



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
Teaching, Learning  
& Culture

# Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum & Instruction-Reading and Literacy



## Handbook



## Contact Information

The Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture (TLAC) administrative offices are located on the third floor of Harrington Tower (EDCT). Faculty offices are located on the second, third, and fourth floors of EDCT. The Graduate Advising Office is located in Harrington 366.

### **Department Head:**

Dr. Claire Katz

### **Literacy Program Chair:**

Dr. Kausalai Wijekumar

[k\\_wijekumar@tamu.edu](mailto:k_wijekumar@tamu.edu)

### **Literacy Program Co-Chair:**

Dr. Emily Cantrell

[aggieemily@tamu.edu](mailto:aggieemily@tamu.edu)

### **Certification Coordinator:**

Misti Corn

[mistihcorn@tamu.edu](mailto:mistihcorn@tamu.edu)

### **Graduate Field Placement:**

Jane Rankin

[janerankin@tamu.edu](mailto:janerankin@tamu.edu)

### **Contact Graduate Advisor:**

Sydney Zentell

[szentell@tamu.edu](mailto:szentell@tamu.edu)



## Perspectives

### Program Purpose and Goals

The **Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum and Instruction-Reading and Literacy** program within the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture offers students the opportunity to earn their master's degree along with completing coursework for an additional state certification at the same time: **State of Texas Reading Specialist Certification**.

Research tells us that many teachers lack the knowledge necessary to deliver evidence-based literacy instruction (Binks-Cantrell, Joshi, Washburn, 2012; Binks-Cantrell, Washburn, Joshi, & Hougen, 2012; Cunningham, Zibulsky, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2009; Moats, 2014), and we also know from personal experience that many schools across Texas desire their teachers to have additional literacy training and expertise. The Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction-Reading and Literacy program can help address these needs by offering distance education and face-to-face delivery options.

For those seeking certification, there are seven specific RDNG classes that must be completed to fulfill the coursework requirements for the State of Texas Reading Specialist certification: RDNG 602, 603, 604, 616, 620, 605, and 609.

Additionally, there are also three other RDNG courses recommended as electives (RDNG 612, 613, and 630) from which students can choose to fulfill the remaining 6 hours necessary for their master's degree. These courses are outlined on the degree plan included in this document.

### Distance Education Delivery Option

To increase the program's reach across the state of Texas, a distance education option for the program was added in the Spring of 2018. Offering online options for all the required certification courses also offers students in other online master's programs the opportunity to complete the required coursework for the state certifications as electives should students wish to enroll in those courses.

The distance education offering of the Reading Specialist certification includes both asynchronous and synchronous online classes for students. Asynchronous courses are those where students complete course requirements, as indicated by the syllabus and deadlines, on their own time. Four courses are offered asynchronously: RDNG 602



(Summer), RDNG 612/613 (alternates Summer and Fall semesters), RDNG 630 (Spring), and RDNG 620 (Fall). The other courses are offered synchronously, meaning classes occur on Tuesday and/or Wednesday evenings via video conference, sometimes joining an on-campus section of the course via a video conferencing system to allow for further collaboration between educators.

Students joining face to face classes via video conference participate in class just as if they were attending in person. They are provided electronic copies of PowerPoints, documents, and any other materials being utilized in class ahead of time. They are encouraged and asked to participate in discussions and are placed with a partner or small group for breakout discussions/work.

During the reading clinic practicum courses (RDNG 604 and 605), students who are seeking Texas Reading Specialist certification are asked to find a reader demonstrating literacy challenges within an actual school setting located in the state of Texas. Students must seek permission to provide tutorials and for audio-visual recordings of sessions from the participant's guardian figure as well as their site supervisor. Students will be asked to submit audio recordings as well as three tutorial sessions to indicate progress to the course instructor and a field supervisor.

As students participate in the practicum courses, standardized tests used in the reading clinic are available to be shipped to those enrolled in the distance education program delivery option. Students will sign an agreement to assume responsibility for returning the tests in high quality condition via a prepaid shipping label. Money generated from the distance education fees as well as the reading clinic fees will be used to pay for the shipping of tests.

## References

- Binks-Cantrell, E., Joshi, R. M., & Washburn, E. (2012). Validation of an instrument for assessing teacher knowledge of basic language constructs of literacy. *Annals of Dyslexia, 62*, 153-171.
- Binks-Cantrell, E., Washburn E. K., Joshi, R. M., & Hougen, M. (2012). Peter effect in the preparation of reading teachers. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 16*, 526-536.
- Cunningham, A. E., Zibulsky, J., Stanovich, K. E., & Stanovich, P. J. (2009). How teachers would spend their time teaching language arts: The mismatch between self-reported and best practices. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 42*, 418-430.
- Moats, L. C. (2014). What teachers don't know and why they aren't learning it: Addressing the need for content and pedagogy in teacher education. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties, 19*, 75-91.

## Program Admission

All M.Ed. Reading and Literacy applicants must meet minimum requirements as set by Texas A&M University. While satisfying the minimum admission criteria qualifies the applicant to be considered, meeting minimum criteria for admission to the university does not guarantee admission to this program. A departmental admission committee considers all criteria with emphasis on prior professional experiences having prepared the individual for roles where literary expertise might be valuable and best applied. Excellent writing skills are also highly valued.

Applicants must submit a GraduateCAS application with all TLAC Departmental requirements to be fully considered for admission. Students should visit <http://tlac.tamu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/med-and-ms-admission-requirements> to read the specifics about the admissions process.

### Minimum Criteria for Admission

Applications are considered for spring, summer and fall admission to the program. March 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for summer and fall admission, and October 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for spring admission. The GRE General test is not required to be eligible for admission to the program. This program **does not** provide initial teacher certification. These criteria include:

- **Admissions application**, including \$89 (domestic applicants) or \$114 (international applicants) non-refundable fee: <https://texasam2023.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>
- **Official transcripts and records:** Unofficial transcripts may be uploaded for review via the respective application service; however, if you are admitted and intend to enroll, you must provide an official transcript directly to the Office of Admissions before you will be allowed to register for classes. Transcripts can be submitted through SPEEDE, eSCRIP-SAFE, PARCHMENT and National Student Clearinghouse.
- **Two essays:** [essays prompts](#)
- **Statement of Purpose**
- **Three letters of recommendation**
- Minimum 3.0 GPR
- Hold a valid Texas teacher certification through TEA



# M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction (C&I)

with Literacy Emphasis, including coursework for Reading Specialist Certification\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

UIN: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester of Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance Education: Yes No

| Required Core Courses |                                   |              |                      |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Course Number         | Course Title                      | Credit Hours | Semester Available   |
| EDCI 602              | Cultural Foundations of Education | 3            | Fall, Spring, Summer |
| EDCI 644              | Curriculum Development            | 3            | Fall, Spring, Summer |
| EDCI 673              | Analysis of Teaching Behavior     | 3            | Fall, Spring Summer  |

| Departmental Required Electives |  |              |   |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------|---|
| Course Number                   | Course Title   | Credit Hours | Semester Available                                    |
| RDNG 602                        | Teaching Reading in the Elementary Grades  | 3            | Fall*, Summer <sup>+</sup>                            |
| RDNG 603                        | Using Advanced Literacy to Teach & Learn Across Disciplines  | 3            | Spring*   |
| RDNG 604 <sup>^</sup>           | Reading Diagnosis  | 3            | Fall*   |
| RDNG 605 <sup>^</sup>           | Practicum in Literacy Intervention   | 3            | Spring*   |
| RDNG 609                        | Foundations of Reading Instruction   | 3            | Spring*   |
| RDNG 616                        | Organization and Supervision of Reading Programs   | 3            | Summer*   |
| RDNG 620                        | Literacy and Language  | 3            | Fall <sup>+</sup> , Summer*                           |
| RDNG 630                        | Writing Development Assessment & Instruction   | 3            | Spring <sup>+</sup>                                   |
| RDNG Electives                  | Choose one:<br>RDNG 612: Children's Literature & Literacy OR<br>RDNG 613: Multicultural Children's Literature & Literacy | 3            | RDNG 612 or RDNG 613:<br>Fall <sup>+</sup><br>Summer* |

\*Courses offered in an on campus/synchronous format

+Courses offered in an asynchronous format (Will count as a Distance Education course)



^RDNG 604 is a prerequisite for RDNG 605 (160-hour practicum is required if seeking Reading Specialist certification)

**Please note important information:**

- After 15 hours of successfully completed courses, you must file a degree plan and select a committee for your Oral Final Exam.
- This program includes both asynchronous (online only) and synchronous (face-to-face and online) classes.

**Example course sequences for those seeking certification**

**Full Time - 5 Semesters**

| Year | Fall     | Spring   | Summer   |
|------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1    | RDNG 602 | RDNG 603 | RDNG 616 |
|      | RDNG 620 | RDNG 609 | RDNG 613 |
|      | EDCI 602 | EDCI 644 |          |
| 2    | RDNG 604 | RDNG 630 |          |
|      | EDCI 673 | RDNG 605 |          |

**Part Time – 6 Semesters**

| Year | Fall     | Spring   | Summer   |
|------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1    | RDNG 602 | RDNG 603 | RDNG 616 |
|      | RDNG 620 | RDNG 609 | RDNG 613 |
| 2    | RDNG 604 | RDNG 630 | EDCI 602 |
|      | EDCI 673 | RDNG 605 | EDCI 644 |

**Please note important information:**

- Sequence of Coursework can vary depending on the student’s academic pursuits
- Students should communicate, and work with, their assigned faculty advisor to develop their own course sequence.
- RDNG 604 and 605 are practicum courses and are recommended to be taken towards the end of the program as they represent a culmination of the knowledge gained through the program.



## Steps to M.Ed. Success: Earning your M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction with Literacy Emphasis

| Step | What to Do   | When  | Approved by   |
|------|--|---|---|
| 1    | Accept offer of admission to certification program; communicate with faculty advisor to plan course of study for first semester; work with advisor to process all paperwork                    | Before first semester registration  | Faculty Advisor, Advisor  |
| 2    | Attend new student orientation   | Before the start of your first full semester                                | Faculty Advisor   |
| 3    | Complete CITI training   | Before the end of your first semester                                       | Advisor   |
| 4    | Successfully complete first semester of coursework, maintaining at least a 3.0 GPR   | First semester (and each semester thereafter)                               | Advisor   |
| 5    | Establish committee chair; find two other committee members; submit your degree plan online  | When you are registered for your 15 <sup>th</sup> hour of coursework        | Advisor, chair, department head, The Graduate and Professional School (GPS) |
| 6    | Update your degree plan using a long-form petition if courses taken differ from those on the degree plan   | When earning credit hours 15-36 of your degree                              | Advisor, chair, department head, GPS  |
| 7    | Email your chair when you are entering your final semester of coursework to schedule your oral final exam. Download and complete the "Request and Announcement of Final Exam" form from OGAPS. | Final semester of courses   | Advisor   |
| 8    | Complete Certification Application document. Check to make sure degree program and committee chair are up to date and course work is complete  | Before applying for graduation  | Advisor, chair and department head  |
| 9    | Apply for a degree online at the Howdy portal; pay graduation fee  | During first week of final semester; pay graduation fee; see OGAPS calendar | GPS   |
| 10   | Graduation: arrange for cap and gown at <a href="http://graduation.tamu.edu">graduation.tamu.edu</a>   | After you apply for graduation before deadline                              |   |



|    |   |  |                  |
|----|---|--|------------------|
| 11 | Take certification test and apply for certification through TEA | After approved by certification office | CEHD Cert Office |
| *  | Update your distance location in Howdy                          | Each semester                          | Registrar        |

## Oral Final Exam

**This is a significant milestone program to be completed during the final semester in your program. Below you will find important information in regards to scheduling and completing your Oral Final Exam.**

**Scheduling.** The exam will be conducted at a date and time convenient to you and your three committee members (Chair, Member, and outside Member). It is ***strongly recommended*** that your committee member be a faculty member in the Reading & Literacy program area.

Prior to scheduling your final exam with your committee, please contact your staff advisor for guidance on dates and deadlines relating to the final exam.

You will need to set up a Doodle Poll with 2-hour time slots between 9am-5pm on days/times you are available before the last day to complete the exam by. Make sure you set up the poll in Chicago/America time zone. Send out the Doodle poll to all of your committee members and ask them to kindly indicate what days/times they will be available for your oral final exam.

Once all committee members have submitted their responses, select a date/time that works for everyone and set up a Zoom meeting for that day and time. Be sure to use your TAMU Zoom account to set up the meeting so that the meeting does not expire after 30 minutes. Email the Zoom meeting information to your committee members and ask them for suggestions regarding what to study.

This is one of the most difficult aspects of the exam process and it is far better to plan ahead to get your date and time on the calendar early. It is not unusual to plan exam dates/times months in advance.

**Paperwork.** Once you have a date and time set, you need to file the paperwork. There are deadlines for the paperwork, so contact Graduate Advising for guidance on deadlines. File the electronic Request and Announcement Form. This form must be filed at least 10



business days before the exam. The form can be found here.

<https://powerforms.docusign.net/6bc30a44-705e-428b-a517-90550cf350cc?env=na2&acct=16517be3-5a0c-489f-a422-a57859ee0f60>

After the exam, you will need to file the paperwork to indicate you have met the milestone. Contact Graduate Advising on how to complete this step.

**The Exam.** The exam is basically three parts: (a) your introduction, (b) round-robin questioning, and (c) decision. Each are described below.

Be sure you study and are prepared on the topics provided by your committee members ahead of time. You can have your study notes with you during the meeting if you'd like. Be prepared to also start off with an introduction that includes 1. your prior teaching experiences, 2. highlights of what you have learned in this program, and 3. your future professional goals/plans.

**Introduction.** To begin the exam, you will be asked to offer a short biography, and it should be less than 4 min long. We want to know: (a) your background - education and teaching (grades and subjects taught), (b) highlights of what you have learned in the program, and (c) your future career goals. You may read from notes or create a slide deck, though it is not required nor expected. This is the one part of the exam that you can control, so it is recommended that you practice.

**Questioning.** Each of your committee members will take turns asking questions. We usually start with your in-program Member, then Outside Member, then Chair, but this can vary. Each will ask anywhere from 1-10 questions. Another round of questioning will be conducted. The second-round questions are usually follow-up questions or questions seeking more detailed knowledge about the topics. You can expect to be asked both direct and scenario-based questions. Scenario-based questions are often connected to your biography (e.g., the grade you are currently teaching or wish to teach).

**Decision.** After questioning is complete, you will be asked to leave the room (if in-person) or be placed in a Meeting room (if on Zoom). Your committee will discuss your responses to the questions and each member will vote on pass/fail.

**Zoom.** You may schedule your own Zoom meeting using your Texas A&M account. If you schedule using a free account, it will time out before the meeting is complete. You may not record any part of the meeting.

**Attempts.** If a student fails the final exam, they have one more opportunity to retake the exam. It must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the next regular



semester (summer terms are excluded). The student and advisory committee should jointly negotiate a mutually acceptable date for this purpose and submit a new examination scheduled to our office.

### **REQUIRED CLASSES**

EDCI 602: Cultural Foundations of Education

EDCI 644: Curriculum Development

EDCI 673: Analysis of Teaching Behavior

RDNG 602: Teaching Reading in the Elementary Grades

RDNG 603: Using Advanced Literacy to Teach & Learn Across Disciplines

RDNG 604: Reading Diagnosis

RDNG 605: Practicum in Literacy Intervention

RDNG 609: Foundations of Reading Instruction

RDNG 616: Organization and Supervision of Reading Programs

RDNG 620: Literacy and Language

RDNG 630: Writing Development Assessment & Instruction

### **RDNG Electives - Choose one:**

RDNG 612: Children's Literature & Literacy **OR**

RDNG 613: Multicultural Children's Literature & Literacy

You can find study materials for certification exams below

Science of Teaching Reading

[https://www.tx.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML\\_FRAG/TX293\\_PrepMaterials.html](https://www.tx.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/TX293_PrepMaterials.html)

Reading Specialist Certification exam

[https://www.tx.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML\\_FRAG/TX151\\_PrepMaterials.html](https://www.tx.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/TX151_PrepMaterials.html)

## [Reading Specialist \(151\) Preparation Materials](#)

A PDF version of the exam framework, sample questions, correct responses, and rationales is available here for printing purposes.. In this file the sample questions are presented initially without the correct answers displayed so that users may print them and answer the questions offline before reviewing the correct answers and rationales.

[www.tx.nesinc.com](http://www.tx.nesinc.com)



## Distance Education Restrictions

The department has specific rules and regulations related to campus-based programs. One of these regulations is a limit of four (4) courses taken in a distance or online format if you are a campus-based student. If you are a campus-based student and take more than four courses in an online format, these additional courses beyond the limit of four courses cannot count toward the 36-hour degree plan, and exceeding the limit will prevent you from graduating.

## Reading Specialist Certification

### Overview

The Reading Specialist certification program requires admission to the Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum & Instruction in the Department of TLAC.

The Reading Specialist certificate is a State of Texas teaching certificate that requires:

- A valid Texas teaching certificate
- Two years of successful teaching experience in an accredited, Texas school (can be completed before, during, or after coursework)
- The successful completion of a 160-hour field practicum, including three observations from a University Supervisor hired by TLAC
- A passing score on the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam

Seven specific courses will prepare Reading Specialist candidates to meet the state requirements listed above: RDNG 602, RDNG 603, RDNG 604 (offered only in the fall semester), RDNG 605 (offered only in the spring semester), RDNG 609, RDNG 616, and RDNG 620.

To comply with state requirements, Reading Specialist candidates will complete the practicum during the following course:

RDNG 605: Clinic Teaching in Reading (spring semester)

## Reading Certification Guidelines



1. Students must declare their intention to pursue the Reading Specialist certification when accepting the admission offer for the M.Ed. program. Failure to do so will not allow approval to take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam.
2. Students must take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam within 6 months of graduation.
3. When students declare their interest in pursuing Reading Specialist certification upon accepting admission into the program, they must also claim a TEA ID# if they do not already have one.
4. A 160-hour field practicum time log and three observations conducted by a University Supervisor must be submitted during RDNG 605.
5. During the final semester of coursework, students who declared their intent to seek Reading Specialist certification upon admission will be approved to take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam.
6. Students will be recommended for certification post-M.Ed. graduation and having provided documentation of a passing score on the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam and have two years of classroom teaching experience.
7. If the student does not yet have the required teaching experience, they can still be approved to take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam but certification will not take place until a service record that demonstrates successful completion of at least two years teaching experience at an accredited school.
8. Teaching experience cannot be satisfied by pre-certification observation hours, student teaching or substitute teaching experience.
9. Students who began their graduate studies prior to 2014 can no longer be approved to take the test.



## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) POLICY STATEMENT**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT AND POLICY**

*"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."*

Academic integrity is an essential force in the academic life of a university. It enhances the quality of education and celebrates the genuine achievements of others. It is, without reservation, a responsibility of all members of the Texas A&M University Community to actively promote academic integrity. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic dishonesty is not a neutral act -- failure to confront and deter it will reinforce, perpetuate, and enlarge the scope of such misconduct. Failure to comply with the honor code in any way can lead to dismissal from program. The decision to be removed from the program is made at the departmental level. For further information: <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/aggiencode/>

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty is paramount to the success of all students within the department to ensure the integrity of our programs and degrees offered. All students within the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture must comply with the Honor System Rules with regard to all aspects of community responsibility and academic misconduct. Students identified as violating academic honesty will be reported to the Aggie Honor Code office. Any academic misconduct confirmed by the Honor Council will result in dismissal from the TLAC program.