

**UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**Handbook for:  
MSE in Literacy with a Dyslexia Endorsement  
Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Congratulations on your admission to either the MSE in Literacy Program with a Dyslexia Endorsement or the Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia Program!

This Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and International Dyslexia Association (IDA) accredited program provides graduate candidates with the opportunity to extend their areas of licensure by pursuing graduate degrees. All graduate faculty members are dedicated to excellence in their profession and have received awards and recognition in leadership, scholarship, and service to the areas in which they teach.

The primary purpose of these programs is to 1) prepare reading specialists/literacy coaches/dyslexia interventionist and/or coordinators with advanced knowledge, strategies, leadership skills and professional dispositions that will allow them to work with struggling readers and writers, assist other classroom teachers in various aspects of teaching, and lead the literacy program in public schools and other institutions; 2) help classroom teachers improve their literacy instruction. The program is designed to meet the performance standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the International Literacy Association (ILA), the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

As you prepare for your entrance into one of these programs, you should carefully read this handbook. This handbook contains the ethical expectations, course requirements, graduation, and licensure requirements you must meet in order to successfully complete this program of study.

You are about to embark on an exhilarating journey! We hope that you will relish the challenges and joys it will bring and make memories you will carry with you throughout your lives.

## **Orientation**

Program candidates participate in an online Zoom orientation at the beginning of their program. This orientation includes program specific policies and procedures, expectations about academic integrity and honesty, ethical practices, program completion requirements, licensing options in our state, pathways for professional credentialing with CERI, and procedures for filing a complaint against the program. Furthermore, each course syllabus and introduction module in the course reviews program-specific policies and procedures, expectations regarding academic integrity and honesty, and procedures for filing a complaint against the program or a grade appeal.

## **Out of State Candidates**

While we welcome any out of state candidates, completion of any program, other than an initial licensure program, may not lead to licensure or endorsement in Arkansas or in the state in which you reside. It is your responsibility to check with your state's department of education to determine if the license or endorsement requirements are met through the program of study. If you are a potential out of state candidate, please contact the program coordinator directly.

## **GPA**

A graduate student is expected to maintain a cumulative graduate GPA and a program GPA of 3.00 or above. A student with a cumulative or program GPA less than 3.00 is on academic probation. Probation serves to alert the student of potential academic problems. A graduate student is limited to 9 hours a semester of coursework that can be completed while on probation. After the completion of the maximum number of hours allowed with probationary status, one of two actions will occur: (1) If the graduate student's cumulative GPA and program GPA are 3.00 or greater, the student will automatically return to good standing and no longer be on probation, (2) If the graduate student's cumulative or program GPA is less than 3.00, the student will automatically be suspended from graduate study at UCA. The student may appeal the suspension by submitting a letter of appeal to the department chair affiliated with the program. The department chair will determine whether extending the probationary period is warranted. This decision will be based upon an improved GPA during the probationary period and the possibility of achieving the required 3.00 GPA during the extended probationary period. If the appeal is granted, the student will continue on probation for an additional semester six hours. At the end of the extended probation period, either the student will have the GPA needed to return to good standing or the student will be suspended from graduate study at UCA.

## Hints for Success

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- I. **Communication is critical!** Check your UCA email often. Please respond to emails promptly. Confirm the receipt of emails if response cannot be provided right away.
- II. Read and become familiar with the International Dyslexia Association's Knowledge and Practice Standards - <https://app.box.com/s/21gdk2k1p3bnagdfz1xy0v98j5ytl1wk> .
- III. Read and become familiar with the International Literacy Association's Standards for Reading/Literacy Specialists - <https://literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/resource-documents/standards-appendix-A.pdf>
- IV. **Deadlines are critical!** Look ahead to make sure that you are prepared to meet deadlines.
- V. Unless instructed to do otherwise, please follow the course calendar in each course without prompting. Instructors/Professors may send regular reminders and updates but ***do not solely rely upon them.***
- VI. **Assignment suggestions/hints** – Read the assignment details and review the rubrics in each course.
- VII. Don't complete assignments just for the sake of getting a grade. Use this opportunity to develop increased understanding and new strategies for effective teaching.
- VIII. Be prepared for your field assignments and document your hours. You will be required to document field hours each semester in courses where field experience is required. At the end of each course, you will upload a screenshot to Blackboard showing these hours have been completed.
- IX. Field experience can be in your own classroom. At this time, these programs do not place students for field experience. This is your responsibility.

## **Professional Dispositions and Practices**

If candidates exhibit a problem in professional behaviors (preparation, attendance, equity, communication, respect for policies and norms, ethical conduct, self-control, collaboration, or resourcefulness), skills (content knowledge and/or self-assessment/reflection), and/or practices (pedagogy) during coursework, the faculty member noting the concern completes a UCA COE [disposition rubric](#) and notifies the Program Coordinator. After receipt of the disposition rubric, the candidate must meet with the Program Coordinator. If another disposition rubric is submitted, the candidate will meet with the Program Coordinator to complete a [Performance Improvement Plan](#). If the plan is not adhered to, the candidate is subject to dismissal from the program.

### **Ethics**

All educators in Arkansas are to follow the [Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators](#). Additionally, the International Dyslexia Association's Standard 5 Dispositions and Practices must be adhered to at all times.

1. Strive to do no harm, maintain confidentiality, and act in the best interest of struggling readers and readers with dyslexia and other reading disorders.
2. Maintain the public trust by providing accurate information about currently accepted and scientifically supported best practices in the field.
3. Avoid misrepresentation of the efficacy of educational or other treatments or the proof for or against those treatments.
4. Respect objectivity by reporting assessment and treatment results accurately and truthfully.
5. Avoid making unfounded claims of any kind regarding the training, experience, credentials, affiliations, and degrees of those providing services.
6. Respect the training requirements of established credentialing and accreditation organizations supported by the Center for Effective Reading Instruction (CERI) and IDA.
7. Avoid conflicts of interest when possible and acknowledge conflicts of interest when they occur.
8. Support just treatment of individuals with dyslexia and related learning difficulties.
9. Respect confidentiality of students or clients.
10. Respect the intellectual property of others.

## **Programs of Study**

Beginning with Fall 2021 candidates, upon acceptance to either the master's degree or the graduate certificate in dyslexia program, candidates are required to submit evidence of meeting Act 1063 enacted as a result of Arkansas 2017 legislation. Act 1063 requires all teachers employed in a teaching position that requires a K-6 license, a K-12 license, a Reading Specialist license, or a Dyslexia license to demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction via one of the pathways approved by the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

ACT 1063 requires candidates and/or teachers to take part in professional development to meet the knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction as approved by DESE (Phase 1). Teachers and candidates must also provide evidence of their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction either via an ADE Certified Science of Reading Assessor (for in-service teachers) or passing the Pearson Foundations of Reading test (for pre-service OR in-service teachers)(Phase II).

If candidates entering the program can provide documentation of pathway completion, they complete the program's standard curriculum. If candidates entering the program cannot provide documentation of pathway completion, they will complete an extended program including the standard curriculum as well as 6-hours of additional coursework to meet the DESE requirements. The additional 6-hours must be completed first (ELSE 6348 Multisensory Approach to Language I and ELSE 6349 Multisensory Approach to Language II).

**[2021 Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia Program of Study](#)** (Starts Fall 2021).

**[2021 MSE in Literacy with a Dyslexia Endorsement Program of Study](#)** (Starts Fall 2021).

## **Graduation**

Information about graduation can be found at the following link each semester.

<https://uca.edu/graduateschool/graduation/> .

All students are required to apply for graduation in order to graduate if you plan to walk or not to walk.

## **Testing Requirements**

Students must complete the Praxis test Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) and submit documentation of the score prior to completion of the Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia Program.

Students must complete the Reading Specialist Praxis test and submit documentation of the score prior to completion of the MSE in Literacy with a Dyslexia Endorsement Program.

Students must complete the KPEERI test and submit documentation of the score prior to completion of BOTH the Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia Program and the MSE in Literacy with a Dyslexia Endorsement Program.

## **Arkansas Licensure**

1. Complete the Program of Study (including testing requirements)
2. Apply for Graduation
3. Apply for the Endorsements with Dr. Bunn's office (Information will be sent to you.)
4. Be sure the Office of Candidate Services (OCS) has copies of the Praxis Reading Specialist and/or Praxis PLT score report(s).
5. Be sure Dr. Thompson has a copy of the KPEERI score report.

## **CERI Certification Opportunity**

Because UCA is an IDA accredited institution, our candidates have the opportunity to obtain additional certifications upon graduation from CERI or the Center for Effective Reading Instruction. More information about certificates available to each of our programs can be found at the links below. It would be suggested to obtain certification at the highest level that you would qualify for rather than stacking them (having multiple certifications).

### **Graduate Certificate in Dyslexia**

Structured Literacy Classroom Teacher Knowledge Certificate - <https://effectivereading.org/structured-literacy-classroom-teacher/>

### **MSE in Literacy with a Dyslexia Endorsement**

Structured Literacy Dyslexia Interventionist (1 Student) <https://effectivereading.org/dyslexia-interventionist/>

Structured Literacy Dyslexia Specialist (3 Students): <https://effectivereading.org/dyslexia-specialist/>

\*\*\*If you plan to apply for the ***Structured Literacy Dyslexia Interventionist OR Specialist certificate with CERI***, you **MUST** schedule a meeting with the Program Coordinator the SEMESTER BEFORE you will start your FIRST Practicum Class in order to determine the availability of the instructor and to make arrangements for you to meet the required expectations. For Example: Dyslexia Interventionist and Specialist Certificates require that you work with the student(s) for TWO semesters instead of the ONE semester required for the program.