Online Master's Degree in LITERACY STUDIES

Emphasis on Multiple Literacies and Critical Perspectives in Education

&

Nevada Reading Specialist Certification

College of Education
Professional and Specialized Services
Reno, Nevada 89557-0299
(775) 784-4383
FAX: (775) 784-4384
Online Master's Program in Literacy Studies: Overview

The Online Master's Program at the University of Nevada, Reno offers licensed teachers the opportunity to develop advanced knowledge in the area of Literacy Studies. The online Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree is a rigorous academic curriculum intended for the practicing educator. This degree is 32 credits for a non-thesis option with a comprehensive exam or 33 credits for a thesis option degree. The degree focuses on research-based literacy instruction from the perspective of Multiple Literacies. Literacy in contemporary society is undergoing change as a result of social, cultural, economic, and technological practices and advances. As a result of these changes, literacy encompasses many new ways of reading and writing; literate practices are not limited to print decoding or cognitive strategies used for comprehension or composition. Educators in modern society must attend to the myriad and complex ways that social groups construct and disseminate meanings through new and evolving literate practices. The online master's program places special emphasis on the many literacies used in modern society and assumes a critical perspective about relationships between literacies and empowerment in a multicultural and pluralistic world.

Online Master's Program in Literacy Studies: Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The Online Master's Program at the University of Nevada, Reno prepares practicing teachers to meet three major learning outcomes that are aligned with professional standards in the field of literacy and standards of graduate scholarship. At completion of this program, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate foundational knowledge of literacy, literacy development, and multiple literacies,

2. demonstrate use of assessment, curricular, and instructional knowledge to determine and meet the literacy needs of diverse students, and

3. demonstrate scholarly abilities, specifically the abilities to: understand leading research articles on a wide variety of literacy topics, synthesize literacy research and write well-crafted academic papers, and apply literacy research to classroom practice.

Coursework, the Comprehensive Exam, and the Entry/Mid/Exit-Essays are all used to identify student progress toward these SLOs.
**Program Phases and Student Responsibilities**

The online master’s graduate program is characterized by three stages: (1) the application phase, (2) the coursework phase, and (3) the graduation phase.

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<tr>
<th>Date completed</th>
<th>Step in Process</th>
<th>Required Forms</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Application Phase</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply to the Graduate School</td>
<td>Graduate school on-line application (Graduate School web site)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/admissions">http://www.unr.edu/grad/admissions</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply to the Literacy Studies Program</td>
<td>Applications, Entry Essays, and dispositions statements (attached)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Coursework Phase</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After acceptance into the Program</td>
<td>Create approved program of study with advisor and submit to graduate school</td>
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<td>Program of Study Form (Graduate School web site)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete course work</td>
<td>Change of Program of Study or Change of Committee forms are needed for any changes</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete mid-program essays</td>
<td>Mid-Program Essays (attached)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Graduation Phase</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Upon Coursework Completion</td>
<td>Apply for graduation</td>
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<td>Application for Graduation (Graduate School web site)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For Non-Thesis-Option Students Only: Complete Comprehensive Exam and Exit Essays</td>
<td>Notice of Completion, Master’s degree (Graduate School web site)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For Thesis-Option Students only: Work with Committee Chair to Develop proposal</td>
<td>Human Subjects Approval will be needed (IRB web site)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/ohrp/">http://www.unr.edu/ohrp/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For Thesis-Option Students only: Oral Thesis Defense</td>
<td>Notice of Completion, Master’s Degree (Graduate School web site)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For Thesis-Option Students only: Submit copies of final thesis (paper or</td>
<td>Signed copies of cover sheet (Graduate School web site)</td>
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<td>electronic format) to the graduate school and Exit Essays to advisor</td>
<td>Exit Essays (attached)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note that you are responsible for all of your paperwork throughout your entire graduate program. Your paperwork in your graduate program is not the responsibility of your academic advisory chair or committee members. You must keep your advisor informed of your progress each semester via email.*
APPLICATION PHASE

Admission Requirements for the Online Master's (M.Ed.)
Applicants for the online Master's Degree Program in Literacy Studies must have an overall cumulative GPA of 2.75 or better (on a 4-point scale) or 3.0 for the last half of the undergraduate degree. Applicants who are U.S. citizens are not required to take additional tests. International applicants must take the TOEFL. There are no provisional admissions to the online program. Please use the following checklist to manage the steps of your application.

Checklist for Completing Your Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date completed</th>
<th>Step in Process</th>
<th>Forms or Sites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read all program descriptions carefully to make sure this is the program for you.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.unr.edu/educ/eds/programs/literacy.html">http://www.unr.edu/educ/eds/programs/literacy.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply online to the Graduate School at UNR (select “Literacy Studies” as your program)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ss.unr.edu/apply/">http://www.ss.unr.edu/apply/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have transcripts of all college/ university work sent directly from those institutions to the Graduate School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Send or fax application materials required by the College of Education (address below):</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy Studies Application form</td>
<td>Attached</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Signed Dispositions Form</td>
<td>Attached</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entry Essays</td>
<td>Attached</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two professional letters of recommendation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brief resume of your educational experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of goals for your master’s degree program. A brief (1-3 page) typed essay describing your educational philosophy and purpose for pursuing the degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance Notification</td>
<td>You will receive a letter from the Graduate School indicating whether you have been accepted into the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If accepted, you will receive a letter from the College of Education indicating your advisor and contact information.

NOTE: Applications are reviewed as they are submitted. There is no deadline for applying to the program.

If you wish to take some course work while awaiting admission to the graduate program, you will want to apply to the Graduate School for admission as a “Graduate Special” student. Graduate Special standing allows you to take up to nine graduate credit hours that may apply to your online master's program. Taking courses prior to admission does not guarantee admission to the program. Be sure to consult with the Literacy Studies advisor before taking any courses. Please note that a maximum of 9 credits may be transferred into a master's degree program from another university or from prior to full admission to the Literacy Studies program.
Application Procedures for the Online Master's (M.Ed.)

Read program materials carefully. If you have questions about the courses or the academic content, contact Dr. Dianna Townsend (dtownsend@unr.edu). Questions about enrolling in courses or the online environment can be directed to Independent Learning (775-784-4652; istudy@unr.edu).

Regular Admission Requirements for Master's (M.Ed.)
Admission to the Masters' programs requires a minimum grade point average (GPA).
- GPA above 2.75 overall or 3.0 for the last half of the undergraduate program

(1) Graduate School Application

Apply for admission to the Graduate School. This application is submitted on-line at http://www.ss.unr.edu/apply/. Applicants need to select “Literacy Studies” as the degree choice. Transcripts from ALL previous college and university work must be sent directly from each institution that you have attended to the Graduate School. Hand-carried transcripts, even with official seals, will not be accepted. If you wish to take some course work while awaiting approval for admission to the graduate program, you will want to apply to the Graduate School for admission as a “Graduate Special” student. Graduate Special standing allows you to take up to nine graduate credit hours that may apply to your master's program.

(2) Literacy Studies Program Application

Apply for admission to the College of Education.
- Application form (attached)
- The signed dispositions statement for the degree sought (attached)
- Entry Essays (attached)
- Confidential letters of recommendation from two persons who can comment on your professional qualifications and/or ability to be successful in graduate work.
- A brief (1-2 page) resume, and
- A brief (1-3 page) typed personal statement describing your educational philosophy and purpose for pursuing the degree.

Physical address for sending materials:

Master's Program in Literacy Studies
College of Education/0299
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, Nevada 89557-0299
Fax: (775) 784-4384
COURSEWORK PHASE

Graduate Student Responsibilities
Each student is responsible to be aware of all university and graduate school, and graduate program requirements including deadlines, dates for registration, change of registration, fee payment, filing of programs of study, changes in program of study, and application for graduation. Each student is responsible for the maintenance of a campus environment that is conducive to intellectual curiosity, civility and diversity. Each student is responsible for informing the university of changes in address, phone number, enrollment changes which might affect financial aid or assistantship awards, and/or any other circumstances which could affect satisfactory progress towards a degree. Each student is responsible for attending class and completing all assignments in accordance with the expectations established by their instructors and programs of study (UNR general catalog - Student Expectations).

Continuous Enrollment and Residency Requirement
You are allowed to take up to six (6) years to complete the degree requirements. Once you are admitted to a graduate program, you must be continuously enrolled in a minimum of 3 graduate credits during both fall and spring semesters (not summer) or apply for a leave of absence. Forms for such a leave may be obtained on-line from the Graduate School site.

Grades: All course work for an advanced degree must be completed with a grade of “C” or better. This means a course for which you receive a “C minus” cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements. If the course is required you will have to re-take the course.

Registering for Courses
The online courses are offered through Independent Learning. In order to be sure you understand their requirements and procedures, you must call their office each semester in order to receive the course “call number” for registration.
Masters’ Committee
All master's degree students will form an academic Examining/Advisory Committee of three graduate faculty members composed of: (1) Advisor, (2) one literacy faculty member, and (3) one faculty member outside the Department of Educational Specialties.

Program of Study (POS)
After completion of 12 graduate credits, you will complete a POS form listing all of the courses that you will take. You are responsible for initiating, completing, and filing this paperwork with your advisor, the graduate school, and the department. Faculty and staff of the College of Education will facilitate the completion of the Program of Study for students in the online program. The POS must include 15 credits of 700-level coursework. With the approval of your advisor, some courses selected for the program of study may be changed as you progress through your program. If changes occur, a "Change of Program" form must be filed with the Graduate School prior to applying for graduation.

Mid-Program Essays
You will need to submit your mid-program essays by the end of the semester in which you complete 15 credits. See the information later in this manual for directions for the entry-/mid-/exit-essays.
COURSE WORK REQUIREMENTS
ONLINE MASTERS PROGRAM
Multiple Literacies: Critical Perspectives in Education
Non-Thesis Option: 32 Credits

Core Courses – Required (18 credits):
EDUC 770 Masters Seminar in EDS OR
   EDUC 771H Research in Literacy Education: Critical Literacy
EDRS 700 Research Applications in Education
EDRL 600 Foundations of Literacy
EDRL 700 Literacy Assessment
EDRL 701 Field Work and Clinical Practice in Reading
EDUC 771e Advanced Seminar in Literacy: Multiple Literacies

Multiple Literacies Electives (12 credits):
EDUC 746 Literacy for Developing Civic Understanding
EDUC 771H Research in Literacy Education: Critical Literacy
EDRL 642 Literacy Instruction I
EDRL 643 Literacy Instruction II
EDRL 607 Book Selection for Children
EDRL 610 Word Study: Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary
EDRL 612 Teaching Reading to Older Students
EDRL 671 Language Acquisition, Development & Learning*
EDRL 672 Methods for Elementary English Language Learners*
EDRL 675 Language Assessment*
EDRL 690 Teaching Spanish Speakers in ESL Settings*
EDRL 778 Seminar in Teaching Writing
EDRL 775 The Psychology of Literacy
EDUC 680 Multicultural Concerns in Education
EDUC 741a Issues in Teaching in Diverse Educational Settings: Multicultural Education
EDUC 741b Issues in Teaching in Diverse Educational Settings: Emerging Issues

Comprehensive Exam (2 credits)
EDS 795 Comprehensive Exam

Students usually take EDS 795 with another course to complete the requirement that they take at least 3 credits each semester; otherwise, if EDS is taken singly, then you will need to enroll in 3 credits of EDS 795, except in the summer when only 2 credits are required.

*Course numbers are subject to change. Check with your advisor on these courses.
COURSE WORK REQUIREMENTS
ONLINE MASTERS PROGRAM
Multiple Literacies: Critical Perspectives in Education
Thesis Option: 33 Credits

Core Courses – Required (18 credits):
EDUC 770   Masters Seminar in EDS OR
            EDUC 771H   Research in Literacy Education: Critical Literacy
EDRS 700   Research Applications in Education
EDRL 600   Foundations of Literacy
EDRL 700   Literacy Assessment
EDRL 701   Field Work and Clinical Practice in Reading
EDUC 771e  Advanced Seminar in Literacy: Multiple Literacies

Multiple Literacies Electives (9 credits):
EDUC 741e  Issues in Teaching in Diverse Educational Settings: Emerging Issues: Numeracy
EDUC 746   Literacy for Developing Civic Understanding
EDUC 771H  Research in Literacy Education: Critical Literacy
EDRL 642   Literacy Instruction I
EDRL 643   Literacy Instruction II
EDRL 607   Book Selection for Children
EDRL 610   Word Study: Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary
EDRL 612   Teaching Reading to Older Students
EDUC 680   Multicultural Concerns in Education
EDUC 741a  Issues in Teaching in Diverse Educational Settings: Multicultural Education
EDUC 741b  Issues in Teaching in Diverse Educational Settings: Emerging Issues
EDUC 740   Social Class and Schooling
EDS 747    Critical Numeracy Across the Curriculum
EDUC 761   Gender Issues in Education
EDRL 778   Seminar in Teaching Writing
EDRL 775   The Psychology of Literacy
EDS 748    Equity and Diversity in Math and Science Education

Thesis (6 credits):
EDS 797    Thesis
Reading Specialist Endorsement Licensing Requirements

According to the Nevada State Department of Education, to receive your endorsement as a reading Specialist, you must have:

1. A master's degree
2. Three years of verified teaching experience in state-approved schools
3. A valid elementary or secondary teaching license
4. A minimum of 16 graduate hours in courses in reading, including each of the following areas:
   A. Foundations of reading (EDRL 600)
   B. Etiology and diagnosis of reading problems (EDRL 700)
   C. Clinical practice in remediating reading problems (EDRL 701)
   D. Research in reading (EDUC 771H or EDUC 770)

The application process can be found at the website for the Nevada State Department of Education.
GRADUATION PHASE

Application for Graduation (M.Ed.)
Applications for graduation are filed on-line by strict graduate school due-dates established each semester. It is very important for you to know and adhere to this deadline and it is your responsibility to be aware of the time frame for graduation. The Graduate School requires that you must be enrolled in at least 3 graduate credits during the semester in which you intend to graduate or one credit in the summer for August graduation. It is your responsibility to file the appropriate paperwork in order to graduate within the published deadlines.

M. Ed. Comprehensive Examination
(EDS 795 minimum of 2 credits)
M. Ed. students complete an online comprehensive exam at the end of their program. Your chair will help you prepare. The examination will be prepared, administered, and scored by the advisory/examining committee. The focus of this exam will be to assess your mastery of course content and general mastery of important elements of your program of study. Students usually take EDS 795 with another course to complete the requirement that they take at least 3 credits each semester; otherwise, if EDS 795 is taken singly, then you will need to enroll in 3 credits of EDS 795, except in the summer when only 2 credits are required.

Online Program: Literacy Studies Checklist for Non-Thesis Option Degree Completion

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<tr>
<th>Date completed</th>
<th>Step in Process</th>
<th>Forms and Sites</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete course work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use the Change of Program of Study or Change of Committee forms for any deviations from the approved program of study</td>
<td>Change forms <a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you do not take 3 credits for a semester, complete the leave of absence form</td>
<td>Leave of Absence Form <a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<td>Work with your advisor to determine your timeline for the Comprehensive Exam (Schedule the exam with Independent Learning)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In your final semester, enroll in EDS 795 for a minimum of 2 credits (or 3 credits if it is your only course)</td>
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<td>Apply for graduation by the date established by the Graduate School in the academic calendar: <a href="http://www.ss.unr.edu/records/calendar/">http://www.ss.unr.edu/records/calendar/</a></td>
<td>Application for Graduation <a href="https://www.applyweb.com/public/register?s=UNRGRADG">https://www.applyweb.com/public/register?s=UNRGRADG</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete Exit Essays</td>
<td>Attached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete Comprehensive Exam</td>
<td>The Notice of Completion Form will be completed by your advisor <a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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# Online Program: Literacy Studies Checklist for Thesis Option Degree Completion

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<tr>
<th>Date completed</th>
<th>Step in Process</th>
<th>Forms and Sites</th>
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<tr>
<td>Complete course work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the Change of Program of Study or Change of Committee forms for any deviations from the approved program of study form</td>
<td>Change forms <a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you do not take 3 credits for a semester, complete the leave of absence form</td>
<td>Leave of Absence Form <a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
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<td>Work with your advisor to determine your timeline for your thesis (see attached guidelines)</td>
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<td>In your final semesters, enroll in total of 6 thesis credits with your advisor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply for graduation by the date established by the Graduate School in the academic calendar: <a href="http://www.ss.unr.edu/records/calendar/">http://www.ss.unr.edu/records/calendar/</a></td>
<td>Application for Graduation <a href="https://www.applyweb.com/public/register?s=UNRGRADG">https://www.applyweb.com/public/register?s=UNRGRADG</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Exit Essays</td>
<td>Attached</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Thesis</td>
<td>The Notice of Completion Form will be completed by your advisor <a href="http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/">http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/</a></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Online Literacy Studies Master’s Degree  
Master of Education (M.Ed.) Application Form

Please complete this form and return it to:

College of Education/0299  
Attn: Literacy Studies Program  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Reno, NV 89557-0299  
Fax: 775-784-4384

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________  
Home Phone: ____________________________

__________________________________________  
Work Phone: ____________________________

__________________________________________  
E-mail: ____________________________

Ethnic Group (optional)  
___ African American  
___ Hispanic/Latino(a)  
___ White/ non-Hispanic

___ Asian/Pacific Islander  
___ Native American

Please list all teaching license(s) currently held
Please note that this program does not provide you with a teaching license:

__________________________________________

How did you find out about the online degrees?

Please check the degree option for which you are applying. If you are unsure, consult with an advisor:

___ M.Ed. Master of Education in Literacy Studies (non-thesis option – 32 credits)

___ M.Ed. Master of Education in Literacy Studies (thesis option – 33 credits)

Name of Preferred Academic Advisor (if known) ____________________________

Semester/year that you will begin taking classes ____________________________

__________________________________________  
Candidate Signature  
__________________________________________  
Date
GRADUATE STUDENT PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS AND DISPOSITIONS

(Complete and submit with application form)

University of Nevada, Reno

All professional educators are expected to adhere to a professional code of conduct. Any educator pursuing graduate studies serves as a model for others. The faculty of the College of Education at the University of Nevada, Reno have adopted a set of professional behaviors or dispositions that are crucial for graduate level students. These dispositions apply to the university setting, courses, and field experiences. Failure to demonstrate one or more of the dispositions may lead to an individualized plan for improvement and, in extreme cases, could lead to removal from the program. The list of dispositions is not exhaustive. Depending on the situation, there could be behaviors that do not appear on the list, but which could be considered in an evaluation of readiness to continue in graduate study.

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<tr>
<th>Reflective Practitioner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Ethics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The candidate adheres to standards of ethical conduct including academic honesty and confidentiality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration/Collegiality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate works effectively with colleagues and contributes to a professional collegial atmosphere.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate values the educational professions. He or she exhibits a positive attitude toward schools, teaching, students, and parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Maturity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate responds to frustration and stress professionally and appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Demeanor &amp; Responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate demonstrates reliability by attending classes and other required experiences fully and completing work on time, communicating with relevant individuals when this is not possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate is receptive and responsive to professional feedback, incorporating suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate reflects on and evaluates his or her behavior and work. He or she is willing to consider multiple perspectives of his or her performance. The candidate is willing and able to recognize difficulties or deficiencies and begins to develop potential solutions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Multiculturalism and Democracy

**Student Focus.**
The candidate recognizes and respects students as valued and unique individuals and believes that all students can learn.

**Commitment to Diversity.**
The candidate values diversity in relation to such human dimensions as race/ethnicity, national origin, native language, social class, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, and political and religious beliefs.

### Love of Learning & Strong Fund of Knowledge

**Initiative and Problem Solving.**
The candidate takes initiative in his or her own learning, seeks help, and solves problems.

**Commitment to Learning.**
The candidate is curious and interested in learning more about students and content area.

The candidate seeks out and takes advantage of opportunities for professional growth.

The candidate recognized and assumes increasing responsibility for directing and contributing to his/her own educational development.

The candidate recognizes, appreciates, and applies appropriate research findings to his/her current practice.

### Research and Scholarship

**Ethical Researcher.**
The candidate understands and adheres to accepted practices regarding acknowledging and referencing other’s ideas, writings, and data.

The candidate understands and adheres to requirements for the protection of human subjects as set forth through the Institutional Review Board.

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I have read the dispositions and professional behaviors above and I understand they describe a set of expectations for candidates enrolled in graduate programs in the College of Education at the University of Nevada, Reno. I further understand that if I do not exhibit these behaviors based on the professional judgment of program faculty, I may be asked to participate in an individualized plan for improvement or be asked to leave the program.

Candidate Signature _________________________________ Date: _______
Entry/Mid/Exit-Essays

Purpose
To track our students’ growth in the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the M.Ed. in Literacy Studies, we require that each student submit responses to the two essay prompts at three times during their program, entry, mid-program, and exit. This data helps us better support our students as they progress through the program, and is also required for accreditation purposes. Each of the three sets of essays are required for graduation from the program.

Procedures
- **Procedures for Entry Essay:** With the application form and dispositions statement, applicants will submit their responses to the essay prompts (3-4 double-spaced pages EACH).

- **Procedures for Mid-Program Essay:** During the semester in which students will complete 15 credits in the program, typically five courses, students will submit their responses to the essay prompts (3-4 double-spaced pages EACH) to Dr. Dianna Townsend (dtownsend@unr.edu) by the last day of the semester. See the UNR academic calendar to identify the last day of the semester.

- **Procedures for Exit Essay:** During EDS 795, the comprehensive exam course, students will prepare a final set of responses to the essay prompts (3-4 double-spaced pages EACH) and submit them Dr. Dianna Townsend (dtownsend@unr.edu) during the semester and no later than the date which notices of completion are due to the graduate school.

Essay Prompts and Rubrics
Question #1: Explain your developing knowledge of (a) foundations of literacy, (b) literacy development, and (c) multiple literacies.
- For the entry essays, evidence of and support for your reflections should include references to your teaching experiences and your undergraduate coursework.
- For the mid- and exit-essays, evidence of and support for your reflections should include specific readings and practicum, experiences from specific courses you have taken. The courses aligned with these topics are EDRL 600, EDUC 771e, and EDS 795 but your other literacy courses would also support your knowledge in these areas.

Question #2: Explain your developing knowledge of the use of assessment, curricular, and instructional knowledge to determine and meet the literacy needs of socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally diverse students.
- For the entry essays, evidence of and support for your reflections should include references to your teaching experiences and your undergraduate coursework.
- For the mid- and exit-essays, evidence of and support for your reflections should include specific readings and practicum, experiences from specific courses you have taken. The courses aligned with these topics are EDRL 700 and EDRL 701, but your other literacy courses would also support your knowledge in these areas.
Grading Criteria for Entry/Mid/Exit Essays: Question #1*
Question 1: Explain your developing knowledge of (a) foundations of literacy, (b) literacy development, and (c) multiple literacies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Essay Related to SLO #1</th>
<th>Exceeds Outcome</th>
<th>Meets Outcome</th>
<th>Developing Knowledge toward Outcome</th>
<th>Minimal Knowledge related to Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple, relevant references to seminal theory and research related to the foundations of literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple, relevant references to seminal theory and research related to the development of literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple, relevant references to seminal theory and research related to multiple literacies</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Essay Related to SLO #3</th>
<th>Exceeds Outcome</th>
<th>Meets Outcome</th>
<th>Developing Knowledge toward Outcome</th>
<th>Minimal Knowledge related to Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of research on these topics via clear and academic writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates ability to synthesize literacy research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates standard conventions of academic writing and APA style in a three to four page response to the prompt.</td>
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</table>
This rubric will be used for the assessments at all three times, entry-, mid-, and exit-program. Given the SLOs for the program, it is expected that students will initially fall into the developing and minimal columns with movement into the meets and exceeds columns as they progress through the program.

**Grading Criteria for Entry/Mid/Exit Essays: Question #2**

Question 2: Explain your developing knowledge of the use of assessment, curricular, and instructional knowledge to determine and meet the literacy needs of socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally diverse students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Essay Related to SLO #2</th>
<th>Exceeds Outcome</th>
<th>Meets Outcome</th>
<th>Developing Knowledge toward Outcome</th>
<th>Minimal Knowledge related to Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of assessment information to meet the literacy needs of socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally diverse students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of curriculum to meet the literacy needs of socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally diverse students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of research on literacy instruction to meet the literacy needs of socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally diverse students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Components of Essay Related to SLO #3

| Demonstrates understanding of research on these topics via clear and academic writing |                  |               |                                    |                                     |
| Demonstrates ability to synthesize literacy research |                  |               |                                    |                                     |
| Demonstrates |                  |               |                                    |                                     |
standard conventions of academic writing and APA style in a three to four page response to the prompt.

*This rubric will be used for the assessments at all three times, entry-, mid-, and exit-program. Given the SLOs for the program, it is expected that students will initially fall into the developing and minimal columns with movement into the meets and exceeds columns as they progress through the program.
Thesis Guidelines

M.Ed. Thesis

The M.Ed. degree is intended for educators who wish to focus on research and development in literacy studies within elementary or secondary schools. Therefore you are expected to complete an original research project under the supervision of your committee chair. This process involves several steps:

1. Select topic, research method, and timeline for graduation with committee chair.
2. Secure IRB approval from the UNR IRB and the school district research office or other applicable institutions.
3. Complete research project data collection, analysis, and final paper under committee chair's supervision.
4. Secure thesis defense date with committee chair and committee members during the first two weeks of the semester you expect to graduate. (Please note that most faculty members are not available during the summer semester; please plan accordingly.)
5. Provide ample time for your chair to review and approve your final paper.
6. Distribute the final paper to your committee members at least two weeks before the oral defense date.
7. File the appropriate paperwork with the graduate school. Please note, the thesis is published and requires copyright approval etc. (see the graduate school website)

M.Ed. Oral Thesis Defense

The oral defense of your thesis consists of a formal online meeting with your committee. You should be prepared to do the following:

1. Schedule a meeting time/date and secure the necessary equipment for a video call
   a. Prepare to present your study, a twenty minutes formal PowerPoint presentation, to the group.
2. Prepare to answer questions related to all aspects of your thesis including
   a. literature and research reviewed,
   b. findings, and
   c. implications for the field