

# *University of Delaware*

*School of Education  
M.Ed. In Literacy*

## *Program Policy Statement*

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## **Part I. Program History**

### **Purpose Statement**

The M.Ed. in Literacy program is a fully online 30-credit graduate program designed to prepare certified teachers to become Reading/Literacy Specialists. According to the ILA Standards for Reading Professionals (ILA, 2017), Reading/Literacy Specialists need competencies and skills that extend beyond those required of the classroom teacher. Specifically, they must demonstrate strong foundational skills in theory and research, a firm understanding of evidence-based instruction and assessment practices, and the ability to evaluate and plan literacy instruction for all students in the reading and writing classroom, including struggling readers and writers. In addition, Reading/Literacy Specialists must be proficient in print and digital literacy practices that allow them to create an environment where students read, write, and learn using traditional literature, multimodal texts, and technology-based literacy tools; in addition, they must be able to support teachers in the use of digital literacy tools. Reading/Literacy specialists must be able to design evidence-based literacy curricula and support teachers in its implementation. Finally, they must demonstrate the professionalism that will allow them to support teachers, work with families, and participate in local and state decision-making.

### **Origin of the Program**

The online M.Ed. in Literacy is a revision of two previously existing specializations within two degree programs in the School of Education: the Master of Instruction (designed to support classroom teachers who want to develop their expertise but remain in the classroom), and the M.Ed. with a specialization in Literacy and Schooling. Both of these specializations served candidates who eventually expressed a desire for certification as Reading Specialists, but neither was specifically designed with that goal in mind.

The M.Ed. in Reading replaced the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction/Literacy and Schooling specialization, and the title of the major was changed to “Reading” in 2004. In 2012 the program was revised to be offered fully online. In 2017 the title of the major was changed to “Literacy” to reflect the multitude of skills required to be literate in the 21st century.

The previous M.Ed. in Reading was reviewed by the International Reading Association for its attention to current standards in the training of Reading Specialists. In September 2010, the program received national recognition from the International Reading Association. Additionally, the Delaware Department of Education reviewed the program design and granted approval of the design as an approved program in the state certification process for Reading Specialists.

### **Administration and Faculty**

The Committee on Graduate Studies in Education (CGSE) is the SOE-level committee that administers all the graduate programs, including the M. Ed. in Literacy. The committee is composed of five faculty members from the School of Education, a graduate student member selected by the Education Graduate Association, and the Assistant Director of the School of Education who serves as the Graduate Coordinator for the School of Education.

The SOE is committed to the recruitment, support, and retention of full-time, tenure-line faculty members in literacy. Faculty members who teach graduate courses and advise graduate students in the School of Education must have a doctorate or equivalent. In some instances, faculty members with a master’s degree and special expertise in an area of Education as a result of concentrated study, employment experience, or service may be recommended for graduate teaching. In such cases, the faculty member must have a record of successful teaching in a specialized area of Education, proven scholarly ability, and the endorsement of the literacy faculty and the Director of the School of Education.

Faculty members in literacy review candidates for admission to the M.Ed. in Literacy, serve as advisors to candidates admitted to the program, teach courses, and evaluate candidates' progress in the program.

### Degrees Offered

The degree awarded to candidates who complete this program will be a M.Ed. in Literacy. Most graduates will earn this degree and then seek state Department of Education certification as Reading/Literacy Specialists.

## **Part II. Admission**

### University Policy on Admission

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated minimum requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths.

### University Admission Procedures

Complete applications will be reviewed upon receipt but no later than the following deadlines: fall admission, August 1st, spring admission, January 1st, summer admission, May 1st Admission application forms are available online.

Applicants must submit all of the following items to the Office of Graduate Studies before admission can be considered:

A nonrefundable application fee must be submitted with the application. Checks must be made payable to the University of Delaware. Applications received without the application fee will not be processed. Foreign students may utilize either a check or an International Postal Money Order to remit payment in U.S. currency.

An official transcript of all previous college records must be sent directly from the institution to the Office of Graduate Studies. Students who have attended the University of Delaware need not supply a transcript from Delaware. Transcripts issued in a language other than English must be accompanied by an official translation into English. If the rank of the student is not displayed on the transcript or diploma, an official letter of explanation and ranking from the institution where the degree was earned is required.

Applicants must submit at least three letters of recommendation. Letters should be from professors who can attest to the candidate's suitability for graduate study and supervisors who can comment on the candidate's professional commitment and experience. Letters from family, friends, and professional peers are strongly discouraged

International candidates must demonstrate a satisfactory level of proficiency in the English language if English is not their first language. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is offered by the Educational Testing Service in test centers throughout the world. TOEFL scores more than two years old cannot be validated or considered official. In addition, international candidates may take the International English Language Testing System assessment (IELTS). International candidates must be offered admission to the University and provide evidence of adequate financial resources before a student visa will be issued. The University has been authorized under federal law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students. International candidates are required to purchase the University-sponsored insurance plan or its equivalent.

It is a Delaware State Board of Health Regulation and a University of Delaware mandate that all entering graduate students born after January 1, 1957 give proof of proper immunization for measles, mumps, and

rubella. If immunization requirements are not met, the student will not be eligible to register. Specific information may be obtained from the Student Health Service (302) 831-2226.

### Specific Requirements for Admission into the M.Ed. in Literacy.

Admission decisions are made by the full-time faculty in literacy. Candidates will be admitted to the program based upon enrollment availability and their ability to meet the following minimum recommended entrance requirements. This program is designed to serve current teachers who wish to enroll in this graduate program on a part-time basis to seek certification as a Reading/Literacy Specialist.

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.
- Transcripts showing an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. Applicants with lower than expected performance are not automatically disqualified, but should provide an explanation for their prior performance and describe the experiences, skills, and dispositions they believe indicate the ability to succeed at the graduate level.
- Transcripts showing a minimum GPA of 3.0 for all graduate courses completed (if applicable). This GPA applies to graduate level courses taken through continuing education or graduate programs at the University of Delaware and other institutions.
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals who are able to assess the applicant's academic potential. Letters should be from professors who can attest to the candidate's suitability for graduate study and supervisors who can comment on the candidate's professional commitment and experience. Letters from family, friends, and professional peers are strongly discouraged.
- For students whose native language is not English, an officially reported minimum TOEFL score of 600 (paper-based test) or 250 (computer-based test), and IELTS of 7.0.
- A written statement responding to the following three prompts:
  - In a 500-word essay, outline your short-term and long-term career goals and how a M.Ed. in Literacy relates to them.
  - Describe a problem in your professional setting that typifies an issue you would like to pursue as a reading/literacy specialist and why you think it is important to address.
  - As you know, the M.Ed. in Literacy program at the University of Delaware is offered online. It requires students to be self-initiated learners and excellent time-managers. In a 500-word essay describe how you plan to manage your time so you are able to fulfill your course requirements.
  - Demonstrated knowledge of the teaching of oral language, reading, and writing through previous coursework and teaching.

Preference in admission is given to individuals with initial teaching certification and classroom teaching experience. This program is not designed as an alternative route to initial certification. Individuals without initial certification may be admitted into the program in some circumstances, but only with the understanding that they cannot be certified as part of the program and that the state of Delaware requires both certification and three years of classroom teaching experience in addition to the M.Ed. for those seeking certification as Reading/Literacy Specialists.

### Admission Status

Regular admission may be offered to candidates who meet all of the established entrance requirements and who have the ability, interest, and commitment necessary for successful study at the graduate level in a degree program. Admission to the graduate programs at the University of Delaware is selective and competitive based on the number of well-qualified applicants and the limits of available faculty and

facilities. Those who meet stated minimum academic requirements are not guaranteed admission. This program receives more applicants than can be considered for admission.

This program does not offer provisional admission.

### **Part III. Degree Requirements for the Master of Education in Reading**

#### Course Requirements

The M.Ed. in Literacy requires 30 credits of graduate-level coursework. There are no electives. The required coursework includes:

EDUC 601	Language Development in the Classroom (3 credits)
EDUC 604	Teaching Writing in the Elementary School (3 credits)
EDUC 608	Literacy Assessment and Instruction I (3 credits)
EDUC 609	Literacy Assessment and Instruction II (3 credits)
EDUC 622	The Role of Literacy in Content Areas (3 credits)
EDUC 630	Supervised Reading Clinic: I (3 credits)
EDUC 631	Organization and Supervision of Literacy Programs (3 credits)
EDUC 762	Digital Literacies (3 credits)
EDUC 763	Supervised Reading Clinic: II (3 credits)
EDUC 740	Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners

## Non-Registered Degree Requirements

Technology requirements: Technology plays a vital role in the MEd in Literacy program. Candidates will use technology to communicate with instructors, collaborate with peers, document school-based instruction, and submit assignments. Given the importance of technology to this program, candidates are responsible for ensuring access to the following:

- DSL or Broadband Internet connection
- Mac or Windows personal computer with up-to-date antivirus software
- Digital Video Camera or WebCam
- Internal or external microphone
- Sound card with speakers
- Scanner
- Flash Player
- Microsoft Power Point
- Microsoft Word
- Adobe Reader
- UD email
- Adobe Connect
- Canvas

Requirements may be revised in response to changing technologies.

Tutorial requirement: All candidates must complete the Online New Student Orientation upon admission to the program. The purpose is to provide candidates with: (1) tenets of online learning, (2) an overview of the online tools used in the MEd in Literacy program, (3) program expectations, and (4) the opportunity to introduce themselves to an online learning community of MEd in Literacy candidates. Information explaining how to access the NSO will be given in the acceptance letter.

Scheduling requirements: Candidates are required to take courses during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. They must take courses following a predetermined sequence unless given permission by their advisor. Fall and spring courses will be offered in sequential 7-week intervals. If candidates do not meet these scheduling requirements, then they will wait until they can reenter the course cycle and then continue taking courses until all ten courses are completed. Content delivery will vary, including synchronous and asynchronous meetings.

Practicum Requirements: The majority of courses in the MEd in Literacy program requires candidates to apply content in educational settings (i.e., one-to-one, small group, whole class). Candidates will assess and instruct K-12 students using a variety of methods and strategies. They will also engage in coaching and mentoring opportunities. This work must be documented with video and submitted to course instructors for their review. It is the candidate's responsibility to (1) obtain required technology listed above, (2) identify appropriate educational settings given assignment guidelines, (3) obtain appropriate consent, and (4) record and upload video. Candidates will be provided a consent form template and must submit the forms to their instructor at the time of assignment submission. Consent forms will explain that all video data will be stored on the University of Delaware password-protected server. While the purpose of these videos is to document the candidates' teaching, K-12 students' faces and first names may be shown depending upon the classroom environment. However, no other identifying factors will be used. All videos will be deleted no later than the end of the candidate's program.

Examination: Prior to exit from the program, all candidates are required to earn a passing score the Praxis II Reading Specialist - 20300 Praxis II as determined by the Delaware Department of Education certification requirements.

#### **Part IV. General Information**

##### Financial Assistance

Most students in the MEd in Literacy program are part-time students who work full time as teachers in public and private schools and do not qualify for scholarship-based financial assistance. However, during all but one fall and spring semester they will be taking 6 graduate credits which will allow them to be considered eligible to apply for Federal student loans. Tuition assistance is sometimes available through tuition reimbursement from the teacher's school district.

##### Application for Advanced Degree.

To initiate the process for degree conferral, candidates must submit an "Application for Advanced Degree" to the Office of Graduate Studies. The application deadlines are February 15 for Spring candidates, May 15 for Summer candidates, and September 15 for Winter candidates. The application must be signed by the candidate's adviser and by the Director or the Assistant Director of the School of Education. There is an application fee. Payment is required when the application is submitted.

##### Graduate Grade Point Average.

Candidates must have a minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.0 to be eligible for the degree. In addition, the grades in courses applied toward the degree program must equal at least 3.0. All graduate-numbered courses taken with graduate student classification at the University of Delaware are applied to the cumulative index. Credit hours and courses for which the grade is below "C-" do not count toward the degree even though the grade is applied to the overall index. Candidates should see that their instructors have submitted all final grades.

## Time Limits for the Completion of Degree Requirements.

Time limits for the completion of degree requirements begin with the date of matriculation and are specifically expressed in the candidate's letter of admission. The University policy for students entering a master's degree program is ten consecutive semesters to complete the degree requirements. Candidates who change their degree plan and have transferred from one degree program to another degree program are given ten consecutive semesters from the beginning of the first year in the latest program.

#### E. Extension of the Time Limit

An extension of time limit may be granted for circumstances beyond the student's control. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the student's adviser and the Director of the School of Education. The Director/Associate Director will forward the request to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies will determine the student's eligibility for a time extension and will notify the student in writing of its decision to grant an extension of time.

#### F. Transfer of Credit Earned as a Continuing Education Student at the University of Delaware

Students who complete graduate credits with the classification of CEND (Continuing Education Nondegree) at the University of Delaware may use a maximum of 9 graduate credits earned with this classification toward their graduate degree. The CEND credits, grades, and quality points become a part of the student's academic record and grade point average. CEND credit can be transferred provided that: (a) the course was at the 600-800 level, (b) the course was taken within the time limit appropriate for the degree, (c) the course was approved by the student's advisor and the chair of the student's major department, and (d) the course was in accord with the specific degree program as specified by the unit's Graduate Program Policy Statement. Courses at the 500-level offered by the department in which the student has declared a major shall not be accepted for transfer.

#### G. Transfer of Credit from Another Institution

Graduate credit earned at another institution will be evaluated at the written request of the student. Such a request should be directed to the student's major department using a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form. A maximum of 9 credits required for the degree will be accepted provided that such credits:

- a. were earned with a grade of no less than B,
- b. are approved by the student's adviser and the chair of the student's major department,
- c. are in accord with the specific degree program of the student as specified by the unit's Graduate Program Policy Statement,
- d. are not older than five years, and
- e. were completed at an accredited college or university.

The credits, but not the grades or quality points, are transferable to University of Delaware graduate records. Graduate courses counted toward a degree received elsewhere may not be used. Credits earned at another institution while the student was classified as a continuing education student at that institution are not eligible to be transferred to one's graduate degree at the University of Delaware. Credits from institutions outside of the United States are generally not transferable to the University of Delaware.

#### H. Transfer of Credit from the Undergraduate Division at the University of Delaware

Candidates cannot transfer in undergraduate credits.