



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Teaching, Learning
& Culture

Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum & Instruction with Literacy Emphasis



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.

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Perspectives

Program Purpose and Goals

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

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 with literacy emphasis program can help address these needs by offering distance education and face-to-face delivery options.

There are seven specific RDNG courses 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.

There are also three other RDNG courses that are 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 reach more potential students and current/future teachers across the state of Texas and beyond, a distance education option for the program was added in the Spring of 2018. Offering distance education options for all of 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 if they wish to do so.

The online program 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 (Fall), RDNG 630 (Spring), and RDNG 620 (Fall). The other courses are offered synchronously, which means the classes occur on Tuesday and/or Wednesday



evenings in video conference conjunction with the face to face section of the course. Students enrolled in those classes will join the face to face class via video conference.

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.

For the reading clinic practicum courses (RDNG 604 and 605), students who are seeking Texas Reading Specialist certification are asked to find a struggling reader from their community and video record some of the assessment and instructional sessions (with necessary permissions secured and precautions taken for video recording). Standardized tests used in the reading clinic are shipped to students at a distance and they will sign an agreement to assume responsibility for returning the tests in 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. with literacy emphasis 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 1st is the deadline for summer and fall admission, and October 1st 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://texasam2021.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>
- **Official transcripts and records**: submitted directly to Graduate Admissions Processing
- **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 ⁺
RDNG 603	Using Advanced Literacy to Teach & Learn Across Disciplines	3	Spring*
RDNG 604 [^]	Reading Diagnosis	3	Fall*
RDNG 605 [^]	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 ⁺ , Summer*
RDNG 630	Writing Development Assessment & Instruction	3	Spring ⁺
RDNG Electives	Choose one: RDNG 612: Children's Literature & Literacy OR RDNG 613: Multicultural Children's Literature & Literacy	3	RDNG 612 or RDNG 613: Fall ⁺ 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.
- This program includes both asynchronous (online only) and synchronous (face-to-face and online) classes.



Example course sequences

Full Time - 5 Semesters

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

Part Time – 6 Semesters

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



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 th hour of coursework	Advisor, chair, department head, OGAPS
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, OGAPS
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	OGAPS
10	Graduation: arrange for cap and gown at graduation.tamu.edu	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 in your program. Below you will find important information.

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 can be held via Zoom or in-person. To schedule, you should choose at least 5 different dates and offer several 2-hour blocks of time during which you would be available to test (e.g., for online meetings this means: in a quiet space assured of no interruptions, with stable internet connection, a computer with a camera, microphone, and speakers). Most students set up a Doodle Poll with these chosen dates and times. If a committee member does not reply within about three business days, it is okay to politely, and respectfully, send a reminder. This is one of the most difficult aspects of the exam process and it is far better to plan ahead and get your date/time on the calendar early. It is not unusual for us 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 please contact Graduate Advising for guidance on deadlines. File the electronic Request and Announcement Form. 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.

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, typically. Then, 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. While 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.

STUDY GUIDE

- Read and know the contents of the National Reading Panel Report
- Name and define the Big 5 in Reading
- Explain various instructional approaches the National Reading Panel has named to address each of the 5 target areas.
- Explain how to assess the Big 5 before instruction on a concept begins, during instruction, after instruction on the concept ends); Understand how each are used in the classroom for literacy: screeners, diagnostics, formative, summative, standardized
- Explain what individual or small group interventions can be used for each of the Big 5 when whole group instruction does not meet student needs based on assessment results.
- Be prepared to describe cycle of data-driven intervention under the response-to-intervention model - non-response to effective instruction, student study team (or similar team at your school), referral, initial assessment, instructional interventions, assessment, data-based decision making
- Explain the characteristics and misunderstandings of dyslexia
- Explain effective interventions for dyslexia
- Explain common issues in writing
- Explain effective instruction for writing and why it is effective
- What is the Science of Reading?



There may be questions regarding the learning objectives from any of the courses in the program, listed below.

CORE 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

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. Students will need to provide a TEA ID# and a UIN within 7 days of their acceptance notification.

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 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, RDNG 605, RDNG 609, RDNG 616, and RDNG 620.

To comply with both the Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Curriculum & Instruction and state requirements, Reading Specialist candidates will enroll in two practicum-designated courses:

- RDNG 604: Reading Diagnosis (fall semester)
- RDNG 605: Clinic Teaching in Reading (spring semester)

The content in these two courses is designed to strengthen knowledge, skills and dispositions related to literacy processes while providing opportunities to apply course content via intervention tutoring experiences in a PreK-12 school setting.

Reading Certification Guidelines

1. Students must declare their intention in the option to pursue the Reading Specialist certification when accepting the admission offer for the master's graduate program. Students who do not declare intention to be certified at the beginning of their program (upon admission) will not be approved to take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam or be recommended for Reading Specialist certification.
2. Students must take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam within 6 months of graduation. *Students can later choose not to take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam but will not be able to change their mind after 6 months of graduation have passed.*
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. The TEA ID# must be claimed at the time of admission into the master's program.
4. All requested information must be provided by the student by the deadlines provided.



5. A 160-hour field practicum time log and three observations conducted by a University Supervisor must be submitted during RDNG 604 and/or RDNG 605.
6. Post-graduation, students who declared their intent to seek Reading Specialist certification upon admission will be approved to take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam.
7. *'Certification only' students will be approved to take the TExES Reading Specialist (151) exam upon completion of certification coursework.*
8. Students will not be eligible for certification until they have received their diploma, passed the TExES 151 exam, provided documentation of past teaching experience (minimum of 2 years for the Reading Specialist certificate) and submitted required SEHD form/s.
9. 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 be recommended until a service record that demonstrates successful completion of at least two years teaching experience at an accredited school has been submitted to the program.
10. Teaching experience cannot be satisfied by pre-certification observation hours, student teaching or substitute teaching experience.
11. Students who began their graduate studies prior to 2014 can no longer be approved to take the test.

Please note:

All candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as a teacher. TEA will perform a preliminary background check, for a fee, in the event there may be something on the candidate's record that may prevent certification eligibility.

Credit for Military or Non-Military Service, Training, or Education: Candidates may be able to apply prior or ongoing military or non-military training or education toward educator preparation program requirements for professional certificates. Such training or education may not count toward internship or practicum requirements and must have been provided by an approved EPP or an accredited institution of higher education within the past five years and be directly related to the certificate being sought. A candidate's prior coursework will be evaluated by academic advisors and/or TLAC Reading Specialist faculty/staff.



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/aggiecode/>

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.