



Master of Educational Leadership Program

Program Manual

Jack H. Skirball Campus

Los Angeles, CA

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Introduction

The Master of Educational Leadership Program Manual supplements the HUC-JIR Academic Catalogue, which contains all policies and procedures that apply to students in all the academic programs of the College-Institute, as well as the HUC-JIR National Student Handbook. Both documents can be found on the National Registrar page of the HUC-JIR [website](#).

This Manual contains policies and procedures that effect students enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership (MEdL) programs of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education. All procedures, policies and their related documents are stored and can be referenced on the [MEdL Canvas site](#).

The Director of the Master of Educational Leadership Program and the National Director of the School of Education are charged with overseeing these policies and procedures, in coordination with the HUC-JIR Registrar and Provost. The student body and faculty will receive electronic notification of any changes to this Manual. Questions regarding the policies and procedures in this Manual should be addressed to the Director of the Master of Educational Leadership Program or the National Director of the School of Education.

HUC-JIR Mission Statement

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) is North America's premier institution of Jewish higher education and the center for professional leadership development of Reform Judaism. A multi-campus academic and spiritual learning community, HUC-JIR builds vibrant progressive Judaism in North America, Israel and around the globe by:

- Studying the great issues of Jewish life, history and thought with an open, egalitarian, inclusive and pluralistic spirit.
- Educating innovative, visionary clergy and professionals who embody the sustaining values, responsibilities, practices, and texts of Jewish tradition to inspire future generations; and
- Advancing the critical study of Judaism and Jewish culture in accordance with the highest standards of modern academic scholarship.

RHSOE Vision and Mission

Jewish education has long been valued as a tool for cultural preservation and continuity; but we believe that Jewish education is poised to achieve so much more. We envision a Jewish educational enterprise that provides learners with the trove of resources, analytical tools, curiosity, and commitments to lead the creative adaptation and cultural disruption that enables each new generation in history to reinvigorate Judaism and Jewish life. HUC-JIR's School of Education is guided by a vision of Jewish education

that faces not only inward to enrich our own community, but outward: engaging the world, informing society, and transforming the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

We aim to cultivate Jewish educators who can create the conditions for inspired, substantive, connected Jewish learning experiences; who can guide their learners to weave distinctively Jewish wisdom into creative thinking that enriches people's lives; who, through their work, strengthen humanity and uplift society. Our mission is to prepare professional Jewish educational leaders and educators who:

- Possess the skills, depth of knowledge, and relationships to be forward-thinking agents of change in the broad landscape of Jewish learning and engagement.
- Design, create, lead, and teach in institutions, communities, and programs that make Judaism accessible, inspiring, and meaningful for all; to enrich the lives of individuals, and strengthen their families, communities, and society.
- Apply vision, passion, creative thinking, and practical expertise to their work.
- Lead, manage, and educate courageously in a time of uncertainty, instability, and opportunity.

Master of Educational Leadership

The RHSOE Master of Educational Leadership (MEdL) degree program aims to bridge the needs of today's students with graduate studies that will most effectively prepare change-makers and meaning-makers for the field of Jewish education. The centerpiece of the degree is a two-year paid part-time (20-25 hours per week) graduate residency in selected Jewish educational institutions which function as living laboratories enabling students to gain meaningful leadership experience while experimenting with intrapreneurial educational design and change management. In these learning laboratories, our graduate residents:

- cultivate dispositions, mindsets, and practices of Jewish educational leadership
- apply their graduate studies directly to institutions that are open to new and sophisticated thinking
- bring Jewish content, ideas, inspiration, and practices to life with a variety of age groups
- develop the muscles of educational decision-making, negotiating change, and building relationships that are at the heart of effective educational leadership
- see the results of their authentic contributions to these institutions and feel the satisfaction of doing valuable work in Jewish education.

8 Dispositions of a Jewish Educational Leader

- Relationship Building
- Self-Awareness
- Learning Centered Design
- Reflection
- Vision Driven
- Inquiry Stance
- Managing Dilemmas
- Holy Work

The MEdL program has two tracks:

- Single degree (2 years) Master of Educational Leadership
- Dual degree (3 years, includes the HUC-JIR Year in Israel and, combined with 13 credits stateside, earns “Master of Arts in Jewish Learning”)

Academic Course of Study: Master of Educational Leadership

The academic course of study for all students weaves together five strands of expertise:

- Teaching and Learning (9.5 credits)
- Aims and Aspirations of Jewish Education (4.5 credits)
- Leadership (12.5 credits)
- Labs in Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Jewish Education (Teaching of Specific Content Areas) (4.5 credits)
- Capstone Seminar (2.5)

Each curricular strand develops and deepens in sophistication over the two years from an introductory orientation to a leadership stance. The progression of the strands, and the relationship between them, are also designed to be in direct conversation with the work of the students in the field, guiding them in becoming analytical, adaptive, relational educational leaders.

Students are also required to take a total of 15 credits in Judaic Content (see below).

Total Credits: 48.5

For a detailed description of the course of study and course descriptions, refer to the [HUC-JIR Academic Catalogue](#).

Academic Course of Study: MA in Jewish Learning

Students who complete the HUC-JIR Year in Israel (YII) program and immerse in a more extensive exploration of Jewish language, land, literature, and liturgy, within an educational analytical framework that explores how people learn about these subjects in Jewish contexts may earn an additional degree, a Master of Arts in Jewish Learning (MAJL).

The MAJL degree may only be earned in conjunction with the Master of Educational Leadership, as it builds on the foundation of the MEdL. With the foundation of the Year in Israel course of study, students in this track are eligible to take Judaic studies courses that are offered in the rabbinic program and will be required to have a Judaic text, history, Israel, or language component in their capstone portfolio.

Rabbinic and Cantorial students are eligible for the MA in Jewish Learning as the YII coursework applies toward their ordination requirements.

Academic course requirements for this degree are:

- Year in Israel courses
- 2 additional Pedagogic Content Knowledge in Jewish Education electives beyond the MEdL requirements (3 credits)
- Judaic and/or Hebrew courses given in the Rabbinical School (6 credits) double-count for MEdL
- Teaching and Learning (4 credits) double-count for MEdL

Total Credits: 31 credits

Judaic Content Requirements

All MEdL students are required to take a total of 15 credits of Judaica courses. Courses to be taken will be determined in consultation with the Director of the Master of Educational Leadership Program and are dependent upon the student's knowledge of Hebrew and previous exposure to Jewish text study, as well as at the program director's and/or instructor's discretion. Students may be able to select from courses offered on campus, across campuses, or in the EMA program. Students who complete the YII OR can demonstrate the requisite proficiency for entry will be eligible to take elective courses offered in the rabbinical program. In some cases, students may be asked to complete an assessment to determine eligibility for certain courses. The flexibility of the course of study is intended to give students the opportunity to deepen expertise in a subject area of interest that can serve their particular career goals. We recommend that students take a balance of Judaica courses that could include:

- 2 Biblical Literature
- 1 Rabbinic Literature
- 1 Thought
- 1 History: Modern or American

Academic Course of Study for Clergy-Education Students

Rabbinical and cantorial students who are admitted to the Master of Educational Leadership program complete the degree in a one-year version of the program on the Los Angeles campus in residence at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education.

Required EDU Courses for Clergy-Ed Students

The academic course of study for all students weaves together five strands of expertise:

- Teaching and Learning (8.25 credits)
- Aims and Aspirations of Jewish Education (4.5 credits)
- Leadership (13.5 credits)
- Labs in Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Jewish Education (Teaching of Specific Content Areas) (3 credits)
- Capstone Seminar (2.5)

Total Credits: 31.75 credits

For a detailed description of the course of study and course descriptions, refer to the [HUC-JIR Academic Catalogue](#).

Specific Requirements of the Master of Educational Leadership

The following sections outline specific requirements, process, policies, and protocols that are unique to the Master of Educational Leadership Program. Please read through each section carefully and refer to the necessary ancillary documents associated with them. All materials for the MEdL program can be found on the [MEdL Canvas site](#).

Hebrew Exit Requirement

Students in the single degree MEdL program are required to fulfill a Hebrew exit requirement. The goal of the Hebrew exit requirement is that graduates will have enough familiarity with Hebrew to be able to use it in the settings in which Jewish educators typically function. In order to graduate, students must have achieved a Hebrew proficiency level equivalent to one year of college-level Hebrew - in either Modern Hebrew or Classical Hebrew – and, if necessary, pass one of the HUC-JIR Hebrew Proficiency Exams.

Evidence of Hebrew proficiency can be demonstrated in one of three ways:

1. By written exam, in either Modern or Classical Hebrew. Students can take one of the proficiency exams at any point during the program and may take it more than once, if needed. See Sitting the Exam in the [Hebrew Requirement Guidelines](#) for additional details.
2. Completion of 2 semesters of Hebrew as part of HUC's Seminary Hebrew program, when it is available.
3. Submission of college transcript within the last five (5) years demonstrating a passing grade (B or above).

The School of Education takes a differentiated approach to supporting students' pursuit of Hebrew language proficiency. You are encouraged to find the right pedagogic modality that aligns with your learning needs and available resources to fulfill your Hebrew requirement. The [Hebrew Requirement Guidelines](#) serves as a resource guide for that work.

For additional guidance on how to complete the Hebrew requirement, students should consult with the Director of the Master of Educational Leadership Program.

Pedagogy Practicum

The pedagogy practicum (EDU 593) is the space for reflection and refining of work that builds the muscle and dispositions of an effective educational decision-maker. During each Fall semester of the MEdL degree program students have one practicum in pedagogy (each worth .25 credits), each one linked to the content, skills and practices addressed in the Teaching and Learning Strand courses.

Each practicum centers around a targeted observation, with the Clinical Faculty Mentor serving as the observer and the MEdL student as the teacher to be observed. A targeted observation enables the teacher to identify a specific skill, instructional practice, or pedagogy they are hoping to examine or improve. In defining the focus of the observation in advance, the observer will be able to look, listen and watch for relevant teacher and learner behaviors. An [observation protocol is provided](#) and should be employed. The Targeted Observation protocol is available on the [MEdL Canvas site](#).

The practicum can be completed at any time during the fall semester and must be completed by the end of the semester. It requires planning ahead as there are three steps to the completion of the full observation cycle.

The responsibility for completing each practicum falls upon the MEdL student, in coordination with their Clinical Faculty Mentor. The Faculty Tutor should be kept informed as to the progress of implementing the observation cycle and must sign off on it upon its completion.

Capstone Project

The goal of the MEdL Capstone project is to enable students to develop and demonstrate deeper levels of expertise in a specific area of Jewish Educational Leadership. Each student will create a project that requires them to apply the knowledge, themes, principles, skills, and experiences they have learned in their coursework and residency to the creation of an authentic example of their work. Students, in consultation with their Faculty Tutor and the Capstone Seminar Instructor, will choose from among seven (7) Capstone project options. Each option is similar in scope and size. The final product of each option has been designed to be an authentic representation of the student's learning and work in that area. So, while each project may, in the end, look very different, they each require students to do similar amounts and types of work.

In the final year of the MEdL program, students will participate in a Capstone Seminar (EDU 591 and 592) which will function as a braintrust/working group with fellow students where they will develop, refine, and improve upon their work in the process of developing their Capstone project.

Detailed descriptions of each Capstone project option and the protocols for completing a capstone will be shared on the [MEdL Canvas site](#).

Capstone for Clergy-Education Students

Clergy-education students will choose their Capstone project with the clergy-education Faculty Tutor and the Capstone Seminar Instructor. While students may consider all options, certain ones are recommended given the feasibility of completing these projects in a one-year program. Digital versions of the Capstone project can become a companion to clergy-ed's professional websites.

Graduate Residency

Clinical Education is an integral part of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, and the graduate residency is its focus. The graduate residency is modeled in part after the role of laboratory schools in the education field and teaching hospitals in medical training.

With the support and assistance of the Director of the Master of Educational Leadership Program, each student interviews with and is hired by an approved graduate residency partner institution. Residency matches are made in organizations that are living laboratories led by master educators who are also skilled supervisors and mentors, and who are excited about this vision and committed to elevating their practice and cultivating the next generation of Jewish educational leadership. Residency organizations are at the cutting edge in thinking about Jewish education, value innovation, play, & experimentation, and are committed to building true interpersonal connections amongst their constituencies.

These institutions partner with HUC-JIR in creating a robust, hands-on graduate and leadership experience where students can learn skills that must be developed in authentic experiences outside the academic classroom. Partner institutions may include congregations which house a variety of educational offerings (such as day school, supplementary school, adult education, pre-school, and day camp); day schools; educational non-profits/agencies; camps.

Applicants to the MEdL program may petition to create their own unpaid graduate residency where they develop an educational startup under Faculty Tutor supervision. A faculty member must “sponsor” the student by vouching for their academic and professional merit and promise. This option is a pilot and highly selective.

Each student will be mentored in their graduate residency by a Clinical Faculty Mentor (CFM). In most residencies, the CFM will also serve as the student’s supervisor. In some settings, a separate day-to-day supervisor will be identified.

The [Master of Educational Leadership Graduate Residency Program Description](#) and the [Master of Educational Leadership Clergy-Ed Residency Program Description](#) each describe the matching process, host institution and CFM criteria, educational goals and learning outcomes, and formative review procedures that are elements of clinical education at RHSOE. Students should read the relevant Program Description thoroughly and should consult it as needed during the year(s). These program descriptions can be found on the [MEdL Canvas site](#).

Residency Travel Reimbursement

MEdL students are responsible for transporting themselves to and from their residency site. The following students are eligible to receive a reimbursement for their travel to their residency site:

- Students who are expected to travel over 20 miles each way from campus or their home to their residency site.
- Students who have documented accommodations with the Office of Student Support requiring the use of public or paid transportation (cab, train, etc.).

In order to receive reimbursement, students must submit the details of travel (e.g., date, mileage, starting location, receipts, etc.) to the College-Institute. Students are reimbursed at the current IRS rate.

The maximum that a student can be reimbursed in 1 school year is \$400 (\$200 per semester). No reimbursements can be made over the \$400 cap.

Faculty Tutors

Each semester a student is enrolled in the Rhea Hirsch School of Education they are assigned a Faculty Tutor. The Faculty Tutor is a member of the RHSEO teaching or adjunct faculty. The Faculty Tutor's task is to support and challenge the student's progress in all areas related to the student's academic, professional and leadership development. In order to do this, the Faculty Tutor meets with the student on a biweekly basis throughout the school year. Course credit is earned each semester for this component of the MEdL curriculum (EDU 650 and EDU 651 Supervised Leadership).

Meetings with the Faculty Tutor may be held individually or in small pods with the other students who have the same tutor. Individual meetings are tailored to each student's particular questions and needs. Tutoring pod meetings may address some of the shared challenges Tutors see across the pod.

The Faculty Tutor engages in many activities, which may include the following:

- partnering with the student's CFM in formulating, finalizing, and assessing the student's progress through their Learning Contract (see below);
- partnering with the student's CFM on completion of their Pedagogy Practica (EDU 593) each Fall semester
- curating the creation of the student's Capstone portfolio
- discussing the student's progress in Judaica and professional courses
- discussing larger issues in Jewish education
- discussing the student's future career plans and how best to prepare for the future
- listening to the student's perception of how they are performing in their residency
- giving feedback, based on firsthand observation of the student in various settings (at Hebrew Union College and elsewhere)
- critiquing materials the student has produced at their residency
- challenging the student's ideas on issues related to current or future professional functioning
- raising problems related to the student's ability to function as a professional, and suggesting avenues for addressing those problems
- supporting the student during difficult times, and if applicable directing the student to appropriate mental health professionals
- listening to the student's perception of academic or professional problems they are having, supporting the student when appropriate, and challenging when appropriate.

These various actions support the student, stimulate their personal and professional growth, and challenge the student to develop wider perspectives and deeper insights. Students should bring any problems they are having or challenges they are facing to their Faculty Tutor.

For additional guidance on EDU 650/EDU 651 Supervised Leadership or working with a Faculty Tutor, students should consult with the Director of the Master of Educational Leadership Program.

Learning Contract

The Learning Contract is a cooperatively negotiated “syllabus” for the clinical education component of the student’s program at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education. It is developed over the course of several conversations between the Clinical Faculty Mentor (CFM) and the student, and the student’s Faculty Tutor.

[Guidelines and protocols for crafting an annual Learning Contract](#) can be found on the [MEdL Canvas site](#).

The Learning Contract is developed annually, each fall (or summer, depending on the residency). Ideally, the timeline for crafting the Learning Contract is as follows:

Summer months	CFM and student begin outlining Learning Contract
By November 1	Team Meeting with student, CFM and Faculty Tutor
Within one week of Team Meeting	Learning Contract Finalized, signed by CFM & student, and sent to Director of MEdL program

The responsibility for moving the Learning Contract process forward, including scheduling all necessary meetings with the Clinical Faculty Mentor and the Faculty Tutor falls upon the MEdL student.

A final agreed-upon Learning Contract is to be signed by the student and the Clinical Faculty Mentor and then submitted by the deadline, to the Director of the Master of Educational Leadership program and the Faculty Tutor.

Tefillah Leadership Requirements

MEdL Students are required to demonstrate Tefillah leading proficiencies in the times and places where Tefillah authentically occurs in their residencies and on campus among their peers and faculty.

Participation in services at the Jack H. Skirball Campus is an important part of the academic, professional, and religious education offered at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education and serves as a safe learning ground for developing Tefillah leading skills. Thus, students in the MEdL Program are required to:

- Serve in the roles as *shlichut tzibur* once a year during a Monday or Thursday Tefillah
- Read or chant from the Torah once a year during a Monday or Thursday Tefillah
- Give a D'var Torah once a year during a Monday or Thursday Tefillah

Students may also volunteer to take on any of these roles on additional days or at additional times during the year.

Please refer to Tefillah Curriculum and Leadership Guide For Rabbinic & Education Students and to the rubric for *shlichut tzibur*, which will be posted on the [MEdL Canvas site](#).

Students in the one-year Clergy-Education program may volunteer to lead services during the year.

Co-Curricular Programs

The Rhea Hirsch School of Education provides a rich combination of academic, professional, creative arts, and religious programming to enrich the professional learning community in formal and informal learning. Full participation in these programs is expected. Students who are unable to participate must communicate conflicts in advance. Specific dates will be announced at the beginning of the Fall semester.

The **Sara S. Lee Seminar** is a 24-hour retreat focused on the presentation of a guest scholar who brings their expertise in issues related to the American Jewish community to bear on Jewish education. The retreat held every other fall is one of the primary opportunities to forge relationships in the Rhea Hirsch School of Education learning community. The “Sara Seminar” is named for Sara S. Lee, the long-time Director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education. It was endowed by alumni and friends of the RHSOE and is sponsored by the SOE Alumni Association.

The **Cutter Colloquium** is a 24-hour retreat designed around the teaching of a guest scholar, the Diane Luboff Scholar-In-Residence, who brings their expertise in education to bear on Jewish education. The retreat is designed to frame the year and begin to foster the professional learning community of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education. The Cutter Colloquium is named for the Founding Director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, Dr. William Cutter. The retreat is sponsored by the SOE Alumni Association and endowed by the family of Diane Luboff.

The **Dr. Michael Zeldin Alumnus-in-Residence Program** brings an outstanding alum to campus for 2-3 days of programming every year. The alum is selected by their peers for outstanding achievement as a Jewish educator. Typically, alumni teaching will include co-curricular seminars, participation in leading Tefillah and/or delivering the D'var Torah, and teaching in several RHSOE classes. The alum is also available to meet individually with education students for 1:1 mentoring and networking. The Dr. Michael Zeldin Alumnus-in-Residence Program is sponsored by the SOE Alumni Association.

The SOE Alumni Association occasionally sponsors a weekend study **Kallah**. Students spend Shabbat leading services and studying and networking with alumni. The Kallah is an opportunity for students to meet alumni and begin the process of integration into the Alumni Association.

Additional required Co-Curricular Programs may be scheduled on a year-to-year basis. Students will be informed of specific dates and programs at the beginning of the Fall semester.

Who to Go to For What?

The HUC faculty and staff work closely and collaboratively. Nevertheless, it is helpful to know who to go to for what.

Rabbi Dr. Laura Novak Winer – Director, Master of Educational Leadership Program
Lwiner@huc.edu (office: 213-765-2190)

- For questions regarding courses to take, fulfilling program requirements, navigating HUC
- For chocolate (always available in the blue glass canister on right as you walk in her office)

Faculty Tutors:

Dr. Sivan Zakai, szakai@huc.edu

Lesley Silverstone, lsilverstone@huc.edu

Rabbi Dr. Laura Novak Winer, lwiner@huc.edu

- For challenges navigating specific courses, residency work, etc. (see above)

Lauren Rosenblum – Coordinator of Graduate Education Programs

lrosenblum@huc.edu (office: 213-765-2115)

- For all things logistical, RSVPs, calendar, immediate technology challenges in a classroom

techsupport@huc.edu

- for all things tech related including Canvas, access to SIS, Library portal, email

Dr. Miriam Heller Stern – National Director of the School of Education

mstern@huc.edu (office: 213-765-2116)

Ken Rosen – Director of Student Life and Campus Culture

krosen@huc.edu (office: 213-765-2148)

- For USC privileges including health services, HUC campus community & events

Accommodations

Students who believe they need academic or other accommodations to participate as fully as possible in the activities related to the Master of Educational Leadership program should make those needs known to the HUC-JIR Office of Student Support as early as possible, preferably as soon as they have received notification of acceptance.

For a detailed description of the Accommodations process, refer to the [HUC-JIR Student Handbook](#).

The Student Support Help Desk website also details additional resources available to students: <https://huc.edu/for-students/student-support-help-desk/>

Degree Progress Check Lists

MEdL Degree progress check lists are provided on the [MEdL Canvas site](#) to help students keep track of their progress in completing the MEdL (and MAJL) degree.

- [MEdL Requirements Checklist](#)
- [MEdL-MAJL Requirements Checklist](#)
- [Clergy-Ed Requirements Checklist](#)

The Director of the Master of Educational Leadership program maintains a confidential check list for each student as well. Periodically students will meet with the MEdL Director to review and assess progress. Students should reach out to the Director any time they have a question about their progress toward completion of the degree.