

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION: LITERACY INSTRUCTION



Literacy abilities are the foundation of contemporary K-12 schooling and for most current careers, yet many students struggle to attain the expected literacy benchmarks. Even though many dedicated educators have guided students in acquiring strong literacy skills, students still need more effective literacy teachers to help them reach these achievement goals. To this end, Niagara University's master's degree program in literacy instruction includes the most current theory and practice in literacy education, and is designed to develop highly qualified literacy educators who can guide K-12 students to excellence in literacy. Graduates will be qualified for New York state initial/professional certification in literacy.



## WHO IS THE PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR?

The 37 credit-hour degree program is registered with the New York State Department of Education and is designed for initially certified teachers. Course offerings will be cycled so that a candidate may complete all work at an expedited pace or pursue the degree over a longer period of time while holding a full-time teaching position.

## TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The literacy program leads to initial/professional certification (birth – grade 6, or grades 5 – 12). Candidates must hold a teaching certificate in early childhood, childhood, middle childhood, or adolescence education to be admitted; and therefore, may use this degree to satisfy the requirements for professional certification in these areas.

## FAMILY LITERACY CENTER

The Family Literacy Center is an on-campus educational opportunity for graduate students to demonstrate teaching while enhancing the literacy performance of at-risk readers and their families. The center's programs focus on improving reading, writing and listening skills among children while supporting the literacy and basic skills of the family itself.

## WHAT MAKES NIAGARA UNIVERSITY'S LITERACY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PROGRAMS?

Niagara's program emphasizes the integration of reading and writing throughout the K-12 curriculum, and focuses on literacy learning at different grade levels and stages of development, a differentiation that other programs may not offer. Students may concentrate their studies on either childhood or

adolescent literacy development through their selection of certification tracks and elective courses.

In addition, Niagara's literacy instruction program is part of a College of Education that was one of the first in New York state to obtain national accreditation through NCATE, and has maintained this national accreditation continuously since 1984.

## LITERACY PRACTICUM

Candidates complete a literacy practicum in a classroom in which literacy instruction is offered at the certification level of the candidate's program. The practicum may also be completed in the candidate's own classroom, if appropriate. Candidates work under the guidance of a mentor who holds a master's degree and certification as a reading specialist or in literacy instruction.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The required core courses are designed to meet the New York state requirements for approved programs.

### • **Required Literacy Instruction Courses** (18 credit hours)

- EDU 552 Applied Children's and Adolescent Literature
- EDU 555 Literacy Foundations
- EDU 558 Using Literacy Technology
- EDU 561\* Literacy: Early Grades\*  
(birth – grade 6 candidates only)
- EDU 562 Literacy: Intermediate Grades
- EDU 572 Reading Difficulties: Identification and Intervention
- EDU 575\* Literacy: Upper Grades\*  
(grades 5 – 12 candidates only)

\*EDU 561 or EDU 575 depending on certification area

### • **Foundations Courses** (12 credit hours total)

#### **Required** (Three credit hours)

- EDU 595 Educational Research and Statistics

#### **Advised Electives** (Nine credit hours selected in consultation with adviser)

- EDU 515 Foundations in Applied Reading Research — Part I
- EDU 516 Foundations in Applied Reading Research — Part II  
(prerequisite EDU 515)
- EDU 579 Developing ELL Literacy Through Multicultural Literature
- EDU 554 Teaching of Composition
- EDU 574 Differentiating Reading Instruction
- EDU 747 Consultation and Collaboration

### • **Required Literacy Field Courses** (Six credit hours)

- EDU 796 Practicum in Literacy Instruction
- EDU 798 Seminar in Literacy Instruction

### • **Required Comprehensive Portfolio** (One credit hour)

- EDU 799 Comprehensive Portfolio Advisement

**Total Graduate Hours: 37**

## HOW DO I APPLY TO THE PROGRAM?

Niagara University's graduate education application process is self-managed. Please submit application and ALL application materials (including official transcripts) in one packet to:

Graduate Education Office  
Academic Complex, P.O. Box 1930  
Niagara University  
Niagara University, NY 14109

Once all materials are received, your file will be sent for review to a program adviser, the chair and the dean.

### Application checklist:

- 1 Niagara University graduate education application ([www.niagara.edu/advance](http://www.niagara.edu/advance)).
- 2 \$30 nonrefundable application fee payable to Niagara University.
- 3 Official transcripts of all colleges and universities attended in a sealed institution envelope included with your application.
- 4 Two references (academic or professional) in sealed envelopes with the referee's signature across the seal included with your application. (Please use the Niagara University reference form.)
- 5 Statement of Intent. Two-page, double-spaced, typewritten statement discussing your desired literacy-specific philosophy, professional goals, objectives, strengths, and weaknesses.
- 6 Applicants with an undergraduate GPA of less than 3.0 may be required to complete a personal interview and writing sample.





#### GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

- Support teachers in applying the principles of effective literacy instruction to all learners.
- Empower teachers to address a variety of literacy strengths and needs in both traditional and inclusive classrooms with learners of diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social backgrounds.
- Enable teachers to identify learners with literacy difficulties through appropriate assessments, early intervention and curricular adaptation.
- Build capacity in teachers to analyze the social and political context in which literacy instruction takes place in order to understand and influence paradigm shifts and policy decisions.
- Prepare teachers to address the unique relationship of reading with writing and the instructional implications of this relationship.
- Build capacity in teachers for understanding and interpreting outstanding contemporary and classical works of children's literature and the means for introducing them to children.
- Provide teachers with experience in interpreting and critiquing both print and electronic research reports related to literacy.



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## MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION: LITERACY INSTRUCTION

- BIRTH – 6
- GRADES 5 – 12

