

## **Master of Science in Education** **LITERACY EDUCATION**

SUNY Potsdam offers three graduate programs in Literacy Education:

MSED Literacy Specialist, Early Childhood and Childhood (Birth-Grade 6)  
MSED Literacy Specialist, Middle Childhood and Adolescence (Grades 5-12)  
MSED Literacy Educator

Our Literacy Specialist programs are designed for candidates holding initial or professional certificates in teaching general education classes at the early childhood, elementary, middle school, or secondary levels or candidates initially certified in special areas (i.e., art, music, business, physical education) who wish to earn a master's degree that will allow them to obtain an additional NYSED certification as a Literacy Specialist.

Our Literacy Educator program is designed for candidates to pursue preparation for becoming more informed, and hence more effective, literacy educators in the general education classroom in line with the candidate's initial certification (i.e., early childhood, elementary, middle school, or secondary). This master's degree will allow candidates to obtain a professional certificate in their initial certification area.

The Literacy Specialist programs are accredited by the International Reading Association and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and are registered with the New York State Education Department.

### Requirements for Admission

1. Submission of the *Application for Graduate Study*

**Application deadline for candidates for Summer and Fall - April 1**

**Application deadline for candidates for Spring - October 15**

2. Submission of a *Letter of Intent*, attached to the application, written by the applicant and which clearly answers the following:

- Why do you wish to develop your knowledge and skills in the field of literacy education at an advanced level?
- What personal attributes do you possess that will help you meet the challenges of this graduate program?

Your letter must be dated and include your signature.

### **IMPORTANT**

In addition, the letter must include a statement that you have read and understand the MSED Literacy Program Professional Dispositions and the MSED Literacy Program Procedures for Assessing and Monitoring MSED Literacy Candidates' Professional Dispositions included in this packet.

3. Submission of an official transcript of an earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited NCATE institution or a comparable preparation program, with a minimum GPA of 2.75 in the last 60 hours of undergraduate study.

4. Submission of three recommendations (including at least one recommendation focusing on teaching performance) from persons who can provide information about the academic potential of the applicant to pursue graduate course work in literacy education (e.g., former or current professors, school administrators).

**Recommendations must be submitted using the forms provided in this packet.**

5. Valid certification indicating preparation in general education curriculum at grade level of the master's program for which application is being made.

## MSED Literacy Program Professional Dispositions

**WORKS WELL WITH OTHERS:** *for example...* Encourages others to share ideas; Values working in groups/ teams; Respects others' ideas; Contributes to the task; Offers help; Understands and accepts consensus; Monitors one's own strengths/ weaknesses as a team participant; Makes resources available to aid group's task.

**TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE'S ACTIONS:** *for example...* Follows through on responsibilities/ tasks; Accepts and acts upon constructive suggestions; Does work in a timely fashion; Reads directions; Avoids blaming others.

**FOSTERS POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS:** *for example...* Models effective interpersonal behaviors/ communications; Provides positive reinforcement to others; Seeks to solve problems; Establishes positive interactions with faculty, staff, students, and parents; Establishes positive interactions with colleagues and instructors.

**BEHAVES IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER:** *for example...* Is punctual; Has integrity; Dresses appropriately; Respects students and staff; Respects confidentiality; Exhibits behavior of teacher, not friend to students; Is a positive adult role model; Respects personal boundaries; Understands that teaching by example must be constant; Models effective and appropriate spoken and written English in keeping with expected standards; Communicates honestly with others.

**MAINTAINS A HIGH LEVEL OF COMPETENCE AND INTEGRITY IN ONE'S PRACTICE:** *for example...* Seeks ways to update content knowledge; Prepares to teach through approved long-term and short-term planning; Engages in ongoing self-reflection to improve one's teaching; Seeks out constructive criticism; Identifies strengths, needs, and updates skills through professional development activities; Espouses beliefs and views consistently; Is honest; Is open to and seeks out innovative instructional strategies; Organizes information/ materials to facilitate success.

**WILLING TO TAKE RISKS AND SHOW COMFORT WITH UNCERTAINTY:** *for example...* Adapts to changes in schedules; Takes advantage of "teachable moments"; Monitors and adjusts learning activities; Tries unfamiliar techniques; Responds positively to change (e.g., practicum, internship change; open to possibilities); Encourages students/ peers in taking risks.

**RECOGNIZES AND RESPECTS ONE'S OWN DIVERSITY AND THAT OF OTHERS:** *for example...* Uses instructional resources that incorporate or depict alternative points of view; Uses instructional practices that respect/ reflect diversity among participants (e.g., instructional styles and participation; structures); Seeks divergent points of view, Responds positively to diverse opinions and lifestyles; Provides individuals with opportunities to share their cultures; Becomes knowledgeable about diversity issues; Responds critically to hurtful comments/ jokes related to diverse groups; Creates a climate of inclusiveness in classroom.

## Procedures for Assessing and Monitoring MSED Literacy Candidates' Professional Dispositions

The purpose of this document is to describe procedures for assessing and monitoring the professional dispositions of candidates in its MSED Literacy programs. It is critical that candidates awarded degrees and recommended for teaching certification by the program exemplify the attributes of highly qualified teaching professionals, which includes suitable attitudes, beliefs, demeanor and conduct.

In accord with policy for assessing candidates' performance<sup>1</sup> professional dispositions will be assessed at three points in the program of study: initial (during the first semester of study), midpoint (during the semester in which the candidate will have completed 15 graduate credits in the MSED Literacy program) and exit (during the final semester). The dispositions to be assessed are as follows:

- Works well with others
- Takes responsibility for one's actions
- Fosters positive relationships
- Behaves in a professional manner
- Maintains a high level of competence and integrity in one's practice
- Willing to take risks, be flexible, and show comfort with uncertainty
- Recognizes and respects one's own diversity and that of others

The above list of dispositions is taken from the SOEPS Professional Dispositions Framework<sup>2</sup>. A more descriptive list of provided below.

### Procedure:

The Professional Dispositions Framework and this document, *Procedures for Assessing and Monitoring MSED Literacy Candidates' Professional Dispositions*, will be provided to candidates when applying for admission to the program. The process for assessing, documenting, reporting, and monitoring dispositions is as follows:

1. Candidates provided copy of Disposition Framework and Procedure for Assessing and Monitoring Dispositions as stated above. In the application packet candidates are instructed to read these documents and include in their signed and dated application letter a statement attesting that they have read and understand the documents.
2. The course instructor of GRDG 600 (initial semester) will review the dispositions framework.
3. Course instructors in GRDG 600 (initial semester), GRDG 655/656 (midpoint semester) and GRDG 690/691 or 696/697 or GRDG 699 or GRDG 681 (exit semester) will consciously monitor disposition of candidates enroll in their course. Each candidate will be evaluated on a four-point scale (1=unsatisfactory, 2=basic, 3=proficient, and 4 = distinguished).
4. Candidates assessed at levels 1 or 2 will not be eligible to enroll in further courses without meeting with the course instructor and the department chair to develop an "improvement plan". Candidates who fail to adequately implement the improvement plan will not be allowed to continue in the program.
5. For candidates exhibiting unacceptable dispositions only during the exit semester (GRDG 690/691 or 696/697 or 699), the candidate will meet with the course instructor and the department chair to develop an improvement plan to be implemented in an additional 6 credit hour practicum experience the following semester. Candidates who fail to adequately implement the improvement plan may face 1) not being recommended for NYS certification by the program, or 2) forgoing graduation and all academic awards and honors.

<sup>1</sup> Dept. of Literacy Education – Assessment Gates – approved 4.5.04

<sup>2</sup> SOEPS document developed by ad-hoc committee on dispositions 2.18.04



**THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT POTSDAM  
MSED Literacy Program - Recommendation Form**

APPLICANT: PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION SECTION ONLY, AND THEN GIVE THIS FORM TO THE RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL WITH A PRE-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE, ADDRESSED TO: SUNY POTSDAM, OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES, SATTERLEE HALL, POTSDAM, NY 13676

**INFORMATION SECTION:**

Applicant's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) (FORMER LAST NAME)

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

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

**TO THE RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL:** The person named above has requested that you submit a recommendation pertaining to his/her potential to pursue a master's degree in Literacy Education. To facilitate the application process, the Office of Graduate Studies requests that you use this form for your recommendation statement.

Please rate the candidate on the following scale:	No Opportunity to Observe	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent	Truly Exceptional
		Lowest 40%	Middle 20%	Next 15%	Higher 20%	Highest 5%	
Motivation for academic work							
Writing and speaking ability							
Professional competence and integrity							
Willingness to take measured risks, be flexible, or show comfort with uncertainty							
Breadth of general knowledge							
Ability as a speaker							
Ability as a writer							
Ability to get along well with others							
Acceptance of responsibility							
Persistence							
Independence							
Overall potential as a Master's candidate							

(OVER)

In your letter of recommendation, it would be helpful if you could address the following questions:

- How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?
- What information can you share about the applicant's academic ability and potential for success in a master's level Department of Literacy program?
- How does the candidate demonstrate the ability to contribute in a collaborative program?
- What information can you share about the applicant's teaching abilities, particularly involving struggling readers/writers?

(A typed letter may be attached to this form.)

#### SUMMARY EVALUATION:

\_\_\_ I do not recommend this applicant for admission.

\_\_\_ I feel that the applicant's qualifications are marginal, but if admitted, the applicant would greatly benefit from this program.

\_\_\_ I recommend this applicant for admission and feel his/her performance should be comparable to that of most graduate students.

\_\_\_ I strongly recommend this applicant for admission and feel that he/she has the capability to perform at a superior level.

Thank you for your cooperation and effort in providing this information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_