Student Policy Handbook

**Master of Science
in
Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership**

2024-2025

Dear Students,

Welcome to the University of San Diego!

I am excited that you have chosen to join the Master's of Science in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership (MS-LEPSL) program. By becoming a student at the University of San Diego you have entered into a community of learners, educators, and changemakers. The opportunities for personal growth, career advancement, and educational attainment that are open to you at the University San Diego are limited only by your own imagination and drive to accomplish them.

For more than 40 years, the Division of Professional and Continuing Education at the University of San Diego has welcomed adult and professional students seeking lifelong and career-enhancing educational opportunities. Over the last four decades we have grown from offering just a few courses on the USD campus to providing fully online master's degree programs like the one into which you have been accepted.

This Student Handbook will acquaint all students – new and returning – about many aspects of the MS-LEPSL program. In these pages, you will see descriptions of the program, student support, performance expectations, and program and university policies. Our code of academic integrity and code of student conduct provide you with information about the ways you can identify with and participate in the program. As a member of the USD community, you share a personal responsibility to uphold the standards of our school and this program. Please read the expectations outlined in the code and make the decision to abide by them.

Your participation in this master's program is the expression of your own pursuit of lifelong learning. By joining this program, you have decided to invest in yourself - in your future, in your career, and in the opportunities that you wish to create for yourself, your community and your family. Education can change lives and open up new horizons for those who commit themselves to the pursuit of excellence. The University of San Diego welcomes your wholehearted participation in this program and in the activities that will make you successful as you pursue this advancement of professional and personal growth.

Best wishes,
Erik Fritsvold, PhD
Academic Director, MS LEPSL

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MS-LEPSL Degree Program Overview

Master of Science in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership (MS-LEPSL)
31 semester units

The degree program is designed to serve the needs of professionals engaged in contemporary public safety activities, especially law enforcement, who seek advancement and professional growth by learning new skills, strategies, and social science for dealing with the contemporary realities of budget cuts, shifting cultural landscapes, and increasing public scrutiny.

In this program, you will learn leadership and management skills, ethical practices, and gain a foundation in legal and policy matters that will inform your choices as members of public safety and law enforcement organizations. Completion of all the courses in the prescribed curriculum of ten 3-unit courses and the 1-unit Integrative Capstone course, for a total of 11 courses and 31 units, is required to successfully complete this program.

MS-LEPSL Program Learning Outcomes

1. **Promoting Ethical and Effective Leadership for Law Enforcement and Public Safety Organizations**
   Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the future of American criminal justice and the safety of our communities. Our Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership degree program will nurture a series of leadership skills that represent the most current best practices for encouraging integrity and creating a culture of ethical awareness within law enforcement institutions. From process-based conflict resolution, to evidence-driven decision making, to effective leadership actions in a challenging and dynamic criminal-justice environment, our nationally recognized experts and criminal justice practitioners will cultivate both a theoretical and practical understanding of ethics in modern law enforcement.

2. **Developing Law Enforcement and Public Safety Knowledge and Skills for the 21st Century**
   Leadership in contemporary law enforcement is challenging and complex; institutions that thrive often have leaders who possess strikingly diverse skill sets that include practical, professional, administrative, and leadership components. Our Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership degree program will cultivate the analytical skills, critical thinking strategies, communication abilities, legal awareness, and financial and budgetary competencies essential for effective management in law enforcement and criminal justice. In addition, students will assess cutting-edge law enforcement technologies for improved organizational effectiveness and policing impact. Other law enforcement technologies, such as database and crime analytics will be taught in order to identify trends, hot spots, and appropriate community-based public safety responses and strategies. This program will provide a well-rounded series of practical skills that are vital both within and beyond the modern law enforcement environment.

3. **Engaging in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Institutional Assessment and Change**
   This program not only builds the skills to look outward on social and criminal justice issues but also to look inward at our own public safety institutions. Critical reflection and assessment of law enforcement institutions, in the context of their own dynamic environment, are essential for law enforcement leaders. Collectively, we will learn and practice the research methodologies and statistical tools for ethical, efficient and effective institutional assessment that will shape and refine our criminal justice system in the coming decades. Concepts of data-driven decision making will strengthen the organizational effectiveness and advancement potential of program participants who seek professional advancement and promotion within these public safety agencies.

4. **Critical Understanding of Modern Criminology and Criminal Justice Issues**
   From unmanned aerial vehicles to crisis communication, social media to recruitment and retention, biometric technology to the changing landscape of use of force, this program will delve into some of America's most challenging crime problems and the issues facing criminal justice institutions. Drawing from real-world case studies and evidence-based best practices, students will actively integrate and apply the skills developed throughout this program to some of the nation's most pressing law enforcement challenges.

MS-LEPSL Degree Program Structure

The program of study includes the eleven-course prescribed curriculum – ten 3-unit courses and a 1-unit integrative capstone course. Courses will be offered year-round with three semesters every year; spring, summer, and fall. Each semester is 14 weeks in length. You will take two courses per semester. Courses will run for seven weeks each with a one or two week break in between semesters. You will enroll in the capstone course during your final semester, and it will run as a third course for the entire 14-weeks along with the other two courses. You can expect to graduate in five semesters after successfully completing all eleven courses.

Each 3-unit course will include 37.5 hours of core instructional time. Additional homework, research, and study time is required. **You can expect to spend 15-18 hours per week in each course in order to be successful.**

MS-LEPSL Degree Program Curriculum

- **LEPS 500 Contemporary Issues in Law Enforcement and Public Safety (3 units)**
  This course examines cutting-edge issues facing law enforcement and public safety including: evolving technology, legal standards regarding use of force, officer health and wellness, UAVs, facial recognition, correctional realignment, drug policy changes, bail reform, records disclosure, and more. These issues are changing the landscape of law enforcement faster than ever before; this course will help law enforcement leaders proactively prepare for their agencies to thrive in this dynamic landscape.

- **LEPS 510 Communication Skills for Law Enforcement Leaders (3 units)**
  From interpersonal communication with colleagues and citizens to formal written reports to working with the media, this course studies all of the different ways law enforcement leaders need to communicate to be successful. The course introduces and develops a series of communication skills essential for someone leading a modern law enforcement department.

- **LEPS 520 Best Practices in Community Engagement (3 units)**
  This course looks at best practices regarding how individuals in law enforcement engage both broadly with the community and with key stakeholders. This course specifically zeros in on these aspects of communication in the modern climate of increased transparency and collaboration. Building from real case studies, students will complete this course with an understanding of how to appropriately position their agencies in the national dialogue about policing in the contemporary climate, being leaders in a progressing industry, and what it means to be a changemaker in the field of policing.

- **LEPS 530 Public Safety Law in a Dynamic World (3 units)**
  In an era where evolving technology is outpacing the law, this cutting-edge course helps provide direction and answer questions around the legal complexities of using law enforcement technologies, and other contemporary legal issues. The course looks at right-to-privacy and 4th amendment cases that are guiding legal precedents regarding smartphones, UAVs, BWCs, Brady issues, DNA evidence, cyber crime, terrorism, peace officer records release and transparency legislation. The course features hypothetical scenarios in which students make leadership and mission decisions broaching legal questions where there is no clear correct legal answer.

- **LEPS 540 Organizational Leadership for Law Enforcement (3 units)**
  How do law enforcement and public safety professionals lead under stress, in environments of change, and in the modern social and political climate? Strong leadership is crucial in law enforcement organizations; from officer safety, to thriving teams, to organizational success or failure, the stakes are high day in and day out. Leadership is a broad and diverse toolkit that can, and should, be understood and applied differently by individuals and organizations. Throughout this course, students will be exposed to practical and application-based examinations of organizational models and leadership theories. Designed to create immediate payoff with real-time and actionable lessons, the course uses a variety of case studies from law enforcement, corporate America and the military to present a holistic look at leadership, ethics, and best practices in modern law enforcement and public safety organizations.

- **LEPS 550 Data Fluency and Analysis for Law Enforcement Leaders (3 units)**
  In today's law enforcement and public safety field, leaders need to be able to justify

resource allocation decisions, present data-driven initiatives, and demonstrate success and failure with sound data and evidence. This course nurtures a contemporary and critical understanding of the importance of crime data and related evidence to maximizing both ethics and efficacy within agencies. Honing in on intelligence-led, evidence-based, data-driven policing, students will learn how to effectively present accurate, detailed crime data and related evidence for key stakeholders.

- **LEPS 560 Effective Leadership in Modern Public Safety: Theory, Concepts, & Application (3 units)**
  This course examines best practices for effective and impactful leadership in the dynamic, contemporary world of public safety. Relevant leadership theories will be coupled with real-world case studies from law enforcement, the military, academia, and the private sector to present a well-rounded analysis of the dynamic concept of leadership. The course emphasizes self-reflection, tangible strategies, and practical skill building to nurture immediately applicable leadership proficiencies that will support today's law enforcement and public safety personnel to thrive in a dynamic and demanding environment.

- **LEPS 570 Public Policy Innovation (3 units)**
  How do agencies carry out reliable public policy research? Which resources do they invest in and why? Are the programs in place working? How can any given law enforcement leader be an effective, critical consumer of research, evidence, and best practices? This course looks at how to make good policy decisions, how to involve key stakeholders, and how to create and communicate policy. Nurturing practical research skills for law enforcement leaders, students will complete a project in which they are placed in groups to collectively write an MOU for a gang or human trafficking multiagency task force. Working each week to contribute to the document, they produce a real MOU by the end of the course; something typically high ranking individuals and/or those in specialized assignments have the opportunity to do.

- **LEPS 580 Law Enforcement Management and Conflict Resolution (3 units)**
  A deep and applicable understanding of emotional intelligence, human resources, and essential skills for managing workplace conflict is key to leading successfully. In this course, students will develop skills that are essential to effective dispute resolution. These skills will be introduced, developed, and applied to conflicts between individuals, within small groups, and throughout organizations. At its core, this is an ethics-centric leadership and management course that addresses the unique dynamics of criminal justice agencies. Navigating contentious issues and developing and executing effective, positive resolutions requires an approach that emphasizes human dignity and both personal and professional integrity throughout the process.

- **LEPS 590 Budget & Finance for Law Enforcement Leaders (3 units)**
  Would you know how to create and present a budget if asked to do so? Budget and finance is an area in which many new to a command staff position feel they need additional training. And with the increased emphasis on evidence-driven rationales for budgetary decisions, all law enforcement leaders need to have a robust understanding of budgeting, contract negotiation, finance, and staffing/resource allocation. This course will expose students to different types of budget models and how they function in a public safety environment. Key learning concepts include performance-based, line-item and zero-based budget models, along with best practices for finding, writing and

securing grants that are often key to organizational goals.

- **LEPS 599 Integrative Capstone (1 unit)**
  In the final course of the program sequence, students create an online portfolio to showcase what they've learned throughout the program. In what could be described as a 'resume on steroids', this portfolio contains a compilation of exemplary projects, term papers, presentations, and skill-based exercises that were completed throughout the program. The creation of the capstone project requires students to identify and critically reflect on the major program themes and what they've learned in the program. The reflection and the portfolio itself are both invaluable assets for career advancement.

MS-LEPSL Program Academic Calendar

Refer to your student success center for your academic calendar and respective dates. Course information can be found here:

onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/lepsl/

MS-LEPSL Program Policies and Procedures

Make-Up and Late Work

Late assignments will be heavily penalized or not accepted unless there are significant extenuating circumstances and the matter is discussed with the instructor in advance of the assignment deadline.

Academic Probation

To be in good academic standing and to be eligible to graduate, graduate students in the Division of Professional and Continuing Education must maintain a 3.0 semester and cumulative grade point average (GPA) in this program. A student who has completed at least six (6) units of coursework and whose cumulative or semester USD GPA for graduate program courses falls below a 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. At the end of each semester the Registrar notifies the Division of Professional and Continuing Education Dean's Office of students eligible for probation. The Dean will send a letter to the student indicating probationary status and copies to the Academic Coordinator. The student should meet with the Academic Coordinator to develop a plan for academic success. A review will take place at the end of the next semester in which the probationary student has registered for six (6) units. If students have not raised the cumulative or semester USD GPA for graduate program courses to at least 3.0 at the end of the subsequent academic term, they may be disqualified from the program. Students who wish to appeal their disqualification must do so in writing to the Dean within ten calendar days of receiving such notice.

Registration Policies and Procedures

The MS-LEPSL program follows the university's registration policies and procedures, which are located at: catalogs.sandiego.edu/graduate/academic-regs/registration-policies-procedures/.

Students will be manually enrolled for each semester (including Spring, Summer, and Fall terms) by the Student Success Team. Once registered, students will receive an email confirming registration. It is the student's responsibility to notify their Program Coordinator if they do not wish to be enrolled in a given semester. In cases where a student does not wish to be enrolled for a given semester, a Leave of Absence will be required (see below). For drop and withdrawal policy and deadlines, view the academic calendars found on the MS-LEPSL Student Success Center webpage: onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/lepsl/

Dropping & Withdrawing Courses

Students will register for two (or three during their final term) prescribed courses each semester. **All courses must be dropped prior to the first day of the semester to receive a 100% tuition refund*** and within the first three days of the start date of the **semester** to receive a 95% tuition refund.* **No refund** will be provided after the third day of the semester for either class. *During the first semester of enrollment, any tuition refund amounts will not include the non-refundable enrollment deposit amount (5% of tuition). After the first three days of the start of the semester and before the start of the fifth week/module, students have the option to withdraw from their courses with a 0% refund and a grade of "W" on their transcript (not included in GPA). Once the fifth week of the course starts, students are no longer able to withdraw from their course and will receive the grade earned. Students who discontinue class attendance and neglect to withdraw officially from the course are subject to failing the class.

Continuous Enrollment/Leave of Absence

Students who are unable to maintain continuous enrollment need to complete a [Petition for Leave of Absence form](#). The Academic Coordinator must approve the leave of absence. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may result in suspension from the program. Students who have been dropped from the program must apply for readmission unless a Petition for Leave of Absence form is on file and current. A leave of absence may be granted for up to one year, and only under extreme circumstances will a student be granted a second leave of absence. Students on academic probation are not normally eligible for a leave of absence.

Financial aid is usually suspended for students on leave of absence. In addition, the leave of absence may trigger the beginning of the loan repayment period for students with loan deferments. Students should petition for leave prior to the requested leave period. Students who find it necessary to discontinue enrollment during a term may also petition for a leave, however, they must be in good standing and officially withdraw from their courses by submitting a [Notice of Withdrawal form](#) within the approved deadline.

Grade Grievance

Grading criteria, course content, assignments, and other requirements are set by instructors and provided to students in writing. The presumption is that students have been given ample opportunity for clarification of class requirements, including assessment, at the beginning of a given course. The instructor's judgment regarding assessment and grading is presumed to be correct. Therefore, the burden of qualifying a grievance rests with the student. At every level in the grievance procedures all participants should understand this presumption.

A student has the right to question a final grade given by a faculty member.
1. Any student may at any time consult her or his instructor about a grade. The exercise of this right does not require a fixed procedure nor is it subject to procedural conditions.
2. If a student feels that she or he has been given an unjust grade, the student should first approach her or his instructor to resolve the difficulty. However, if the student believes she or he has reason not to approach the instructor, the Academic Coordinator (or her or his delegate) shall be the judge of the advisability or inadvisability of making this first step.
3. In cases where the Academic Coordinator has ruled that direct consultation with the instructor is inadvisable; the student may present her or his case, along with any graded work, to the Academic Coordinator or Dean. The student may request that the instructor provide the student with a copy of the work in question. The Academic Coordinator shall review the disputed grade in consultation with the instructor. After this review, the instructor may decide to change the original grade or not. The Academic Coordinator will communicate the instructor's decision to the student.
4. If the matter is not satisfactorily settled at number "3" above, the student may present his/her case to the Dean for review.
5. If the efforts described in steps "2" through "4" do not resolve the dispute, the student may formally challenge the assigned grade. The policy regarding a formal challenge of a grade in the School of Professional Studies is as follows:
    a. An academic grade may only be formally challenged on grounds that it reflects other than appropriate criteria as stated on the course syllabus.

b. Students may only challenge grades when they claim to have earned a grade at least one full letter higher than the grade assigned by the instructor (e.g. the student is assigned a grade of C+ and alleges that the actual grade should have been B+ or higher).

c. A written petition presenting evidence concerning step "5a" must be submitted to the School of Professional Studies Dean no later than the end of the second full week of instruction in the semester following that in which the grade was given.

6. The procedure following submission of the petition by the student is as follows:

a. On receipt of the petition, the Dean will promptly appoint a committee consisting of two faculty members and one student. The student and at least one of the faculty members will be associated with the student's program. The committee's membership is privileged information.

b. The committee will promptly decide whether the evidence presented by the student warrants an investigation. If it does not so find, the committee will take no further action on the case and the student will be so notified. If the committee so finds, it will investigate.

c. During the investigation, the committee must provide a fair proceeding for instructor and student, including information as to the character and object of the proceedings, knowledge of the allegations and evidence produced by the student in making out her or his case, and an opportunity for both parties to respond in writing and/or orally.

d. If, during the course of this investigation, the instructor voluntarily decides to change the original grade assigned the instructor will report this decision to the student and the Dean, and the committee will take no further action.

e. If no agreement is reached, the committee must decide whether the grade reflected criteria other than those stated on the syllabus, and if so, the criteria that were reflected.

f. Their conclusions shall be made in the form of a preliminary written report, copies of which are to be sent to the Dean, Academic Coordinator, the instructor and the student. The instructor and the student will have the opportunity of submitting written responses to the committee within ten days of receipt of the preliminary report. The committee will review the written responses, if any, before issuing its final report to the Dean.

g. Submission of the final written report to the Dean will be the final action taken by the committee.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of "Incomplete" ("I") may be recorded to indicate that at least 75% of the requirements of a course has been completed, but, for a legitimate reason, 25% or less of the work remains to be completed; and that the record of the student in the course justifies the expectation that he or she will complete the work and obtain a passing grade by the deadline. It is the student's responsibility to explain to the instructor the reasons for non-completion of the work and to request an "incomplete" grade **prior** to the posting of final grades. The instructor should discuss with the student the conditions and deadline for completion, whenever possible, and should document the conditions and deadline using the Petition for Grade of Incomplete. The "incomplete" grade is not counted in the computation of the grade point average, nor is credit earned for the semester/session for which the grade was authorized.

Students who receive a grade of "incomplete" must submit all missing work at maximum two weeks after the course end date otherwise; the "I" grade will become an "F. A faculty member assigning a grade of "incomplete" will complete a Petition for Grade of Incomplete, indicating the reason for the "incomplete", and attach a copy of the form to the grade roster when turning in grades. A copy of this form will be placed in the student's file.

Students receiving financial aid should be aware that taking an "incomplete" grade might affect their eligibility for financial aid by their failure to earn the appropriate amount of credit within a year. When the work is completed, a Removal of Incomplete or Change of Grade form will be completed by the instructor and signed by the associate dean. One copy is then placed in the student's file and the original is sent to the registrar.

Petition to Graduate
The University's policy is located at:
https://catalogs.sandiego.edu/graduate/academic-programs/completion-degree-requirements/

In order to be cleared for degree completion, students, in consultation with the Academic Coordinator must file a Petition for Graduation form. Students who meet the deadline for May graduation will receive their degree at that time and students who fulfill all requisites for their degree in the summer will have their degree recorded in their transcript effective

August 31st. Students who fail to meet the stipulated deadlines will not be permitted to graduate, even if all other graduation requirements have been met. In order to receive permission to attend commencement, eligible students must register and pay in full for their remaining units at USD no later than May 1st. The University of San Diego holds only ONE graduation ceremony each year. All graduates during the relevant academic year are welcome to participate in this May graduation ceremony.

Graduate students scheduled to receive their degree the following August who have nine (9) units or fewer of remaining work may participate if their work falls in the category of coursework, portfolio, practicum/fieldwork/student teaching, or internship. Such August graduates must take the remaining summer work at USD and they must register and pay for their remaining units by May 1st. If a candidate does not graduate at the expected time, the registrar will automatically roll the Petition for Graduation over to the next graduation period if it is in the same calendar year. If the graduation period extends beyond the calendar year for which the petition was filed, a new petition must be completed.

Student Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the Online MS-LEPSL program for:
1. Failure to maintain an established grade point average of 3.0 or all coursework.
2. Failure to make satisfactory academic progress toward their degree.
3. Failure to complete the program within the time limits for degree.
4. Failure to make satisfactory progress in the development of academic and practitioner skills.
5. Violations of ethics code(s) as established by the applicable field of study and program area.
6. Violations of USD policies and the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities, including academic dishonesty and plagiarism.
7. Failure to maintain cooperative relationships with other students and/or faculty or failure to maintain satisfactory delivery of services to clients during fieldwork, including, but not limited to: internships, student teaching, practicum or service learning.

When any of the above concerns are raised, the student will meet with her or his Academic Coordinator to discuss the concern. The Academic Coordinator or her or his faculty designee(s) will provide the student with a written plan for improvement that specifies the nature of the concern(s) along with required steps for remediation for successful completion of the program. The Academic Coordinator or her or his faculty designee(s) will, on an ongoing basis evaluate the student's progress and a written evaluation of progress will be sent to the student and placed in the student's file. In the event that satisfactory progress is not made within the time limits set by the plan, a written notification of dismissal will be sent to the student.

Students who are terminated for any reason may appeal for reinstatement in writing to Associate Provost, Professional and Continuing Education within ten calendar days of receiving notice of termination.

Student Reinstatement

Students who fail to make satisfactory progress toward the required deadlines, who have dropped out of the program for any reason, or who have failed to return from an official Leave of Absence will be dismissed from the program. Students may apply for readmission. Depending upon the time and circumstances, the procedure for readmission may require a new personal statement of interest in the program, three (3) new letters of recommendation and a complete set of current transcripts. In considering the readmission request, faculty will evaluate previous coursework and other activities both in and out of the program. If the student is readmitted, the faculty may recommend redoing any or all of the student's coursework and work depending on the length of the time away from the program and the circumstances for leaving the program. There is no guarantee of readmission.

Transfer of Graduate Credit

Eligibility of transfer credit will be determined by the Academic Program Coordinator. Students need to have transfer credit submitted, evaluated, and approved before the end of the first course offered in their first semester. Any requests for transfer credit after the first course will not be permitted. Concurrent enrollment in Command College or FBINA in the LEPSL program is not permitted. Concurrent enrollment in SLI, FBILEEDA, or SDRLI is permissible if you have the bandwidth to do so, however, you will NOT be able to use that training as transfer credit since all transfer credit must be submitted, evaluated, and approved before the end of the first course offered in their first semester.

Petition for Transfer of Graduate Credit. The student must also request that an official transcript of the course be sent to the Graduate Records Office if the transcript was not included among the admissions documents. When both the petition and transcript are on file they will be reviewed in the Graduate Records Office for conformity to USD policies. Grade(s) awarded by the issuing institution will not be calculated in the student's overall grade point average or considered during probationary review.

Students may petition to transfer credit from another university under the following conditions:
1. Credit must be from an accredited, USD-approved university.
2. Credit must be at the graduate-level at the university of origin. The student is responsible for submitting acceptable supporting documentation.
3. Credit must be relevant to the USD degree program and be approved by the Academic Coordinator.
4. Transfer courses cannot repeat essentially the same content of work taken at USD.
5. Credit may not be used (or have been used) toward any other degree.
6. Credit earned more than five (5) years prior to matriculation at USD will not be accepted.
7. A grade of "B" or higher must have been earned (grade of "pass" or "satisfactory" ordinarily is not acceptable).
8. Students must supply satisfactory documentation regarding course content for independent study or self-directed courses.
9. The number of credit hours transferred will be based on USD's semester credit system rounded down to the nearest full or half unit (multiply the number of quarter hours by .67 and round down). For example, four (4) quarter-hours x .67 = 2.68 which will be recorded as 2.5 USD semester-hour units). It is the student's responsibility to make up the difference if the total number of degree credits falls short of the requirement for the degree. The amount of USD credit awarded may not exceed the equivalent amount on the originating transcript.
10. Although transfer credit from other universities will be posted on the USD transcript, grades will not be posted or computed in the USD grade point average for probation/disqualification review.

USD Email

All USD graduate students are required to have a USD email account. The University may conduct official business by sending notices or other information to the student's USD email address. It is the student's responsibility to regularly check his or her USD account and to respond to any notices or information in a timely manner. Failure to check the USD email account will not be considered a legitimate reason for a policy exception.

Academic Integrity and Guidance for Online Students

All students will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the University of San Diego. As on online student, you will be asked to sign a pledge prior to starting each course in the program acknowledging that you have read the [Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#) as well as the Guidelines for Online Students.

As an online student, you are encouraged to reach out to your fellow students in the online classroom to build community, to discuss topics, and to ask each other questions, but there are limits to this collaboration. As a student at University of San Diego you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) established by the University.

> In accordance with the University of San Diego's Mission Statement, the Honor Code establishes a standard of integrity which is aligned with the University's Core Values: *Academic Excellence, Knowledge, Community, Ethical Conduct, and Compassionate Service.* The promotion of academic integrity should take place in the context of a commitment to creating a culture of integrity that encompasses all constituencies of the university including students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni and trustees. Only through campus-wide engagement will the University achieve its goal of "developing ethical and responsible leaders committed to the common good."

Standards of Conduct
Adherence to standards of honesty and integrity precludes engaging in, causing, or knowingly benefiting from any violation of academic integrity. Without regard to purpose, the following violations are prohibited.

Cheating
Cheating is the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, and study aids, as well as unauthorized collaboration on examinations and other academic exercises. It is the responsibility of students to consult with their professors concerning what constitutes permissible collaboration. Cheating or helping others cheat is academic fraud.

Check your course syllabus for more guidance about your assignments and assessments, such as quizzes, projects, papers, and exams. You may see rules such as these:

> **OK:** Listening to lectures with another student.
> **Not OK:** Working simultaneously with another student when doing an assignment.

> **OK:** Studying together online or offline for the midterm.
> **Not OK:** Taking the midterm with another student and discussing the answers to the questions.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the act of presenting, as one's own the ideas or writings of another; plagiarism, in any of its forms, violates academic integrity. While different academic disciplines have different norms of attribution, all strive to recognize and value individuals' contributions to the larger body of knowledge. It is the responsibility of students to consult with their professors in order to understand the norms of attribution in each discipline and area of study.

Check your course syllabus for more guidance about your research assignments. You may see rules such as these:

> **OK:** Researching the web or "Google-ing" a topic for a written assignment or discussion question.
> **Not OK:** Copying or paraphrasing text from a website without citing the source.

False Citations
False citation is attribution to an incorrect or fabricated source; false citation is academic fraud. False citation seriously undermines the integrity of the academic enterprise.

Submitting the Same Work for Multiple Assignments
Students may not submit work (in identical or similar form) for multiple assignments without the prior, explicit approval of all faculty to whom the work will be submitted. This includes work first produced at USD or at another institution attended by the student.

Submitting False Data
False data is information that has been fabricated, altered, or contrived in such a way as to be misleading; the submission of false data is academic fraud.

> **OK:** Discussing online or offline the discussion question topic.
> **Not OK:** Writing an answer together and submitting the same or slightly paraphrased text.

Falsifying Academic Documentation
Forging or altering academic documentation (including transcripts, signatures, letters of recommendation, certificates of enrollment or standing, registration forms, and medical certifications) concerning oneself or others is academic fraud.

Abuse of Library Privileges
Depriving others of equal access to library materials constitutes a violation of academic integrity. This includes sequestering library materials for the use of an individual or group, refusal to respond to recall notices, and the removal or attempt to remove library materials from any University library without authorization.

Abuse of Shared Electronic Media
Depriving others of equal access to shared electronic media used for academic purposes constitutes a violation of academic integrity. This includes actions that result in the damage or sabotage of computer systems.

Generative AI Guidelines
Transparency: If you are using ChatGPT and similar programs you must be transparent about your use and disclose any generated content as being produced by an AI program. This includes, but is not limited to, written assignments, research papers, and other forms of communication through citations and documentation.

Responsibility: You are responsible for critically evaluating the accuracy, reliability, and quality of any information generated by ChatGPT and similar programs and verifying it through additional sources if necessary.

Critical Thinking: You are encouraged to use ChatGPT and similar programs as a tool to support your own learning and critical thinking, but not as a replacement for independent

research and analysis. The use of ChatGPT and similar programs must be accompanied by the development of your critical thinking skills and an understanding of their limitations.

Note: Responses generated by ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, were used as a source of information for these guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **How should I keep track of the financial aid documents and additional forms?** It is suggested that students constantly monitor their student portal (mysandiego.edu) to receive the most up-to-date information regarding their financial aid.

2. **How many units do I need to take to be eligible for financial aid?** If a student drops below 6 semester units, they are no longer eligible to receive financial aid.

3. **What additional financial aid forms do I need to complete besides the FAFSA?** Every student's file is unique so in addition to completing the MPN and Entrance Loan Counseling they may have to complete: Verification paperwork, prove that they are actually the student (in front of a notary rep), C-Codes (Selective Service, Defaulted loans). FAFSA will contact students directly if these documents are necessary via their student portal.

4. **What are the interest rates for student loans available for graduate students?** Students are eligible for unsubsidized loans and GRAD Plus loans.

5. **What other forms do you suggest I complete?** It is advised that the student fill out the FERPA release form if they plan to allow someone else to access their personal information.

6. **How do I receive my FA award letter?** The award letter is sent via email. You will need to Accept or Deny the award electronically.

7. **Can financial aid be used to pay for books, course materials and on campus experiences? If so, what is the process?** Yes, financial aid can be used for any school related purpose. If students receive excess funding after their tuition and fees have been deducted, they can use those funds to assist with these expenses. However, you are advised to take out only what you need for the program.

8. **Is financial aid awarded year-round?** There are specific deadlines in order to be awarded financial aid for all three (3) semesters. There is one FAFSA application for each academic year – which starts in the Fall and ends after the Summer term. (Ex. Fall 2023 – Summer 2024 aligns with the 2023-2024 FAFSA application). For the summer semester, there is an additional summer supplemental form to be completed in addition to FAFSA. Refer to the website for details.

9. **Is there additional financial aid available for military personnel?** Yellow Ribbon is automatically awarded to inactive military and they can be 100% eligible depending on their service time. Tuition assistance is also accepted, but military students must be active duty to receive it. G.I. Bill requires students to provide a Certificate of Eligibility.

10. **What services does the Student Accounts office provide?** Student Accounts provides service to our online students with billing and payment of tuition, fees, financial aid updates, and registration access. You are encouraged to check your student portal regularly for updates.

11. **Is there a payment plan option?** Yes. Online MS-LEPSL students have the option to pay in 3-5 equal installments dependent upon the term of enrollment; Student Accounts provides this option for a processing fee of $50 per semester.

12. **What is the program course drop policy? Both** courses must be dropped prior to the first day of the semester to receive a 100% tuition refund* and within the first three days of the start date of the semester to receive a 95% tuition refund.* **<u>No refund</u>** will be provided after the third day of the semester for either class. *During the first semester of enrollment, any tuition refund amounts will not include the non-refundable enrollment deposit amount (5% of tuition).

13. **How do I know when to register for classes?** On a semesterly basis, students will be registered for courses by their student success team. Once registered, students will receive an email confirming their registration. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Program Coordinator via email if they do not wish to be enrolled in a given semester.

Program Contacts and Important Websites and Emails

Academic Director Erik Fritsvold erikf@sandiego.edu	**Your Student Success Team** Studentsuccess@sandiego.edu onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/lepsl/

USD Student Portal My.SanDiego.edu	**Canvas** canvas.sandiego.edu	**ITS (Technical Support)** 619-260-7900 help@sandiego.edu
Copley Library 619-260-4799 libanswers.sandiego.edu/ Copley@sandiego.edu	**Torero Store** usdtorerostores.com	**Campus Card Services** 619-260-5999 sandiego.edu/campuscard/ campuscard@sandiego.edu
Financial Aid Office 619-260-2700 sandiego.edu/torero-hub/financial-aid Student Inquiry Form	**Registrar** 619-260-4600 x2888 registrar@sandiego.edu	**Student Accounts** 619-260-2700 (Option 3) sandiego.edu/finance/student-financial-services/student-accounts.php Student Inquiry Form