Master’s of Education
Reading & Literacy

Department of Educational Psychology
University of Utah

Handbook for Master’s Students
MASTER’S OF EDUCATION
Reading & Literacy

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preface

Welcome to the Department of Educational Psychology. We look forward to working with you in your graduate program and helping you to get the most out of your studies. This guide is part of that effort. AS A GRADUATE STUDENT, MOST OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING YOUR PROGRAM AND FOR SEEING THAT YOU MEET YOUR OBJECTIVES WILL BE IN YOUR OWN HANDS.

What you need in order to do that wisely is information about the resources that the department offers, the nature of various programs, and the deadlines and requirements you must satisfy to complete your program successfully. This guide provides the basic outline of what you need to know. More detailed information is always available from the Graduate Academic Program Specialist or the Director of the Graduate Programs. In addition to this guide, you should also refer to the current University of Utah General Catalog and the Bulletin of the University Graduate School.

1.2 The Department

The Department of Educational Psychology provides a Master’s of Education in Reading & Literacy and a Doctoral Degree in Literacy Studies. We urge you to plan your course work early around our core of courses, but keep in mind that the rest of the College of Education and University offer an array of interesting and challenging courses. You should try to make room in your program for a few courses that you take simply for the sake of curiosity; sometimes areas of tangential interest become more important to you than you might expect.

The Masters of Education is a research-based professional degree that involves students working to become exemplary practitioners. The emphasis is on powerfully integrating research-based theory and practice. As accomplished professionals, graduates with this degree are prepared to be leaders in their educational settings. Through this degree, the Department of Educational Psychology develops educators who are:

• Committed to excellence in learning for all students
• Knowledgeable in the various disciplines that support research-informed teaching practice
• Effective in assessing and engaging students’ developing understandings
• Aware of and committed to addressing issues of diversity and social justice through their practice.

1.3. List of Faculty

The faculty of the department are listed below, along with their areas of interest. All of them are willing to meet with you informally to discuss your interests. We encourage you to come and visit; often it helps you to discover interesting courses and opportunities that you might not otherwise learn about.

Faculty and Research Interests

Janice Dole, Ph.D.
Comprehension and Instruction Research, Instructional Quality of Textbooks

Douglas J. Hacker, Ph.D.
Writing and Reading Processes, Metacognition, Eye-tracking methodology, School & Program Evaluation

Lauren Aimonette Liang, Ph.D.
Children’s and Young Adult Literature, Comprehension Instruction in the Middle School Grades

Emily Swan, Ph.D.
Reading Acquisition and Comprehension, Motivation, Classroom Contexts that Promote Literacy

Anne E. Cook, Ph.D.
Reading and Text Comprehension Process, Eye-tracking Methodology to Explore Questions in Reading
Faculty from other Departments who Collaborate with Ed Psych Faculty

MaryAnn Christison, Ph.D.

Teacher Beliefs and Practices, Content-based Instruction, Second Language Acquisition, Second Language Teacher Education, Second Language Methodology; Teacher Education

Kathleen Brown, Ph.D.

Intervention for at-risk and struggling readers, Beginning Reading, and Word Recognition Development.

SECTION TWO: TIME LINE AND CHECKLIST

2.1 Advising

You are assigned a faculty advisor when you are admitted to the program. This is the person you should go to first with questions about program options and requirements. The Graduate Academic Program Specialist or the Director of Graduate Programs will also be happy to answer your questions. It is wise to make an appointment with your advisor early in your program to establish your goals and needs.

2.2 Statement of Student Responsibility

You should see that your course of study corresponds to departmental and graduate school requirements and deadlines. Detailed instructions can be found in the Graduate School's Bulletin (available at the Park Building, Room 302 or online at www.utah.edu/graduate_school). Specific questions can be answered by the Graduate Academic Program Specialist or personnel at the Graduate School.

The responsibility for satisfying degree requirements is in your hands. Your advisor and departmental staff are here to help; however it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the necessary requirements and deadlines. This section includes a general time line and checklist that you should use in keeping track of your progress through the M.Ed. program. In many cases, failure to meet these requirements will needlessly complicate and delay the completion of your program.

2.3 Procedural Checklist

1)  (First Semester)  

Meet with faculty advisor to review departmental policies regarding program requirements and examinations. Plan how you will satisfy requirements when applicable.

If transfer credit for graduate work completed elsewhere is to be used, request that official transcripts be sent to the Admissions Office, if you have not already done so. Transfer credit must first be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs.

2)  (Second or Third Semester)  

Submit a "Course Work Proposal" to the Academic Program Specialist. Plan your proposed course work with your faculty advisor. This should be done early in your program.
3) (After completion of approximately 75% of graduate course work) Final deadline for the “Candidacy” form is two months prior to the semester you plan to graduate. Submit the “Request for Supervisory Committee” and "Application for Admission to Candidacy” forms to the Graduate Academic Program Specialist (142 MBH). You will be assigned a Supervisory Committee. Committees are reviewed and appointed every year. On the Candidacy form list your program of study chronologically, from the earliest to the most recent or projected course work. Subsequent changes in this program must be reported to the Graduate Academic Program Specialist and approved. THESE FORMS MUST BE TYPED. These forms can be obtained online at www.utah.edu/graduate_school/forms.html.

4) (The semester you plan to graduate.) Take the comprehensive final examination. You must be registered for three (3) credit hours in this semester. (See section 3.5) IN ADDITION, YOU MUST BE REGISTERED FOR THREE HOURS OF CREDIT THE SEMESTER YOU GRADUATE. PLAN YOUR PROGRAM ACCORDINGLY!

Check your file in the Graduate Records Office and make sure that the "Report of the Final Examination" and other documents have been filed.

SECTION THREE: PROGRAM OF STUDY

3.1 Requirements

6000 AND 7000 LEVEL COURSES: The graduate level courses in this department are numbered in the 6000’s and 7000’s. There is a difference between the two kinds of classes, although both are open to Master’s as well as Doctoral students. 7000 level courses are advanced graduate courses which emphasize current conceptual, methodological, and research issues in education. They are designed for students who are interested in studying specific issues in depth and often assume previous course work and experience. They are research-oriented, reading and writing intensive, and less immediately pertinent to applications in the classroom.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Core Requirements (6 credit hours). The core consists of the following courses.

   1) EDPS 6451 Foundations of Learning 3 hours
   2) EDPS 6712 Reading Research 3 hours

2. Specialty Area (21 credit hours) (Level I Reading Endorsement)

   1) EDPS 6711 Foundations of Reading 3 hours
   2) EDPS 6124 Children’s Literature OR
   OR EDPS 6125 Adolescent Literature 3 hours
   3) EDPS 6126 Content Area Literacy Instruction 3 hours
   4) EDPS 6130 Writing Theory & Instruction 3 hours
   5) EDPS 6713 Early Literacy Theory & Instruction OR
   OR EDPS 6717 Supporting Struggling Readers 3 hours
   6) EDPS 6714 Comprehension Theory & Instruction 3 hours
   7) SPED 6631 Assessment & Intervention of Reading Difficulties 3 hours

Continued on next page....
3. **Electives** (9 credit hours). Select three courses from the following areas:

**Level II Reading Endorsement:**
1. EDPS 6715  Reading Supervision 3 hours  
2. EDPS 6716  Reading Internship 3 hours

**Other Reading and Literacy Electives:**
1. EDPS 6960  Special Topics Reading and Literacy (varies) 3 hours

**Reading Clinic Intervention:**
1. SPED 6632  Intro to Intervention for Struggling Readers 3 hours  
2. SPED 6633  Assessment & Intervention: Early Steps Practicum 3 hours  
3. SPED 6634  Assessment & Intervention: Next Steps Practicum 3 hours

**OR**

**Linguistics:**
1. Ling 6000 Graduate Survey of Linguistics for Educators 3 hours  
2. Ling 6042 Minority Language Issues in Education 3 hours  
3. Ling 5810  L2 Methodology 3 hours  
4. Ling 5811 Educating English Language Learners  
5. Ling 6812  Content-Based Language Teaching 3 hours

4. **Total** (36 credit hours).

5. **Final Examination:** In addition to the above course work, all M.Ed. students must complete a final comprehensive examination, based on their course work in the specialty area (see 3.5).

**CO-OPERATIVE MASTER'S PROGRAMS (CO-OPS).** Some M.Ed. students may enroll in a co-operative program offered through their school or district. Co-operative Master's programs are special graduate programs that are designed in coordination with a group of teachers. Admission and degree requirements are the same as for the regular M.Ed. degree, but the specific course of study is tailored to the unique needs of that group of teachers.

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS:** Evaluation of the quality of each candidate's graduate performance is a continuing process. You should be especially aware of the following requirements:

1. **Satisfactory performance in courses:** Each instructor will expect satisfactory performance in your graduate courses. The overall quality of your work, as well as your progress toward completing the program, will be monitored. If your overall grade point average falls below a 3.0, you will be asked to come in for a discussion with the Director of Graduate Programs. No course grade below a "B-" can be counted toward your graduate degree.

2. **Criteria for graduate course work:** Up to 6 semester hours of 5000 level classes in departments outside the College of Education may be included in your program of study, if they are appropriate (courses must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs). Classes in the College of Education at the 5000 level are not acceptable in your program of study. With the prior approval of your faculty advisor, it may be possible to arrange independent study at the graduate level for credit.

You must have the prior approval of the Director of Graduate Programs to count course work toward your graduate program that is not taught by regular faculty or is not part of the regular curriculum, including certain workshop courses, in-service courses, online courses, or any course that does not involve substantial research and writing.
GENERAL REGULATIONS: In planning your course work, be aware of the following:

1. **Time limit:** There is a **four year** limit on completion: All work toward the Master's degree **must** be completed within four consecutive calendar years.

2. **Minimum continuous registration:** All graduate students must maintain a minimum continuous registration of at least three credit hours per semester, unless granted an official leave of absence, from the time of admission to the time of completion of the program. (Summers are not included in this regulation.)

3. **Leave of Absence:** If a student cannot maintain continuous registration, the student must request a Leave of Absence. The form is available online at [www.utah.edu/graduate_school/forms.html](http://www.utah.edu/graduate_school/forms.html). Students may request up to one year off at a time, and students must register for the semester they indicate as their returning semester. Retroactive leaves of absence are **never** granted. If a student does not register for 3 hours and fails to submit a leave of absence form, the student will be automatically discontinued from the graduate program. Students who are discontinued for failing to register must reapply to continue their program.

4. **Transfer hours:** A limit of **6 semester hours** are allowed, subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Programs. Courses must be graduate level, must have direct relevance to your program, and must have a grade of "B" or better. Grades of "P" or "CR" (pass/credit) are **not** acceptable. For any course you wish to have considered, you must provide a copy of the course description from the official catalog of the institution from which the course was taken and an official transcript for review. The University Library has catalogs from most universities. The above information should be submitted along with the **Course Work Proposal**. The Director of Graduate Programs will review the materials and make a decision. Official transcripts must be submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office when the Candidacy form is submitted as evidence that these courses have been satisfactorily completed.

5. **Non-matriculated course work:** No more than **9 credit hours** of non-matriculated course work can be counted toward a graduate degree. These courses must be appropriate to your program, and will need to be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs.

6. **Total credit hour registration limitations:** Graduate degree candidates are not permitted to register for more than 16 credit hours in any semester. Teaching assistants, research assistants, and others employed approximately half-time by the department are limited to a minimum registration of 9 credit hours. Tuition benefits for teaching and research assistants will cover up to 12 hours. If more than 12 credit hours are taken by teaching and research assistants, the additional hours are paid by the student.

7. **Undergraduate Petition for Graduate Credit:** University of Utah students may be allowed to select certain graduate level courses taken while enrolled as an undergraduate student for graduate credit. Such graduate credit is limited to 6 semester hours or two courses. **Credit used to earn the undergraduate degree may not be counted toward a graduate degree.** Students are encouraged to seek advance approval of the dean of the Graduate School on an “Undergraduate Petition for Graduate Credit” form available in the Registrar’s Office. However, if a student seeks retroactive graduate credit for courses taken as an undergraduate, permission may be granted only if a grade of B or better was earned in the specified courses and if the courses were taken no more than three years prior to the petition.

8. **Credit/no credit:** In rare cases, and subject to approval by the Director of Graduate Programs and review by the Dean of the Graduate School, graduate students are granted the option to enroll in elective courses with a credit/no credit option rather than a letter grade. For details see the **Graduate Bulletin**, available at the University Graduate Office (302 Park Building).

9. **Independent reading and research courses:** Individual reading and research courses are offered for the purpose of allowing students to pursue interests and specializations that may be more appropriately served by independent reading than in conventional courses taught on a group basis. Independent studies are designed to explore topics outside the parameters of customary
and usual department courses. Professors will not approve an independent study for a course that is offered in a traditional manner. Independent study hours may not be used for: assisting faculty with teaching duties, grading assignments, or otherwise performing duties of graduate teaching assistants. The required form students must complete to undertake an independent study is available from the Graduate Academic Program Specialist.

10. **Exceptions:** If you have exceeded the four-year time limit, or if the courses you have taken do not match those listed on your Candidacy Form, the Director of Graduate Programs must submit a letter of justification to the Dean of the Graduate School explaining the discrepancies. The Dean of the Graduate School will then rule on the request. Exceptions are approved only under extenuating (e.g., illness) circumstances.

### 3.2 Advisor

You are assigned a faculty advisor when you enter the program. Your advisor will guide you through your studies and is responsible for advising and approving your course selection.

If, during the course of your program you find a faculty member who is more appropriate to your area of interest, you may request a change of advisor. That change can be made by contacting both faculty members and the Graduate Academic Program Specialist.

Please note that faculty members are on 9-month contracts, and are not obligated to be on-campus or available during Summer term. Therefore, it is wise to meet with or contact your advisor prior to the end of Spring semester. If issues arise during Summer term both the Graduate Academic Program Specialist and Director of Graduate Programs are available for consultation.

### 3.3 Supervisory Committee

You will be assigned a Supervisory Committee that will administer a final examination to you at the conclusion of your studies (see 3.6).

**All students:**

There are two forms that must be filed in order to graduate. The “Request for Supervisory Committee” and the “Application for Admission to Candidacy” forms must be submitted to the Graduate Academic Program Specialist no later than two months prior to the semester you plan to graduate. These forms are available online at [www.utah.edu/graduate_school/forms.html](http://www.utah.edu/graduate_school/forms.html). These forms will be signed by all three members of your Supervisory Committee and the Director of Graduate Programs. After obtaining these signatures, the Graduate Academic Program Specialist will send your forms to Graduate Records for approval from the Dean of the Graduate School.

### 3.4 Examinations

**FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION:** When you have completed your Admission to Candidacy form, begin planning and preparing for your final examination. Sample questions will be distributed upon request to help you prepare. You must complete this examination at the conclusion of your studies. **Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 3 credit hours during the semester they take the comprehensive exam.** The exam is typically offered each fall and spring. No exams will be given during the summer semester. It is a take-home exam, designed and evaluated by members of the Graduate Committee. We will try to schedule the exam during students’ fall or spring break from their schools. Graduation from the program depends on successful completion of the comprehensive exam.

The exam is intended to give you the opportunity to review and synthesize your program’s course work. You will have ten days to complete the exam, and it will be evaluated by members of the Graduate Committee. After you pass the exam, you will be notified about any paperwork you need to complete in order to receive your degree.
If your exam is judged unacceptable, you will receive specific feedback for improvement. Before you may take the exam again, you must meet with the Director of Graduate Programs to develop a program of study that outlines what you plan to do to prepare to rewrite the exam. If you do not pass the exam a second time, you may only take it again after filing an appeal that explains why you feel you should be permitted to take the exam a third time and that includes a proposal of the steps you will take to improve your performance on the exam. This appeal must be approved by the Graduate Committee. If you do not pass the exam a third time, you will be discontinued from the program and will not receive your degree.

3.5 Best Wishes

We hope you have an enjoyable and successful graduate experience in the Department of Educational Psychology. We will try to offer you the very best in graduate course work, and the opportunity to interact with faculty and fellow graduate students who are seriously involved with their work and sincerely interested in you. We are happy to do what we can to help you through your studies.

SECTION FOUR: MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

4.1 Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Student Advisory Committees (SAC) have existed since 1969, when they were created by the University Senate to give voice to the student body in matters of faculty retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) decisions, and any other departmental policies that affect students (see Faculty Regulations, ch. V, sec. 2). This mandate is somewhat open-ended:

SAC’s are allowed the opportunity to play a significant role in various departmental matters beyond RPT, if the students are willing to do so. SAC’s therefore have served as student advocates, liaisons between faculty and students, members of search committees, organizers of academic and social events, etc. You are encouraged to contact the SAC Chairperson for information about current SAC activities.

4.2 Student Appeals

All graduate students have the right to have disputes regarding academic matters resolved in a fair, uniform, and expeditious manner. It is the policy of the University to solve such problems internally and at the level most closely related to the origin of the dispute. A graduate student who believes he or she has been mistreated in any way by a member of the faculty or the administration should discuss his or her problem directly with the person involved. If the student is not satisfied at this level, or if discussion of the problem seems inappropriate because of the nature of the student's complaint, the student should seek advice from the department chairperson. Depending on the nature of the problem, the department chairperson may deal with the situation directly or refer the matter to the appropriate college or university committee.

In instances where the Supervisory Committee or the Graduate Committee must approve some aspect of the student’s program, and where the judgment of the student and the Supervisory Committee or Graduate Committee differ, the student may ask the Chair of the department to adjudicate the difference of opinion.

The Graduate School has adopted an appeal procedure to be used in dealing with students who wish to appeal decisions made by the faculty or administration concerning some aspect of their graduate work at the University.
4.3 Procedures for Appeals

Several different university committees have been authorized to hear graduate student appeals which cannot be resolved at the department level. Matters that relate to violations of academic freedom should be appealed to the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee as outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual, 8-7. A student who wishes to assert a discrimination complaint relating to race, color, religion, national origin, age, handicap, or sex should appeal to the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity as outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual, 2-32. A student who wishes to appeal dismissal from a course or the grade received in a course should direct an appeal to the Academic Evaluation Appeals Committee of the college or department in which the instructor is appointed. If an Academic Evaluation Appeals Committee has not been appointed, the student may appeal directly to the Student-Faculty Relations Committee. Matters relating to student misconduct are handled by the Student Behavior Committee. The appropriate university committee for purposes of filing a complaint is determined initially by the student and the departmental or college committee where the complaint is filed.

Graduate students who have complaints relating to admission to graduate school, degree requirements, preliminary and qualifying examinations, problems relating to theses or dissertations, or dismissal from Graduate School should direct their appeals to the Chair of the Supervisory Committee, Director of Graduate Programs, department Chairperson, and to the Dean of their college, in that order. Normally, these university officials will attempt to work out a solution by bringing the parties together in an informal, non-adversarial manner. Inquiry at this stage is usually limited to a determination of whether the graduate student has been treated in an arbitrary or capricious manner, or in some way not consistent with previously announced policy guidelines.

If the problem cannot be resolved through this process at the college level, an appeal may be taken to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School will normally appoint an appeals committee of no fewer than five members who are mutually satisfactory to both parties, three of whom will be faculty members and two graduate students. This appeals committee will hold a full evidentiary hearing into the merits of the case. The burden of proof shall rest with the complaining party. Proceedings shall be commenced by a written complaint to the Dean of the Graduate School citing the specific grievances, regulations, or policies that have allegedly been violated. This complaint will then be submitted to the parties charged in the complaint for their response. Both those making allegations and those complained against may, if they wish, be represented by counsel and cross-examine witnesses, but the appeals committee is not bound by strict rules of legal evidence and may develop procedures which they consider to be fair and equitable to the particular circumstances of the case. The hearing shall be closed unless the committee believes that an open hearing would be preferable.

The decision of the appeals committee shall by majority vote and will be advisory to the Dean of the Graduate School who is responsible for taking appropriate action. Any further appeal shall be directed to the President of the University.

4.4 Ethical Standards

Matriculated students in the Department of Educational Psychology are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics of the University of Utah Student Code, which can be found online at http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanuial/8/8-10.html.

Student behavior is governed by provisions of the Student Code which defines rights and responsibilities and encourages students to conduct themselves with integrity and to respect the rights of others. The Student Code prohibits such behaviors as (1) academic dishonesty (in all its forms including, but without being limited to, cheating on tests, plagiarism, and collusion); (2) theft; (3) malicious destruction; and (4) disruptive practices. The Student Code is administered by a student-faculty committee which has jurisdiction to impose sanctions.
4.5 Financial Aid

There are some sources of financial aid available to students in the department.

(1) GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS: Graduate assistantships are available in the department usually each year. Applications for these should be submitted by April 15th.

Students can apply for a graduate assistantship by obtaining application materials from the Graduate Academic Program Specialist or online at http://tl.ed.utah.edu/Programs/MED-MA-MS/GraduateAssist.htm. This application should stress their instructional, research, and other professional skills. The application should include grade point average; and the names of three references, preferably faculty who have worked with the student. The application should also include a personal statement that addresses the following: first, if there is a particular faculty member and particular project the student proposes to work with; second, the student's academic and professional goals, and how this project relates to those goals; and third, a discussion of financial needs, including expected income and expenses, in-state or out-of-state tuition needs, family responsibilities, etc. Having a faculty sponsor and a particular project in mind are not necessary for the application, but they are factors that will weigh in a student's favor.

Students who have received a graduate assistantship may reapply in subsequent years; there is a two year limit a student can receive support, though exceptions may be negotiated through approval of the Graduate Committee and the Graduate School. The selection is always made in comparison with other student applicants and their abilities and needs. Another factor that will be considered with reapplicants is whether they are making consistent progress towards completing their degree, and this should be addressed in their personal statement and/or recommendations. Finally, reapplicants should include some evaluation of their prior performance in the graduate assistantship by the faculty member responsible for their supervision. Because continued support is not guaranteed, students who have been receiving a graduate assistantship should always be exploring other avenues of support.

(2) OTHER FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES: The university, and various national organizations, do make fellowships available from time to time. Students interested in pursuing some of these opportunities should consult the Director of Graduate Programs. However, the burden of responsibility in making application for these opportunities is entirely up to the individual student.

For example, each year the university awards approximately 35 research fellowships to graduate students. Persons interested in applying should contact the University Research Committee. The application deadline is March 1st, but students should begin their application well before this deadline so that appropriate supporting documents (letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc.) can be gathered.

(3) GRANTS AND OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT: Graduate students should stay abreast of grant writing opportunities in the department and college. Not only is participation in a grant an excellent way of acquiring concrete research skills and experience; it can often be a source of financial support as a research assistant. Once again, it is up to students to find out about and pursue such opportunities.

The College of Education offers many scholarships. Scholarship information is available online at http://www.ed.utah.edu/scholarships.html.

4.6 Evaluation and Follow-up

After you have completed your final comprehensive examination, you will receive a "Graduate Student Exit Survey." The form requests some feedback regarding the strengths and limitations of your graduate program as well as general impressions regarding the department, university, community, and future professional goals. The form should be submitted to the Graduate Academic
Program Specialist once it is completed. It will help us in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of our programs and benefit future generations of graduate students.