

Literacy Studies

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The Ph.D. in Literacy Studies is an interdisciplinary program drawing on faculty from the Colleges of Education, Health and Behavioral Sciences, and Liberal Arts. The program offers a flexible framework of courses, field experiences, and research opportunities designed to provide professionals in various spheres of influence with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively address the literacy and learning crisis in the United States.

Applicants with master's degrees in a variety of disciplines are eligible for admission. Typically, a successful student will hold formal qualifications related to some area of PK–12 educational practice with three or more years of professional experience in their specializations.

Requirements for the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies

Candidate must

1. submit application including a primary interest area, current curriculum vitae, and a choice of full- or part-time study;
2. submit a 700–1,000 word essay explaining background and objectives relative to the program;
3. submit three letters of recommendation from professionals who can address the applicant's interest in literacy and potential for successfully completing a doctoral program;
4. document at least three years of successful professional experience;
5. submit recent (within five years) scores on the GRE with preferred minimum scores of Verbal 550, Quantitative 500, and 4.5 Analytical Writing; and
6. have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.50 in master's coursework.

All application materials should be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies.

Once admitted to the program, candidate must complete at least 60 semester hours of the following:

Foundations (6 credits)

LITS 7021 Cognitive Neuropsychology of Literacy
 LITS 7130 Literacy in the Sociocultural Context

Language and Literacy (9 credits)

CDIS 6000 Language Development, Speech, and Literacy
 LITS 7011 Neurobiology of Language and Literacy
 ENGL 7520 Essentials of Linguistics

Pedagogy (9 credits)

ELED 7250 From Policy to Practice in American Public Schools
 LITS 7110 Models of Literacy Assessment
 LITS 7210 Evidence-based Methods of Literacy Development

Fall admission only

Research Design and Data Analysis (9 credits)

- LITS 7140 Research Design and Methodology in Literacy
- PSY 7585 Test Construction and Validation OR
- PSY 7210 Advanced Psychometrics OR
- ELED 7350 Introduction to Qualitative Methods
- PSY 7290 Psychological Statistics: ANOVA

Practicum (3 credits)

- LITS 7200 Practicum in Literacy Studies

Specialization Area (9 credits selected with advisor)

- Reading Disabilities/Dyslexia
- Literacy Instruction and Staff Development
- Literacy Measurement and Analysis
- Administration/Policy

Dissertation (12 credits)

Courses in Literacy Studies [LITS]

6011/ 7011 Neurobiology of Language and Literacy. Three credits. Advanced introduction to the functional anatomy of language acquisition, perception, comprehension, and production. Contemporary anatomical and functional neuroimaging techniques in research and clinical applications.

6021/ 7021 Cognitive Neuropsychology of Literacy. Three credits. Prerequisite: LITS 7011. Reviews, methods, models, and findings of cognitive neuropsychology and their application to issues in literacy. Provides a conceptual framework for understanding the organization of cognitive abilities with an emphasis on reading, writing, and spelling.

7110 Models of Literacy Assessment. Three credits. Prerequisite: Permission of department. Examines frames of reference within which approaches to diagnostic and achievement testing reside. Topics include grade level achievement models, discrepancy models, curriculum-based assessment, process models, and value-added models.

7130 Literacy in the Sociocultural Context. Three credits. Prerequisite: CDIS 6000 or ENGL 7520. Exploration of how language and socialization patterns within families of various cultural groups (i.e., Latinos, Asian Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans) may influence acquisition of literacy skills and performance in literacy instruction.

7140 Research Design and Methodology in Literacy. Three credits. Prerequisite: Permission of department. Integrated review of current and historical designs and methodologies in literacy research. Analysis of theoretical principles and underlying assumptions will be addressed.

7200 Practicum in Literacy Studies. One to three credits. Prerequisite: Admission to the program; good academic standing; completion of at least 20 hours of core coursework; Intent to Register and Practicum Contract forms; permission of department. Field-based experiences, in as many as three settings, selected by the student in collaboration with the program advisor. Purpose is to expand the student's world view of a career path/field as one connected to literacy issues across a spectrum of disciplines.

7210 Evidence-Based Methods of Literacy Development. Three credits. Prerequisite: Permission of department. Explores context that spawned the evidence-based movement and the founding of What Works Clearinghouse. Evaluation of instructional programs and methods for reading and spelling within the framework of scientifically based evidence of effectiveness.

7330 Special Topics in Literacy. One to three credits. Prerequisite: Permission of department. Independent study of a particular topic selected by the student and approved by the instructor. Provides an opportunity to study special areas of interest for which regular courses are not offered.

7640 Dissertation Research. One to six credits. Selection of a research problem, review of pertinent literature, collection and analysis of data, and composition of dissertation. Once enrolled, student should register for at least one credit hour of doctoral research each semester until completion. S/U grading.

