Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Graduate Studies Handbook

for

Master of Education Degree in Reading Specialist

Revised: April, 2009
Reading Specialist Program Handbook
Department of Educational Instruction and Leadership
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

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Introduction

Welcome to the Master of Education program at Southeastern Oklahoma State University! It is our goal to provide challenging, rigorous, and relevant programs that equip students to enhance leadership roles they currently fill in schools and to prepare them for those they plan to pursue in the future. The Graduate Student Handbook: Master of Education Degree in Reading Specialist has been developed to support the pursuit of a Master of Education degree from application to graduation. In the Handbook are copies of all needed forms (these are also available online at the M. Ed. website: www.se.edu/graduate-programs/master-of-education/), general information for organizing the program of studies with the program advisor, as well as some suggestions for streamlining the process of earning a master’s degree. If at any time during the graduate studies a student encounters questions not addressed in the Handbook or on the M. Ed. website, the candidate should contact the appropriate program advisor or Dr. Muhammad Betz, M.Ed. Programs Coordinator at 1-800-435-1327 extension 2262, 580-745-2262, or via email: mbetz@se.edu.

Vision Statement

Southeastern Oklahoma State University will be the leading provider of high quality M.Ed. programs in southeastern Oklahoma and north Texas for the development of educational leaders.

Mission Statement

Southeastern Oklahoma State University M.Ed. programs produce graduates who demonstrate academic and practical excellence in their respective fields. Through quality instruction grounded in current research, students will develop the professional competencies necessary to support thoughtful, ethical and effective practice.

Master of Education Program Administration and Advisors

The faculty of the Master of Education program is approved by the Graduate Council and provides quality instruction supported by involvement in and consumption of current research and work experience in a variety of clinical situations, particularly in public schools. The following partial list is provided to help current and prospective students learn more about the program of interest.
Master of Education Program Administration and Advisors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Bryon Clark</td>
<td>Dean, School of Graduate Studies</td>
<td>580-745-2206 <a href="mailto:bclark@se.edu">bclark@se.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Carrie Williamson</td>
<td>Secretary, School of Graduate Studies</td>
<td>580-745-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Will Mawer</td>
<td>Dean, School of Education and Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td><a href="mailto:580-745-wmawer@se.edu">580-745-wmawer@se.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Vivian Guarnera</td>
<td>Director of Teacher Education Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:580-745-vguarnera@se.edu">580-745-vguarnera@se.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Susie Wilson</td>
<td>Certification Officer</td>
<td>580-745-2652 <a href="mailto:swilson@se.edu">swilson@se.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Muhammad Betz</td>
<td>Coordinator, Master of Education Programs</td>
<td>580-745-2640 <a href="mailto:mbetz@se.edu">mbetz@se.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gerrie Johnson</td>
<td>Chair, Department of Educational Instruction and Leadership</td>
<td><a href="mailto:grjohnson@se.edu">grjohnson@se.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Nancy A. Hill</td>
<td>Advisor, M. Ed. in Reading Specialist</td>
<td>580-745-2642 <a href="mailto:nhill@se.edu">nhill@se.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admission to Graduate Study

The journey to a master’s degree begins with admission to the program of the student’s choice. Admission to the Master of Education program is a two step process. The first step is admission to the School of Graduate Studies. The second step is to apply for admission to the Master of Education program. Application for admission to the School of Graduate Studies may be made online at www.se.edu/grad. Hard copy applications are submitted to the School of Graduate Studies office, room 307 of the administration building. Complete instructions for admission to the School of Graduate Studies and to the specific program of choice are detailed in Bulletin: School of Graduate Studies 2009 - 2011, which is available online at www.se.edu/grad.

Admission to the Master of Education Reading Specialist Degree Program

Requirements for Unconditional Admission to the Master of Education Reading Specialist Program consists of the following:

1. Application for Admission to the Southeastern School of Graduate Studies.
2. Three current letters of recommendation from practicing administrators or others who can speak objectively to the candidate’s personal and professional qualifications.
3. Successful completion of a writing sample or a minimum score of 4.5 on the analytical writing measure of the GRE
4. GRE: the successful applicant would have a minimum score of 700 (verbal + quantitative) and take the analytical writing measure (no minimum score required; for admission and advising use only)

The Master of Education Coordinator assesses all applications for admission to the program. Each applicant will receive a letter from the M.Ed. Coordinator informing the applicant of the admissions decision. Students may be admitted unconditionally (all requirements met), conditionally (student has a deficiency in at least one area), or denied admission. Students who are admitted conditionally must fulfill the same requirements of students admitted conditionally to the School of Graduate Studies.

**Program Admission Requirements**

Admission to the M.Ed. in the Reading Specialist Program is a two-step process. First, prospective students must complete an application for admission to the School of Graduate Studies. After being successfully admitted to the School of Graduate Studies, application must be made to the M.Ed. Program for acceptance into the Reading Specialist Degree Program. Please note that successful admission to the School of Graduate Studies does not guarantee that the prospective student will be admitted to the Reading Specialist Program.

Unconditional admission to the M.Ed. in the Reading Specialist Program requires the following:

I. At least a 2.75 overall undergraduate GPA.

II. Application for admission to the Reading Specialist Program. This application must include a copy of all college/university transcripts, including verification of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.

III. Acceptable scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The successful applicant would have a combined GRE score of at least 700 on the Verbal and Quantitative sections on this examination. The applicant must also complete the Analytical Writing measure and obtain a score of at least 4.5. An applicant who does not obtain this score is required to take and pass the Writing Sample as a requirement for admission to graduate study.

IV. Verification that the applicant must have taught in an elementary school setting or special education setting for a minimum of three (3) years prior to completion of all program requirements.

V. Three current letters of recommendation from practicing administrators or others who can speak objectively to the candidate’s personal and professional qualifications.

VI. If a student does not meet one of the above requirements for unconditional admission to the program, at the discretion of the admissions committee, the student’s grade point average on graduate courses, involvement in professional endeavors, and other factors may be considered in order to waive one of the above requirements. This process shall be considered on a case-by-case basis by the admissions committee.
Conditional admission to the M.Ed. in the Reading Specialist Program requires the following:

I. Successful application to the School of Graduate and University Studies (A-307) and to the Master of Education Program.
II. At least a 2.75 overall undergraduate GPA.

All applications for admission to the program will be reviewed by the admissions committee. The admissions committee meets at least once during each academic semester (spring, summer, and fall) and other times as needed. Following the submission of a complete application, each applicant will receive a letter from the committee coordinator informing him or her of the committee’s admissions decision and, for those admitted to the program, the name and contact information of the applicant’s appointed advisor. The admissions committee may choose to admit students unconditionally (all requirements met at acceptable levels), admit students conditionally, or deny admission.

Students who are admitted conditionally to the M.Ed. in the Reading Specialist Program will be given instructions detailing what must be done to ensure unconditional admission and the necessary timeline for securing unconditional admission from the admissions committee. Students who are denied admission will be provided with conditions for re-application in their denial letter.

Students may complete up to 12 graduate hours under conditional admission while completing the requirements for unconditional admission. Students admitted conditionally to the M.Ed. program must maintain a minimum of a 3.00 GPA to remain in the program. (See further information in the Retention and Dismissal Conditions section.)

Students who have completed 12 graduate hours, but who have not completed the necessary requirements for unconditional admission to the M.Ed. program will not be allowed to matriculate further in the program until unconditional admission is secured.

Advisement

After admission to the Graduate School, the student will be sent a letter that identifies the program advisor. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the advisor to schedule the initial advising meeting. During the initial meeting with the advisor the student should receive an overview the program of studies required for the degree sought. At the meeting the student and advisor should discuss which courses will be required and the particular order (if a specific order is required) in which courses should be taken. Particular attention should be paid to courses that have prerequisites and to courses that are offered only once per year. By planning the order of courses in concert with the advisor, students should be able to avoid creating scheduling difficulties. The advisor also needs to discuss procedures to be accomplished along the way such as Admission to Candidacy, the Comprehensive Examination, and Graduation Check. Students
pursuing advanced certification (Reading Specialist, School Administration, and School Counseling) also need to discuss requirements for the Advanced Certificate Portfolio with their advisor. Please note that applications for advanced certification submitted to the State Department of Education must be signed by the Director of Teacher Education Services.

Academic Regulations

Academic Load

A regular term graduate student is classified as full-time if he/she is enrolled in nine (9) or more hours. A summer term graduate students is classified as full-time if he/she is enrolled in six (6) or more hours. Normally, a graduate student may not enroll in more than fourteen (14) semester hours during any regular semester or nine (9) hours in semester hours during any summer session. Overloads must be approved by the Dean of the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences.

Academic Time Limitations

A graduate student has a six (6) year time period, dating from the first enrolled class, in which to complete a master’s degree program. All applicable course work taken during that six year period will be applied toward the master’s degree at full credit. If the graduate student has not completed the requirements for graduation in that six (6) year period, course credit for graduation expires on all coursework that exceeds the 6 year limit. Students may recover lost credit by repeating courses or taking additional, graduate level course relevant to the student’s degree, subject to the approval of the M. Ed. Coordinator. Content/Specialization courses offered outside the Department of Educational Instruction and Leadership need to be approved by the student’s advisor as well. Courses repeated or added for recovery of lost credit must be documented in the M. Ed. Coordinator’s office and the Office of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

Advanced Standing Credit

No graduate credit earned by advanced standing may be applied toward a master’s degree.

Grade-Point Average

Graduate students must maintain a 3.00 average or better in all graduate work attempted with a least 80% of the total program passed with a grade of A or B. A grade below a C is not acceptable at the graduate level.

Retention Policies

A graduate student is required to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.00 in all graduate course work attempted in order to be considered in good standing in a graduate program. If a
student’s cumulative graduate grade point average falls below a 3.00, the student is automatically placed on probation. A student on probation must accomplish both of the following to return to good standing in the graduate program:

1. Achieve a minimum of 3.00 grade point average each term of enrollment while on probation, and

2. Achieve a cumulative graduate grade point average of 3.00 after completion of the next 9 hours of graduate course work from the time the probationary status commenced.

Failure to accomplish either of these requirements will result in an automatic suspension from graduate studies for one semester (Fall, Spring, or Summer). Reinstatement requires re-application for admission to graduate study at Southeastern. A second such suspension results in permanent dismissal of the student from graduate study at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Appeal of an Assigned Grade

The Graduate Council acts upon appeals received in writing from faculty or students who seek to have grades or records altered. The decision of the Graduate Council will be final. The procedure for submitting a grade appeal is as follows:

1. Request an Application for Graduate Appeal from the office of the School of Graduate Studies, Administration Building, Room 307.

2. Submit the application form along with a letter stating the reason for the appeal to the office of the School of Graduate Studies (the student may attach any documentation he/she believes could be helpful to the Graduate Council).

3. After the application is received, the office of the School of Graduate Studies will inform the student in writing of the meeting date. The Graduate Council usually meets several times during each semester.

4. The student has the option of appearing before the Graduate Council.

5. The final decision of the Graduate Council will be submitted to the student by mail.

6. Decisions of the Graduate Council may be appealed to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Graduate Council is composed of 14 members: seven graduate faculty members, two graduate students, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies (ex-officio), and the coordinators of the five graduate programs. The administrative liaison for the Graduate Council is the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.
Residence Requirement

A minimum of twenty-four (24) semester hours, including the last four hours of the program, must be completed in residence at Southeastern.

Transfer of Credit

A maximum of nine (9) hours from another accredited school of graduate studies toward the master’s degree at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. These hours, or any part thereof, may be applied when in the judgment of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and the student’s advisor, they contribute to the program of the student. Transfer credit must also meet the time limit regulation.

Arranged Courses

Graduate students are permitted to take courses by arrangement for credit toward master’s degrees. Students should seek approval of their advisor and the graduate faculty member with whom they wish to take the arranged course first. All arranged courses must be approved by the chair of the department offering the course and the appropriate academic dean.

The Advanced Certificate Portfolio

Each student pursuing an advanced certificate (e.g., Reading Specialist) is required by Oklahoma state statute (H.B. 1549, passed in 1995) to compile a portfolio during his/her graduate studies. The purpose of developing a portfolio is for the student to create a collection of artifacts that provides tangible evidence of his/her growth and learning during the course of the master’s program. Linn and Miller (2005) describe a portfolio as a “self portrait” that “benefits from guidance and feedback” (p. 290). The Advanced Certificate Portfolio Guidelines are available online at the Master of Education program website (http://www.se.edu/graduate-programs/master-of-education/).

Master of Education students who are seeking advanced certification should read the Advanced Certificate Portfolio Guidelines prior to their initial advisement meeting. The first section of the Guidelines provides a detailed list of required components for compiling the portfolio. Among the requirement elements for the portfolio are:

1. Letters of recommendation from members of the graduate faculty, and
2. A selection of credentials, awards, and diplomas held by the student.

It is required that students begin the process of developing their portfolios at the beginning of graduate study and meet regularly with their advisors to ensure that the portfolio is being developed properly.
The Advanced Certificate Portfolio divides the advanced certificate programs into three modules. For each module of the program of study, each student is required to use artifacts produced in class as evidence of progress toward general and program specific competencies. The *Advanced Certificate Portfolio Guidelines* provide checklists and corresponding matrices in which the student is required to list the artifacts included for each class, and to document competencies demonstrated by each artifact. There are checklists and matrices for each module for general competencies and for specific program competencies. Both general competency and the appropriate program competency checklist and matrix for Module 1 must be on file with the M. Ed. Coordinator before a student can be admitted to candidacy. Checklists and matrices for Modules 1 and 2 must be on file with the M. Ed. Coordinator before a student can be cleared to write his/her comprehensive examination. A completed *Advanced Certificate Portfolio* is required for graduation in affected programs.

**The Writing Sample**

Every student who seeks a master of education degree in Reading Specialist is required to take and pass the Writing Sample as a requirement for admission to graduate study. Students who obtain a score of at least 4.5 on the GRE Analytical Writing Measure are exempt from this requirement. This examination is arranged through the office of the M. Ed. Program Coordinator. The Writing Sample requires the student to select a writing prompt from a provided list and then write a response of at least 200-words addressing the prompt within a 90-minute time limit. The prompts are related to general educational issues or current events.

The Writing Sample is intended to assess students’ writing proficiencies only. Writing samples are scored on a scale of one (1) to six (6) with a minimum score of four (4) is required to pass. Initially, each writing sample is read by two members of the graduate faculty. A writing sample must receive a passing score from both readers to pass. When a writing sample receives a passing score from one reader and a failing score from another reader, the M. Ed. coordinator will select a third reader to score the writing sample. Passing scores from two different readers are required for a writing sample to pass.

If a student does not pass the writing sample on the first attempt, a second attempt with the student writing to a different prompt than used for the first attempt must be scheduled with the M. Ed. Program Coordinator. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the student must wait at least one semester before making another attempt. A copy of the application to take the Writing Sample and the rubric that is used to score writing samples are provided in the appendix of this handbook and are available online at http://www.se.edu/graduate-programs/master-of-education/. 
Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy

Students must apply for Candidacy in the Master of Education in the Reading Specialist Program upon completion of 12 hours of course work. Students may not enroll for more than 12 hours in the program until they are granted Admission to Candidacy. The qualifications for Admission to Candidacy are:

I. Removal of any conditions to program admission

II. Maintenance of a 3.0 GPA on all graduate course work prior to Admission to Candidacy. Students not meeting this requirement will forfeit Candidacy and may not enroll for more than 12 hours in the M.Ed. Program in Reading Specialist.

Comprehensive Examination

Candidates for the Master of Education Degree in the Reading Specialist Program must perform satisfactorily on a Comprehensive Examination administered after completion of all but nine hours of the degree program requirements. Further, candidates must have completed at least nine hours in the Specialization Component before taking the Comprehensive Examination. A detailed description of the Comprehensive Examination is provided in the Graduate Studies Handbook available online at www.se.edu/grad/programs/med.

Each student seeking a master’s degree in education is required to successfully complete a comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination is offered around midterm of each semester. The time, date, and place of the examination are posted on the M.Ed. website, http://www.se.edu/graduate-programs/master-of-education/. Timeline for the comprehensive exam will be one day for four hours. Applications for the comprehensive examination are due no later than three weeks prior to the testing date requested.

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is for the student to demonstrate the ability to discuss and to apply concepts and skills from his/her program to situations representative of the leadership roles for which the student is preparing. To qualify to take the comprehensive examination, students must:

1. Complete all but nine hours of their program
2. Complete at least nine hours in the area of specialization.
3. Have copies of all checklists for modules 1 and 2 on file with the M. Ed. Coordinator (for advanced certification programs only)
The application for the comprehensive examination is available as an appendix in this handbook, online at www.se.edu/graduate-programs/master-of-education/, or from the M. Ed. Program Coordinator’s office, 215 Morrison Hall. This application should be submitted to the M. Ed. Program coordinator and must include copies of the student’s transcript and updated degree plan before processing can begin. Approximately three weeks prior to the administration of the examination, the candidate will receive a letter from the M.Ed. Program Coordinator that offers guidelines for preparation for the examination and a list of courses from the candidate’s program of study that will comprise the examination. Comprehensive examinations are compiled by and administered by the M. Ed. Program Coordinator.

The comprehensive examination is comprised of 5 essay questions, one from each of five courses selected at random from the completed courses on the student’s program of studies. Comprehensive examination questions are graded holistically on a scale of zero (0) to five (5). A composite score of 15 points is required for passing. Any response that receives a score below 2 must be rewritten. In the case of a composite score below “15,” each question with a score below 3 must be repeated. Prior to rewriting comprehensive examination questions, it is recommended that the student confer with the graduate faculty member who scored the unacceptable response to determine why the student’s response was not acceptable. If a candidate is not successful on the second attempt, policy requires the student to take an oral examination before a panel of graduate faculty members over the question not passed. If the student performs unsatisfactorily on the oral examination, additional requirements shall be added to his/her degree program. Requirements may include but are not restricted to assigned papers, auditing portions of or entire courses, and taking an additional course(s) for credit.

Comprehensive examination questions are scored on a scale of zero (0) to five (5) based on the following holistic rubric.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All parts of the question are answered completely utilizing an outstanding level of analysis/application. The response is very strong mechanically. This response is well above average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All parts of the questions are answered utilizing basic levels of analysis/application. The response is strong grammatically. This is an above average response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>At least one part of the question is not answered. A basic level of analysis/application level is present. The response has minor mechanical errors. This is an average response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2  More than one part of the question was not answered. The analysis/application level is poor. There are noticeable mechanical errors. This is a below average response.

1  Several parts of the question were not answered. Little evidence of analysis/application is apparent. There are multiple mechanical errors. This response is well below average.

0  Did not attempt to answer the question.

Oral Comprehensive Examination Policy

Oral examinations will only be administered following approval by the Reading Specialist Program Committee. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Certification Examination

Reading Specialist

Southeastern Oklahoma State University offers the M. Ed. in the Reading Specialist degree which prepares candidates for certification as reading specialist and literacy coaching in Oklahoma for Kindergarten through grade twelve. Reading Specialist certification in Oklahoma requires:

Requirement for admission to the Southeastern M.Ed. program in Reading Specialist is the applicant must be eligible for or hold a standard Oklahoma teaching certificate in elementary or special education. An out-of-state applicant should contact the Southeastern certification officer for assistance in applying for his/her Oklahoma certificate prior to beginning this M.Ed. program. Upon graduation, all candidates for Reading Specialist certification must have successfully completed the appropriate Oklahoma certification testing and must apply to have the reading specialist certification area added to his/her Oklahoma teaching credential through the Southeastern certification officer, Susie Wilson at 580-745-2652.

Candidates with a standard Oklahoma teaching certificate in elementary or special education who already have a M.Ed. in an area other than Reading Specialist must complete, at the very minimum, the specialization component of the Reading Specialist M.Ed. program and the appropriate Oklahoma certification test to be eligible for certification as a reading specialist.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University offers three master’s of education degrees that prepare students for advanced certification. This section of the Handbook is designed to provide students with basic instructions for obtaining first time advanced certification. Websites that provide helpful information about obtaining certification in Oklahoma and out-of-state are listed in this
section. Students are urged to consult the office of Teacher Education Services (105 Morrison Hall) for the most recent information concerning advanced certification.

Application for certification should be made through the office of Teacher Education Services, 105 Morrison Hall. Further information is available at the following websites:

Test Registration and Schedules: http://www.ceoe.nesinc.com

Links to all Reading Specialist Study Guides: http://www.ceoe.nesinc.com/CE_studyguide_opener.asp

IMPORTANT NOTE: Oklahoma statute (70 O.S. § 3-104 and § 3-104.1) states that no person shall receive a certificate for instructional, supervisory or administrative position in an accredited school of this state who has been convicted of a felony, any crime involving more turpitude or a felony violation of the narcotic laws of the United States or the State of Oklahoma, provided the conviction was entered within the preceding ten-year period.

Alternative Certification

Alternative certification in some areas is available in Oklahoma and in Texas. Students interested in exploring or pursuing alternative routes to certification are urged to contact Susie Wilson, SOSU Certification Officer, 105 Morrison Hall, at 580-745-2652 for further information. Contact the Reading Specialist Advisor for information about alternative certification.

Graduation

During the semester in which the candidate will complete the requirements for his/her degree, plans for graduation must be finalized. Before a master’s degree can be conferred (awarded), the Certification for Graduation form must be completed, signed by the student’s advisor, and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies. Completion of this form certifies that all requirements have been or by the end of the semester will be met for the degree sought.

Completion of an advanced degree is a major accomplishment. Public acknowledgement of this accomplishment occurs at commencement when the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies presents the candidate with his/her academic hood. All students are urged to participate in commencement exercises to allow family, friends, and faculty to publicly participate in celebrating this milestone. Southeastern holds commencement exercises each spring (May) and each fall (December). Students completing degrees during the summer are invited to participate in the following fall commencement. It some circumstances, a student may be permitted to participate in commencement exercises prior to completion of his/her degree. A Graduate Petition for Early Participation in Commencement Exercises (available in the appendix of this handbook) must be completed and approved the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Early participation in commencement exercises does not alter in any way the requirements for the degree sought.