



Georgia Clerks Education Institute



Carl Vinson Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Masters Education Management Development Program

Guidelines and 2024-2026 Schedule

Masters Education Management Development Program

In 1980, the International Institute of Municipal Clerks implemented the Academy for Advanced Education. The purpose is to acknowledge, promote, and guide advanced training and continued professional growth. In support of this effort, an advanced education program was instituted in Georgia in 1982. The program provides an opportunity for certified city and county clerks to continue supervisory and management development and professional growth. Now named the Masters Education Management Development Program, the program was planned by the certification committee, has been updated in collaboration with Vinson Institute faculty, and is offered in conjunction with the fall/winter Georgia Clerks Education Institute conferences.

Program Summary

The Masters Education Management Development Program features three key components:

1. ten courses
2. peer networking
3. a project

Peer networking and engaged participation during classroom time are expected. Two courses within the series are offered at the fall and winter Georgia Clerks Education Institute conferences. Course offerings occur in a repeating, two and half year cycle that matches the order of the list below:

Class Title	Schedule
Continuous Improvement	February 2024
Ethics and the Public Servant	February 2024
Managing Power Effectively	September 2024
Advanced Change Management	September 2024
Effective Public Presentations I	February 2025
Effective Public Presentations II	February 2025
The Role of the Manager	September 2025
Communication and Coaching Skills	September 2025
Performance Evaluations	February 2026
Conflict Management	February 2026

Course offerings outside of the Georgia Clerks Education Institute programming may be available at ACCG, GMCA, GCCA, or GMA events. Clerks should check the listings from the associations for which courses are available.

Clerks who have earned certification may commence the program at any point during the course cycle.

Attendance is recommended for both course days during a specific conference to avoid needlessly extending the projected two and a half year time period. However, it is recognized that missed conferences may add to the time needed for course completion.

Advanced Management Certificate

The program's project requirement is for those participants interested in receiving an *Advanced Management Certificate* and may be fulfilled after successful completion of the 60 course hours. Certified clerks who choose not to complete the job-related project are still encouraged to participate in the management series.

Project Requirement Summary

The project is designed to fully apply classroom topics to a clerk's daily work. There are two project options, and each requires applying knowledge from and reflecting upon the classroom topics. In short, the two options are:

- 1) Conducting an actual work/process improvement project and analyzing it in terms of the applicable classroom topics.
- 2) Writing a reflection paper about your work that considers all nine topics from the instruction.

Both options require a *Lessons Learned* section; one is about what you may have learned while conducting the process improvement and the other summarizes what you have learned during the Masters Education Program.

Project Requirement Details

For completion of the Masters Education Management Development Program and to be awarded an Advanced Management Certificate, a participant must complete a project, in addition to successfully fulfilling the ten course class requirements. Two major types of projects are allowed: **process improvement** and **reflection**. In either case, the project should demonstrate application of the many skills and practical theories participants have learned through the series of classes. The written report must be submitted to the course instructor **within one year of completion of the course work**.

The individual selects a project, which must be approved by the course instructor (or designee); process improvement projects also require written approval from the clerk's supervisor (manager/administrator, mayor, chairman).

1. *Process Improvement Project*. With this option, you are to achieve some form of process (organizational, policy, or procedural) improvement and prepare a written report that documents your effort. Projects may focus on such areas as interactions among staff and elected officials, employee morale, improving work procedures, scheduling, employee training, creative problem solving, development of guidelines for improved intergovernmental relations, and improved performance evaluation systems. The project must be something you have or have had personal responsibility for, and you will work with others during some phase of the project.

2. *Reflection Project*. If your professional duties or responsibilities make a process improvement project difficult to accomplish, you have the option of submitting a reflection paper as your final project.
3. Unlike the process improvement project, the reflection project is a wholly individual effort. It involves documenting how each and every course topic has affected you in your professional role.

Getting Your Project Going

Participants can have their project idea approved at any point during the course of study. However, the participant will need to have taken most of the courses to be in a position to prepare a complete written report that meets all requirements. However, a portion of the reflection project option can be drafted following each class taken

Begin with a conversation with the Masters Education Management Development Program Instructor. Your goal is to explore some project ideas and get the go-ahead. If it's a *process improvement project*, it should be related to something that you initiate and manage. Alternatively, the *reflection project* option is more personal but broader in management development scope. After this initial conversation, you will need to submit a written request for approval to the course instructor's attention. If your desired project is a process improvement one, you also will need to seek and submit written approval by your supervisor. These requests may be submitted as email correspondence, scanned attachments, faxed letters, or mailed memoranda. Before you initiate the project, be sure the course instructor has given formal written approval. (In most cases, this will be accomplished via email.) Please recognize that it *is your responsibility to be certain that the course instructor has received your request; confirming the receipt of anything you send with a phone call or via email is required*.

Project Report Content and Outline

While the two project options share the core objective of demonstrating the participant's knowledge of the Masters Education Management Development Program courses and relating that knowledge to the workplace, the specific content and outline of each option differ. The subsections that follow further outline the differing requirements for each of the options.

Process Improvement Project. It is critical that the written report for any process improvement project describes not only what the participant did in terms of making an improvement but also the ways that the Masters Education Management Development Program informed the project work. Please recognize that all ten courses may not apply; the participant is only required to discuss the courses that did apply. For example, performance evaluation may not be something that is within the project's scope or the participant's area of responsibility. However, it is likely that issues related to change, power, or conflict did arise. For example, if conflict was resolved, how was this achieved? If there was no conflict during the process, explain why this was the case. Consistent with the checklist, be sure to include an evaluation of the project. Was it successful? How did the participant measure its success? What lessons did the participant learn?

The checklist that follows should be used as a guide for completing the written project report. The participant must be sure to address each of the areas indicated. Please contact the course instructor for

clarification or guidance; the project may not “fit” into all of the checklist areas. Please note that the project report goes beyond a detailed description of the project; it also includes an analysis of what transpired during the project period and an evaluation of what the participant accomplished.

Process Improvement Project Report Checklist

This is simply a guide for use in preparing your process improvement project. While it is not necessary that you strictly adhere to it in terms of order and structure, any written report that does not address all applicable areas will be considered incomplete.

√	Section	Comments
	Title Page	
	Background	Remember, the reader knows nothing about your organization.
	Problem to be solved or improvement to be made	What issue(s) are you trying to address and why? If it can be stated quantitatively, please do so. (e.g., reduce backlog by_% by_____.)
	Project description	What is it you are setting out to do?
	Steps you took or process followed during course of project	This is a description (with relevant details) of what you did.
	Analysis of the MDP topics that relate to your project. How did this knowledge inform your decisions?	**<u>Most Important Section</u> How did you use what you have learned? Think about the courses you took and how they relate to the project. (e.g., Was there conflict? How did you manage others during this project? Describe any ethical challenges along the way and how you resolved them, and so on.)
	Evaluation and lessons learned	** Another Important section Was the project successful? How do you measure this success? What worked? What did not?
	Timetable	Some dates may be in the future.
	Appendix: Policy, procedure, manual, or some artifact of what you accomplished. Also, budget or financial sheet timeline (including future steps)	Any worksheets, survey results, maps, or brochures you have that help the reader better understand the process. If your project has a tangible product that can be copied or included, please do so. (e.g., new policy, copy of handbook or manual).

Reflections Paper Project Checklist

The reflection project paper is designed to be a comprehensive reflection of the coursework; it is broader in content scope but with only three major sections, is less complex in organization, and so a simple checklist is provided below. The project paper should be organized into three sections. A paper that fails to include one of these sections will be considered incomplete.

√	Section	Comments
	Introduction	Here you are to briefly describe what you are about to do. Name your position and jurisdiction and how the paper is organized.
	Content and Analysis	Here you reflect on each of the nine course topics; you will recall that although you had 10 class days, public speaking spanned two of them. This section should include 1.5-2 double spaced pages per topic in length. Be sure to describe your reflections, observations, and reactions to how each topic relates to or has affected your workplace situation. While not required, you may also include reflections on how a topic relates to non-workplace situations.
	Lessons Learned	This section should summarize what you have learned during the Masters Education Program. Here you should describe what's at the core of each topic or the single theme (or two) that unites your learning.

Project Report Font and Format Details

The suggested font for either report is Times New Roman 12 point, but any business quality, easily readable font that does not exceed 12 point or go under 11 point will be accepted.

Your completed reflection project paper should be 17-21 double-spaced pages in total length.

Masters Education Management Development Program Projects:
Things to Keep In Mind

- You must meet with the Masters Education Management Development Program Instructor, for approval of all project ideas.
- Process improvement projects also will require your supervisor's approval.
- You may start at any time, but you will not be able to complete what's required until you have participated in all ten class days.
- Keep class handouts and the yellow sheets that have mini-notes on each class.
- You can work on the reflection paper section by section as you go through your coursework. It's a good option if you do not have responsibility for work processes and/or finding a large block of time to work on a project is difficult.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the Institute director or other designee receives any correspondence you send via email or USPS.
- Once agreed, we look for you to fulfill your commitment according to schedule.

Masters Education Graduate Seminar (MEGS)

The Masters Education Graduate Seminar, or MEGS, is continuing education designed for clerks and finance officers who have successfully completed the Masters Education Management Development Program. During four conference sessions held at the Georgia Clerks Education Institute that extend from Sunday evening through Tuesday afternoon, MEGS participants will explore a management or leadership topic through reading, reflection, and group discussion. MEGS is exclusively available to those conference participants who have earned their Advanced Management certificate.