

Application Timeline & Program Status

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Sul Ross State University

Current Program Status

The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership has completed Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) approval and is pending final approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

THECB Approval: Granted January 22, 2026

SACSCOC Review: Decision expected June 2026

Anticipated Program Start: Fall 2026

Sul Ross State University is committed to the successful launch of this program and will communicate all relevant updates to prospective candidates in a timely manner.

Application Timeline

Application Window Opens: February 2026

The ApplyTexas application portal opened in February 2026 for the inaugural cohort. Prospective students who submitted an Expression of Interest were notified when applications became available.

Application Deadline: May 9, 2026

While applications will be accepted after this date if space remains available, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit complete applications by May 9, 2026 to ensure full consideration for the inaugural cohort.

Application Review Period: May 10 – June 6, 2026

The Ed.D. Program Admissions Committee will conduct holistic review of all complete applications. Some applicants may be invited for virtual interviews during this period.

Cohort Announcement: Prior to June 15, 2026

The slate containing the names of the first cohort will be announced to those selected prior to June 15. Admission decisions will be communicated approximately 4–6 weeks after the application deadline. Admitted students will receive information about enrollment procedures, program orientation, and next steps.

Enrollment Confirmation Period: June 15 – July 21, 2026

Admitted students confirm their intent to enroll and complete necessary registration processes. The program director and faculty will be available for consultation during this period to answer questions and support the transition to doctoral study.

Program Orientation: August 2026

Prior to the start of Fall 2026 coursework, admitted students participate in a comprehensive orientation covering program expectations, improvement science foundations, technology requirements, and cohort community building.

Program Start: Fall 2026

The inaugural cohort begins coursework in Fall 2026 with Semester 1 courses: The Science of Change and Improvement and Trends in Rural and Borderland Community Contexts.

Key Dates at a Glance

Milestone	Date
THECB Approval	January 22, 2026
Application Deadline	May 9, 2026
Cohort Announcement	June 15, 2026
Enrollment Confirmation Period	June 15 – July 21, 2026
Program Orientation	August 2026
Program Start	Fall 2026

Admission Requirements Summary

To be eligible for admission, applicants must:

- Hold a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution (minimum 3.0 GPA)
- Possess Texas Principal or Principal as Instructional Leader Certificate
- Demonstrate minimum three years of leadership experience
- Be employed in a leadership role with authority to lead change initiatives and access to organizational data
- Submit complete application materials including letter of introduction, video presentation, letters of recommendation, and employer support verification

Full admission requirements and application materials are detailed in the Admissions Requirements & Process document.

What to Do Now

Submit an Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest form allows you to receive notification of application deadlines, learn about information sessions and webinars, and connect with the program director for questions. Submitting an Expression of Interest creates no obligation.

Expression of Interest Form: [Submit Here](#)

Prepare Your Application Materials

You can begin preparing materials now:

- Letter of Introduction: Draft your 3–5 page statement addressing your professional background, Problem of Practice, motivation for doctoral study, and program alignment
- Video Presentation: Plan and record your 5–7 minute video introducing yourself, your problem of practice, and your goals
- Letters of Recommendation: Identify and contact two recommenders who can speak to your leadership ability and readiness for doctoral work
- Employer Support Letter: Request written verification from your supervisor confirming your leadership authority, data access, and organizational support
- Transcripts: Request official transcripts from all institutions where you completed graduate work
- Texas Principal Certificate: Ensure your certificate is current and have a copy ready to submit
- Professional Materials: Update your résumé or CV and gather any evidence of leadership impact you wish to include

Connect With the Program Director

Dr. John Decman is available to discuss the program with prospective students and answer questions about program alignment with your professional goals, your preliminary Problem of Practice, application materials and requirements, and the cohort model and program expectations.

Contact: Dr. John Decman

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Frequently Asked Questions

What if SACSCOC approval is delayed beyond June 2026?

Sul Ross State University will adjust the program start timeline accordingly and communicate any changes immediately to prospective candidates. The university is committed to launching this program and will work with admitted students to ensure a smooth transition regardless of timeline adjustments.

What if I miss the May 9 deadline?

Applications submitted after May 9, 2026 will be considered on a space-available basis. However, late applications may have less time for enrollment preparation and may not receive priority consideration.

Will there be information sessions before applications are due?

Yes. The program will host virtual information sessions in Spring 2026. Details will be communicated to those who submit Expression of Interest forms.

How competitive is admission?

The inaugural cohort is limited to 15 students. Admission is competitive and holistic, considering professional experience, academic preparation, mission alignment, and potential contribution to the cohort learning community.

I hold an out-of-state principal certificate. Am I eligible?

The program requires Texas Principal or Principal as Instructional Leader Certification. Applicants with out-of-state credentials should contact the program director to discuss eligibility and potential pathways to Texas certification.

Can I apply if I'm not currently a principal?

Yes. Applicants must hold Texas Principal Certification and have minimum three years of leadership experience, but current employment as a principal is not required. Many admitted students serve in district-level, higher education, or other leadership roles.

Questions About Timeline or Program Status?

Dr. John Decman, Program Director

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