

ADULT LEARNING, MASTER OF ARTS

The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Adult Learning is a program designed for students interested in adult learning, education and training, including learning in education, business, government, unions, and not-for-profit organizations. Students in the program engage in studies related to learning in organizations, online learning, adults in higher education, higher education and student affairs, adult literacy, and adult learning for social change and community engagement. This fully online program is a meld of theory and application with opportunities for students to both choose from structured online group studies to individualized studies that respond to the interests of the particular learners. Students in the program will be encouraged to reflect on their own learning, a process deepened within a collaborative community of faculty members and peers.

Student may choose from two concentrations of this 30-credit degree. The **General** concentration allows students to choose from a range of electives which should align with their area of interest. The **Higher Education Administration** concentration will require the completion of specific courses within this focus area.

Drawing on a solid foundation, students can meet individual goals and customize their degree programs to meet those needs. Therefore, students entering the program are encouraged to begin to think about a capstone project – i.e., a concrete and focused project in the field of adult learning – around which their learning goals will be formulated.

The hallmarks of the program include:

- A supportive online community with opportunities for collaboration;
- A meld of theory and application, with possibilities for internships designed by the student;
- A robust learning environment with opportunities to deepen understanding of technology mediated learning;
- Opportunities for hands-on engagement with the innovative practices of Empire State University;
- A deepening of reflection on practice and awareness of self as a learner; and
- Practice in learning design, program evaluation, and research.

Prior Learning Assessment

For students with more extensive applied experience or study in an area related to adult learning, the program allows for up to 12 credits of evaluated learning through prior learning assessment and/or transfer credit. The American Council of Education has evaluated some credit sources from organizational or military learning at the graduate level that, when applicable, can be used in a student's program. In addition, in consultation with program faculty, students can submit learning essays to be considered for graduate level prior learning assessment and credit toward their degree.

Program Delivery and Tuition Rate

While most of this program is delivered online asynchronously, some courses may have a small number of synchronous supplemental learning opportunities via webinars or virtual environments. Instructors will make an effort to schedule these activities at times that work for their students. In addition, due to the nature of some courses, students may be required to access or acquire additional software and/or hardware for some

course activities. Students will be notified of additional requirements in a course's full syllabus. This program is billed at the non-MBA rate.

Admission

Admission is selective, new students may enroll in the fall and spring terms.

Application

Please see the Graduate Admissions (<http://catalog.esc.edu/graduate/admission/>) pages of this catalog for a complete listing of materials required to complete a graduate application.

Program Curriculum

The following tables outline the required courses and suggested enrollment sequences of both the General and Higher Education Administration concentrations. The graduate fall and spring terms are 15 weeks long, and the summer terms have some offerings for eight weeks and some for 15 weeks. The exact enrollment sequence should be planned between the student and the advisor as part of degree planning¹, as not all students enroll in 6 credits every term.

The sequences below are for those students starting the program in the fall or spring terms.

Suggested Enrollment Sequences

General Concentration

The enrollment sequence for the General concentration is as follows for students enrolled in two courses per term - a typical part-time schedule. These are sample enrollment sequences only.

General Concentration - Fall Term Start

First Year		Credits
Fall		
ADLC 6005	Rethinking Experience & Learning in Adulthood	3
ADLC 6010	Learning & Development in Contemporary Adulthood	3
Credits		6
Spring		
ADLC 6015	Strategies for Effective Adult Learning	3
ADLC 6020	Approaches to Critical Inquiry & Research	3
Credits		6
Summer		
Elective 1		3
Elective 2		3
Credits		6
Second Year		
Fall		
Elective 3		3
ADLC 7010	Project Design: Adult Learning ¹	3
Credits		6
Spring		
Elective 4		3
ADLC 7015	Final Project: Adult Learning	3
Credits		6
Total Credits		30

General Concentration - Spring Term Start

First Year		Credits
Spring		
ADLC 6005	Rethinking Experience & Learning in Adulthood	3
ADLC 6010	Learning & Development in Contemporary Adulthood	3
Credits		6

Summer		
ADLC 6015	Strategies for Effective Adult Learning	3
Elective 1		3
Credits		6
Second Year		
Fall		
ADLC 6020	Approaches to Critical Inquiry & Research	3
Elective 2		3
Credits		6
Spring		
Elective 3		3
ADLC 7010	Project Design: Adult Learning	3
Credits		6
Summer		
Elective 4 (or take in Fall/3rd year with Final Project)		3
Credits		3
Third Year		
Fall		
ADLC 7015	Final Project: Adult Learning	3
Credits		3
Total Credits		30

Higher Education Administration Concentration

The enrollment sequence for the Higher Education Administration concentration is as follows for students enrolled in two courses per term - a typical part-time schedule. (Enrollment also can be for one course per term.) These are sample enrollment sequences only.

Higher Education Administration - fall Term Start

First Year		
Fall		
ADLC 6005	Rethinking Experience & Learning in Adulthood	3
ADLC 6010	Learning & Development in Contemporary Adulthood	3
Credits		6
Spring		
ADLC 6020	Approaches to Critical Inquiry & Research	3
ADLC 6034	History and Philosophy of Higher Education	3
Credits		6
Summer		
ADLC 6015	Strategies for Effective Adult Learning	3
ADLC 6032	Economics and Finance in Higher Education	3
Credits		6
Second Year		
Fall		
ADLC 6031	Administration and Leadership in Higher Education	3
ADLC 7010	Project Design: Adult Learning ¹	3
Credits		6
Spring		
Higher Education Elective		3
ADLC 7015	Final Project: Adult Learning	3
Credits		6
Total Credits		30

Higher Education Administration - Spring Term Start

First Year		
Spring		
ADLC 6005	Rethinking Experience & Learning in Adulthood	3
ADLC 6010	Learning & Development in Contemporary Adulthood	3
Credits		6
Summer		
ADLC 6015	Strategies for Effective Adult Learning	3

ADLC 6032	Economics and Finance in Higher Education	3
Credits		6
Second Year		
Fall		
ADLC 6020	Approaches to Critical Inquiry & Research	3
ADLC 6031	Administration and Leadership in Higher Education	3
Credits		6
Spring		
ADLC 6034	History and Philosophy of Higher Education	3
ADLC 7010	Project Design: Adult Learning	3
Credits		6
Summer		
Higher Education Elective		3
Credits		3
Third Year		
Fall		
ADLC 7015	Final Project: Adult Learning	3
Credits		3
Total Credits		30

¹ You must have an approved degree plan in order to take more than 21 credits. Please see the Degree Program Planning and Prior Learning Assessment section.

Electives

Students who choose the General concentration must complete 12 credits of electives and the Higher Education concentration has one 3-credit elective, devoted to their area of focus. Students may choose to take scheduled or individualized electives or courses from other graduate programs at Empire State University. They also may cross register at another college or use transfer credit to complete elective credits. Electives are available in a variety of areas including Human Resources Development, Higher Education and Social Change.

Degree Program Planning and Prior Learning Assessment

By the end of the second term, you will have developed a degree plan for the remainder of the program. The planning of individual degrees is initially grounded in a critical exploration of your experiential learning, as well as your needs as an adult learning practitioner. From the start of the program, you actively engage with your roles and responsibilities as a learner and educator, your knowledge of the field in both capacities, and your professional and social values and commitments. You will draw and build upon your initial exploration of experiential learning and the nature of inquiry in the field in crafting the degree program plan and rationale essay as a part of the fourth core course.

The rationale essay integrates prior learning and explores choices in terms of intellectual and academic development, professional needs and social purposes. It also provides an initial articulation of the final project. You will consider choices in designing the degree, given professional values, commitments and needs; optimal ways to use the range of opportunities provided by the program; opportunities for collaboration; and the expertise and methodologies needed to complete the final project.

If interested in requesting transfer credit, you will begin this discussion at the start of the program with the program coordinator. Prior learning assessment is considered with your advisor. It is important to note that the total number of transfer and PLA credits combined cannot exceed 12 credits.

If you are considering doctoral study, you also should investigate the requirements of programs that interest you so that you can incorporate their requirements into your M.A. degree.

Follow this link for the MA in Adult Learning Student Handbook, Degree Programs and Prior Learning Assessment (<https://www.sunyempire.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-degrees/education-programs/ma-adult-learning/>).

Final Project

M.A. in Adult Learning students do a final culminating experience in a two-course sequence with other students at the end of their program. In this two-course sequence, students can choose from among the following three options: a professional project; a practicum; or a policy-brief. In the final project design course (ADLC 7010) the students design a study which addresses any suitable problem within adult learning but must demonstrate the student's core skills through research, application, integrative analysis, and advocacy. The project is executed in the second term in the capstone (ADLC 7015) through the professional project, practicum or policy-brief, described below. The final project is both written and presented orally by students at the conclusion of the final project term with other students and will demonstrate the ability to investigate an adult learning problem, using many of the skills acquired throughout the program. Successful completion will demonstrate research, application, integrative analysis, advocacy, and writing and oral presentation skills. It also will show a keen awareness and understanding of the social justice issues in adult learning environments. The student will have the resources of the instructor teaching the two culminating studies and may add a consulting faculty content expert with greater familiarity of the specific study. The consulting faculty content expert will only give advice on the project and attend the oral presentation, if possible, and will not serve a role in evaluation.

Professional Project

A professional project should meet a clear need or address a problem in the student's community, school or work environment. It demonstrates practical application of theory to practice. It is based upon independent research and analysis of the various approaches to the problem, and the proposed solution. Professional projects generally can take the form of the development of a curriculum or course (with evaluative components), but also may involve a performance improvement initiative in a workplace or adult learning setting. A professional or community project should demonstrate the ability to integrate coursework with an actual professional product. It involves reading and research during the term prior to provide theoretical insights, to write a literature review, to research related projects and to provide a broader context for the work that will be done in a paper of approximately 20 pages. In the final project term students design work on the project; write a blog or journal of the activities and the insights gathered during the experience; and an analytic essay. The final project, including the literature review is approximately 30 pages.

In the project design term, the following sections are completed:

- An introduction to the project to be completed, addressing the need and proposed audience;
- A theoretical framework for the work;
- Draw upon and reference appropriate academic literature;
- Review related projects in the field;
- Lay out a project completion plan; and

- Propose an evaluation and assessment strategy, including a proposed return on the investment in the activity.

In the final project term, the following are completed:

- Complete the curriculum and professional project design;
- Test your project with faculty member, and possibly secondary advisory faculty or other students in the class;
- Write an assessment of the final project completion and recommendations for future delivery; and
- Orally present the project through PowerPoint, Prezi, video or other format in a webinar.

Practicum

A practicum must be a learning opportunity where you develop skills and practical insights related to the development, analysis, implementation or evaluation in the workplace. It involves considerable work at a specific site or in a fieldwork setting where you can try out the ideas you have developed in this program or examine their applicability to specific situations or theories. A practicum is a very effective way to expand the program knowledge and provide an exciting and challenging culminating experience. It also allows you to use your coursework and gain experience in actual field settings.

In the project design term:

- Reading and research during the term to provide theoretical insights and a broader context for the work that you will be doing. The project design paper will contain the following sections:
 - An introduction to the practicum to be completed; A theoretical framework for the work;
 - Draw upon and reference appropriate academic literature;
 - Review related environments in the field; and
 - Lay out a practicum completion plan.

In the final project term:

- Approximately 150 hours of work in the practicum during the term;
- A blog or journal of your activities and the insights gathered during the experience; and
- Some field site supervision by an appropriate professional, or observations of the nature and quality of the work that you do or the projects that you undertake during the practicum. At the end of the practicum, your field supervisor will need to provide an evaluation of the work done in the practicum.
- The final project reflection paper will include a rewrite of the sections in the project design and reflection sections including:
 - Analysis of the experience;
 - Evaluation of self-identified goals;
 - Recommendations for practice or research in the area.
 - Orally present the project through PowerPoint, Prezi, video or other format in a webinar.

Policy-Brief

Because adult education is closely intertwined with struggles for social justice/equity and change in the work environment, and because to be an effective adult educator often means advocating effectively for/with communities you work with, a final project option in the MAAL program is to focus on a policy brief. This policy brief will address a salient issue within the field of adult education.

For the policy brief, students might consider a content study which explores the building of cohesive arguments to support their positions. Students might consider advocacy or activist-based courses which will assist them in developing persuasive projects/presentations.

Once an issue is chosen to explore, students will write a 25-page policy brief for the following three audiences (all of whom may have differing levels of knowledge about the topic):

- Public policy makers who currently (or possibly might in the future) set policy and funding for such adult education programs in N.Y., the state of the student and or nationally. For HRD students the brief would explore the benefits, what might be done, what's been done to the highest levels of the organization.
- Private-sector funders who currently (or possibly might in the future) provide funding to adult education programs in N.Y., states and nationally. (These private-sector funders can include foundations, corporate giving offices, or individual donors.) For HRD students this section of the brief would be directed at the potential financial supporters of the issue you are addressing.
- Current and potential advocates for adult education (i.e., the general public, community and ethnic organizations, social service providers, labor organizations, business groups, etc. who should have a stake in adult education in N.Y./nationally and who could benefit from having well-researched and well-presented "ammunition" when making the case for investment in the field). For HRD students this would address potential advocates and collaborators in the organization.

In the project design term, the student writes the following three sections as research background for the policy brief.

- A definition of the issue – Why is it important/a salient issue and to whom?
- What has been done about the issue so far – Nationally, in your state or in similar companies or organizations.
- Results of these efforts to date – In this section students define why investing in this is important for the adult education field and for the organization or society as a whole.
- A proposed timeline for collecting material for the brief.

In the final project term, the student writes the final three sections and prepares an oral presentation for the intended audience on the brief.

- How increased investment should be targeted. Further research be done, pilot projects be established, an office be created somewhere to work on this further, professional development opportunities be created.
- A proposal for financing and considering the return on investment.
- Methodology and sources: In a brief Appendix, state where the information came from for the brief, how the information was gained such as through literature review, interviews.

An Oral Presentation – Done on presentation software such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or video, the student prepares a 10-minute oral brief that will be presented to classmates.

Upon successful completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Participate in the public discourse of adult and higher education as writers, speakers, and producers of digital information, the ability to explore adult learning through multiple conceptual lenses, the ability to define problems, ask questions, and find appropriate

methods of problem-solving and research in their scholarly inquiry and professional practice;

- Develop the skills of critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation and of informed and effective communication;
- Enhance practices as critically reflective practitioners, developing habits of reflective practice and recursive learning, habits of intentional and ethical practice, awareness of themselves as social actors in their capacities of learners and educators;
- Enhance skills in designing, developing, and deploying effective and innovative learning environments and learner supports for adult and higher education audiences with attention to learner needs, respect for the diversity of social and personal experience, and effective program administration;
- Recognize and address the ways in which disparate knowledge claims and discourses intersect with power relationships, including building an awareness of multiple paradigms concerning participation, leadership, service, advocacy, and social and intellectual critique; and
- Enhance abilities to work collaboratively with others with differing perspectives and ways of knowing, will gain an appreciation for multiple sources of learning and develop critical perspectives on adult education, including both academic and field-based practices.