program. These scholarships are awarded according to applicants' ranking in the MDP admission review. They are distributed over fall and spring semesters for each student who remains in good academic standing. Scholarships are not negotiable once students are enrolled in the MDP program but remain in place for a second year if they maintain good academic standing.

MDP partial 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 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

The MDP program provides funding to students participating in approved Summer Field Practicums (international or U.S.-based) in accordance with 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 that may be incurred in Atlanta (e.g. rent) while they are engaging in an international field practicum.

If a student's host organization covers some or all expenses or provides students with compensation for their work during the practicum, the MDP funding will be adjusted accordingly.

For details, students should review the MDP Field Practicum Manual located in the [MDP Student Hub](#).

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.

Regarding student use of Artificial Intelligence for completing coursework assignments and other degree-related work, please refer to this [LGS Policy](#).

C.2 GENERAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Students with a grievance related to the MDP program should submit a letter to the DGS, describing the grievance and relevant details. If the grievance involves the DGS, the student should report it directly to the MDP Director. If the grievance involves the MDP Director, the student should go directly to the LGS personnel designated in the [LGS Handbook](#).

Grievances will first be addressed by the DGS, who try to resolve the grievance in conversation with student and relevant parties. If this is not successful, the MDP Director will form a committee with two additional Emory faculty and/or staff who will review the grievance and propose an appropriate response.

If it is impossible to resolve the grievance within this committee, the MDP Director will forward the grievance to the appropriate LGS personnel. From that point forward, the grievance will be handled according to the Grievance Procedure outlined in the [LGS Handbook](#).

D. BECOMING A DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

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

Students' academic records, concentration choices, and practical learning experiences are important factors in securing rewarding and meaningful employment after graduation. Students should consult with the DGS and/or the MDP Director early in their graduate studies for advice on how to plan their studies and practicum experiences in ways that will result in a coherent professional profile.