

**PH.D. IN LITERACY STUDIES  
Student Handbook**

**2011 – 2012**

**College of Education  
College of Behavioral and Health Sciences  
College of Liberal Arts**

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Graduate Student Handbook is designed to serve as a user-friendly, comprehensive guide to the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program at Middle Tennessee State University. Every effort will be made to update the handbook periodically. Students and faculty should be aware, however, that the university's *Graduate Catalog* is the final authority concerning graduate school policies, programs, and curricula.

For more information about the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program, students may consult the *Literacy Studies* website or any of the program faculty or staff:

### DIRECTOR

Jwa Kim, Ph.D., Interim Program Director	(615) 904-8419	<a href="mailto:Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu">Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu</a>
Aleka Blackwell, Ph.D., Interim Program Co-Director	(615) 898-5960	<a href="mailto:ablackwe@mtsu.edu">ablackwe@mtsu.edu</a>

### SUPPORT STAFF

Sharon Farmer, Executive Aide	(615) 898-5642	<a href="mailto:sbfarmer@mtsu.edu">sbfarmer@mtsu.edu</a>
Angela Morrell, Program Secretary	(615) 904-8434	<a href="mailto:amorrell@mtsu.edu">amorrell@mtsu.edu</a>

### FACULTY

Aleka Blackwell, Ph.D.	(615) 898-5960	<a href="mailto:ablackwe@mtsu.edu">ablackwe@mtsu.edu</a>
Amy Elleman, Ph.D.	(615) 898-5688	<a href="mailto:aelleman@mtsu.edu">aelleman@mtsu.edu</a>
Jeanne Fain, Ph.D.	(615) 898-2322	<a href="mailto:jfain@mtsu.edu">jfain@mtsu.edu</a>
Rebecca Fischer, Ph.D.	(615) 898-2641	<a href="mailto:rfischer@mtsu.edu">rfischer@mtsu.edu</a>
Jwa Kim, Ph.D.	(615) 904-8419	<a href="mailto:Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu">Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu</a>
Cyrille Magne, Ph.D.	(615) 898-5599	<a href="mailto:cmagne@mtsu.edu">cmagne@mtsu.edu</a>

### WEBSITE

Ph.D. in Literacy Studies website:	<a href="http://www.mtsu.edu/literacy">www.mtsu.edu/literacy</a>	<a href="mailto:literacy@mtsu.edu">literacy@mtsu.edu</a>
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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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### Mission

The mission of the doctoral program in Literacy Studies is to broaden the understanding of literacy to include an appreciation of the contributions of biology, language, society, and culture as well as instruction on the acquisition and use of literacy skills. The program endeavors to support the application of this broader construct for the advancement of literacy learning through various elements of the education enterprise.

### Objectives

The *Ph.D. in Literacy Studies at Middle Tennessee State University* is designed to address one of education's most pressing needs – the shortage of scholars, practitioners, administrators and policy-makers equipped to bridge the gap between the rapidly expanding body of scientific research on the development of literacy and educational practice, policy, and professional preparation. Drawing on the faculty from the College of Education, the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts, this interdisciplinary program offers a flexible framework of courses, field experiences, teaching, and research opportunities designed to provide professionals in various spheres of influence with the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively address the literacy crisis in the United States and beyond.

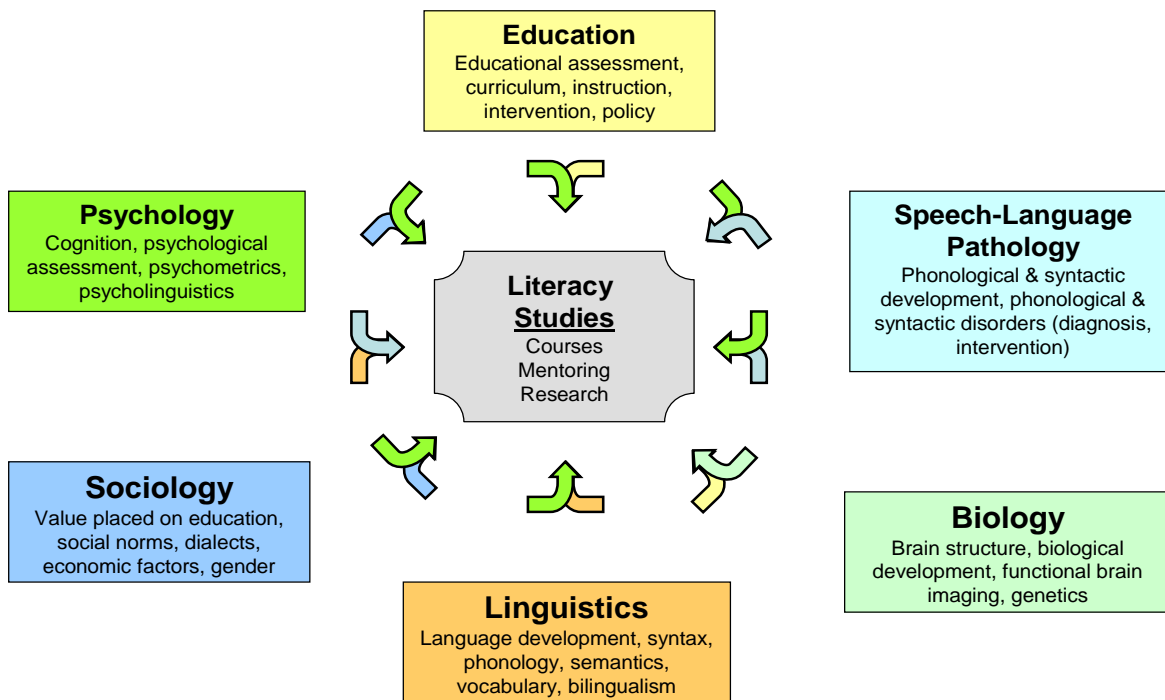
Historically, Middle Tennessee State University is a recognized leader in the preparation of professional educators. It employs nationally recognized scholars in linguistics, cognition, psychometrics, research design, and statistics who strive to integrate aspects of these various disciplines into education research and training.

The Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program draws on these various disciplines and, in turn, strengthens them by connecting their resources and potential. The result is constructive change within the various spheres of study and practice.

## Program Design

Graduates of the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program will be prepared to participate in a national paradigm shift in the way that literacy is viewed. Traditionally, the emphasis has been on “content to be taught”. The focus in this program is on the cognitive processes that support fluency in reading and writing and the instructional approaches that facilitate their growth.

To accomplish these goals, the program is structured to provide coursework involving experienced faculty in three colleges, the College of Education, the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and the College of Liberal Arts. The coursework is designed to establish the foundation for a comprehensive and interdisciplinary understanding of literacy within biological, psychological, linguistic, and social contexts of human development. As illustrated in the figure below, this program broadens the scope of investigations of literacy development by applying the analytic strengths from each of the independent academic disciplines. The program’s interdisciplinary nature is reflected in all three aspects of its design: program structure, coursework, and doctoral research.



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## CURRICULUM

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The doctoral program requires completion of 60 semester credit hours (post master's) distributed as follows:

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<u>Curriculum Component</u>	<u>Hours Required</u>
Literacy Studies Core	36
<i>Foundations of Literacy</i>	06
<i>Language &amp; Literacy</i>	09
<i>Pedagogy</i>	09
<i>Research Design &amp; Data Analysis</i>	09
<i>Practicum</i>	03
Specializations	09
Electives	03
Dissertation	<u>12</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>60</b>

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### ESTIMATED TIME FOR COMPLETION

Full-time: approximately three (3) years

Part-time: approximately five (5) years

**Maximum time:** There is a time limit of ten (10) years to complete all Ph.D. degree requirements. That is, all doctoral coursework as well as the dissertation must be completed within ten (10) years of the first semester of enrollment.

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## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

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### Overview

A common set of **core courses** provides a comprehensive understanding of literacy within biological, psychological, linguistic, and social contributions to human development, learning, and motivation. Students in this program will develop an understanding of how changing social and political perspectives and evolving scientific knowledge affect how literacy is defined, taught, assessed and acquired. Core courses will assist students to build upon prior education and experience. They will inform students about designs and methodologies typically employed to research the process of literacy learning and the outcomes of teaching. The program incorporates several components including coursework specific to the core of the program, courses selected to flesh out an area of specialization chosen by the student, and service learning requirements tied to specific courses and a practicum.

### Program Structure

#### Core Courses Required of All Students (36 credit hours):

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<u>Rubric/Number</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Hours</u>
<b>Foundations (6 hours)</b>		
LITS 7130	Literacy in Socio-Cultural Contexts <sup>1</sup>	3
LITS 7021	Cognitive Neuropsychology <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>Language &amp; Literacy (9 hours)</b>		
CDIS 6000	Language, Speech, & Literacy <sup>1</sup>	3
LITS 7011	Neurobiology of Language and Literacy <sup>1</sup>	3
ENGL 7520	Essentials of Linguistics <sup>S</sup>	3
<b>Pedagogy (9 hours)</b>		
ELED 7250	From Policy to Practice in American Public Schools <sup>S</sup>	3
LITS 7110	Models of Literacy Assessment <sup>S</sup>	3
LITS 7210	Evidence Based Methods for Literacy Development <sup>S</sup>	3

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<b>Research Design &amp; Data Analysis (9 hours)</b>		
LITS 7140	Research Design and Methodology in Literacy	3
PSY 7290	<i>Psychological Statistics: ANOVA</i>	3 <sup>a</sup>
PSY 7210	<i>Advanced Psychometrics</i> <sup>5</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>
<b>or</b>		
PSY 7585	<i>Test Construction and Validation</i>	3
<b>or</b>		
ELED 7350	<i>Introduction to Qualitative Methods</i>	3
<b>Practicum (3 hours)</b>		
LITS 7200	Practicum	3

<sup>a</sup>Requires one previous graduate course in statistics - PSY 7280

<sup>1</sup> Hybrid courses that draw content from many disciplines.

<sup>5</sup> Courses that draw the majority of their content from specific academic disciplines.

The core courses marked as interdisciplinary in the core are hybrids that draw content from many disciplines and integrate this knowledge through application to the topic of literacy. These courses have been developed by faculty with expertise in a primary discipline (e.g., neurobiology) in consultation with the interdisciplinary Program Coordination Committee, which ensures that the content specific to the discipline is explicitly related to issues in literacy.

### Table of Interdisciplinary Course Content

		Biology	Education	Linguistics	Psychology	Statistics / Measurement	Sociology	Speech - Lang Path
CDIS 6000	Language, Speech, & Literacy	●	⊙	●	⊙		⊙	●
ELED 7250	Policy to Practice in American Public Schools	⊙	●		⊙	⊙	●	⊙
ENGL 7520	Essentials of Linguistics	⊙	⊙	●	⊙		●	⊙
LITS 7110	Models of Literacy Assessment	●	●	●	●	●	⊙	●
LITS 7130	Literacy in Socio-Cultural Contexts	⊙	●	●	●		●	⊙
LITS 7210	Evidence Based Methods for Literacy Develop.	●	●	⊙	●	●	⊙	⊙
LITS 7021	Cognitive Neuropsychology of Literacy	●	⊙	●	●	⊙	⊙	●
LITS 7011	Neurobiology of Language and Literacy	●	●	⊙	●		⊙	⊙
PSY 7210	Advanced Psychometrics				●	●		
PSY 7290	Psychological Statistics: ANOVA				●	●		

#### Key

Major emphasis in course ●

Minor emphasis in course ⊙

### Core Course Replacements

It is required that all students complete 36 hours in the Core, distributed as detailed above. However, it is possible that some students will have taken one or two of the above listed courses as part of a previous graduate program. When a student documents that a specific course listed in the core has been satisfactorily completed, within three (3) years preceding admission, the advisor and student will jointly identify a replacement course that satisfies the interdisciplinary goals of the program as well as the career goals of the student. For instance, if a student entering with a master's has already taken graduate classes equivalent to a core course, such as Essentials of Linguistics, the core requirement for that specific course would be waived, but the student would take an additional three hours of coursework, specific to the literacy framework of this degree, to bring his/her total hours to 60.

*No more than two courses in the core will be considered for replacements.* Students requesting such course replacements will be required to provide adequate documentation of the content of the course, such as a copy of the course syllabus, to be approved. This will permit evaluation of its similarity to the related course in the Ph.D. program. Only courses in which a grade of A- or better was earned will be considered for replacement.

### Course-Based Service Learning Experiences

Students in this program will complete four field-based service learning experiences through which they will gain practical knowledge in work settings. The field-based experiences are embedded in the core courses and the practicum. Typically, the service learning experiences will require 15-20 clock hours in the field. A practicum experience will involve work in the field each week throughout a semester. Typically, the practicum experience will require 60 total clock hours in the field. Field experiences provide opportunities for students to work in a variety of environments where they are exposed to current issues in literacy research and practice. For the most part, these field experiences will provide a service to the sponsoring organization. These experiences are thus in-line with the University's stated interests in encouraging service learning experiences. The table below offers illustrative examples of field experiences that might be linked to specific courses:

Table of Course-Based Service Learning Experiences		
Number	Course Title	Activity / Experience
*LITS 7130	Literacy in a Socio-Cultural Context	Consult with school-based professionals on cases in which reading performance difficulties are language based
*LITS 7110	Models of Literacy Assessment	Perform evaluation of assessment processes within a school setting
*LITS 7210	Evidenced-Based Methods of Literacy Development	Perform analysis of school-based curriculum materials
**LITS 7200	Practicum	See examples page 8.

\* Course-based Service Learning Ratings: E= Exceptional, S= Supportive

\*\* Practicum work is graded according to the College of Graduate Studies grading scale (see *Grades and Academic Standing* section of this handbook)

The core courses and course-based field experiences are followed by coursework in one of four areas of specialization:

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

In addition to coursework, the chosen area of specialization may be expanded through electives, a supervised practicum experience, and the dissertation research.

## Practicum Experience

Students may register for a practicum experience no earlier than their second year in the program, having completed a minimum of 20 credit hours of coursework within the core and at least 6 credit hours in the area of specialization. Typically, the practicum experience will require 60 total clock hours in the field.

Practicum experiences are designed to provide students with appropriate experiences related to their areas of specialization. For example, a student concentrating in *Literacy Instruction and Staff Development* might work with a district curriculum supervisor and gain hands-on experience in the evaluation of curriculum materials and/or providing support and in-service training to teachers. A student concentrating in *Reading Disabilities* might be placed in a Title-I or Special Education program to gain hands-on experience diagnosing reading disabilities and providing support and in-service training to the teachers who provide remedial instruction. A student concentrating in *Administration / Policy* might be placed in the Tennessee State Board of Education for hands-on experience in education law and policy. Faculty and department chairs from component programmatic areas will collaborate on maintaining a webpage of available practicum sites for the interdisciplinary students.

*Approval of Field Experience/Practicum Sites and Supervisors.* Sites for field experiences will be screened to insure the quality of the site, the supervisor, and the nature of the work to be done. Clearly defined expectations for field work will be established through contractual agreements between students and on-site supervisors. The contract will detail the activities to be engaged in and the work product(s) expected, as well as the nature and frequency of training and supportive supervision to be provided. These contracts will be reviewed and approved by the faculty member responsible for a course with a field-based learning component.

## Specialized Courses: 9 hours

*Please note: Courses listed here, within each area of specialization, are examples of those deemed appropriate. However, this list is not exhaustive. Substitutions may be arranged with the permission of a student's program advisor.*

### 1. LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

This specialization is intended primarily for individuals who already hold licensure or certification in a profession (e.g. school psychology, speech-language pathology) or are credentialed in specialized areas of education (e.g., reading education, special education, and educational administration). The doctorate prepares these individuals for a career in pre-service teacher education and in-service staff development. Instruction and staff development specialists are needed to oversee the changes in literacy education inspired by new research and mandated in new policies. There is a growing need for professionals who can help implement changes, such as RTI, by training new teachers and updating the skills of in-service teachers. This specialization provides additional coursework to enhance graduates' capacity to address important problems within their areas of competence.

Rubric/Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
ELED 6220	Seminar in Early Childhood Education	3
LITS 7330	Special Topics in Literacy	3
PSY 6530/7530	The Psychology of Reading and Reading Development	3
READ 6120	Current Issues in Reading Instruction	3
SPSE 6140	Teacher Leadership for School Improvement	3
SPSE 6900	Learning Systems & Instructional Design	3
YOED 6680	Issues & Trends in Teaching & Learning	3

### 2. READING DISABILITIES / DYSLEXIA

This specialization includes added coursework in dyslexic studies, learning disabilities, and communication disorders in order to prepare master's level professionals (e.g. special education mild/moderate, school

psychologists, speech pathologists, etc.) who have specific training and experience diagnosing and teaching children with reading disabilities for a variety of second careers. These careers include college faculty, developing curriculum materials or assessment tools for publishers, or serving as professional consultants to schools, school systems, and State Departments of Education.

<b>Rubric/Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
DYST 6000	Introduction to Dyslexia	3
DYST 6010	Identifying Students with Dyslexia	3
DYST 6011	Interventions with Dyslexia	3
PSY 6530/7530	The Psychology of Reading and Reading Development	3
PSY 6750	Psychology & Assessment of Learning Disabilities	3
PSY 6050	Psychological Testing	3
SPED 6300	Theoretical Perspectives on Mild/Moderate Disabilities	3
SPED 6780	Issues in Special Education	3
READ 6750	Research Seminar in Reading	3
SPSE 6140	Teacher Leadership for School Improvement	3

### 3. LITERACY MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS

This specialization is intended for those who may be interested in a career related to work in the development of assessment tools and curriculum materials under the umbrella of a publishing house, for careers in consulting with school systems on the application of measurements, or with a career in state or national governmental agencies that use measurement to draft, direct, and enforce literacy policies. Preparation in this concentration will enhance skills related to data analysis and test construction as well as adding to background knowledge related to the utilization of assessment in K-12 education.

<b>Rubric/Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
PSY 6750	Psychology and Assessment of Learning Disabilities	3
PSY 6050	Psychological Testing	3
PSY 6XXX	Neuropsychological Assessment	3
PSY 6550	Structural Equation Modeling	3
PSY 7580	Multivariate Data Analysis	3
PSY 7585	Test Construction and Validation	3
SOC 6720	Qualitative Research	3
SPED 6310	Issues in Assessment of Mild/Moderate Disabilities	3

### 4. ADMINISTRATION / POLICY

This specialization includes coursework in law and policy, organizational change, and child development in order to prepare master's level licensed administrators, curriculum supervisors, superintendents, and state agency employees who want to move up in their own administrative system or who want to advance to state and federal-level administrative jobs. This specialization could also serve individuals who have backgrounds outside traditional education domains (e.g. managers holding an M.B.A., Industrial/Organizational psychologists) who would need additional training in order to pursue a second career in district or system educational administration or a second career in state or federal education administration in which policy guides literacy education.

<b>Rubric/Number</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
SOC 6010	Social Policy Analysis	3
PSY 6570	Psychological Research Methods in Human Resource Management	3
ECON 6430	Seminar on Public Finance	3
SOC 6570	Seminar in Advanced Social Psychology	3
SPED 6780/7780	Issues in Special Education	3

### Course Credit Transfers in Areas of Specialization

In cases where an applicant has completed a previous course of study leading to a post-master's degree, and one or more courses in that program are directly related to the area of specialization the student chooses to pursue in this doctoral program, the applicant may request that previous credits be applied to this degree. In most cases, up to twelve (12) hours of formal coursework earned in a previous post-master's degree, within three (3) years preceding admission to this Ph.D. program, may be substituted for courses required in the specialization area chosen. The recommendation to accept these credits must come from the graduate program director after she or he has made an analysis of the courses requested for transfer. Final approval must be given by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Coursework accepted for credit toward a graduate degree at MTSU **must** represent graduate coursework relevant to the degree, with course content and the level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those of students enrolled in the institution's own graduate degree programs.

### Electives: 3 hours

All students will include one three-hour elective in their degree plan. This elective may serve to extend credit hours in the area of specialization or add to the knowledge base in another area of interest. An elective will be chosen in consultation with a Program Advisor.

### Dissertation: 12 hours

Candidates will design and conduct a research project culminating in the presentation and oral defense of a dissertation.

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Rubric/Number	Course Title	Credit Hours
LITS 7640	Dissertation Research	12

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The dissertation is a work of original, advanced research written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. A dissertation is a lengthy, unified, coherent work, usually exceeding 100 pages, that makes an original contribution to scholarship in the field. This is the document that secures the candidate's right to enter into the academic profession and provides proof of professional competence.

Please see the *Graduate Catalog* for further information on dissertations and all other mentioned academic regulations and procedures.

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## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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All applicants for Ph.D. in Literacy Studies **must** submit the following materials to The College of Graduate Studies (MTSU P.O. Box 42):

- a completed application form (<http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/apply.shtml>);
- a non-refundable application fee (required of all applicants) should accompany the application;
- official transcripts certifying coursework from each college or university attended; **minimum GPA of 3.5 in master's coursework required for admission to program**;
- a current curriculum vitae showing at least three (3) years of documented professional experience;
- a 700 – 1,000 word essay explaining how their background and objectives relate to the program's purpose;
- three (3) letters of recommendation from professionals who can address the applicant's interest in literacy and potential for successfully completing a doctoral program;
- Recent GRE scores (within the last five years); preferred minimum scores are Verbal 550, Quantitative 500, and 4.5 on Analytical Writing.

Applicants must ensure that all materials are sent to the College of Graduate Studies before the stated deadlines for submission. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that their files are complete by the deadline. Typically, applicants with incomplete files will not be considered for admission. However, exceptions may be made if extenuating circumstances are documented.

### **Deadlines**

Application for fall admission must be submitted by **June 1**.

### **Screening**

The program faculty committee will conduct an initial screening of applicants. Individuals will remain in the applicant pool if they meet the minimum required GPA and GRE scores, have positive letters of recommendation, and have written a personal statement that is judged to be satisfactory by the program coordinating committee. The professional experience and career goals represented in these documents must match one of the specializations within the doctorate.

### **Rating**

Applicants will be rated during a meeting of the program coordinating committee, which serves as the admissions committee. This meeting will be open to all members of the core program faculty. Applicant ratings will be based on GPA, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, relevant employment experience, and the faculty review of the required essay (personal statement). Applicants receiving sufficiently high ratings for submitted documents will then be scheduled to participate in an interview. Admission decisions are based on a combination of factors – academic qualifications, prior work experience, career goals, and abilities to communicate orally and in writing.

### **Graduate Assistantship Applications**

Applications for a graduate assistantship should be sent directly to the College of Graduate Studies (MTSU Box 42). Please refer to pages 18 of this Handbook and to the Graduate Studies website ([www.mtsu.edu/graduate/student/gtas.shtml](http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/student/gtas.shtml)) for a detailed discussion of Graduate Assistantships at MTSU.

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## **RETENTION AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

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The Literacy Studies program is designed to be completed in four years of full-time study. Coursework and the preliminary examination could be completed in six semesters. Dissertation research and preparation of the document could be completed over two to three additional semesters. This time frame is consistent with guidelines that traditionally have been associated with availability of assistantships and fellowships for doctoral study. Completion within four years assumes that prerequisites (3 credit hours) for entry into the statistics sequence are satisfied. Throughout the program, students will be engaged in raising viable research questions, designing studies, analyzing data sets, and professional writing. Collectively, these experiences will prepare students to undertake the dissertation research project.

### **Pre-Dissertation Advising**

Upon admission to the Ph.D. program, each candidate will be assigned an advisor. Advisors are members of the core faculty. Guided by the mentorship model, this advisor, in consultation with other faculty in the program, will advise the student on an appropriate program of study, will provide any other required academic advisement, and will conduct a written annual review of student progress toward the degree. A written evaluation of progress by the student's advisor will be incorporated into the student's academic file.

### **Colloquium Series**

Students participation in scheduled colloquia and symposia is one component in the annual determination of "good standing" in the program. Participation is encouraged throughout the years that a student is enrolled in the program. Participation is required for students fulfilling their residency\* requirement. These events provide a forum in which program faculty, students, and guests will present and discuss

original research and in which doctoral candidates will present their thesis proposals and defend their completed dissertations. Participation in these events is an important part of creating a sense of identity and unity for faculty and students who are part of the literacy studies multi-disciplinary doctoral program.

### **Degree Plan**

In consultation with the program advisor, each degree-seeking student must file a formal outline of the degree program on a degree plan available at The College of Graduate Studies on the website ([www.mtsu.edu/graduate](http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate)). Degree plans should be completed within the first 21 hours of enrollment. *In general, a doctoral student will not be permitted to register for more than 30 semester hours unless an approved degree plan is on file.*

### **Research Tools, Techniques, and Methodology Requirements**

The Ph.D. in Literacy Studies requires students to demonstrate proficiency in the application of research skills. Doctoral seminars will involve reviews of model studies for the purpose of evaluating the research design methodology selected to address the specific hypothesis. Statistical methods and tools will be acquired in the two required courses in advanced statistics (these build upon an additional graduate level course in statistics as a prerequisite for a total of three graduate courses in statistics). Students with professional interests in statistics and measurement can take three additional courses as part of the specialization in literacy measurement & analysis.

### **Ethical Development**

Issues of professional ethics as well as obligations of researchers to ensure confidentiality of research subjects, and to protect data collected from the dangers of misuse, will be addressed directly in the doctoral seminars, the practica experiences, and in the research core. Students will assist in preparing requests for IRB approval for any studies in which they participate. They are required to successfully complete the HIPPA training course prior to approval of the dissertation proposal and will prepare a request for IRB approval to conduct the dissertation research project.

### **Residency**

To ensure that students in the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies will have the opportunity to be fully immersed in the intellectual and research climate that will characterize the program, a period of residency is required. To fulfill residency requirements, Ph.D. students must be enrolled in full-time study (nine [9] credits per semester) a minimum of two consecutive Academic Year semesters or two summer semesters, which extend from the beginning of Summer Session II through the end of Summer Session IV. During the residency semesters, students are expected to assist faculty members with their teaching and research responsibilities. This time should also be dedicated to other enrichment endeavors, such as the preparation of a colloquium presentation, submission of one paper for publication, engagement in service-learning, and participation in professional development beyond the opportunities provided in the program.

Residency requirements must be satisfied no later than the semester during which a student takes the preliminary examination. Students entering the program on a part-time basis must plan for ways to meet this requirement. In addition, all students in the program must maintain continuous enrollment (at least one course per semester) from admission until graduation. In extenuating circumstances, students may apply to the pre-dissertation committee for a leave-of-absence.

### **Professional Writing**

Students are expected to develop skills in professional writing leading to submission of at least one paper for publication in a referred journal prior to sitting for the preliminary examinations. To ensure that the writing skills of all candidates meet professional standards, advisors may suggest enrollment in a remedial writing course for those students whose early coursework indicates a need for substantial improvement.

### **Preliminary Examinations**

When coursework is completed, the student will be required to pass a written preliminary examination. This examination reflects critical concepts from the core classes as well as specific competencies gained in courses within the student's area of specialization.

### **Advancement to Candidacy**

Once the student has successfully completed the written preliminary examinations, the program director will file the Results of Preliminary Examination and Advancement to Candidacy Form with the College of Graduate Studies in order for the student to be admitted to candidacy and to enroll in dissertation credits. No more than six credit hours of C grade will count towards the requirement of a Ph.D. degree. Grades of D and F will not count towards degree requirements but will be computed in determining the GPA. The student must have a GPA of at least 3.25 in the program of studies to advance to candidacy status. They must also have filed a degree plan with appropriate approvals.

### **Dissertation Committee**

Candidates for the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies will be required to conceptualize, formally propose, and independently carry out an original research project, which will add to the knowledge base in an area of inquiry that is integral to Literacy Studies. The study will be defended orally before a committee of peers who are familiar with the field of inquiry. Following advancement to candidacy, the student must formally establish his/her dissertation committee. The committee should include a minimum of three graduate faculty with current status as full members; the chair and at least one member must be from the program committee and one or more may be from outside the program. The chair of the committee must be a current member of Middle Tennessee State University's graduate faculty and must have a doctoral endorsement. The dissertation committee should consist of faculty from different disciplines in order to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the program. Once the committee is established, the student may then draft the research proposal. **The proposal may take either the traditional dissertation format or the article format. The dissertation proposal should propose an original research study developed by the student. Whereas pilot studies are appropriate for the formulation of research hypotheses, pilot data cannot be included as part of either dissertation or article format. After the proposal conference, the student must follow through and address all issues and suggestions raised by each member of the committee and redistribute the revised proposal within three weeks of the proposal conference.** Upon successful defense of the proposal before a committee, which will be comprised of the dissertation advisors and other experts in the field of interest (e.g., speech/language, learning, teaching, etc.), the student will be allowed to initiate the research study. Finally, consultation and advice will be provided by the dissertation committee as the student develops and prepares to defend the document as well as during the post-defense revision process.

### **Defense of Dissertation**

Upon submission of the completed dissertation, the doctoral candidate who has successfully completed all requirements for the degree will be scheduled by the chair of her/his dissertation committee, in consultation with other advisory members, to defend the dissertation. The College of Graduate Studies will publish the dissertation title, date, time, and location of the defense at least two weeks prior to the defense. The defense is open to all members of the University community who wish to attend. The dissertation defense is administered by the advisory/dissertation committee according to program guidelines. Successful defense of the dissertation must be attested to in writing by all members of the advisory/dissertation committee and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

### **Intent to Graduate**

An Intent to Graduate Form, available on the College of Graduate studies website ([www.mtsu.edu/graduate](http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate)), must be filed by the student by the end of the second week of the semester in which the student plans to graduate or no later than the end of the first week of Summer Session II (for August graduation).

### **Time Limit**

There is a ten year time limit for completing all Ph.D. degree requirements; i.e., all doctoral coursework as well as the dissertation must be completed within ten years of the first semester of enrollment.

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## GRADUATE COURSES

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Graduate students take courses at the 6000 (M.A.) or 7000 (Ph.D.) level. No more than one-third of the minimum 60 credit hours in the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies may be at the 6000-level.

Descriptions for all graduate courses appear in the *Graduate Catalog*, both in print and online [www.mtsu.edu/gcat](http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat).

Course offerings for each semester appear in a class schedule, which is available online usually in the month before the end of the current term. Once students know which courses they would like to take in a given semester, they can register for these courses online during their assigned registration period.

**Note:** Sometimes students try to “shop” courses; that is, they attend the first day of several courses, then decide which ones they will take and drop the others. This practice is actively discouraged as it effectively prevents some students from registering for courses that they need. Students who enroll in more than the allowed number of courses may be dropped immediately and without notice from all courses for which they have registered, necessitating their re-enrollment in whatever courses remain open at the time.

### Course Load

Students should become familiar with the following information concerning status in regard to graduate loads to avoid problems with registration, financial aid, or academic status:

**Full-time** status is 9-12 graduate hours.

**Three-quarter time** is 7-8 graduate hours.

**Half-time** is 5-6 graduate hours.

Graduate students are limited to a maximum of 12 graduate hours per semester. If an exception is requested, overload forms must be signed by the director of graduate studies and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Full-time status for students holding graduate assistantships is six (6) graduate semester hours.

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## GRADES AND ACADEMIC STANDING

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Grades are assigned by professors based on the following notations, mandated by the College of Graduate Studies. Individual professors provide the grading scale for the courses they teach, using some or all of the assigned notations:

Grade	Grade Points
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00

D-	0.67
F	0.00
I (Incomplete)	Not calculated
W (withdrawal)	Not calculated
P	Pass
F	Fail
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory

### Incompletes

Incompletes (designated by an **I** on the transcript) indicate that the student has not completed all course requirements due to illness or other uncontrollable circumstances, especially those that occur towards the close of the term. Mere failure to make up work or turn in assignments on time will not result in an incomplete unless documented extenuating circumstances are acceptable to the professor, who finally determines acceptable criteria for assigning an **I**.

### Accessing Grades

Grades can be accessed online through PipelineMT at [www.mtsu.edu](http://www.mtsu.edu). Select **RaiderNet**, then select **Student, Student Records**, and then **Final Grades**. Outstanding financial balances prevent release of grades. **RaiderNet** provides an option that allows online payment by credit card or check card (VISA or MasterCard) to view grades.

### Grade Appeals

The grade appeals process is available to any student who wants to contest a course grade. In general, grade appeals are adjudicated on the basis of policies and procedures outlined in the individual course guidelines and syllabus. The College of Graduate Studies provides policies and procedures, which constitute a two-level appeals process that the student initiates.

### Academic Standing

Students should acquaint themselves with the following policies from the "Academic Regulations" section of the Graduate Studies catalog:

1. No courses with a **C** grade may count toward Ph.D. requirements.
2. No course with a grade lower than a **C-** may be applied toward any graduate degree requirement.

Doctoral students in the Literacy Studies Program must maintain a minimum GPA of **3.25**.

### Academic Probation

A graduate student who fails to meet the following academic retention standards will be placed on academic probation for the subsequent term:

1. the applicable minimum cumulative graduate GPA retention standard listed below; or
2. cumulative GPA less than 3.00 for three consecutive semesters.

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## STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

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The Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program assumes important responsibilities in preparing students for professional work in teaching and research. The faculty seeks to prepare students by providing courses, field experience, seminars, speakers, research experience, and other activities and resources relevant to students' studies and preparation. While faculty will attend to specific needs of students when feasible, students should understand that program demands render it ultimately impossible to make exceptions to policy or procedure for any but the rarest circumstances.

Graduate students in turn assume a responsibility to understand and meet all program requirements. Students should communicate their plans regarding dates for completion of coursework, dissertations,

exam scheduling, deadlines, and other information relevant to their satisfactory progress to the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as feasible.

Students are expected to arrange their schedules to accommodate class meeting times and the office hours of professors.

While faculty attempt to address individual needs when feasible, they are also obligated to apply all university, College of Graduate Studies, and Literacy Studies Graduate Program policies and procedures impartially to all students. Students who have special needs related to disability should work through the Disabled Students Services office (615-898-2783; Keathley University Center, Room 120; [www.mtsu.edu/dssemail](http://www.mtsu.edu/dssemail)).

### **Statement of Community Standards of Civil Behavior**

The Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program fully endorses the statement regarding tolerance for diversity issued by the MTSU Office of Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services, found at [www.mtsu.edu/judaff](http://www.mtsu.edu/judaff). Further, the Literacy Studies Graduate Program supports the statement of community standards issued by the MTSU Handbook:

#### **Statement of Community Standards and Expectations**

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to the ideal of developing and nurturing a community of scholars. The choice to associate or affiliate with the MTSU community is freely made by students, staff, and faculty; nevertheless, it is assumed that each person who joins the community will accept and practice the following core values and expectations:

1. **Value of Honesty.** The notion of personal honesty and academic integrity is central to the existence of the MTSU community. Community members will not engage in cheating, plagiarism, or fabrications of any type. All members of the community will strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic achievement.
2. **Respect for Diversity.** The MTSU community is composed of individuals representing different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and cultures. The community celebrates and embraces this diversity as a pillar of its strength.
3. **Commitment to the Community.** Citizens of the MTSU community will be good stewards of the University's resources and will not engage in conduct which damages or exploits the community.
4. **Freedom of Expression.** The MTSU community is a marketplace of ideas and opinions. Community members are encouraged to communicate their ideas and opinions freely, and with civility, concerning issues both within and outside the community.

These expectations for community standards would apply to all areas of graduate study—actual and virtual classrooms, writing labs, library, group meetings, presentations, all communication venues, and any other forum.

### **University Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities**

The Tennessee State Board of Regents and the university have developed a statement of student rights and responsibilities that pertains to all MTSU students, including graduate students, which is printed in the MTSU Student Handbook. Students assume a responsibility to know and act according to expectations for academic community, and to understand their rights as students.

*The program faculty **strongly encourages** that **all students** become familiar with the MTSU Student Handbook.*

[www.mtsu.edu/~handbook](http://www.mtsu.edu/~handbook)

### **Scholarly Integrity**

One aspect of professionalism involves integrity. Faculty members assume that students understand, subscribe to, and practice high personal and professional standards, and they hold students accountable

to them. This includes the responsibility of doing one's own work and for complying with professional standards and procedures for attributing the sources of information, images, and other forms of media.

The following policies are disseminated by Middle Tennessee State University's Office of Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services. The Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program complies with these policies and procedures.

### **Academic Misconduct Defined**

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

1. Plagiarism—The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgment.
2. Cheating—Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
3. Fabrication—Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
4. Facilitation—Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.

### **Academic Misconduct Policy**

The professor reports allegations of academic misconduct to the Literacy Studies Program Director and to the Assistant Dean for Judicial Affairs (898-2750). The professor should attempt to inform the student of the allegation and notify the student that the information has been forwarded to the assistant dean. The professor may conduct a conference with the student in compliance with the following procedures:

1. The student will be provided notice that he or she is believed to have committed an act or acts of academic misconduct in violation of University rules.
2. The student will be presented with all evidence in the knowledge or possession of the professor that tends to support the allegation(s) of academic misconduct.
3. The student will have an opportunity to present information on his or her behalf.

Based upon TBR Policy # 3:02:00:01 regarding academic misconduct, the professor will assign an appropriate grade. This information, along with all supporting documentation of the violation, will be forwarded to the Assistant Dean for Judicial Affairs.

In the event a student believes he or she has been erroneously accused of academic misconduct, and at the discretion of the Assistant Dean of Student Life, a hearing before the University Discipline Committee may be arranged.

If the student is found responsible for the allegation(s) of academic misconduct, the grade, as assigned by the professor, will stand. Should the student be absolved of the allegations of academic misconduct by the Discipline Committee, the faculty member will reassess the student's grade based on the Discipline Committee's finding.

Consistent with other disciplinary cases, the Discipline Committee will forward their recommendation for sanctions to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. If the student withdraws from the University, and is ultimately found responsible for academic misconduct, the student will receive the grade as assigned by the professor.

### **Class Attendance Pending Hearing**

The student may stay in class pending an appeal hearing if the faculty member determines that the student's presence in the class does not interfere with the professor's ability to teach the class or the ability of other class members to learn.

Graduate assistants found responsible for academic misconduct will have their assistantship terminated.

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## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

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Applicants wishing to be considered for a graduate assistantship, in addition to supplying the materials for general application (including a general application form), must fill out an application for an assistantship. The application form may be found at the back of the *Graduate Catalog* as well as at the College of Graduate Studies website: [www.mtsu.edu/graduate/pdf/GraduateAsstApp.pdf](http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/pdf/GraduateAsstApp.pdf).

These applications will be reviewed by the program coordinating committee and will be awarded competitively.

### Merit Based Awards

Applications will be awarded by merit. The merit of applications will be judged based on students' grades, test scores, letters of reference, and skills that students have developed in prior graduate study and professional experience.

### Term of Assistantships

Full-time students entering the Literacy Studies Doctorate Program may apply for up to four years of support through an assistantship. The four year limit is an appropriate amount of time for full-time students to complete a 60 hour degree program. Students who have been taking courses on a part-time basis may apply for support that is proportional to the number of credits remaining to be completed. For instance, a student who has completed 21 of 60 credits may apply for no more than two years of full-time support.

### Responsibilities of Assistantships

Specific duties may vary from department to department. The majority of Graduate Teaching Assistants are assigned one or more of the following responsibilities:

- Teaching a classroom section of a course
- Teaching a laboratory or discussion section of a course
- Tutoring or providing other special assistance to students of the University
- Assisting a faculty member in grading, advising, and other duties necessary to conduct a course
- Assisting directly or indirectly in instruction or supervision of MTSU students in community programs, internships, workshops, or seminars for practicing professionals

Full-time graduate assistants will work twenty (20) clock hours per week in supervised activities in the department or office of their employment or a combination of contact hours in a classroom or laboratory environment. Full-time graduate assistantships at MTSU pay tuition costs and a stipend of \$14,000.00 a year.

Part-time graduate assistants will work ten (10) clock hours per week in supervised activities in the department or office of their employment or a combination of contact hours in a classroom or laboratory environment. Part-time graduate assistantships at MTSU pay one-half of tuition costs and a stipend of \$7,000.00 a year.

### Termination of Assistantships

Students who are awarded an assistantship will typically receive all four years of support, unless their academic performance or performance of duties within the assistantship warrants termination. The MTSU College of Graduate Studies specifies that retaining support is dependent on maintaining a 3.25 cumulative GPA in graduate courses.

For more information about Graduate Assistantships, please refer to Appendix C at the end of this handbook.

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## APPENDIX A: RESEARCH AND SERVICE LEARNING RESOURCES

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A vital part of the preparation envisioned for graduate students is field experience relevant to their selected specialization within the broad field of literacy. Though many students will enter the doctoral program with significant experience as classroom teachers, school administrators, or other educational specialists, we believe it is important to build on those experiences by offering a variety of opportunities for service learning in settings relevant to their selected areas of specialization within the Ph.D. degree program.

### Campus-Based Research and Field Placement

The Middle Tennessee State University campus offers graduate students in Literacy Studies many opportunities to participate in and conduct literacy-related research and to participate in service learning activities. Examples include:

1. *Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia*. The primary mission of the Tennessee Center for Dyslexia is to provide services and support to children with dyslexia, their families and their schools across the state. These services include assessment for dyslexia, recommendations for intervention and progress monitoring. The Center also makes its archives of case data available for research. Both research opportunities and practicum placements in reading assessment and intervention would be available to Literacy Studies graduate students.
2. *Psychology Department*. The research resources of the Psychology Department, including its extensive experimental research facility and centrally coordinated subject pool, are available to graduate students in Literacy Studies.
3. *Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic*. MTSU's Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic run by the Communication Disorders program provides diagnostic and therapeutic services to children and adults with communication disorders. It offers valuable research and service learning opportunities for students interested in issues relating to language development and disorders, particularly as they relate to early literacy.
4. *University Writing Center*. The University Writing Center offers assistance in college-level writing to MTSU students both in their on-campus center and online. Service learning placements with the Writing Center offers students opportunities for interacting with college students with difficulties in writing and with the Writing Center's staff and tutors in, for example, the development of training that would improve the capacity to understand the range of factors affecting students' oral and written language proficiency.

### External Collaborations

Partnerships with area organizations of various kinds add significantly to the richness of the experiences the Literacy Studies program offers its graduate students. Collaborations have been established with a variety of educational, clinical, service, research and policy organizations in order to provide graduate students with opportunities to experience the real-world application of their classroom and literacy-based learning and to support a variety of research opportunities for class-based and dissertation research. We provide an overview of the range of collaborations that the program has developed, along with a representative listing of the kinds of organizations with which we have formed partnerships.

### Types of Organizations Providing Collaborations

1. Schools and School Systems. Schools and school districts are one source for field experiences for doctoral students. The doctoral program is well-positioned to continue to develop partnerships with schools, school districts, and individual educators locally and within the region through its links to teacher preparation programs at MTSU and the Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia. The College of Education has strong links to schools and school systems through its involvement in the regional P-16 council as well as its student teaching collaborations. The Center for Dyslexia has established many associations and collaborations with local, state, and national leaders in the civic, educational, and political fields related to dyslexia and reading education. These connections will be of great value in cultivating and sustaining partnerships for the doctoral program.
2. State and Local Education Agencies. There are many government agencies that will serve as excellent field placements for students with interests in education policy, legislation, and regulations. These include county boards of education, legislative committees of the Tennessee State Legislature (both Senate and House of Representatives), the Tennessee Board of Education, and governmental commissions with education-related mandates and units of the Tennessee Department of Education. The program will make use of existing association with these offices and individuals to develop field placement opportunities for doctoral students.
3. Local, Regional, and National Educational Service, Advocacy, and Policy Organizations. Many non-governmental agencies are engaged in important work intended to improve literacy outcomes for children and adults. These organizations will provide effective field experiences for students whose interests overlap with the missions and projects of these organizations. Examples include:
  - a. Private Foundations. Many private foundations are significantly involved in supporting literacy-related programs and projects in the Middle Tennessee area. These include the Memorial Foundation, Dollar General Literacy Foundation, and the Dell Foundation Literate Community Grants program. Doctoral students will gain valuable experience through working with these foundations in their grant-making activities or working with the organizations that are funded by these (and other) foundations. Faculty representatives of the doctoral program will cultivate contacts with these organizations and discuss the roles that the students might play in their operations.
  - b. Advocacy, Outreach, and Public Education Groups. Advocacy groups that engage in efforts to influence public policy at the state and federal level and engage in a variety of advocacy activities (e.g., Tennessee Branch, International Dyslexia Association; Tennessee Bar Association). These organizations will offer graduate students excellent opportunities to gain experience in a variety of activities relating to literacy education. At the same time, the knowledge and skills our students possess could be very valuable to these organizations and their missions. Representatives of the program are developing contacts with these and similar organizations to discuss the possibility of mutually advantageous partnerships that would lead to field experience opportunities for our graduates.
  - c. Private Policy Institutes. Public policies on education are heavily influenced by the activities of a number of private policy institutes and organizations. On the national level, these include the Carnegie Foundation, The Rand Corporation, and the Brookings Institution. On a more local scale, similar organizations, often associated with academic institutions, also conduct studies, analyze governmental data, and prepare position statements with the aim of influencing public policy (e.g., Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University). While the number of such institutions in the Middle Tennessee area is very small, we intend to explore possible field placements at these organizations.

- d. *Professional Associations*. A number of professional associations for educators, psychologists, and other professionals in the broad field of education are engaged in advocacy, research, and policy formulation. These groups provide another potential source for field placements that could suit the interests and needs of our doctoral students. Examples include the Tennessee Education Association; Tennessee Association of School Psychologists, and the Tennessee Chapter of the American Speech and Hearing Association. We plan to explore possible partnership agreements with these organizations.
4. *Clinical Service Collaborations*. One of the major areas that we anticipate our students will find of great interest is the opportunity to participate in diagnostic and intervention services. Many of these services are provided through the public schools, but there are a number of other institutions and organizations that also offer these services to the public. They represent another potential source of both institutional partnerships and field placement opportunities. A brief summary of these services is provided below.
  - a. *Diagnostic and Intervention Services*. Students with interest in diagnostic and/or intervention practices may wish to arrange field placements with clinicians or diagnosticians who work with specific populations (early childhood acquired neurocognitive disorders in children), or who are skilled in conducting particular types of diagnostic assessments that differ from those typically administered in schools (e.g., psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluations; assessments for developmental language or communication disorders). Some of these clinics are located on the campus of the Middle Tennessee State University and would make excellent field placements for students (e.g., the Communication Disorders clinic). Other nearby sites include hospital-based psychology assessment centers (e.g., Alvin C. York Veterans Administration Hospital) and private clinical practices. These potential partners will be approached by representatives of the program and invited to initiate discussions regarding the development of mutually beneficial academic partnerships.
  - b. *Research Partnerships*. While students will have many different research opportunities through the program faculty, we have also developed a variety of additional opportunities that will allow them to gain further research experience that would supplement the facilities available on the campus of the Middle Tennessee State University. This is achieved through existing and future research collaborations in areas such as neuroimaging, genetics, academic interventions, diagnostic research, and experiences through research-based internships in settings such as the Tennessee Department of Education, county school systems, and the Southern Regional Education Board.
5. *Examples of Partnerships*. A variety of literacy-related organizations, institutions and individuals have expressed clear interest in developing collaborative agreements with the Literacy Studies program for the purpose of offering its graduate students opportunities for research, service learning, and practicum placements. The following list illustrates the range and quality of these opportunities.
  - a. *Vanderbilt University: Kennedy Center (Dr. Mark Wallace)*. Research collaborations on issues relating to literacy development are being developed by faculty members associated with the proposed Ph.D. in Literacy Studies and Dr. Mark Wallace of Vanderbilt University's Kennedy Center.
  - b. *University of Memphis: Memphis Striving Readers Project (Dr. Robert B. Cooter)*. The Striving Readers program, a federally funded program project addressing issues of reading instruction in the Memphis schools, would be available as a potential research and placement site for students in the Literacy Studies program.

- c. Tennessee Department of Education. The Assistant Commissioner for Special Education (Joseph Fisher), the Director of Reading First (James Herman), and the Director of the Office of Early Learning (Bobbi Lussier) have each provided letters indicating interest in the possible development of collaborative relationships with the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program to support service learning and practicum experiences for students in the program. These experiences might include professional staff development, professional practice (assessment and/or instruction), program assessment, program or system administration, research and its application.
- d. Murfreesboro City Schools, Murfreesboro, TN (Dr. Linda Gilbert, Director of Schools). The Murfreesboro City Schools have a longstanding history of collaboration with MTSU faculty in conducting research with school-aged populations. The Director of Schools has indicated interest in developing a collaborative arrangement with the Literacy Studies program both for support of research and field and practicum placements for doctoral students.
- e. Lebanon Special School District, Lebanon, TN (Dr. Sharon Roberts). The Lebanon Special School District and the Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia have developed a multifaceted collaboration over the last several years. In addition to working together on program and professional development projects, this relationship has also involved school-based research focusing on screening and assessment measures for students at risk for reading difficulty and on instructional effectiveness of literacy programs.
- f. The Bodine School, Germantown, TN (Dr. Rene Friemoth Lee – Admissions and Outreach). The Bodine School, a private school for students with learning disabilities, has expressed interest in establishing a collaboration with the Literacy Studies program through which graduate students interested in reading disabilities might engage in research with Bodine students or participate in supervised field placements or practica at this site.
- g. Currey Ingram Academy (Jane Hannah, Ph.D., Lower School Head). Currey Ingram Academy is a private school for children with reading difficulties. Dr. Hannah has indicated her interest in setting up a collaborative arrangement with the Literacy Studies program for field and practicum placements relating to professional development in research-supported reading instruction appropriate to the needs of their students.
- h. Read to Succeed (Lisa Mitchell, Executive Director). Read to Succeed is a local nonprofit literacy organization that provides reading-related information, programs and services to children and adults. Students would have the opportunity to work directly with adults in need of literacy tutoring, to be involved in the development of tutor training programs or to participate in the delivery of that training.

**DEGREE PLAN FOR DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LITERACY STUDIES**

Student M #: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUIRED COURSES					
Area/Course No.	Course Title	Hours	Semester/Year	Grade	
<b>Foundations (6 hours)</b>					
LITS 7130	Literacy in Socio-Cultural Context	3			
LITS 7021	Cognitive Neuropsychology	3			
<b>Language and Literacy (9 hours)</b>					
CDIS 6000	Language Development, Speech and Literacy	3			
LITS 7011	Neurobiology of Language and Literacy	3			
ENGL 7520	Essentials of Linguistics	3			
<b>Pedagogy (9 hours)</b>					
ELED 7250	From Policy to Practice in American Public Schools	3			
LITS 7110	Models of Literacy Assessment	3			
LITS 7210	Evidence-Based Methods for Literacy Development	3			
<b>Research Design and Analysis (9 hours)</b>					
LITS 7140	Research Design and Methodology in Literacy	3			
PSY 7290	Psychological Statistics: ANOVA	3			
<i>Choose one of the following:</i>					
PSY 7210	Advanced Psychometrics	3			
PSY 7585	Test Construction and Validation				
ELED 7350	Introduction to Qualitative Methods				
<b>Practicum (3 hours)</b>					
LITS 7200	Practicum	3			
<b>AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:</b>					
Area/Course No.	Course Title	Hours	Semester/Year	Grade	
		3			
		3			
		3			
<b>APPROVED ELECTIVES</b>					
Area/Course No.	Course Title	Hours	Semester/Year	Grade	
		3			
<b>DISSERTATION</b>					
Area/Course No.	Course Title	Hrs Completed	Hrs Remaining	Hours	Grade
LITS 7640	Dissertation			12	
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>60</b>	
<b>RESIDENCY</b>					
	Dates				
Academic Year					
Semester (Summer) 1:					
Semester (Summer) 2:					
<b>SERVICE LEARNING CHECKLIST**</b>					
Activity/Experience	Course	Date Submitted	Semester/Year	Rating	
Consultation/Intervention	LITS 7130				
Evaluation/Assessment	LITS 7110				
Curriculum/Instruction	LITS 7210				
Other					

\*\* Ratings: E= Exceptional, S= Supportive

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, College of Graduate Studies/Graduate Analyst

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

A Tennessee Board of Regents Institution  
MTSU is an equal opportunity, non-racially identifiable, educational institution that does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.

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## APPENDIX C: EMPLOYMENT OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

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Excerpted from *Middle Tennessee State University Policies and Procedures Manual*.

POLICY NO: IV:07:12 ([http://frank.mtsu.edu/~graduate/pdf/GA\\_Policy\\_01-JUL-2008.pdf](http://frank.mtsu.edu/~graduate/pdf/GA_Policy_01-JUL-2008.pdf))

### Graduate Assistant Workload Required by Contract

1. All graduate assistants must register for at least six (6) graduate credit hours of course work per semester in order to receive an assistantship and be classified as full-time graduate students. Graduate assistants holding summer term appointments may register for less than six (6) hours but their stipends may be subject to federal withholding requirements.
2. The required six (6) hours must be maintained throughout the entire semester. Courses may not be dropped if the resulting course load is less than the required six (6) credit hours. Courses may not be changed to audit.
3. Half-time Graduate Assistants will complete the equivalent of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the work-load of Full-time Graduate Assistants. Half-time Graduate Assistants will receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the stipend and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the tuition and fees of Full-time Graduate Assistants. Half-time Graduate Assistants are charged the balance of their tuition and fees at the resident fee level.

### Appointment

1. Contract Period
  - a. A contract may be issued for one (1) or two (2) semesters or for twelve months.
  - b. For a given Doctoral or M.F.A. program, students may be awarded an assistantship for no more than twelve (12) semesters or, for those on twelve-month contracts, no more than four (4) years.
  - c. Variations from the nine-month and twelve-month contracts must be approved by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.
2. Fiscal Year Appointment: The work period is from July 1 through June 30.
3. Academic Year Appointment: The Fall semester work period will begin one day after the University Convocation and end the day before Fall graduation. The Spring semester work period will begin on the Monday preceding the day classes begin and end the day before Spring graduation.
4. Semester Appointment: The work schedule follows the appropriate semester in Section 3 above.

### Payment for Services

1. Fiscal Year Appointments: Assistants receiving fiscal year appointments are paid in twelve (12) equal installments beginning July 31 and ending June 30.
2. Academic Year Appointments: Assistants receiving academic year appointments are paid in eight (8) equal installments beginning September 30 and ending April 30.

3. Semester Appointments: Assistants receiving a semester appointment are paid in four (4) equal installments.

### **Procedures for Securing and Maintaining Assistantships**

1. The student seeking a graduate assistantship should secure the Application for Assistantship Form from the Graduate Catalog, the academic department of his or her major, the appropriate administrative office, or the College of Graduate Studies website. The completed form should be filed with the academic department or the appropriate administrative office.
2. The Department/Administrative Office checks for the following requirements:
  - a. Overall Grade Point Average (GPA), whether undergraduate or graduate, must be at least 3.0. Currently enrolled doctoral students seeking an assistantship must have a 3.25 GPA;
  - b. All entrance requirements have been met and the student has been accepted into a graduate degree program unconditionally;
3. The College of Graduate Studies requires that all Assistants undergo appropriate pre-service and in service training. Such training consists of the University-wide orientation as well as Department or Administrative Office-based sessions.
4. All Graduate Assistants must receive a satisfactory evaluation each semester while holding the assistantship.
5. Graduate Assistants who fail to maintain a 3.0 (Master's) or a 3.25 (Doctoral) for any semester while holding an assistantship will be placed on "Assistantship Probation." The Graduate Assistant will be given one (1) semester to regain the required grade point average. Failure to do so will result in termination of the Graduate Assistantship contract at the close of the probationary semester.



PH.D. IN LITERACY STUDIES
Course-Based Service Learning Form

General Description:

Course-based service learning experiences are embedded within the core courses. Ratings: E= Exceptional and S= Supportive.

Student Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number

Call Number

Semester

Consultation/Intervention checkbox

Consultation/Intervention

Evaluation/Assessment checkbox

Evaluation/Assessment

Curriculum/Instruction checkbox

Curriculum/Instruction

Other

Describe the service-learning experience:

Goals:

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Hours/Week \_\_\_\_\_

15-20 Total Clock Hours

On-Site Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Title

Student Signature

Supervising Professor's Name

Supervising Professor's Signature

P.O.D. Approved

Yes checkbox

Yes

No checkbox

No

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director's Signature

Return completed form to Literacy Studies Program Office, MTSU Box 402.

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## APPENDIX E: PRACTICUM FORMS

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### OVERVIEW OF PRACTICUM COURSE

#### Ph.D. in Literacy Studies – LITS 7200

##### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Practicum in Literacy Studies is to apply knowledge and skills gained in the Core program to literacy issues found in field environments. To do so effectively, a student in the program should have completed a minimum of 20 credit hours of Core courses, excluding the Research component, and at least 6 credit hours in the area of specialization.

##### PREPARATION:

- 1) The student and faculty advisor will collaboratively agree on the specific type of practicum placement that will best meet the student's career goals. The faculty advisor, in collaboration with the Program Director if needed, will identify an appropriate practicum site and will obtain administrative authorization for a practicum student to work in the setting. The faculty advisor will also identify a qualified on-site supervisor/mentor who is willing to mentor/supervise the student.
- 2) The student, in collaboration with the faculty advisor, will identify and record the specific goals to be accomplished through the practicum.
- 3) The student, faculty advisor, and on-site mentor/supervisor will, together, develop a clear and detailed description of the responsibilities the student will assume throughout the practicum. These responsibilities should bear directly on the goals established (item 2 above).
- 4) The schedule of days and times that the student will be expected to be on-site will be determined and recorded. **Typically, the practicum experience requires 60 total clock hours in the field.**
- 5) A formal statement of contract will be prepared and signed by all parties involved (see Practicum Contract attached). **A copy will be sent to the Program Director for the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies.**

##### STRUCTURE OF THE EXPERIENCE:

- 1) The student will be on-site and working with the mentor/supervisor on the dates agreed upon (item 4 above).
- 2) The student will maintain a log detailing the experiences engaged in for both the days spent on-site and for the time between when preparation for the next site visit is required. Each entry should end with a reflection on the quality of the experience, what was gained as a result (information, insights, skills, etc.), how (if) the experience contributed to meeting one or more of the stated goals for the practicum, overall.

- 3) The student will share and discuss the log with the mentor/supervisor at least once every three weeks (assumes a 12 week semester) or every two weeks if the practicum extends over an 8 week summer semester. The mentor/supervisor will comment and sign the log to verify that these discussions have taken place. This assures that the mentor/supervisor and the student are teaming to ensure that the student's goals are being met. Adjustments to subsequent experiences planned might be made as a result of these discussions.
- 4) **The advisor is responsible for verifying that the experiences engaged in are providing opportunities for the student to apply knowledge and skills gained in the program Core to issues(s) common to the professional field for which the student is preparing.**
  - A) The student will meet with the faculty advisor at intervals established prior to the beginning of the practicum but not less than 4 times during the semester.
  - B) The advisor will review the log entries, discuss progress toward meeting the stated goals of the experience, offer guidance and support, if needed, to adjust the experiences so that the student will achieve maximum benefit from the experience.

#### **EVALUATION:**

Evaluation of the Practicum will be conducted by all three partners in the experience. The percent of the final grade contributed by each might be distributed as noted. However, the final decision regarding the allocation of percentages will rest with the faculty supervisor and this will be made known prior to beginning the on-site work.

- 1) At the start of the Practicum experience, the faculty advisor will provide a rubric for evaluating the log, planned meetings/discussions, on-site observations of the student in action, and the self-evaluation provided at the conclusion of the experience. (55%)
- 2) The student will submit a self-evaluation of the experience that should be guided by the goals established prior to beginning the on-site activities. It should conclude with a reflection on what was gained through the experience overall (additional knowledge, skills, insights, etc.). This will be submitted to both the mentor/supervisor and the faculty advisor. (20%)
- 3) The mentor/supervisor will provide written responses to a standard set of questions (see Practicum Supervisor's Evaluation attached). This will be discussed with the student and the faculty advisor. (25%).



**PH.D. IN LITERACY STUDIES**  
***Practicum Intent to Register Form***  
**(LITS 7200)**

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Name/Student ID \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Current GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Core hours completed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Excluding Research Component of 9 hours)*

**What are the goals of the internship? List your responsibilities and activities and what you hope to accomplish:**

**Approvals:**

---

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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On-site Practicum Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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MTSU Faculty Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Literacy Studies Program Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**PH.D. IN LITERACY STUDIES  
LITS 7200: Practicum Course Contract**

**General Description:** Students may register for the practicum experience (LITS 7200) no earlier than their second year in the program, having completed a minimum of 20 credit hours of coursework in the Core and at least 6 credit hours in the area of specialization. The experience is designed to permit the integration of knowledge and skills developed through the core courses with tasks that relate to the student's area of specialization (see page 8 of The Ph.D. in Literacy Studies Student Handbook).

**Student Identification Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**E-Mail Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Semester:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the specific nature of the practicum experience:**

**Goals to be accomplished:**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

**Evaluation Method(s) / Person(s) Responsible:**

**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Hours/Week** \_\_\_\_\_  
(60 Total Hours/Semester)

_____	_____
On-Site Supervisor's Name/Title	On-site Supervisor's Signature
_____	_____
Institutional Authorizing Name/Title	Institutional Authorizing Signature
_____	_____
Supervising Professor's Name	Supervising Professor's Signature
_____	_____
Student Name	Student Signature

<b>P.O.D. Approved</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Date:</b> _____
<b>Program Director's Signature</b>		_____

**Return typed, completed form to Literacy Studies Program Office, MTSU Box 402.**



3. Other comments you wish to make:

Thank you for mentoring and helping to evaluate this student's performance. The student will also be evaluated on other course assignments. Would your program be willing to supervise another Literacy Studies Practicum Student?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(On-Site Supervisor Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(On-Site Supervisor Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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## APPENDIX F: STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION FORM

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**STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION  
PH.D. IN LITERACY STUDIES  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**

The Annual Review of Students in the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies requires a Student Self -Evaluation as well as evaluation by faculty with whom you have had coursework and/or graduate assistantships. The following outline is provided to prompt your thinking as you develop your self-evaluation for the current year. Please submit any documents you believe will support your statements. Send your self-evaluation to the Program Director, electronically, no later than April 15.

Graduate Student Name:

Academic Advisor Name:

Supervisor of Assistantship:

Academic Year: 20\_\_ - 20\_\_

Semester and Year Entering the Program:

Applied for Candidacy: YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

If YES, provide:

Semester of application:

Ph.D. Committee Members:

Expected Date of Graduation:

### **Part I Academic Performance**

- a. List all courses and grades earned during the past year.
  
- b. Among the listed courses, list the course in which you felt you performed best and the course in which you felt your performance was least strong.
  
- c. Summarize what you believe are your **current strengths**—please consider your grasp of concepts pertinent to each of the categories of courses in the core (foundations, language & literacy, pedagogy, research), your ability to prepare high quality written products, class participation and presentations, other aspects of the academic program. Plan to support your comments with appropriate documentation (work products, faculty comments, participant evaluations, etc. if requested).

d. Identify any area(s) you believe are relatively weak when you consider your academic performance during the past year. Again, consider the categories of courses in the core and/ or your selected area of specialization.

e. Identify those areas for which you desire specific faculty assistance/support in working through weaknesses.

## **Part II – Graduate level research and writing skills**

**Responses to the following items will vary according to your status in the program (number of years enrolled and number of credit hours completed).**

- a. List the types of experiences you have had this year that specifically supported your growth toward competence as a researcher (eg., critiques/integration of articles, a review of literature, participation in data collection, data analysis, designing a study, executing a study).
- b. Describe any research activities you have pursued during the past year. Indicate the progress you have made in such areas as literature review, research design, data collection, data analysis, preparation of a written report.
- c. List proposals and/or abstracts you prepared and submitted for conference presentations or poster sessions, including internal and external venues.
- d. List manuscripts submitted/accepted or published during the past year, giving details about authors, journals. Indicate status—under review, revised and resubmitted, in press, published.
- e. List any grant applications in which you have been involved. Provide the grant title, agency and PI information.
- f. Summarize those areas which you have identified as in need of further research support as you develop research skills during the coming year in this program. The areas may include statistics, constructing valid research questions, research design, sample selection, identifying confounding variables, and etc.
- g. Identify those areas for which you desire specific faculty assistance/support in working through perceived weaknesses that might not be addressed in coursework.

### **Part III– Collegiality**

**Professional colleagues discuss issues, challenge interpretations of or within professional literature, share ideas and insights, cooperate in the pursuit of projects, collaborate in the development of projects, communicate respectfully, and assist when assistance is needed to benefit the whole.**

- a. Describe the level of communication, cooperation, support, and collaboration you have contributed through interactions with your supervisors, professors, advisors, and other students in the program.
- b. Identify areas within the collegial network of experiences that you have not had adequate opportunities to develop and might wish to address in the coming year of this program.
- c. Identify those areas for which you desire specific faculty assistance/support in accessing opportunities for continued growth in collegiality.

### **Part IV-- Professional Development**

**Development in the professional arena of choice is on-going and pervasive throughout one's career. Professional development includes coursework, independent readings, communication with scholars and practitioners near and far, attendance at conferences and workshops, and presentations of your own work for collegial discussion.**

- a. Describe your participation during the past year in professional development activities in any and all venues during the past year. Include your participation in program colloquia, professional conferences on campus or away, teaching experiences, independent study, and other experiences that have enhanced your development as the professional you are in the process of becoming.
- b. Identify areas of professional development that you especially intend to focus on in the coming year.
- c. Identify those areas for which specific faculty assistance/support would be beneficial as you continue to develop professionally.

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## APPENDIX G: PRELIMINARY EXAM PROCEDURE

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### When to Register

Students should plan to take the exam when they have successfully completed 36 hours of core courses. In general, students are not permitted to take Preliminary Exams until the required courses have been completed. An exception may be granted if a student is enrolled in the last required courses during the semester in which the Preliminary Exams are taken. Students who are granted an exception are still held accountable for all the content covered on the Preliminary Exam study guide.

Also, students must be in good academic standing and must have at least a 3.25 grade point average in graduate coursework at the time the Preliminary Exam Registration Form is filed.

### How to Register

The Preliminary Exams are offered once each semester (fall, spring, and summer). *The deadline for registration is always one week (7 days) prior to exam date.* Further information about registration deadlines and the registration form are available online at <http://www.mtsu.edu/literacy>. Currently, the Program Secretary handles Preliminary Exams registration. Students may contact her by phone at 904-8434, by email at [literacy@mtsu.edu](mailto:literacy@mtsu.edu), or in her office in COE 316. If students have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, please contact the Preliminary Exams Coordinator, currently Dr. Jwa Kim ([Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu](mailto:Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu) or 904-8419), when they sign up for the Preliminary Exams. The Preliminary Exams coordinator will require a letter from the Office of Disabled Students Services (898-2783) verifying the disability and addressing the necessary accommodations.

### Format

The Preliminary Exams are administered on a Saturday, usually during April, July, and November. Students are given six hours to complete the exam. Once they have finished, they turn in the exam. It generally takes around three weeks before grades are reported. The length of time between taking the Preliminary Exams and receiving grades for will vary according to how many people take the exams.

### Content Covered

The Preliminary Exam questions are derived from the required courses. A list of sample questions will be posted on the program web site within the first week of each semester. It is useful for students to obtain the sample questions early in each semester in order to familiarize themselves with the types of questions that are asked on the exam.

### Grading Criteria

The grading criteria for the Preliminary Exams are described below.

Total Score	Item Scores	Outcome
80% or higher	80% or higher on all 4 or more items	Pass the exam.
80% or higher	79% - 70% on any of the 4 items	Fail the exam. Must give oral defense of failed items. Item scores from the oral defense replace the failed item scores from the written exam, and the total score is recalculated. If the oral defense scores are below 80%, the candidate fails the exam and must give both written and oral defense of failed items on second attempt.
80% or higher	69% or less on any of the 4 items	Fail the exam. Must give both written and oral defense of failed items on second attempt. Item scores on the second attempt replace the failed item scores from the first attempt, and the total score is recalculated.
Less than 80%		Fail the exam. Will be tested over all items on second attempt. Total score is based only on the second attempt results.

**Students are automatically allowed to attempt the Preliminary Exams a second time. A second failure of the preliminary exam generally results in termination from the program.**

## PH.D. IN LITERACY STUDIES PRELIMINARY EXAM REGISTRATION

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In order to take the Preliminary Exam, you must complete 36 core credit hours, and you must obtain the approval of your academic advisor and the Program Director.

To register for the Preliminary Exam, please complete the following information:

MTSU ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Area of Specialization** (mark one):

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

**First attempt?**

- Yes
- No

**When do you plan to take the Preliminary Exam?**

- Spring    Summer    Fall   Year \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Advisor Signature** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Program Director Signature** **Date**

**Important Notes:**

- Check with professor(s) regarding study classes, forms, etc.
- Deadline for registration is always one week prior to exam.
- The Program will **NOT** accept registration forms after the deadline.
- **THERE IS NO FEE TO TAKE THE PRELIMINARY EXAM.**

**PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM TO LITERACY STUDIES PROGRAM OFFICE MTSU BOX 402.**

Because university printing schedules make immediate updating of policies and procedures in written formats impracticable, students should be aware that inconsistencies might occur from time to time. Information in the Literacy Studies Graduate Student Handbook, based on information in the College of Graduate Studies *Graduate Catalog* or university department and program documents, is superseded by more recently communicated updated policies and procedures from the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program office. It is the student's responsibility to ask the Director of Literacy Studies about any apparent inconsistencies that may come to the student's attention. Students should keep in mind that they are generally governed by the policies and procedures stated in the catalog and handbook in place when they enter the program, unless they elect to be governed by newer policies and procedures when the option is available.