



Student Policy Handbook

Master of Science in Learning Design and Technology (MS-LDT)

2026-2027

Dear Students,

Welcome to the University of San Diego!

I am excited that you have chosen to join the Master of Science in Learning Design and Technology (MS-LDT) 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 of 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 – with many aspects of the MS-LDT program. On 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,
Lisa Evans, PhD
Academic Director, MS LDT

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MS-LDT Degree Program Overview

Master of Science in Instructional Design and Technology (MS-LDT)

30 semester units

The Master of Science in Learning Design and Technology (MS-LDT) degree program has been designed for professionals working in education, training, or for those looking for a career change to the field of learning design. The program prepares candidates for learning design roles where learning science and dynamic learning technologies converge. The MS-LDT program emphasizes educational learning theory and research, the needs of learners in both in-person and virtual learning environments, and the practical, learner-centered application of instructional technology to learning design. The curriculum focuses on learning experience design, digital literacy skills, emerging technologies, professional leadership, facilitating high-impact teaching practices in digital environments, implementing best practices in learning design, meeting the needs of diverse learners, and evaluating learner and program outcomes. MS-LDT is practitioner-oriented, so most courses include practical application of theoretical concepts; students produce a learning artifact such as an eLearning module, program plan, or online curriculum that they can add to their ID Portfolio. Additionally, students will critically examine theories, pedagogies, and technologies to advance the field, challenge preconceived notions, and shape the future of teaching and learning.

MS-LDT Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the MS-LDT, graduates will be able to:

1. Integrate foundational models and professional practices in learning design and instructional technology. Graduates will be able to apply knowledge of adult learning theory, online pedagogy and andragogy, and social justice principles to design, develop, and deliver sound and equitable learning experiences and construct appropriate technology solutions in education and training contexts.
2. Employ sound practices in program planning, data collection and data analysis. Graduates will be able to accurately and reliably assess the needs of diverse learner populations by applying ethical and objective data collection methods and employing appropriate data analysis techniques to use in learning design evaluation.
3. Critically evaluate trends, issues, practices, and methodologies that impact the field of instructional design. Graduates will recognize historical social disparities in education and training contexts and engage in discourse that challenges the current perspectives in learning design to drive the discipline forward.
4. Critically examine educational technology trends and apply empirical rationale in the development of instructional multimedia that supports the needs of a diverse audience, enhances cultural understanding, and increases global awareness. Graduates will employ principles of media design in the creation of end-to-end learning objects to deepen learning and reduce elements that impede cognitive processing. Students will be well-versed in Universal Design for Learning strategies and utilize digital tools that integrate with adaptive and assistive technologies.

5. Engage learning project stakeholders in achieving the optimal student experience and meet organizational goals. Graduates will be able to effectively oversee the development of a learning project by applying project management techniques and frameworks. Graduates will recognize and exhibit high ethical standards in project leadership, consultation, negotiation, collaboration, and milestone, data and budget management.
6. Ensure quality of instructional design and technology implementation. Graduates will be able to define and apply information literacy and ethical use of content, and discuss the implications of quality management in educational product design and evaluation of learning technologies.

MS-LDT Degree Program Structure

The program of study includes the ten-course prescribed curriculum – ten 3-unit 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 can expect to graduate in five semesters after successfully completing all ten courses.

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

MS-LDT Degree Program Curriculum

LDT 500A (3 Units) Foundations in Instructional and Learning Design: This course focuses on the field of instructional and learning design. Students will examine foundational theories of learning and cognition, the instructional design process, and human-centered design thinking strategies. By identifying real-world instructional challenges, students apply research-based approaches to solving knowledge and skills gap problems that occur in a variety of workplace, education, and organizational settings. In this foundational course, students actively engage in various instructional design process activities that build professional competency. The course learning experience includes an introduction to AI tools like Gemini and NotebookLM for productivity and self-regulated learning.

This course is a prerequisite for taking LDT-500B.

LDT 500B (3 Units) Foundations in Multimedia and eLearning Design: This course introduces research-based principles of effective multimedia design and the creation of original media that aligns with those principles. Students examine common learning technologies used in the development phase of the instructional design process, including eLearning authoring software (such as Articulate Storyline 360 and Rise 360) and Generative AI tools. Students apply principles of visual and graphic design to storyboard and prototype interactive learning experiences. Generative AI is integrated as a productivity tool to support ideation, rapid prototyping, and the creation of interactive eLearning activities. Emphasis is placed on critically evaluating and refining AI-assisted outputs to ensure they align with learning goals and professional instructional design standards. Prerequisite: LDT 500A

This course is a prerequisite for taking any core curriculum course (LDT 520, LDT 530, LDT 535, LDT 540, LDT 545, LDT 550, LDT 555)

LDT 520 (3 Units) Advanced Learning Theory and Evidence-Based Instructional Design
: This course examines advanced topics in instructional design, including needs assessment, learner characteristics, alignment of learning objectives, instructional strategies, and formative and summative assessments. Students engage with generative AI tools as professional design partners to support instructional ideation, scenario development, and activity design, while learning to critically evaluate AI-generated outputs using evidence from learning science. Students will explore critical theories of learning and motivation and the ethical responsibility of instructional designers to analyze and dispel common myths and misapplication of these concepts, including those that may be introduced or amplified by AI systems. The course emphasizes the application of sound design principles to plan, design, evaluate, and refine inclusive learning experiences that are grounded in research and responsive to real-world contexts. Prerequisites: LDT 500A & LDT 500B

LDT 530 (3 Units) Designing for All Learners: Legal and Ethical Digital Design Standards
: This course explores the artistic and technical aspects of creating engaging and accessible digital media for diverse learners. Students examine research-based and ethical approaches to multimedia design to develop ADA-compliant learning artifacts. Students will apply appropriate federal and state laws guiding accessible design requirements, and explore professional guidelines such as the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Students leverage Generative AI as an industry tool to streamline professional workflows and create accessibility

resources used in the field, while critically assessing AI outputs for correctness and quality. Design decisions are evaluated through a Learner Experience (LX) design rubric to ensure effective, equitable, and professional information delivery. Prerequisites: LDT 500A & LDT 500B

LDT 535 (3 Units) Curating Digital Asset and Artifacts: This course explores the lifecycle of digital assets and artifacts within instructional systems, from initial needs assessment to final implementation. Students analyze assets as critical system inputs--ranging from tangible media and AI-generated content to intangible learner prior knowledge. A significant portion of the course is dedicated to the legal and ethical landscapes of instructional design. Students will navigate the complexities of U.S. Copyright law, the TEACH Act, and Creative Commons, with a specific focus on the emerging intellectual property challenges posed by Generative AI. Through case studies and hands-on design, students conduct needs assessments to evaluate assets for pedagogical alignment, accessibility, and technical feasibility. The course further examines the shift toward authentic assessment and the disruptive impact of Generative AI on learning. By the conclusion of the course, students will be able to craft ethically sound, comprehensive design plans that balance the risks and liabilities of copyright with the innovative potential of modern instructional tools. Prerequisites: LDT 500A & LDT 500B

LDT 540 (3 Units) Strategic Leadership in Digital Learning

: This course establishes the foundations for ethical leadership within the digital learning landscape. Students develop essential skills for leading cross-functional remote teams, managing complex project delivery, and navigating the requirements of regulatory bodies (e.g., Accreditation, Accessibility, and GDPR). Students will use Generative AI as a strategic tool to enhance research, facilitate project management tasks, and streamline professional communication. Through a user-centric lens, students map learner journeys and synthesize their expertise into a comprehensive business plan for an online program. Prerequisites: LDT 500A & LDT 500B

LDT 545 (3 Units) Learner Assessment and Evaluation of Training Programs: This course examines theories and techniques for assessing and evaluating educational and training programs, with an emphasis on contemporary, technology-supported evaluation practices. Students apply methodologies to identify needs, establish measurable objectives, and design, test, and refine assessment and evaluation plans for educational, training, and adult learning environments. Students will examine practical applications of Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation and how they are supported by generative AI to draft, analyze, and pressure-test assessment and evaluation artifacts. Through an applied case study, students will demonstrate workforce-ready competencies in program evaluation and assessment best practices, informed by AI literacy and responsible use. Prerequisites: LDT 500A & LDT 500B

LDT 550 (3 Units) Applying Educational Research Methods: This course prepares students to critically engage with educational research to inform effective, evidence-based decisions in learning design and instructional technology. Students will identify a real-world problem of practice, conduct a scholarly literature review, and design an actionable research proposal to address it. Through scaffolded assignments and collaborative peer feedback, students will analyze current research, develop well-aligned research questions, and explore appropriate methodologies, ethical considerations, and data presentation strategies. Throughout the course, students will engage with generative AI tools as analytic and reflective supports, using them to interrogate ideas, surface assumptions, and refine scholarly reasoning. By the end of the course,

students will not only produce a comprehensive research proposal but also reflect on how educational research shapes their professional identity and strengthens their ability to justify design decisions grounded in data and theory. Prerequisites: LDT 500A & LDT 500B

LDT 555 (3 Units) Emerging Technologies in Learning Design: Designed as a dynamic exploratory lab, this course explores the rapidly evolving landscape of learning technologies with content that continuously adapts to reflect the latest industry advancements. Students evaluate the value and practical application of cutting-edge tools in creating high-impact learning activities for diverse learning and development contexts. Students will actively engage in the applied use of generative AI to create diverse training content, such as animated training videos and AI-powered chatbot tutorials, aligned with the specific learning needs of their Capstone project. By assessing real-time learning design trends and the ethical implications of rapid tech adoption, students learn to move beyond the hype and make responsible, research-based recommendations for technology deployment in the modern workforce. Prerequisites: LDT 500A & LDT 500B

This course is a prerequisite for taking LDT 560.

LDT 560 (3 Units) Capstone Project: Professional Portfolio and Online Course Design
: This Capstone course is the culminating assessment of the Master of Science in Learning Design and Technology. In this course, students will demonstrate all program learning outcomes through an instructional design portfolio project that showcases their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the field. They'll complete a two-module online course that reflects their ability to apply learning theories, instructional design processes, and technology integration to address a specific instructional need for a target audience. Additionally, students will engage in peer evaluation to demonstrate critical evaluation skills against ethical, quality, research-based, and professional standards in learning design and technology. Throughout the online course design process, students are encouraged to collaborate with AI systems, assess output accuracy, document transparent use, and justify the strategic application of AI as a professional tool of the trade. Prerequisites: LDT 500A, LDT 500B, LDT 520, LDT 530, LDT 535, LDT 540, LDT 545, LDT 550, and LDT 555

MS-LDT Program Academic Calendar (subject to change)

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

onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/ldt/

MS-LDT Program Policies and Procedures

Technical Requirements

Students must own or have unrestricted access to a computer for this program. Courses will utilize a variety of technologies and multimedia. To complete course activities and to access course content, please verify that you have the following technologies and plug-ins available:

- Computer – 16 GB, 1.5 GHz Speed I7 + 500 GB external memory (preferably SSD hard disk drive). PC computer suggested.
- Mac users will need to (1) download a PC emulation software such as VMWare Fusion in order to access the required program software and (2) have access to Windows 10 or newer.
- Browser Plug-ins – Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Adobe Reader.
- Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome is the recommended browser. You will want to have 2 browsers for software testing and viewing.
- [Microsoft Office](#) is required.
- Speakers or headset – to listen and record multimedia.
- Webcam – for recording video.
- High-speed internet connection required (DSL or better).
- Google Suite (Gmail for student email, Google Docs, Google Drive, etc.)
- Access to Articulate360 tools (Storyline 360, Rise 360, Content Library 360, and Review 360).

Articulate360 Access

All students in the online MS-LDT program require current access to Articulate360 software for various assignments and projects. The University of San Diego will issue a one-time, discounted tech fee of \$280 for all first-semester students to be granted access to an Articulate360 account. The account suite will grant access to the following tools:

- Storyline 360, Rise 360, Content Library 360, Review 360, Studio 360, Presenter 360, Quizmaker 360, Engage 360, Replay 360, and Peek 360 (without the discounted rate, the cost for these tools would typically be ~\$500/year).

Students who already have access to Articulate360 and the required tools can waive this one-time fee by submitting the [Waiver Request form](#). Please only submit a waiver if you already have access to the following required tools: Storyline 360, Rise 360, Content Library 360, and Review 360.

All enrolled students will have access to Articulate360. If you file a Leave of Absence, withdraw/drop a course, or graduate from the program, access will be terminated until you enroll again in the program.

Students will have access to Articulate 360 while enrolled as a student and for up to 6 months after graduation. After the 6-month period, it is the responsibility of the student to pursue an individual purchase/subscription to maintain access to the editing tools and systems involved. Even once the university-sponsored coverage ends, the projects and files will remain on the Articulate 360 account, but students won't be able to work on them using the software until a new license/subscription is purchased. Students would, however, be able to access all the files they created and have "forever" access to whatever they published to Review 360.

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. Late assignments will only be accepted at the discretion of the instructor and in compliance with their course-specified late work policy.

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-LDT program follows the university's registration policies and procedures, which are located at:

<https://graduate.catalog.sandiego.edu/academics/academicregulations#registration-policies-and-procedures1>.

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). Tuition payment is due on the first day of the semester. Unpaid student accounts are subject to late fees. For drop and withdrawal policy and deadlines, view the academic calendars found on the MS-LDT Student Success Center webpage: onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/ldt/

Dropping & Withdrawing Courses

Students will register for two 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. Students located in Oregon should contact their Program Coordinator for information on tuition refund schedules. *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 their 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 his or her 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 criteria other than those 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 the 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 warrant an investigation, 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 the 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 their 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 to submit 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 the 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 a maximum of 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 due to 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://graduate.catalog.sandiego.edu/academics/academicsandadmission#completion-of-degree-requirements-the-petition-to-graduate>

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-LDT program for:

1. Failure to maintain a grade point average of 3.0 for all coursework.
2. Failure to make satisfactory academic progress toward their degree.
3. Failure to complete the program within the time limits for the 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 their Academic Coordinator to discuss the concern. The Academic Coordinator or his or her faculty designee(s) will provide the student with a written plan for improvement that specifies the nature of the concern(s) along with the required steps for remediation for the successful completion of the program. The Academic Coordinator or his or her 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 the 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

The eligibility of transfer credits from accredited institutions will be determined by the Academic Director. Students are encouraged to submit a transfer credit petition before their first semester to ensure accurate planning of their academic program. Transfer petitions for prior coursework will not be accepted during the final semester unless the transfer course is being taken in that 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 in 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 credits 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 an 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 the 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 that 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.

MS-LDT Artificial Intelligence Policy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents dynamic challenges and opportunities for both academia and professional use. Given the specialized nature of our Master's program and the expectation that you'll develop practitioner-oriented AI proficiency, [this living document formally outlines LDT's specific policy regarding AI use](#). Please note that the policy is subject to change. A current copy of the policy will be provided in every LDT course.

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 4.5 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:
 - Submit documents required for the federal Financial Aid Verification compliance process
 - Provide notarized proof of their identity
 - Resolve any outstanding C-Codes (Comment Codes) in their file, such as those relating to previously defaulted student loans
4. **What are the interest rates for student loans available for graduate students?** Students are eligible for unsubsidized 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 2026 – Summer 2027 aligns with the 2026-2027 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 Office of Student Accounts 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 students have the option to pay in 4-5 equal installments, dependent upon the start date; Student Accounts provides this option for a processing fee of \$50 per semester.
- 12. What is your 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.* **No refund** will be provided after the third day of the semester for either class. Students located in Oregon should contact their Program Coordinator for information on tuition refund schedules. *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?** You will receive all of the necessary registration information from the online Program Coordinator before registration opens. This information includes registration instructions, course titles, CRNs, and textbook information. Students can opt in to the continuous enrollment process to request automatic enrollment for each semester.
- 14. What happens if I relocate during the MS-LDT program?** Students must notify the university if they relocate to another state at any time during their program. If a student relocates, either temporarily or permanently, to a state not currently authorized [as listed on the website](#), they will become ineligible to continue in their program due to state authorization regulations. Please review the unauthorized states before making any relocation plans.

Program Contacts and Important Websites and Emails

Academic Director Lisa Evans, PhD lisaevans@SanDiego.edu	Student Success Center onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/studentsuccess/ldt/	Your Student Success Team studentsuccess@sandiego.edu
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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 usdtorerores.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