

**Department of Advanced Teacher Education
Advanced Literacy Program**



HANDBOOK OF THE LITERACY INSTRUCTION ALL-GRADES PROGRAM 2024-2026



**Aligned to the
International Literacy Association
Standards for Literacy Professionals, 2017**

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Introduction

This handbook describes the Niagara University Literacy Instruction All-Grades program, curriculum, assessments, field experiences, and application process. The program is aligned to the International Literacy Association Standards for Professionals 2017 (ILA 2017) (see appendix a).

College of Education Mission Statement

It is the mission of the College of Education to develop skilled, ethical professionals who act as positive change agents by learning, serving, and advocating in pluralist societies. Guiding Values:

- The Vincentian tradition of Niagara University: We are inspired to serve all members of society, especially those living in poverty and oppression, in local communities and in the larger world.
- Person-centered education through constructivist practice: We consider the experiences, values, and multiple identities of the individuals we serve as the foundation from which to facilitate learning and development.
- Evidence-based best practice: We implement practices and strategies drawn from the best available research and data generated within our own professional contexts.
- Reflective practice: We promote self-assessment, peer-assessment, and critical examination of the efficacy of one's own practice as essential for the continuous improvement of all professionals.
- Professional Commitment and Responsibility: We demonstrate dedication and accountability to our respective professions through professional, enthusiastic, lawful and ethical behaviors.
- Professional Relationships: We maintain high expectations for ourselves, our colleagues, and those we serve, while respecting diversities of background, experience, opinion and perspective; acting patiently; and working collaboratively to support one another.

Literacy Instruction All Grades Program

The Literacy Instruction All-Grades program includes the most current theory and practice in literacy education and is designed to develop highly qualified literacy educators. Literacy abilities are the foundation of contemporary B-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 B-12 students to excellence in literacy. Students gain professional skills and knowledge in both childhood and adolescent literacy development through course content and professional experiences. Graduates will be qualified for New York state initial certification as reading specialists leading to professional certification.

Curriculum

This 37-credit hour program has been aligned to the International Literacy Association 2017 Standards for Literacy Professionals, emphasizes the integration of reading and writing throughout the birth-12 curriculum, and focuses on literacy learning at different grade levels and stages of development. By addressing these standards through course projects and class discussions, candidates have an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a literacy specialist, including the leadership skills necessary to organize and support school-wide literacy programs. See appendix a: Literacy Instruction Planning Guide. See [Niagara University Academic Catalog](#) for course descriptions.

Courses

Semester Offered

Required Literacy Courses (18 credit hours)

_ EDU 552 Teaching Children and Adolescent Literature	Spring
_ EDU 555 Literacy Foundations	Fall
_ EDU 561 Literacy: Early Childhood	Spring
_ EDU 562 Literacy: Middle Childhood	Fall
_ EDU 572 Reading Difficulties: Diagnosis and Intervention	Fall
_ EDU 575 Literacy: Upper Grades	Spring

Required Field Courses (6 credit hours) Must be taken together

_ EDU 796 Practicum in Literacy Instruction	Fall and Spring
_ EDU 798 Seminar in Literacy Instruction	Fall and Spring

Required Foundations Courses (credit hours)

_ EDU595 Introduction to Educational Research	Fall/Spring/Summer
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Elective Foundations Courses (9 credit hours)

_ EDU 528 Multiculturalism in Education
_ EDU 530 Behavior Management and Motivational Strategies
_ EDU 539 Characteristics of Students with Exceptional Needs
_ EDU 565 Assessment of Exceptional Learners
_ EDU 597 Computer Technology and Utilization
_ EDU 651 Introduction to Counseling
_ EDU 663 Interpersonal Communication
_ EDU 666 Abnormal Psychology

Required Culminating Experience

_ EDU 799 Comprehensive Portfolio Advisement (1 credit hour)
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_ Comprehensive portfolio defense

***15 credit hours of required literacy course work must be taken prior to taking EDU 796 and EDU 798**

For practicing teachers, this 37 credit-hour program leads to initial/professional certification in literacy, all grades. Candidates must hold a teaching certification in early childhood, middle-childhood or adolescence education (elementary or secondary). This degree may be used to satisfy the requirements for professional (permanent certification).

To earn a degree, candidates are required to maintain a “B” average and successfully complete program gateways (see program gateways below) in all course work and develop a portfolio that demonstrates mastery of current ILA Standards for Literacy Professionals. Since this program qualifies candidates for initial/professional certification as a literacy specialist in grades p – 12, candidates are expected to complete field experiences with primary, intermediate, and middle/secondary grade students. Successful completion of the program qualifies candidates for a M.Ed. degree.

Common Course Assessments

Every course in the program includes a common course assessment that has been carefully aligned to the ILA standards ensuring that by the completion of the program, candidates will have met these standards.

Common Course Assessment EDU 552 (see appendix b)

Common Course Assessment EDU 555 (see appendix c)

Common Course Assessment EDU 561 (see appendix d)

Common Course Assessment EDU 562 (see appendix e)

Common Course Assessment EDU 572 (see appendix f)

Pre-Practicum Field Experience: Family Literacy Center

[The Family Literacy Center](#) is an on-campus educational opportunity for graduate students to enact theory to practice 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. Students in the Advanced Literacy Program complete pre-practicum field experience within this context through the methods courses in the program.

Field Practicum

Candidates matriculated in the Literacy Instruction program must complete a field practicum at the culmination of their studies in which they demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they have developed according to the International Literacy Association 2017 Standards for Literacy Professionals. The practicum is typically undertaken during the spring of the second year of the program. The field component includes 3 credit hours of practicum and 3 credit hours of seminar.

The practicum is supervised by a veteran school faculty member selected in a cooperative manner by the candidate, district, and university. Supervisors must be tenured and certified in literacy/reading instruction, and they must be recognized by their district as outstanding teacher leaders. Supervisors assist candidates in developing professional knowledge and skills in the ILA standards. The practicum is evaluated by the supervisor using an evaluation form based on the ILA standards.

The seminar is facilitated by a Niagara University faculty member. During the seminar candidates work jointly with other novice teachers to explore theoretical aspects of the ILA standards and discuss appropriate applications within their practice. The Seminar instructor also acts as a liaison between practicum supervisors and candidates supporting their activities in the field through periodic site visits. The seminar instructor makes at least 2 meetings with each candidate during the practicum semester and evaluates the candidate’s progress using the practicum rubric form.

Literacy Instruction Program Gateways

Intake Gateway

Applicants to the Literacy Instruction program must submit transcripts from their undergraduate degree, standardized test scores on measures of reading and mathematics, evidence of generalist teacher certification, a statement of intent, and two professional reference letters. These measures are reviewed by the Literacy Program Coordinator and the Dean of the College of Education for admissions decisions. The following rubric illustrates how each of the measures is considered in the overall decision to admit the candidate. The GPA and standardized test scores have greater emphasis as we only admit up to 15% who do not meet the admission criteria on these measures. Candidate must achieve an overall average of 2.8 on the admissions rubric for unconditional admission. Candidates who achieve a 2.6 may be admitted or waitlisted but will have conditions placed on their admission corresponding to the areas rated “For Further Review.” Candidates who score less than 2.6 will not be admitted into the program.

Criteria	Deny 1	For Further Review ²	Admission 3
Bachelor’s Degree from accredited institution with GPA	Candidate demonstrates a GPA of less than 2.6 in the last four academic semesters of study.	Candidate demonstrates a GPA of 2.6-2.99 in the last four academic semesters of study.	Candidate demonstrates a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the last four academic semesters of study.
Standardized Test Cutscore Reading and Math Accuplacer 250,255 SAT 536, 531 ACT 21.3, 20.6 GRE 150.05, 152.80 Or Evidence of a Master’s Degree	Candidate scores on an approved standardized assessment in reading and mathematics are below the approved cutscores. OR Master’s Degree with less than 2.5	Candidate scores on an approved standardized assessment in reading and mathematics is at or above the approved cutscore for one of the measures but slightly below in the other. OR Master’s Degree with 2.5-2.99	Candidate scores on an approved standardized assessment in reading and mathematics are at or above the approved cutscores. OR Master’s Degree with 3.0 or better
Teaching Certification B-2, 1-6, 5-9 or 7-12	Candidate is not eligible for certification in B-2, 1-6, 5-9 and/or 7-12.	Candidate is eligible for NYS teacher certification based on completing an approved program in B-2, 1-6, 5-9 and/or 7-12	Candidate holds NYS teacher certification in B-2, 1-6, 5-9 and/or 7-12.
Statement of Intent* Not required of NU COE undergrad meeting all other requirements.	The statement of intent fails to demonstrate writing competencies expected of a teacher.	The statement of intent includes a few errors in grammar, spelling, word choice, etc. However the errors do not detract from the message conveyed.	The statement of intent demonstrates effective and professional writing competency.
Dispositions in Letters of Reference/Statement of Intent Not required of NU undergrad meeting all other requirements.	The statement of intent and/or letters of reference provide no evidence that the applicant demonstrates the ATE dispositions or there is evidence that they are non-	The statement of intent and/or letters of reference demonstrate at least 1 of the ATE dispositions.	The statement of intent and/or letters of reference demonstrates at least 2 of the ATE Dispositions.

	compliant with any one disposition.		
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Mid Program Gateway

Candidates will have a mid-program review to gauge academic progress prior to enrolling in EDU 572. At this time candidate must have completed EDU 555, 552, 562 and either 561 or 575. The mid program evaluation considers candidate GPA after completing a minimum of 12 credit hours, the completion of field experience hours for EDU 561 or EDU 575, demonstration of dispositions in EDU 555 and 552, and the overall scores achieved on the common course assessments in EDU 555, 552, 562, and 561 or 575. Candidate must achieve an overall average of 3.0 on the mid program gateway rubric for unconditional progression. Candidates who achieve a 2.6 may be permitted to continue in the program but will have conditions placed on their progression corresponding to the areas rated “Academic Progress Contract”. Candidates who score less than 2.6 face dismissal from the program.

Measure	Potential Dismissal 1	Academic Progress Contract 2	Satisfactory Academic Progress 3
GPA	Candidates demonstrates a GPA of less than 2.75 after completing at least 12 credit hours of study.	Candidates demonstrates a GPA of 2.75-2.99 after completing at least 12 credit hours of study.	Candidate demonstrates a GPA of 3.0 or higher after completing at least 12 credit hours of study.
Field Experience Hours	The candidates has completed less than 15 field experience hours associated with the requirements of 561 or 575.	The candidates has completed a minimum of 15 field experience hours associated with the requirements of 561 or 575.	The candidates has completed a minimum of 20 field experience hours associated with the requirements of 561 or 575.
Dispositions	The disposition evaluations in EDU 555 and 552 result in ratings of less than 2.5 or more than 2 instances of ratings at the level of 1 from multiple raters.	The disposition evaluations in EDU 555 and 552 result in ratings of 2.5 or higher. With fewer than 2 instances of ratings at the level of 1 from multiple raters.	The disposition evaluations in EDU 555 and 552 result in average ratings of 3 or higher with no instances of level 1 ratings.
CCA Average (555, 562, 552, 561/575)	The CCA ratings in EDU 555, 562, 552, and 561/575 result in average ratings of less than 2.0.	The CCA ratings in EDU 555, 562, 552, and 561/575 result in average ratings of 2.0 or higher.	The CCA ratings in EDU 555, 562, 552, and 561/575 result in average ratings of 2.5 or higher.

Graduation and Recommendation for Certification

Candidates will have a graduation/certification review when they have completed all of the program coursework, field experiences, and evaluations. The measures considered for graduation include grades in the common course assessments for EDU 572 and 595, the overall GPA, the number of completed credit hours, the final practicum evaluation, and the comprehensive portfolio evaluation. In addition to these measures, candidates must achieve a passing score on the Literacy Specialist Content Specialty Test to be recommended for certification. Candidate must achieve an overall average of 3.0 on the graduation gateway rubric to receive their degree. Candidates receiving a 2.6 or higher may be permitted to retake certain measures. Candidates with less than 2.6 make be dismissed from the program.

Measure	Dismissal 1	Revise/Retake 2	Graduation 3
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CCA (572, 595)	The CCA ratings in EDU 595 and 572 result in average ratings of less than 2.2.	The CCA ratings in EDU 595 and 572 result in average ratings of 2.2 or higher.	The CCA ratings in EDU 595 and 572 result in average ratings of 2.7 or higher.
GPA	Candidates demonstrates a GPA of less than 3.0 after completing all credit hours of study.	Candidates demonstrates a GPA of 3.0 after completing all credit hours of study within the retake policy	Candidate demonstrates a GPA of 3.0 or higher after completing all credit hours of study.
Coursework Completed	Less than 37 hours completed	Could walk in graduation with incomplete not in practicum or portfolio	37 credit hours completed
Dispositions	The disposition evaluations in EDU 572 and 798 result in ratings of less than 2.5 or more than 2 instances of ratings at the level of 1 from multiple raters.	The disposition evaluations in EDU 572 and 798 result in ratings of 2.5 or higher. With fewer than 2 instances of ratings at the level of 1 from multiple raters.	The disposition evaluations in EDU 572 and 798 result in average ratings of 3 or higher with no instances of level 1 ratings.
Practicum Completion	If, after an additional 25 hours each standard is not satisfactory, the candidate will be assigned a grade of "U" for unsatisfactory and need to retake the practicum in its entirety.	Candidates who do not receive a "pass" will need to continue the practicum beyond 100 hours to include an additional 25 hours prior to a second review. They must then achieve a score of Satisfactory (2.0 or higher in Anthology).	Candidates must achieve a score of Satisfactory (2.0 Anthology) or higher in each of the tasks to pass the Practicum Evaluation.
Portfolio Completion	Candidates not reaching satisfactory on more than 2 sub-standards, or not meeting this on the retake, must retake the entire portfolio course.	Candidates may retake up to 2 sub-standards that are lower than 2.0 and submit this work to the advisor for review.	Candidates must achieve a score of Satisfactory (2.0 in Anthology) or higher in each of the 28 sub-standard areas.
CST for Recommendation for Certification*	The candidate will not be recommended for Literacy Specialist certification without passing the CST or Safety net requirements.	When a safety net is authorized by NYSED a candidate may be recommended for Literacy Specialist certification with less than 520 but within safety net.	To be recommended for Literacy Specialist certification the candidate must receive a passing score (520) on the Literacy CST

Final Practicum Report

At the conclusion of the field practicum the mentor teacher will complete a final practicum report and return it to the university supervisor. The form on the following pages is used to assess the candidate's performance during the practicum and as a commencement assessment of the candidate's competency (see appendix g)

Final Program Portfolio

At the conclusion of the program, the candidate will complete a final program portfolio which evidences that the candidate has met the ILA standards across the program courses, field experiences, and practicum (see appendix h).

Application Process

The Literacy Instruction All Grades Program at Niagara University seeks highly qualified teachers for admission to graduate literacy studies. Applications to the program will be accepted on a rolling basis. Materials required for admission to the program provide evidence of a candidate's potential for success as a reading specialist as specified in the 2017 ILA Standards for Literacy Professionals. While no single piece of evidence is considered an absolute indicator of success, all materials offer insight into a candidate's knowledge, skills, and dispositions as a teaching professional. See link for the [application process](#).

Questions regarding the program can be directed to:

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Appendix a



Standards for the
Preparation of Literac

Appendix b



AssessmentInstrume
nt_607_EDU_552_Anc

Appendix c



AssessmentInstrume
nt_623_EDU_555_Cor

Appendix d



AssessmentInstrume
nt_271_EDU_561_575

Appendix e



AssessmentInstrume
nt_611_EDU_562_The

Appendix f



AssessmentInstrume
nt_614_EDU_572_Lite

Appendix g



LiteracyPracticumRu
bricLA2017.pdf

Appendix h



LiteracyPortfolioRubr
icLA2017f.pdf