

*Master of Arts Degree in Education*  
*with a concentration in*  
*Curriculum and Instruction*

Degree Program Overview  
and  
Application Forms



COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

**MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN EDUCATION**  
with a concentration in Curriculum and Instruction

Revised September, 2009

## INTRODUCTION

Educators wishing to broaden their theoretical understanding of curriculum and instruction, to increase their knowledge and skills in their content specializations, to pursue additional endorsements, and to develop new strategies and materials for their classrooms should consider the Master of Arts in Education, with a concentration in Curriculum and Instruction. Successful completion of this program contributes to the professional development of educators, prepares them for roles of leadership within their subject areas and schools, and leads to advanced graduate study.

## COURSE DELIVERY

All courses for the program are offered through the Outreach School, either by Video conference, Audio conference, intensive weekends, Web-based instruction, or a combination of these formats. The format and sites for delivery of courses will be described at the Outreach web site (<http://outreach.uwyo.edu>) prior to the semester during which the courses are offered. All work on a master's degree must be completed within six (6) calendar years from the date of admission. Students who do not take courses for two consecutive semesters must reapply for admission to the program.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for the Master of Arts degree in Education are reviewed for admission two times each year. To be considered for admission, applications must be completed and submitted by **October 1<sup>st</sup>** for spring semester admission, and **March 1<sup>st</sup>** for summer/fall admission. Educators wishing to apply for admission to the Master of Arts in Education degree program must complete the Graduate Student Resources application and pay the required fee. This application is available only in online format through the Graduate Student Resource's website:

<http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/UWGrad/>. In addition, applicants must submit a letter of intent, an academic resume, three letters of recommendation, and college transcripts, as described in the section below, "Minimal Admissions Criteria." International students must also submit passing scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). One year of K-12 teaching experience or its equivalent is required. In exceptional cases, an approved teaching internship during the first semester of enrollment may be substituted for prior teaching.

All application materials should be mailed to the following address:

Admissions, Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Programs  
College of Education  
Dept. 3374  
1000 E. University Avenue  
University of Wyoming  
Laramie, WY 82071-3374

Application files will not be reviewed until they are complete. Meeting minimal admissions criteria does NOT automatically ensure admission to the program.

## MINIMAL ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

- Score of “Proficient” or higher on a *letter of intent* describing academic goals, teaching experiences, and reasons for pursuing a master’s degree at the University of Wyoming. This letter serves as a writing sample, and takes the place of GRE scores in the admission process. For a full description of the letter of intent and scoring categories, see page 3.
- **One year of K-12 teaching experience or its equivalent**
- Three letters of recommendation, completed by an individual familiar with the applicant’s academic performance, a current or recent supervisor, and/or a selected colleague. Recommendation forms are available online through the Graduate Student Resource’s website: <http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/info.asp?p=2235>
- Transcript evaluation for undergraduate degree completion, reflecting a minimum 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale on the applicant’s most recent degree from an accredited institution, plus transcripts from all other schools attended.
- A TOEFL score of 525 (paper-based), 197 (computer exam) or above is required for international students.
- Academic Resume- see page 4.

## GUIDELINES FOR LETTER OF INTENT

A letter of intent must be submitted with other required admissions materials. The letter of intent serves as a writing sample, an indicator of the applicant’s proficiency in writing. The letter of intent also serves as a substitute for scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The admissions committee will be examining both the quality of the written sample and the depth of its content. Following are guidelines for writing the letter and a rubric the admissions committee members will use to assess these letters.

In the letter of intent please address the following questions:

- 1. A detailed description of teaching experience describing how many years in teaching, what grades and/or subjects taught. Describe crucial aspects of the teaching experience, and how did he/she develop as a teacher as a result of these experiences and how will their background influence graduate studies.
- 2. Describe strengths: What will the student bring to our program and his/her classes that may demonstrate ability to be a successful graduate student and ability to contribute to the learning environment.
- 3. Academic goals: describe in detail why students wish to pursue a Masters of Arts in C&I, including why they want to do so at this time and how they are planning to use the degree in the future. What areas of study are they interested in and include goals for a graduate study and why these goals are important?

The letter should be typed (double-spaced) on 8.5 by 11 inch paper. Letters of intent will be scored by a rubric that evaluates two areas: Ideas/Content Development; and Organization/Structure/Mechanics/Format. Each category is ranked as Outstanding, Proficient,

Marginal, or Deficient. An overall score of Proficient is required for acceptance to the Master of Arts in Education program.

### **Guidelines for Academic Resume**

Include the following in your resume:

- Personal Information: Name and Contact Information (Address, Phone numbers, email)
- Education: Institution, City, State, Dates Attended, Major, and Degree
- Work Experience: Dates, Job Title, Employer, City, State
- Professional experiences such as: Publications, Presentations and Grants; Continuing Education Activities, Awards/Honors Received; Community and Volunteer Activities; Professional Memberships; other

### Rubric for Assessing Letters of Intent

The categories and scoring for the letter are as follows:

- Ideas and content development
  - 1=Deficient - Ideas and content are poorly developed and not clearly expressed
  - 2=Marginal - Ideas and content are evident but are not thoroughly developed or are difficult to follow - Enrichment needed to write successfully at graduate level
  - 3=Proficient – Ideas and content are developed and expressed at a level appropriate for success in the applicant’s graduate program
  - 4=Outstanding – Ideas and content are clearly expressed and well developed – writing exceeds required level of proficiency
- Organization/Structure/Mechanics/Format
  - 1=Deficient - Multiple errors and/or poor organization prevent thoughts from being clearly communicated
  - 2=Marginal - Errors cause interruptions for the reader - Organization is difficult to follow - Enrichment needed to write successfully at graduate level.

3=Proficient – Occasional errors or misuse. Errors do not cause major misunderstanding of the thoughts expressed – Organization and mechanics are at an adequate level for success in the applicant’s graduate program

4=Outstanding – Very few errors - Organization follows a logical pattern. Exceeds required (proficient) level of proficiency

## **Master of Arts in Education with a concentration in Curriculum and Instruction Program Requirements**

The Master of Arts degree in Education is offered in two options: Plan A, which requires writing a thesis; and Plan B, which requires a written paper based on a scholarly project. A minimum of 30 semester hours beyond the Bachelor’s degree is required. All course work and degree requirements must be approved by the student’s graduate committee.

The Master of Arts degree in Education consists of a set of core courses and one of three emphases: Endorsements, Content Studies, or Curriculum Studies. All students are required to complete the core courses and one of the three emphases. Specific courses are outlined below.

The *Endorsements* emphasis allows practicing teachers to take coursework toward eligibility for endorsement in Literacy, Early Childhood Education, or English as a Second Language through the state of Wyoming’s Professional Teaching Standards Board. These endorsements are only available to teachers who hold valid teaching certification in the state of Wyoming. For more information on endorsements, use contact information provided below.

Early Childhood Education: Michelle Hansen ([mhanse19@uwyo.edu](mailto:mhanse19@uwyo.edu))

English as a Second Language: Sara Chapa ([schapa@uwyo.edu](mailto:schapa@uwyo.edu))

Literacy: Barbara Chatton ([bchat@uwyo.edu](mailto:bchat@uwyo.edu))

The *Content Studies* emphasis is designed to allow practicing teachers to pursue further education in a particular content area – such as history, English, math, etc. -- through 4000 and 5000-level courses in those content areas. This coursework may be helpful particularly in the case of practicing teachers who are pursuing “highly qualified” status in a content area.

The *Curriculum Studies* emphasis is designed for practicing educators who are interested in gaining knowledge and expertise related to curriculum and instruction.

Another strand, focusing on Teacher Leadership, is available through the Department of Educational Leadership: <http://www.uwyo.edu/edleadership/>.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

### I. Core Courses (17-20 credit hours)

- Assessment (3 credit hours): EDCI 5500 – Classroom Assessment
- Curriculum (3): EDCI 5000 – Principles of Curriculum
- Diversity (3): EDCI 5350 – Issues in Multicultural Education
- Instruction (3): EDCI 5790 – Advanced Instructional Strategies
- Research (3): EDRE 5530 – Intro to Research or EDRE 5550 – Action Research
- Midpoint Review (1): EDCI 5400 – Portfolio Reflection (1) (EDCI 5400 represents a midpoint evaluation and must be taken no later than 2 semesters [may include a summer semester] before graduation.
- Final Review (2-5) Plan A thesis (4) OR Plan B project (2) OR National Board Certification (1-3). Students, as guided by an academic advisor, may pursue a Plan A thesis or a Plan B non-thesis. Generally, one can think of the Plan A thesis as a research project that emerges when a student finds that a problem of interest has not been addressed in the research literature. A Plan B non-thesis is a research project that emerges from practice, typically involving a problem of interest within a student’s school, classroom, or work site.)

### II. Emphases (15-18 credit hours plus 1 credit mid-program review)

#### A. Endorsements

- Literacy (18 credit hours)
- Early Childhood (18 credit hours)
- ESL (15 credit hours)

#### B. Content Studies (15 to 18 hours plus one credit mid program review)

This specialization is intended for those practicing teachers who are pursuing the “highly qualified” status. Coursework will primarily be taken in students’ content areas (e.g., History, English, etc. 4000 and 5000 level courses).

#### C. Curriculum Studies (15 to 18 hours plus one credit mid program review)

This specialization is intended for those who are interested in focusing on issues of curriculum and instruction.

- Required: EDCI 5650 Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, & Secondary School Curriculum
- Other potential coursework:
  - EDCI 5800 – Curriculum Development
  - Research Methods
  - Counseling
  - Instructional Technology
  - Special Education

Literacy  
 ESL  
 Diversity  
 Other courses with approval from committee

TOTAL: 32 minimum semester hours

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- A minimum of 32 semester hours are required for completion of the degree.
- Students may count up to 12 units of graduate credit taken prior to admission to the master's program. However, taking courses for graduate credit prior to applying for the master's program does not guarantee acceptance to the program.
- A maximum of 12 semester hours can be taken at the 4000 level in fulfillment of the Master of Arts degree program coursework.
- Students may count up to 12 transfer credit units to the Master of Arts degree in Education.
- National Board Certification candidates may count up to 9 credit units as elective hours.
- At least half of the semester hours required for the master's degree shall be in courses restricted to graduate students (5000 level).
- No more than one third of the program hours may be taken for S/U grades, and those S/U grades will only count in courses offered for S/U only.

### **ACCESSING COURSE INFORMATION AND REGISTERING FOR COURSES**

Information about all courses can be found on Wyoweb, the University of Wyoming's online portal: <https://shermanpass.uwyo.edu/cp/home/displaylogin>. Registration for courses is also carried out on Wyoweb. Once admitted to the University of Wyoming, students can access this page and obtain a user ID and password. Students must also obtain a PERC number from their advisor or through the Curriculum and Instruction office in order to register for courses each semester.

### **GRADUATE COMMITTEE**

Upon being successfully admitted to the program, each student will be assigned an advisor, who may also serve as the student's committee chair. Each student's program will be approved and supervised by a master's committee consisting of **two** members within Curriculum and Instruction (from the Departments of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, Educational Studies, and/or Secondary Education) and **one** member from outside Curriculum and Instruction. The committee, in collaboration with the student, will ensure satisfactory completion of the program.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Procedures for Master's Degree Students

Appendix B: Thesis and Non-Thesis Options

**Master of Arts Degree in Education**  
*with a concentration in*  
**Curriculum and Instruction**

Effective Fall 2007

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_

W#: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Core/Required Courses (16 credit hours)**

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5500 – Classroom Assessment (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5000 – Principles of Curriculum (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5450 – Issues in Multicultural  
Education (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5790 – Advanced Instructional  
Strategies (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ EDRE 5550 – Action Research (3)

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_ EDRE 5530 - Intro to Research (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5400 – Midpoint Portfolio  
Reflection (1)

**II. Emphasis Options (15-18 credit hours)**

**A. Endorsements**

- Literacy (18 credit hours)
- Early Childhood (25 credit hours)
- ESL (15 credit hours)

**B. Content Studies (15 to 18 hours)**

**C. Curriculum Studies (15 to 18 hours - EDCI 5650  
Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, & Secondary  
School Curriculum Required for Curriculum  
Studies Emphasis)**

(Course Prefix & Title)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**III. Final Review (1-4)**

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5960 Thesis/Plan A,

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5890 Directed Professional  
Study (2)/Plan B project,

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_ EDCI 5890 Directed Professional  
Study (1)/National Board Certification

TOTAL: 32 minimum semester hours

**Additional Information**

- Students may count up to 12 units of graduate credit taken prior to admission to the master's program. However, taking courses for graduate credit prior to applying for the master's program does not guarantee acceptance to the program.
- A maximum of 12 semester hours can be taken at the 4000 level in fulfillment of the Master of Arts degree program coursework.
- Students may count up to 12 transfer credit units to the Master of Arts degree in Education.
- National Board Certification candidates may count up to 9 seminar credits as elective hours.
- At least half of the semester hours required for the master's degree shall be in courses restricted to graduate students (5000 level).
- No more than one third of the program hours may be taken for S/U grades, and those S/U grades will only count in courses offered for S/U only.

Procedures for Master's Degree Students  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Revised, 12/12/2005

1. The student will apply to the C&I program. When the admissions committee has agreed to admit the student to the program, the student's file is given to the assigned faculty advisor. A letter is sent to the student from Graduate Admissions indicating that the student has been admitted to the program and giving the name of the advisor.

2. The student will initiate a meeting with the advisor within one month of receiving a letter of admission. During this meeting the student and advisor will discuss the student's program goals, possible coursework, and identify faculty who might serve as both committee members and as the committee chair. If the advisor and the student agree, the advisor can serve as the committee chair.

3. After this initial appointment, the student begins coursework. The student may transfer in twelve hours of graduate coursework taken at the University of Wyoming/nine hours from another graduate institution. The advisor should decide whether these are likely to be viable courses for the graduate program. As the student takes classes, he/she should be considering faculty who might serve on the graduate committee.

**Timeline Note:** The first or oldest course to be counted as part of the program will dictate the graduation timeline. The student has six years to complete the degree, beginning with the semester of the oldest course.

4. The student will, with consultation of the advisor, begin assembling committee members. The University Graduate Student Handbook strongly recommends that this be done in the first or second semester of the program. The Program uses a form to collect these signatures, identifying the committee composition. This form is approved by the advisor, and sent to the department head, who sends it on to the graduate school. The student and the advisor are notified by email when the committee has been approved. If the advisor is to serve as the committee chair, these duties begin at this point. If another person takes over as chair, the advisor will pass all student materials on to the chair.

5. The student drafts a program of study with the help of the committee chair. The Program of Study form is available on-line from the Graduate Student Resources site: ([uwgrad@uwyo.edu](mailto:uwgrad@uwyo.edu), under Second Semester Documents). The student then meets with the graduate committee about the Program of Study.

Once the Program of Study is approved by the committee and signed by the chair, the student forwards the paperwork to the department head for approval. The department then sends it to the Graduate School for final approval and filing. Again, the student has six years to complete the program beginning with the oldest course listed on the Program of Study.

6. Beginning the Thesis or Plan B paper. After the student has completed coursework, he/she is ready to begin the process of formally developing a Plan A thesis or Plan B paper. Generally, the Plan A thesis incorporates quantitative or qualitative research that results in new information about a subject of interest to the student. Those students who plan to go on to complete the Ph.D. should choose the thesis option. The Plan B paper focuses on creating a product, project, a theoretical bibliography linked to implications for practice, or program that grows out of the coursework and interests of the student. While the product is research-based and supported and is evaluated in some

way, the focus is on the product itself rather than the research needed to create it. Students should carefully consider potential thesis or Plan B ideas from the onset of the program of study. Coursework should inform and refine project and research topics.

7. The student should discuss ideas for the thesis or Plan B paper with the advisor. Once an idea has initial approval, the student should contact committee members with a brief one or two page summary of the problem to be studied and get their verbal or email approval to continue.

8. The student will write a prospectus that may include (The scope of the prospectus will be determined by the student in consultation with the chair and members of the committee):

*An Introduction*

- Statement of problem or hypothesis
- Importance of the study
- What will be investigated and what is beyond the scope of the study
- Definitions of significant terms to be used in the study

*A Review of the Existing Literature about this subject*

- Scope of the review
- Conclusions that tie the literature review to the problem

*The Methods and/or Procedures to be Followed to Implement the Study*

- Description of pilot if done
- Participants, population, sample size
- Research design for Plan A/ Method for evaluation for Plan B
- Instrumentation-measurement, data recording instruments, type of analysis to be used on the data
- Materials and equipment to be used and/or developed

The prospectus should be written in APA style so that it is consistent with the eventual final product.

9. The student will prepare a proposal for the Institutional Review Board, if human subjects are going to be used for the study. The advisor must write a letter of support for this proposal, but if the committee is in agreement with the proposal idea, the IRB document can move forward before the student's prospectus meeting. It is the student's responsibility to send the IRB document forward.

10. Prospectus meeting. When the student and chair agree on a draft of the prospectus, the student will arrange a time and place for the committee to meet to discuss it. Committee members should be given at least one week for reading and review of this document. When the committee reaches agreement on the prospectus and the shape of the thesis or Plan B paper, the student is ready to move forward with the research and writing. If they have not been completed, formal filing of committee members and admission to candidacy paperwork should be done at this time.

11. Writing the thesis/Plan B. The student should work closely with the chair and committee members in conducting research and writing the thesis. Drafts of chapters should be submitted to the chair for primary review. The drafts can be disbursed to committee members for secondary review, under the direction of the chair, if the committee members express interest in reading the draft chapters, or

they provide necessary expertise for the paper. This process can be lengthy. Do not expect to finish the paper in one semester. Pay attention to University deadlines and requirements to be enrolled during the final semester.

Note: The C&I program offers sections of Continuing Enrollment at a reduced tuition rate to accommodate students who require additional time to complete the degree once the Program of Study requirements have been fulfilled.

12. Graduation Semester: Intent to Graduate; Completion of Requirements Form; Enrollment

These two Graduate Student Resources forms should be filed with the C&I Departments and Registrar during the semester the student wishes to graduate. The second form includes payment of fees and a degree check. Students need to pay attention to graduation dates so that the defense is scheduled appropriately. Students must be enrolled in at least one credit hour during the semester in which they graduate. The credit could be a Thesis hour as part of the program of study, or a continuing enrollment credit for those who have completed all program of study requirements.

13. Thesis/Plan B defense. When the student and chair are satisfied with the paper, the student will schedule a time and place for the defense. Committee members should have copies of the paper at least two weeks prior to the meeting. If you plan to graduate in a particular semester, you should plan to have a completed draft which has been approved by the committee chair, to all members of the committee by the middle of the semester. As the defense date approaches, the chair should poll the committee members about their satisfaction with the paper so that major concerns can be addressed before the meeting. The student will bring the Completion of Requirements form and signature page of the paper to the meeting. Generally, if the Committee members agree that the student has passed the written paper and the oral defense, they submit corrections they wish to be made to the student and chair and sign off at this point. The chair signs off on the paper when these corrections have been made. Committee members will specify at this point whether they would like copies of the revised product. The chair will always receive a final copy. Plan A students will submit forms and two copies of the thesis to the graduate school. Plan B students submit the forms only.

14. The student will provide a hard or electronic copy of the thesis or Plan B that can be filed in the Curriculum and Instruction Professional Library (to be established) that can be used as a model for future graduate students.

15. Graduation.

Thesis and Non-Thesis Options  
Revised, 10/2007

Plan B Non-thesis:

1. This program type carries a minimum of 30 hours of course work...at least 14 of these hours must be in the student's major field... The Plan B non-thesis program differs from the thesis program type in that it may include additional hours of coursework instead of thesis hours. It permits a wider distribution of courses and permits a wider array of possible final products than the Plan A thesis program type...the Plan B project may resemble a thesis, but the topic is not research or original. The non-thesis project may take the form of a business plan or a professional portfolio.
2. Most...units...have the student prepare a paper, or sometimes two papers, as their final project. In the selection of a subject the student shall be guided by the advisor... The paper(s) should present the results of study and at a level of scholastic quality commensurate with the Plan A thesis project. The Plan B non-thesis is different from the Plan A thesis in that it is not an in-depth research project.

(*Graduate Bulletin*, 2—2-4, p. 12, “Regulations, Policies, Procedures)

**Students in the Master's degree program in Curriculum and Instruction may choose (guided by the Academic Advisor) to create a Plan A thesis or a Plan B non-thesis.**

Generally, one can think of the Plan A thesis as a research project that emerges from the literature, when a student finds that a problem of interest has not been addressed by others. A Plan B non-thesis is a research project that emerges from practice, when a student finds a problem of interest within the school classroom or work site. (Michael Day, 2004 thesis defense meeting).

Whether the student creates a Plan A thesis or a Plan B non-thesis, the following key elements need to be included:

- \*Either type of project will have both a written and an oral defense (generally in the form of a presentation or defense of the study for the graduate committee)
- \* A rationale for the study and/or a rationale for selection of a particular format
- \* A review of the literature relevant to the study
- \* A description of the proposed or accomplished research (Methods for study)
- \* An evaluation of the research or an evaluation plan to be used when the research is conducted.

Students who select the Plan B non-thesis option should work with advisors and committee members to select from among the following formats one that best reflects their accomplishments in the Master's Degree program;

1. An article ready for submission to a publication that focuses on teacher practices.
2. Parts or all of the National Board Certification portfolio.
3. A portfolio of scholarship, research, and changes to practice that have occurred during the Master's degree program.
4. An action research project conducted in the classroom, perhaps emerging from coursework done for other classes in the program.
5. Written comprehensive questions designed by the committee to reflect the students program, followed by an oral discussion of the questions.
6. A technology-based presentation (e.g. to a school board, for a conference) of one's work or an area of interest in the classroom.
7. A grant application in one's area of interest, with supporting documents.
8. A pilot or prospectus for a larger research project to be conducted in the future.
9. Additional coursework, with rigorous assessment of the student's work within those courses.
10. Other with approval of Master's committee.

Students will provide a hard or electronic copy of the Plan B project that can be filed in the Curriculum and Instruction Professional Library (to be established) that can be used as a model for future graduate students.