

Master of Defense and Strategic Studies Online

The Master of Defense and Strategic Studies is designed to provide an in-depth, critical examination of the major defense and security challenges facing the United States now and in the future. Particular attention will be placed on the development of strategy, both in theory and practice, to address defense-related problems. Offered in a distance-learning/online format, this will be a distinctive degree tailored to improving the competence of military and civilian personnel engaged in strategic planning, the inter-agency process, military operations, diplomacy, budgeting, legislative affairs, defense program management, research and development, and a myriad of other staff activities and specialties.

The program is offered online through UTEP Connect. (<https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/utepconnect/>)

Admissions Requirements

1. Completion and submission of a graduate admissions application.
2. Submission of official transcripts in accordance with the requirements of the Graduate School.
3. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
4. A brief statement of purpose (1-2 pages) that addresses educational and career goals and reasons for pursuing the degree.
5. Three letters of recommendation from individuals that can evaluate the ability to succeed in a rigorous graduate program, such as former instructors. Letters of recommendation from employers or work supervisors are also acceptable. Please contact the DSS Director for any questions regarding letters of recommendation.
6. Applicants whose degrees are from non-English speaking institutions are required to demonstrate English proficiency. Please consult the Graduate School (<https://www.utep.edu/graduate/future-students/applicant-timelines.html>) website for required scores.

Degree Requirements

Master of Defense and Strategic Studies - 33 semester hours

The online program consists of eleven (11) required courses (33 semester hours), completed at the student's pace, with the option to aim for graduation within one year. Each course has a duration of seven weeks. There are four core courses focused on strategy, conflict, and security in the modern world, complemented by seven elective courses outlining the strategic relevance and challenges of specific world regions such as the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific, and topics like Information Warfare and Space Strategy. This sequence leads to a final core course focused on the likely character of future warfare. Educational goals include students gaining desired skills in areas like strategic communication, such as the ability to synthesize large amounts of information and credibly and persuasively present a concise analysis both verbally and in written form. The curriculum fosters greater cross-cultural competence and an understanding of related U.S. strategic interests and capabilities.

Academic Standards

Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better in order to earn the Master's degree. Students with a semester GPA below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. Students will have only nine semester hours (three courses) to return to "good" academic standing with a GPA of 3.0 or better. Those students failing to return to good academic standing after nine semester hours may be dismissed from the program.

Degree Plan

Required Credits: 33

| Code | Title | Hours |
|---|--|-------|
| Defense & Strategic Studies (All courses require a grade of C or better) | | |
| Required Courses (15 hours): | | |
| DSS 5300 | U.S. National Security (OR DSSX 5300) | 3 |
| DSS 5301 | Strategic Theory & Modern War (OR DSSX 5301) | 3 |
| DSS 5302 | Global Security (OR DSSX 5302) | 3 |
| DSS 5306 | U.S. Grand Strategy (OR DSSX 5306) | 3 |
| DSS 5320 | Future Warfare (OR DSSX 5320) | 3 |
| Elective Courses | | |
| Select 18 hours from the following: | | 18 |
| DSS 5303 | Low Intensity Conflict (OR DSSX 5303) | 3 |
| DSS 5304 | Information Operations (OR DSSX 5304) | 3 |
| DSS 5305 | Cyber Warfare (OR DSSX 5305) | 3 |
| DSS 5310 | Strategic Survey-Americas (OR DSSX 5310) | 3 |
| DSS 5311 | Strategic Survey-Africa (OR DSSX 5311) | 3 |
| DSS 5312 | Strategic Survey-Europe (OR DSSX 5312) | 3 |

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| DSS 5313 | Strategic Survey-Middle East (OR DSSX 5313) | 3 |
| DSS 5314 | Strategic Survey-Indo Pacific (OR DSSX 5314) | 3 |
| DSS 5315 | Strategic Survey-North America (OR DSSX 5315) | 3 |
| DSS 5319 | Space Strategy (OR DSSX 5319) | 3 |
| DSS 5321 | Selected Topics in DSS (OR DSSX 5321) | 3 |
| Total Hours | | 33 |