

Graduate Reading Program Handbook

Master of Science in Education in Reading



Teachers College

Henderson State University

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Masters of Science in Education in Reading

Section 1: Program Overview and Rationale

The Master of Science in Education in Reading provides a course of study that enables early childhood, middle level, and secondary teachers to obtain an Arkansas Reading Specialist License. Its mission is to prepare teachers to effectively assume the varied roles of reading specialists. The role of reading specialists in public schools has changed drastically in the past several years. Previously, they were remedial reading teachers who taught small groups of students in "pullout" classes. Now reading specialists are considered the "reading experts" in their schools, and their duties go beyond working with students. Their job descriptions often include co-teaching in classrooms, serving as literacy coaches, developing reading programs, conducting reading assessments, managing the duties of paraprofessionals and volunteers, serving as advocates for students, and providing professional development. The program of study and performance assessments in the MSE in Reading are aligned to the International Reading Association's Standards for Reading Professionals: Revised 2003.

http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/reports/professional_standards.html

Upon completion of the Reading program candidates will

1. be knowledgeable of the foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction. (IRA Standard 1)
2. effectively use, model, and collaborate with other teachers in using a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods, and curriculum materials to support reading and writing instruction that are supported by research. (IRA Standard 2)
3. effectively use, model, and collaborate with other teachers in using a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading instruction that supported by research. (IRA Standard 3)
4. create and collaborate with other teachers in creating literate environments that foster reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments. (IRA Standard 4)
5. display appropriate dispositions towards students, reading, and reading instruction. (IRA Standard 5)
6. view professional development as a career-long effort and responsibility. (IRA Standard 5)

Section 2: Curriculum Outline

The program will consist of 36 credit hours. Six of the hours will come from the C & I graduate core. The other 30 hours will come from reading education courses. Within the 30 hours of reading education, six hours of reading practicum are required.

CORE COURSES

- EDU 6413 Introduction to Research 3
- EDU 6633 Curriculum Development 3 (May be substituted with advisor approval)

FOUNDATIONAL READING COURSES

- RDG 5503 Reading in the Content Areas 3
- RDG 6153 Developmental Reading 3
- RDG 5403 Psychology of Reading 3
- RDG 6133 Advanced Language Arts 3

ADVANCED READING COURSES (Prerequisites: Foundational Reading Courses or permission from advisor)

- RDG 6443 Diagnosis of Reading Difficulties 3
- RDG 6173 Trends and Issues in Reading Education 3
- RDG 6163 Leadership in Reading Education 3

CAPSTONE COURSES (Prerequisite: RDG 6443 Diagnosis of Reading Difficulties)

10. RDG 6183 Reading Practicum: Individual Tutoring 3
11. RDG 6693 Reading Practicum: Group Instruction 3
12. RDG 6553 Research Problems: Reading 3
(Prerequisite: Introduction to Research)

Section 3. Program Outline: Milestones along the Way

The graduate reading program adheres to the assessment policies contained in **Henderson’s 2004 NCATE Report, Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation: Element 2: Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation**. This system provides the means and procedures for collecting, aggregating, and using data for monitoring individual candidate performance. For you the graduate candidate, this means that you will be required to go through a system of program assessments at various intervals before, during, and after your program. These assessment milestones are presented in the following table and discussed in greater detail in Sections .

MSE READING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PROCESS

ADMISSION TO PROGRAM	ADMISSION TO DEGREE CANDIDACY	COMPLETION OF PRACTICUM	EXIT FROM PROGRAM	POST GRADUATE
<p>Bachelors Degree Official Transcripts</p> <p>Initial or standard teaching license</p> <p>Overall undergraduate GPA of 2.70 or better</p> <p>GRE or MAT test scores</p> <p>Application</p> <p>Three letters of recommendation</p> <p>Disposition Check</p> <p>Current Resume</p> <p>Written essay including autobiography and philosophy</p> <p>Admission interview with faculty</p>	<p>Candidacy application form approved and signed by advisor and graduate dean after completion of nine but not more than 12 semester hours of graduate study</p> <p>GPA of 3.0</p> <p>Approval of Graduate Council</p> <p>No more than six hours of grades lower than “B”</p> <p>Grades of “D” or “F” do not count toward graduation</p>	<p>Successful evaluation by university supervisor scored by rubrics</p> <p>Successful disposition evaluation by university supervisor scored by rubrics</p> <p>Documented multicultural experiences</p> <p>Demonstration of technology skills</p>	<p>Course grades</p> <p>Satisfactory completion of program with a minimum GPA of 3.0</p> <p>Passage of the Praxis II Reading Specialist Test</p> <p>Satisfactory exit portfolio (evaluated with rubrics by Exit Evaluation Committee)</p> <p>Satisfactory dispositions check (evaluated with rubrics by Exit Evaluation Committee)</p> <p>Successful oral presentation of exit portfolio (evaluated with rubrics by Exit Evaluation Committee)</p> <p>Exit Evaluation Committee is describe in Section 11.</p>	<p>Survey of employers (at end of three years of employment of graduates)</p> <p>Graduate Survey (at end of three years of employment)</p>

Section 4. Getting Started: Admission into the Reading Program

Admission into the reading program actually has two components. First, you will need to be complete the requirements established by the Graduate School in order to become a graduate school students. Second you must complete the requirements established by Teachers College to be admitted into the various Masters of Science in Education (MSE) programs. Graduate school students in Teachers College are referred to as graduate candidates. The children our graduate candidates teach are referred to as students.

Before you can take courses in Henderson's Graduate School, you must first be admitted as a graduate candidate. You can obtain a copy of the Graduate School Application Form at

http://www.hsu.edu/uploadedFiles/Graduate_School/Catalog/GRADADMISSIONAPPLICATION.pdf .

IMPORTANT NOTE: Applications should be received at least two (2) weeks before the beginning of the semester in which the student wishes to begin graduate studies. International applications must be received no later than June 30th for the Fall semester, and November 30th for the Spring semester.

The Graduate School will receive the admission packet which requires:

1. Completed HSU Graduate School application, including immunization and selective service status forms.
2. Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate work for all colleges or universities attended.
3. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.
4. Possession of a standard teacher's license from the State of Arkansas. A candidate whose teaching field is questionable for the degree of specialization will be referred to the appropriate department for evaluation.
5. An overall undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 2.70. A candidate with less than 2.70 but more than 2.50 may be conditionally admitted with evidence that the candidate is capable of satisfactory performance. A 3.0 GPA or above on the last 60 hours of undergraduate credit may also be considered a conditional admission.
6. For full admission, submission of GRE General Test or Millers Analogies Test MAT scores during the first semester of enrollment. Conditional admission requires appropriate scores prior to admission.

After gaining admission into Graduate School, the next step is to be admitted into the Graduate Reading Program. In order to do this you must submit three letters of recommendation, provide a current resume and a written essay (including your autobiography and philosophy), and be interviewed for Admission by the graduate faculty. A major focus of the interview will be a disposition check.

You will find in this subsection the Interview Questions for the Entrance into the Graduate Reading Program, the Interview Rating Sheet, and rubric used to evaluate the interview.

Interview Questions for the Entrance into the Graduate Reading Program

1. Why do you wish to be a reading specialist? (Professional Awareness/Interest)
2. Why is it necessary to be aware of the IRA's Standards for Reading Professionals? (Professional Awareness/Interest)
3. What kind of information should a teacher try to learn about his/her students' reading strengths and weaknesses? (Sense of efficacy)
 - a. How can a teacher find this information? (Sense of Efficacy)
 - b. Why is this information important? (Sense of Efficacy)
4. Give examples of how teachers can work together or with other education professionals to improve the literacy of our students. (Sense of Efficacy)
5. How can teachers get parents involved in their children's reading? Why is parental involvement important? (Caring for Students/Families)
6. Tell about a situation in which you were involved with a person from a different ethnic, religious, or racial background or a person with a disability. (Sense of Diversity)
7. Describe how you would react if you were a reading specialist placement at a school whose population is racially, culturally, and/or ethnically very different from you. Why would you react that way? (Sense of Diversity)
8. When it comes to reading instruction, what does being "fair" mean? (Sense of Fairness)
 - a. Give examples of how a teacher can demonstrate fairness in the classroom.
 - b. Give examples of how a teacher can demonstrate unfairness in the classroom.
9. Why do you think you will be a successful reading specialist? (Personal Reflection)
10. If you were guaranteed to accomplish at least one major task as a reading specialist, what would that accomplishment be? (Personal Reflection)

Admission to Graduate Reading Program

INTERVIEW RATING SHEET

Scoring rubric: Unacceptable = 1 Acceptable = 2 Target = 3

Raters: Please circle the appropriate rating in each category. Comments:

1.	Professional Awareness/Interest:	1	2	3	_____
2.	Sense of Efficacy	1	2	3	_____
3.	Caring for Students/Families	1	2	3	_____
4.	Sensitivity to Diversity:	1	2	3	_____
5.	Sense of Fairness	1	2	3	_____
6.	Personal Reflection	1	2	3	_____
7.	Use of Standard English:	1	2	3	_____
8.	Personal Appearance:	1	2	3	_____
9.	Personal Presentation:	1	2	3	_____

If you rate a candidate "1" or "3" on any criterion, please write a brief justification on the comment line.

Rater's Signature

Date

Note: Candidates who receive a 2 or above in every category will "pass" the interview requirement for admission into the Graduate Reading Program. Candidates who receive a "1" in any category must meet with their academic advisor to discuss the results of the interview and steps needed for professional development.

**RUBRIC FOR EVALUATING THE INTERVIEW FOR ADMISSION
INTO THE GRADUATE READING EDUCATION PROGRAM (Revised June 07)**

	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Target
Professional Awareness and Interest	Candidate is unable to respond to questions concerning the professional nature of being a reading specialist. Indicates little interest in the profession.	Candidate indicates a minimal knowledge of the professional nature of being a reading specialist and demonstrates some knowledge of the IRA Standards for Reading Professionals. Demonstrates moderate interest in the profession.	Candidate responds strongly to questions concerning the role of a reading specialist and is knowledgeable of the IRA Standards for Reading Professionals. Demonstrates enthusiasm about becoming a reading specialist.
Caring for Students and Families	Candidate is unable to respond to questions concerning the needs of families and the importance of their involvement in their child's literacy development. Candidate shows little interest in the needs and involvement of families in student learning.	Candidate indicates understanding and sensitivity to the needs of families and the importance of their involvement in their child's literacy development.	In addition to indicating understanding and sensitivity toward the needs of families and the importance of their involvement in their child's literacy development, the candidate can give specific examples of how to encourage family involvement in student learning.
Sense of Efficacy	Candidate expresses a belief that some students cannot learn. Indicates that the teacher is not responsible for student learning.	Candidate believes that all students can learn and that the teacher should accept responsibility for student learning.	Candidate believes that all students can learn and that the teacher should accept responsibility for student learning. In addition, the candidate identifies ways that the teacher can impact student learning.
Sensitivity to Diversity	Candidate demonstrates little understanding of or respect for differences in race, culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, etc.	Candidate demonstrates some understanding of and respect for diverse students and the need for differentiated instruction.	Candidate demonstrates understanding of and respect for diverse students and the need to differentiate instruction. Has some knowledge of special education law.

Sense of Fairness	Candidate is unable to articulate what it means to be fair or give an example of a teacher's fairness with students or students' fairness among one another. May indicate that fairness is treating everyone exactly the same.	Candidate articulates a general understanding of what it means to be fair. Understands that fairness includes considering the special needs of all students. Indicates that fairness applies to students' treatment of one another as well as teacher to student or student to teacher.	Candidate articulates a clear understanding of fairness of teacher to student, student to teacher, and student to student. In addition, the candidate gives specific example(s) of what it means to be fair.
Personal Reflection	Candidate is unable to reflect on the effect of past experiences on success or lack of success in professional or educational projects.	Candidate demonstrates a limited sense of personal awareness and can articulate how past experiences have contributed to personal and professional growth.	Candidate demonstrates a strong sense of personal awareness and can articulate how specific experiences have contributed to personal and professional growth.
Use of Standard English	Candidate makes grammatical errors, mumbles, mispronounces words, or speaks too softly to be understood. Vocabulary is limited and inappropriate or inadequate.	Candidate makes no grammatical errors or corrects himself/herself, pronounces most words correctly, and speaks clearly and audibly. Vocabulary is limited but appropriate.	Candidate uses clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of words and makes no grammatical errors. Vocabulary is mature and appropriate.
Personal Appearance	Dress is inappropriate (too casual – jeans, T shirt; too provocative—low cut blouse, short skirt, tight pants, etc.; dirty or wrinkled). Hair is uncombed or dirty. Shoes are athletic or unpolished. Jewelry and /or makeup is excessive.	Dress is appropriately casual (slacks, polo shirt). Clothing is clean, well fitting, and pressed. Hair is clean and neatly groomed. Shoes are polished. Jewelry is not overwhelming. Makeup is not distracting.	Dress is business like (suit with dress shirt and tie or slacks and sport jacket with tie for men; business suit or dress for women). Clothing is clean and well fitting. Hair is clean and neatly groomed. Shoes are polished. Jewelry and accessories are appropriate to attire.
Personal Presentation	Candidate exhibits poor posture, slouches while sitting, and/or has poor eye contact. Lacks poise and confidence.	Candidate exhibits good posture and sits erect. Uses appropriate eye contact. May lack poise and confidence.	Candidate exhibits good posture. Sits erect with legs together and feet on the floor. Exhibits poise and confidence.

5. Admission to Candidacy

Every candidate for an advanced degree must make application for admission to candidacy. This application constitutes a degree plan (Degree Plan can be accessed at --). The degree plan will not be approved or signed by your advisor until all conditions for admission into the program have been met. Notice that this degree plan should be submitted to the Graduate Dean while you are taking the fourth class of your graduate program (See #2). You will not be able to continue taking classes until the degree plan has been approved by the Graduate Dean.

1. Admission to graduate study
2. Completed application for candidacy filed with the Dean of the Graduate School after the completion of nine (9) but not more than twelve (12) semester hours of graduate study
3. A grade point average of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) on all work completed
4. Approval by the Graduate Council as being physically, mentally, morally, and emotionally acceptable
5. Completion of all required school examinations and prerequisites.

Section 6. COMPLETION OF PRACTICUM

Towards the end of your graduate reading program, you will be involved in two practicum courses (RDG 6183 Reading Practicum: Individual Tutoring and RDG 6693 Reading Practicum: Group Instruction). Before you can enroll in the practicum courses you must be admitted in the candidacy, and you must have successfully completed the prerequisite courses. The prerequisite courses include Introduction to Research, the Foundational Reading Courses, and Diagnosis and Remediation of Reading Difficulties. Any exceptions from the prerequisite course requirements must be approved by your advisor. Registration for the Praxis II Reading Specialist Test is also required in order to enroll in the practicum.

At the end of RDG 6693 Reading Practicum: Group Instruction, you will be involved in the Reading Practicum Portfolio/Interview. A panel of evaluators will assess your ability to effectively plan and use researched-based literacy instruction during the practicum. Make sure your ability to work with other educators is presented. The presentation will be evaluated using a rubric which addresses knowledge, skills, and dispositions reading education and doing the work of a reading specialist. The following rubrics will also be employed during the interview: Disposition Check, Documentation of Multicultural Experiences, and Demonstration of Technology Skills. On the next page you will find the questions interviewers will ask you during your presentation.

One of the projects for the graduate candidates was to write memoirs of their involvement in the Summer Reading Program Practicum. They were given the following set of questions as a guide for their memoirs. During the interview, the graduate candidates should address these questions during their presentations. Please feel free to ask specific questions of the candidates during the interview.

1. What type of initial and on-going student assessments did you use? (3.1)
2. How were initial and on-going student assessments used in your planning for the class and for individuals? (3.3)
3. What type of instruction and materials did you provide to the class and particular individuals? Justify your selection of those particular strategies and materials by research. (2.2 & 2.3) Focus on student's strengths and weaknesses in the major components of reading (1.4), their reading levels (4.1), their developmental levels (3.2), their interests, and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds (4.1).
4. How and why did you and your colleagues group students as you did? (2.1)
5. How did you use technology in assessing students' literacy needs and in providing reading and writing instruction? (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, & 3.1)
6. What types of research did you use to locate the most appropriate materials and instructional strategies? (2.2 & 2.3)
7. How did you model reading and writing as valued lifelong activities? (4.3)
8. How did you motivate your students to be lifelong readers? (4.4)
9. How did you display positive dispositions towards reading and the teaching of reading? (5.1)
10. During the planning meetings, how did you collaborate with your colleagues? What leadership role did you play? How did you display the characteristics of a reading specialist? (5.3)
11. What did you learn about yourself as you formally met with the colleague who observed you teach? (5.3)
12. What did you learn about yourself as you formally observed and met with the colleague(s) you observed teaching? (5.3)
13. How did your responses to items to questions seven and eight relate to your role as a reading specialist? (5.3)
14. Lastly, describe the insights that you gained from this practicum experience (be reflective).

Section 7. Exit Guidelines

The guidelines for your exiting the graduate reading program are listed below.

1. The candidate must meet all exit requirements for master level programs as stated in the current HSU Graduate Catalog.
2. A three (3) hour research course - RDG 6653 Research Problems: Reading - is required for the M.S.E. in Reading. The candidate must successfully complete substantive research in the form of an action research project. The candidate, in consultation with the faculty advisor, program coordinator, and academic department chair, selects an appropriate topic. Students must provide proof that they have successfully taken and passed the Praxis II Reading Specialist Test before enrolling in RDG 6653.
3. A portfolio will be required of all candidates for the M.S.E. in Reading degree. Candidates will continually update and maintain their portfolios in order to demonstrate that they have met the five standards and 19 elements of the IRA Standards for reading professionals at both the classroom teacher level and reading specialist/literacy coach level. Artifacts from required coursework, as well as artifacts that represent candidate activity beyond course requirements, will be included. The faculty advisor will provide guidelines for organizing the portfolio to the candidate.
4. An Exit Evaluation Committee composed of the faculty advisor serving as chair of the Committee, the Dean of the Graduate school or a faculty designee, program coordinator, and one faculty member from the academic specialization area will review each candidate's portfolio, thesis/project, and other relevant materials. Each candidate will present his/her materials to the committee in an oral defense process. A scoring rubric will be used to standardize the exit review process. The final copy of the project will be maintained in the department for a minimum of three years.
5. The faculty advisor will notify the candidate in writing with copy to the Graduate School a letter indicating successful or non-successful completion of the program of study.
6. The candidate must complete an Application for Graduation. Information on graduation can be found at <http://www.hsu.edu/grad.aspx?id=1525> .

Section 8. Reading Specialist Licensure

Candidates completing the Reading Specialty will be required to take the appropriate Praxis II examination prior to graduation. In order to be recommended for licensure, the candidate must submit an official copy of the appropriate score to the Office of Teacher Licensure at HSU. The HSU teacher licensure officer will send completed applications, official transcripts (verifying program of study completion), and appropriate Praxis II test scores to the Arkansas Department of Education Office of Professional Licensure once requirements for additional licensure are verified. ADE will then issue a standard five-year teaching license.

Section 9. Post Graduation Surveys

The graduate reading program also includes post graduate surveys from graduates and their employers. These surveys are not intended to evaluate you as a reading specialist; instead, these are used to determine strengths and weaknesses with the program. They will help the faculty, in consultation with individuals outside of Teachers College, Henderson to make decisions that should lead to the strengthening of the program. Your cooperation in completing these surveys after graduation will be greatly appreciated.

