



**Human Dimensions of Organizations (HDO)
Master of Arts Program (Option III)
Graduate Student Handbook**

2023-2024

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
Program Contacts	3
OVERVIEW.....	3
CURRICULUM AND REQUIREMENTS	4
Coursework Requirements.....	4
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	5
Academic Advising.....	5
Registration Procedures.....	5
Grading	5
Incomplete Grades	6
Outside Courses.....	6
Transfer of Credit.....	6
Adding/Dropping a Course.....	6
Withdrawing from the University.....	6
Leaves of Absence	7
Grievances	7
Minimum and Maximum Course Load	7
Time Limits.....	7
Student Evaluations.....	7
Warning Status and Academic Dismissal.....	7
FUNDING.....	8
Financial Aid.....	8
Veteran Education Benefits.....	8
Student Employment	8
ADMINISTRATIVE BASICS	8
Student Responsibilities.....	8
Academic Integrity.....	9
Attendance and Participation.....	9
Managing Coursework and Class Deadlines	10
Professionalism and Conduct	10
Capstone Completion Extensions	11
Communication	11

Class Logistics12

Course Materials12

Career Services12

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Human Dimensions of Organizations (HDO) Master of Arts program at The University of Texas at Austin. HDO faculty and staff are committed to helping you achieve your educational and professional goals in a positive, supportive atmosphere.

The student handbook is designed to introduce HDO graduate students to the requirements, policies, procedures, and deadlines of the HDO Master’s program and The University of Texas at Austin (UT) Graduate School. This information supplements the policies included in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and posted on the Graduate School’s [website](#).

Program Contacts

- Program Director: Mary Rose (mrose@austin.utexas.edu)
- Assistant Director: Lewis Miller (lewismiller@utexas.edu)
- Graduate Adviser: Dr. Clay Spinuzzi (clay.spinuzzi@utexas.edu)
- Academic Program Coordinator: Rolee Rios (rrios@austin.utexas.edu)

OVERVIEW

HDO is an Option III degree program. This means it is designed for students pursuing a terminal master's degree. HDO is an innovative program offering professionals from the business, government, and nonprofit sectors the knowledge and skills they need to make their organizations more effective, creative, and efficient. HDO courses are led by UT Austin’s top faculty and cover topics such as leadership, communication, ethics, change management, and decision-making.

As an Option III program, the HDO M.A. is a self-funded program. That is, courses and programmatic activities are not supported through state funds. This places some restrictions on M.A. program participants, as noted throughout this handbook. For additional details on the nature of Option III programs, please see the Graduate School’s [Revised Guidelines for Option III Degree Programs](#).

The Graduate School: As a graduate applicant is admitted to The University, the person becomes enrolled in the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin. All graduate degrees are the responsibility of the Graduate School.

[The Graduate School](#) includes the Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School and staff, plus approximately 100 Graduate Studies Committees. Each department or field of study offering a graduate degree has a Graduate Studies Committee composed of active assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors (tenured and tenure-track faculty). Each Graduate Studies Committee sets policy and supervises its graduate program.

Approximately 30 faculty members from various Graduate Studies Committees, plus six graduate students, serve as representatives in the Graduate Assembly, the legislative body of the Graduate

School. There is also a student organization concerned with issues related to graduate study, called the [Graduate Student Assembly \(GSA\)](#). Any graduate student is welcome as a member.

CURRICULUM AND REQUIREMENTS

The M.A. HDO degree is offered on a coursework only basis. The curriculum was developed to provide working professionals with a comprehensive understanding of human behavior and experience as it relates to today's global marketplace. To deepen students' understanding of these principles, HDO courses also focus on conceptualizing and implementing organizational change.

Coursework Requirements

The program requires completion of 36 semester hours of coursework spread across four consecutive semesters. All courses are required and taken in prescribed sequence.

This "Program of Work" consists of:

Fall I Semester (11-credit hours):

HDO 381: Individual Perspective on the Human Dimensions of Organizations

HDO 383: Society, Culture, and Diversity

HDO 390: Qualitative Research in Organizations

HDO 285: Organizational Ethics

Spring Semester (11-credit hours):

HDO 382: Approaches to Leadership

HDO 391: Quantitative Research in Organizations

HDO 384: Organizational Inertia, Decision Making, and Change

HDO 289: Writing and Researching Organizations

Summer Semester (8-credit hours):

HDO 380: Cultural Perspectives on the Human Dimensions of Organizations

HDO 386: Persuasion and Argumentation

HDO 287: The Structure of Organizations

Fall II Semester (6-credit hours):

HDO 695: Capstone Project

HDO students' final semester is dedicated to completing a [Capstone Project](#), which will consist of both a visual presentation and a written report.

Additional Requirements: A mandatory orientation session (Intensive Week) begins the first fall semester. During this time, new students will be introduced to UT Austin's campus, meet HDO faculty, staff, and advisors, and discuss the details of the program's academic requirements. Students will also begin their coursework during this period. Similar Intensive Weeks are held at the start of the following spring and summer semesters.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Advising

Advising and assistance are provided to students in the HDO program through a combination of resources including the Graduate Adviser, the Academic Program Coordinator, and the Director. The student is responsible for seeking advice, knowing and meeting the requirements of the degree program of his or her interest, enrolling in courses appropriate to that degree program, and for taking courses in the proper sequence to ensure orderly and timely progress toward the degree.

Students are assigned a **Capstone Advisors** in their first semester. Students may change advisors later in the program. Students interested in doing so should contact the HDO Program Director. Once a new advisor has been selected, the student should send an email update and include the new advisor, outgoing advisor, HDO Director, and the HDO Academic Program Coordinator.

Registration Procedures

Per university policy, students in the HDO M.A. program are not permitted to register themselves for classes. Course registration is facilitated by the Academic Program Coordinator. Thus, it is important that students respond to any registration-related correspondence from the program regarding registration for an upcoming semester. Students are responsible for clearing any registration bars by the given deadlines.

Grading

Students must earn a grade of at least a C in all courses. If a student received a C- in a course they will have to re-take the course. Note: due to the class schedule, the course will have to be retaken when it is offered again the following academic year.

Courses counting towards the M.A. Program of Work must be taken on a letter grade basis. Additional courses taken on a credit/no credit (C/NC) basis do not count towards the Program of Work, nor do they count towards the student's cumulative grade point average.

Candidates for the master's degree must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 in courses included on the Program of Work. Per University policy, any graduate student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 at the end of any semester will be placed on scholastic warning status and must bring their cumulative GPA to at least 3.00 during the next semester or be subject to dismissal from the program.

Official grade point averages are calculated by the registrar and appear on the student's academic record maintained by the registrar. The following numerical equivalents of letter grades are used in the calculation of the graduate grade point average:

A 4.00
A- 3.67
B+ 3.33
B 3.00
B- 2.67
C+ 2.33
C 2.00
C- 1.67
D+ 1.33
D 1.00
D- 0.67

F 0.00

Incomplete Grades

If a student does not complete all the assignments in a course before the end of the course, the instructor may report work incomplete (X) to the Office of the Registrar in place of a grade.

The student must then complete the course requirements by the last class day in their next long-session semester of enrollment. If this deadline is not met, the symbol X is converted to the symbol I (permanent incomplete), noted on the student's transcript. A course in which the student receives an incomplete grade will not affect the student's GPA, but may not be applied toward a degree.

Outside Courses

As students in an Option III program, HDO graduate students are not able to register for courses outside the HDO curriculum.

Transfer of Credit

The HDO M.A. program does not accept transfer credits from other institutions.

Adding/Dropping a Course

Students can add a course through the 12th class day of a long semester (4th class day during summer sessions). Instructor consent is sometimes required to add a class after the 4th class day of any long semester in cases when the student has not been attending the class. After the 12th or 4th class day registration deadline, students may not add a course, except for rare and extenuating circumstances which must be approved by the Graduate Dean. Requests to add a course under these circumstances require a letter of petition from the Graduate Adviser to the Graduate Dean and a completed Add/Drop form with all required signatures. This form may be obtained from the Academic Program Coordinator.

Classes dropped between the 20th day (10th day of a summer session) and the last day of the semester require the instructor's signature in addition to approval of the Graduate Adviser and Graduate Dean. The instructor will determine whether the student shall receive a Q or an F on his/her transcript for the course. Courses assigned a Q will not be included in the student's GPA. Students will still be billed for this course.

For more information, please see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/adding-and-dropping-courses>.

Withdrawing from the University

Dropping an entire course load constitutes withdrawal from the University for that semester. To withdraw from the Graduate School, the student must file a Withdrawal and Refund Request form with the Dean of the Graduate School. This form may be obtained from the Graduate School in Main 101. When a student is unable to complete a withdrawal on campus, please contact the Graduate School at 512-471-4511. All requests for withdrawal must be accompanied by an acknowledgement from the student's graduate advisor. A student may withdraw through the last class day of the semester. For more information, please see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/withdrawals>.

Note, because HDO courses are pre-scheduled, a student who leaves one semester may not return until those courses are taught again. Often, this timeframe is one academic year. This will likely affect the student's graduation date.

Leaves of Absence

While in most cases participation in the program is continuous, students sometimes find it necessary to take a temporary Leave of Absence (LOA) from the university. A student may apply for a leave of absence of no more than two long semesters. A student on an approved LOA may not use any university facilities nor is the student entitled to receive advice from any member of the faculty. A student on leave must apply for readmission in order to return to the University, but readmission during this approved period is automatic and the application fee is waived. Note, a leave of absence MUST be submitted to the Graduate School PRIOR to the first-class day of the requested semester. The Graduate School has final approval regarding leave requests. For more information, please see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/leaves-of-absence>.

Students who did not secure a LOA for their time away from the University will be assessed an application fee for re-admission. Students are also required to petition the Graduate Studies Committee for re-admission to the graduate program.

Grievances

Graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin have the right to seek redress of any grievance related to academic or nonacademic matters. Every effort should be made to resolve grievances informally between the student and the faculty member involved or with the assistance of the Graduate Adviser or Program Director. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, students have recourse to formal grievance procedures through the Graduate School. For more information, please see <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/grievances>.

If you have concerns that you feel were inadequately addressed within the department, students may also contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) at utombuds@austin.utexas.edu. The ombudsman can assist with a range of issues by offering neutral advice, providing mediation, and conducting an impartial investigation of concerns.

Minimum and Maximum Course Load

In accordance with Graduate School policy, a student is considered full-time if he or she is enrolled in 9 semester hours during a long semester or 3 hours during a summer session.

Time Limits

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within one six-year period. Work over six years can be reinstated only by special permission of the Graduate Dean, upon recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Student Evaluations

Students receive a progress report following each long academic semester to assess whether they are making adequate progress to degree. The progress report will indicate any concerns or requirements the student must meet in order to remain in good academic standing. The progress of individual students, particularly if conditions have been imposed for their continued participation in the program, may be reviewed by the HDO Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) more frequently.

Warning Status and Academic Dismissal

A student who fails to meet admission conditions may be subject to dismissal. The standard Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) admission conditions may be found [here](#). The conditions state that a student must: make satisfactory progress in fulfilling any conditional admission conditions that were imposed; meet any requirements made in writing by your Graduate Studies Committee; maintain a

grade point average of at least 3.0; and have approval of the Graduate Studies Committee.

The student must be making satisfactory progress toward a degree as determined by HDO's GSC. If the GSC determines that a student is not making satisfactory progress, it may recommend that the student's program be terminated. Please note that a student with a grade point average below 3.0 at the end of any semester will receive a warning letter from the Graduate School and must bring their cumulative graduate grade point average up to at least 3.0 by the end of the following semester in which the student is enrolled. Students under OGS warning must have approval of the graduate dean to drop any courses in the warning semester.

FUNDING

Financial Aid

HDO does not provide direct financial assistance to students. Information about financial aid for U.S. students is available through the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA). This office has contact information for federal financial aid lenders, as well as information regarding the various resources available for graduate students to fund their studies. <https://finaid.utexas.edu/>

Questions about financial aid disbursements or funds received from the federal aid program should be directed to the OSFA at ask@finaid.utexas.edu. Please note: HDO staff cannot access a student's financial aid account status. Students must contact OSFA directly for all financial aid-related questions.

Veteran Education Benefits

Eligible students can receive eligible Veteran Education Benefits through the Office of the Registrar at The University. Students utilizing benefits should contact the Registrar's Veteran Certification Team, <https://onestop.utexas.edu/managing-costs/veteran-education-benefits/>. Staff can assist veterans and their dependents understand and apply for Veteran Education Benefits.

Students should also be in contact with Student Veteran Services at the Office of the Dean of Students, <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/veterans/index.php>.

Please note, the Hinson-Hazelwood benefits are not available for students enrolled in HDO because the program is self-supporting and does not receive state funding. HDO does, however, honor the spirit of the Hazelwood Act via reduced program fees. Please contact HDO for more information.

Student Employment

As students in an Option III program, HDO M.A. students are not eligible for positions classified as "academic employment," including TA, AI, GRA, AA, or A(G) appointments. Students are eligible for "non-academic employment," which includes positions in the library and other places on campus. Look on the [Non-Academic employment](#) page to find links to the jobs database, [Handshake](#), and other resources.

ADMINISTRATIVE BASICS

Student Responsibilities

HDO M.A. students are responsible for knowing and satisfying program degree requirements, meeting administrative and academic deadlines, seeking academic advice when needed, and

enrolling in appropriate courses to ensure progress toward degree completion.

There are two essential University references: [The General Information Bulletin](#) and [The Graduate Catalog](#). Students must know and abide by the academic and disciplinary policies given in these publications, including rules governing quantity of work, the standard of work required to continue at The University, warning status and scholastic dismissal, and enforced withdrawal

HDO faculty and staff are eager to advise and help, but students are ultimately responsible for the academic responsibilities of their own education.

Academic Integrity

The University has a set of core values:

“The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.”

<https://www.utexas.edu/about/mission-and-values>

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin, as emphasized in the standards of conduct. More specifically, you and other students are expected to “maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work” undertaken at the university (Sec. 11-801, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities). This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University’s Honor Code and standards for conduct.

<https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsofconduct.php>

At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to: acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts; complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them; follow instructions for assignments and exams; and observe the standards of your academic discipline. Avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

Using artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard) to complete “academic work in a manner not allowed by the instructor” constitutes a prohibited use of AI tools (see: <https://security.utexas.edu/ai-tools>). HDO students should assume that these tools are not allowed *unless students receive explicit authorization from an instructor to use them*.

HDO students who undermine the University’s academic standards by plagiarizing, colluding, or otherwise breaking the above rules face the possibility of dismissal from the program.

For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is expected for all class meetings, including all intensive weeks. Students should ensure that they are aware of each faculty member’s attendance and participation policies, including what academic penalties accrue for failing to attend or for not adequately participating. Class participation requires active engagement and readiness to contribute to discussion or activities for the duration of all scheduled class meetings. Leaving class meetings substantially early or arriving substantially late may count as absences.

When participation is remote, students are required to have their video on during class meetings, (exceptions include when students need to take short breaks and when the class is officially on break).

In the event that students know they will not be able to attend an upcoming class meeting, it is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty course leader(s) in advance to provide a notice of the absence and, if applicable, to arrange to submit any assignments early or to determine an agreed-upon timeframe for submitting assignments after the due date. (See section below on managing coursework.)

If the reason or reasons for an absence (planned or unplanned) will require missing more than one class meeting, please contact HDO staff in addition to faculty to discuss your situation. Multiple absences make it very difficult for students to stay current on class content and assignments. In certain instances, these unique situations could lead to a temporary leave from the program.

If you are not a designated distance learner and circumstances require that you begin attending classes via distance learning, please contact faculty and HDO staff as soon as possible so that all personnel know what to expect for upcoming class sessions.

Managing Coursework and Class Deadlines

Assignments are due on the date listed on the syllabus or in Canvas.

If students know they will not be able to attend an upcoming class meeting, it is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty course leader(s) in advance and arrange to submit any assignments early or to determine an agreed-upon timeframe for submitting assignments after the due date. Faculty policies on late submissions vary, so in some circumstances, an early turn-in may be required instead of a late extension.

In the event of an unexpected or unplanned delay in turning in work, it is the student's responsibility to contact the faculty course leader(s) as soon as possible to determine the best manner in which to make up missed assignments and content. Be aware of course-specific syllabus policies, as not all faculty accept late work when there has not been a prior discussion.

Professionalism and Conduct

As a graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin, you are bound by the university's Code of Conduct: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsconduct.php>

HDO students come to the program with unique professional backgrounds and experiences. Class discussions enhance overall learning by providing the opportunity for students to learn from their peers and to hear differing perspectives on a wide range of topics. Opportunities such as these are only possible when discussions are conducted professionally and reflect openness and respect.

The following expectations apply to all in-class and online group discussions:

- Comments made should be "on topic" in light of the overall discussion.
- Each speaker should have the opportunity to complete statements before another participant shares his or her perspective.
- As a cohort-based program, we strive for all students to succeed; even when comments are critical, they should be constructive and learning-centered. This applies to both in-class discussions and any discussion-board postings.

- Learning material may involve periods of feeling uncomfortable or challenged. All students can expect to make mistakes, speak unartfully, or even unwittingly offend another as they test out ideas. Learning is most effective when all students treat each other with respect and approach discussion with a spirit of generosity and humility aimed at understanding one another's perspective.
- Personal attacks, threatening or discriminatory language, and disruptive behavior are unacceptable. Should these behaviors rise to the level of creating a hostile environment, be deemed threatening, to have disrupted teaching or learning, or involve sexual misconduct, students will be referred to Student Judicial Services for appropriate disposition (for definitions and details on procedures, see Chapter 11 of the General Information Catalog: <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/>).

Please note that expectations of professionalism and appropriate conduct also extend to students' interactions with HDO and UT staff and to the many people who support the HDO program (e.g., Advisory Board members).

Students are encouraged to bring any concerns about behavior or discussions to one another, to the attention of a faculty member, or to the program director.

Capstone Completion Extensions

Students complete a capstone project (including an academic report and a poster/visual representation of research) during their final semester of the program. The program has formal, posted deadlines for first complete drafts, final drafts, and poster content. Each student is required to work with their advisor to establish a reasonable timeline to meet program deadlines and any faculty-specific benchmarks.

In the event that a student does not expect to complete his or her final capstone project and poster on time, it is the student's responsibility to contact HDO staff to discuss their options. An extension into a future semester may be granted. *Extensions will incur an additional fee and will likely mean that the student is ineligible to participate in planned graduation activities with their original cohort.* In this event, the student will be allowed (and encouraged) to participate in graduation activities with the next immediate cohort.

Communication

E-mail is the official form of communication at UT Austin. The University's email policy may be viewed [here](#). The University views email as "a mechanism for official University communications to students."

Students are required to provide HDO and The University with current and accurate contact information at all times, including e-mail address, local and permanent physical addresses, and telephone numbers. If your contact information changes during your enrollment, please update your [UT Direct profile](#).

Please notify the HDO Academic Program Coordinator by email if/when you update your information with the university so that we can update the program's internal records, including the current HDO graduate student listserv. This listserv is used for official correspondence from the HDO program; it is not something you can opt out.

HDO considers its listservs to be extensions of the email system. Listservs are used for student

discussion on courses as well as for administrative notifications and reminders (faculty are not on the student listserv). Information on UT's listserv system (UT Lists) is available [here](#). All students will be automatically subscribed to the listserv for their class year and are expected to remain subscribed for the duration of their HDO education.

Class Logistics

HDO courses are held at the HDO office located on the third floor (3.100) in the [IC2 building](#). To access the building after hours and on weekends, students must use their UT student ID card, which will be activated for this purpose after registration.

Classes meet every two weeks on Friday evening and Saturday.

The HDO Program does not run on the typical UT Austin schedule. As a result, there will be times when students will attend class although they have not been officially enrolled in the courses. Therefore, university databases might not be ready to accept and/or process data when HDO classes begin, which could complicate using some university resources such as the Library and Canvas system. Additionally, facilities such as the campus computer store, recreational center and health services center (including insurance) might not be accessible until the official start date of each semester.

Course Materials

HDO provides all textbooks and related course materials. The costs for all materials are included in the program fees. If a student drops/withdraws, they must return all textbooks and other materials from that semester. Failure to do so will result in the student being charged for these items. All students are provided with one copy of all course materials. If issued items are lost, it is the student's responsibility to replace materials at their own expense.

Career Services

[Texas Career Engagement](#) (TCE) assists students in connecting with the many resources available at The University to discover career options, develop professional skills, connect with employers for employment, and more.

[Liberal Arts Career Services](#) (LACS) also provides resources to currently enrolled Liberal Arts graduate students. Mock interviews may also be arranged through LACS. Whether your goal is advancement within your current organization or moving on to a new job, these sessions will help you determine the best way to move forward after completing your HDO education.