Masters Handbook

Adult and Postsecondary Education

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Welcome...

to the Adult and Postsecondary Education master's program in the College of Education at the University of Wyoming. We are excited to have you in our program and look forward to collaborating with you in the future. This handbook is intended to orient you as you begin your program. It provides guidance and references that will help you navigate successfully through your graduate experience. We hope that you will frequently refer to this guide as you progress.

You may also want to visit the program website to keep up-to-date with department and program news. You should also monitor graduate student regulations and policies. It is your responsibility to become familiar with the rules, regulations, and procedures involved in graduate work.

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Your Advisor

As you entered the graduate program you were assigned an advisor. We try to match student and faculty interests in advising decisions. Common interests and ideas help create a positive working relationship, promote research collaboration, and streamline doctoral work. Despite this pairing, it is your responsibility to build a relationship with your advisor. To begin this process, setup an appointment to meet your advisor (e.g., face-to-face or via telephone). You may also want to establish regular meetings to discuss research ideas, course offerings, and professional goals.

Take time to explore the researcher interests of your advisor. Summary interests are located in this guide and on the program website. Individual profiles on the webpage often contain links to a curriculum vitae, recent publications, or additional information. Read some of these resources and discuss them with your advisor.

Your advisor will help you select yearly goals, identify a committee, formalize a program of study, and complete your dissertation. Unless changed, your advisor will also become your committee chair.

Establishing Successful Relationships:
Although your advisor wants you to succeed in the program, (s)he will not force you to do anything. You must take the initiative to build a successful relationship. Below are some recommendations:

- Faculty at the University of Wyoming are busy. All have research responsibilities and agendas, prepare and teach courses, grade assignments, and provide national and local service. Try to find answers to your questions prior to confronting your advisor. Be proactive. University, college, and program websites contain much information. Check these resources, contact office managers, and ask other students first.
- If you can't find what you need, do not wait for your advisor to come to you. When you have questions, want to discuss research ideas, or prepare for programmatic exams, initiate the conversation with your advisor.
- Schedule appointments with advisors in advance and thank them for their time.

- Show commitment to your professional development. When you say that you will do something be sure to follow through.
- Think how your research interests might better align with those of your advisor.
- Receive criticism in a professional manner.

Selecting a New Advisor:
During the course of your program you may need to change your advisor. There are many reasons to change an advisor. You may not share common interests—making it difficult for your advisor to help you in your research. Personalities may not match or you may find it difficult to meet. Changing advisors (and later committee chairs and members) is a normal part of the graduate experience and should not cause personal feelings of failure, frustration, or stress. During your first year, you should get to know as many faculty members as possible to see how they interact with you and whether their research interests are similar to your own. Familiarizing yourself with faculty members will help you as you form your committee and conduct your research. It will also help you to brainstorm research ideas, refine thoughts, and progress in your professional development.

If you want to switch your advisor, you should first inform him or her and talk about the idea. Based on this meeting, you should then setup meetings to speak with prospective new advisors. Be sure to articulate why you would like her/him to be your advisor—generally this is because they have similar research interests and you work well together. Remember, they may not be willing or able to serve as your advisor depending on their own work and advising load.

When a faculty member from your program decides to serve as your new advisor, you will need to notify your former advisor, contact the office associate, and submit Committee Assignment/ Change Form.

Program Pillars

Adult and Postsecondary Education programs build upon four pillars or foundations to help students become well-rounded professionals. These include educational foundations, learning and development, technological understanding, and research and scholarship.

Educational foundations focuses on the socio-cultural analyses of education. Foundations include the philosophical and historical perspectives that shape your field over time. They also include relevant theories and rationales that influence past and present research and inquiry.

Learning and development includes conceptual analyses of human development, learning theories, principles, practices, and/or models that apply to knowledge or skills acquisition.

Technological understanding involves the conceptual analyses of information access, technological skill, literacy, and/or procedures for use in your program.

Research and scholarship involves advanced work in research necessary for understanding, analyzing, and interpreting data and research design. This area also focuses on skills and expertise in conducting, synthesizing, and disseminating original research.
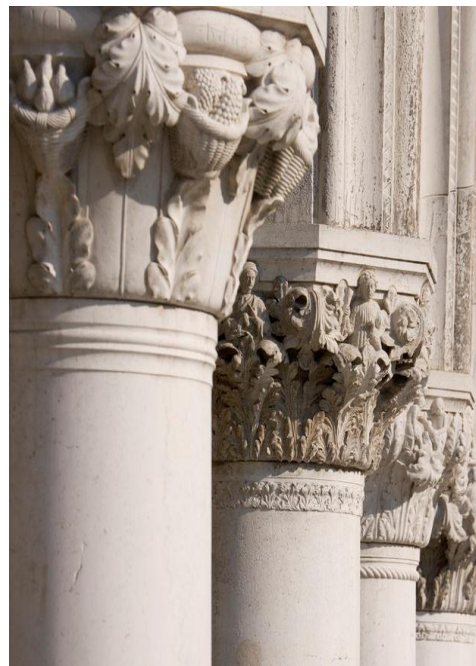
Masters Work

Graduate study in Adult and Postsecondary Education at the University of Wyoming aims to provide a balance between theory and practice. Attention is directed toward the union of learning that is required by circumstance (requisites) and learning that enriches life. Our nationally recognized graduate program offers courses that prepare individuals to work in diverse areas. To accomplish this, we focus on the following outcomes:

1. Academic Knowledge: Students will demonstrate a deep understanding of education and related fields and a broad understanding of various methods of inquiry in education.
2. Practical Competence: Students will demonstrate competence in several methods of inquiry.
3. Reflective Inquiry: Students will demonstrate the ability to guide their own scholarship, foster ethical and professional research and practice in education, as well as demonstrate a reflective and analytical stance towards scholarship in general.
4. Democratic Commitment: Students will demonstrate commitment to diversity in education and an understanding of the relationship between the university and the complex process of democracy and a commitment to pursue this process with a focus on access to quality education for all learners in their own professional work.
5. Professional Engagement: Students will demonstrate deep intellectual engagement with education as an area of scholarly inquiry. In doing so students will belong to and participate in national/international scholarly associations and make evident benefits and contributions that result from these memberships.

Residency Requirement:
Masters students are required to attend a Capstone Defense at the University of Wyoming during their final year in the program. This event takes place during a weekend at the end of Spring Semester. You are encouraged to make travel arrangements for Thursday or Friday in case of inclement weather.

Course Requirements

Master of Arts in Education: Adult and Postsecondary Education

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

	EDRE 5530	Introduction to Education Research (3) **or**
	EDRE 5550	Action Research (3)

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
(24 CREDIT HOURS)

	ITEC 5870	Introduction to Graduate Studies (3)
	ADED 5020	Survey of Adult Education (3)
	ADED 5050	Learning Theories for Educators (3)
	ADED 5510	Adult Education Movement (3)
	ADED 5610	Planning and Evaluation of Instructional Systems (3)
	ADED 5660	Community College (3)
	ADED 5710	International and Comparative Education (3)
	ITEC 5160	Instructional Design (3) **or**
	ITEC 5010	Instructional Technology (3) **or**
	ITEC 5550	Theory of Change (3)
	ITEC 5070	Trends in Ethical, Legal, Social Issues (3)

PROGRAM ELECTIVE
(3 CREDIT HOURS)

	ADED 5240	Teaching Adults (3)
	ADED 5440	Information Technology (3)
	ADED 5580	Supervised Internship (3)
	ADED 5450	Short Course In:_____
	ITEC 5020	Technology and Distance Education (3)
	ADED 5890	Seminar:_____ (3)

CAPSTONE (Option B)

	ADED 5090	Master's Capstone (3)

(Minimum 36 hours to graduate with MA in Adult and Post Secondary Education)

Events Timeline

Students seeking a Master's Degree from the College of Education are expected to complete their degree within two years of entrance. Although individual abilities and situations may vary, below is a timeline highlighting program milestones to fulfill this goal.

End of 2nd Year: Defend Capstone project before committee

- Complete Capstone Projects
- Apply for employment (if applicable)

End of 2nd Semester

- Committees assigned

End of 1st Year: Advisor reviews progress and helps student develop goals for second year.

- Review job postings (if interested in new positions)

End of 1st Semester

- Explore interests of faculty members
- Develop academic goals

Admission

Retention Policies

Retention policies and procedures are based on the expectation that students who enroll in our programs are self-directed. Your acceptance in any program does not guarantee your fitness to remain in that program. The faculty is responsible for assuring that only those students who continue to meet academic program standards and who make adequate yearly progress toward degree completion are allowed to continue. Faculty members seek to identify additional help students may need to be successful and to recognize outstanding student achievements.

Continuous Registration:
All students are required to demonstrate annual academic progress. A component of this progress requires you to complete 9-12 credit hours per year towards your program of study. Under some circumstances (e.g., work schedule, family situations, travel) you may be unable to enroll in courses for a semester. During these times you should enroll in one credit hour of continuous enrollment. These hours do not count towards graduation but will keep your status active in the program. You are allowed to enroll in **a maximum of four credit hours of continuous enrollment**. Exceptions to this rule are made on a case-by-case basis with your advisor. If you require additional time away from program courses, you should petition for a leave of absence from the university. If you do not enroll in classes for a 12-month period, your status will be deactivated, you will be dismissed from the program, and you have the option to reapply to the program for readmission.

Coursework:
You are expected to earn a minimum grade of "B" or "S" in each graduate-level course you take. If a student borders on making unsatisfactory progress (as evidenced by grades and/or less than average evaluations by department faculty), they meet with their faculty advisor to discuss the problem(s), review appropriate measures of correction, and establish a timeline for change. However, severity of the problem(s) may not allow for this method and informal methods are not procedurally required. The programs define "unsatisfactory" performance in graduate level course work as a grade of "U" or "F" in any course and/or more than two grades below a "B." Obtaining one course grade of "F" or "U," more than two course grades below a "B," a cumulative GPA lower than a "B" average, or failure to meet all requirements of a remediation plan will result in program dismissal. Students who have been dismissed for unsatisfactory performance in graduate level course work will not be allowed to take courses in the program as unclassified students.

Professional Conduct:
In addition to maintaining high scholastic standards, you should develop professional skills necessary to work effectively with a variety of people. The faculty expects you:

- To be committed to personal growth and professional development,
- To be concerned about others,
- To be able to receive and give constructive feedback
- To effectively apply the skills and understandings covered in course work

Further, you are expected to adhere to the codes of ethics of your professional associations (e.g., American Association of Adult and Continuing Education and the Council for the Study of Community Colleges). Examples of behaviors that may evidence professional impairment include but are not limited to:

- Violation of professional or academic standards such as plagiarism
- Inability or unwillingness to acquire or manifest professional skills or understandings at an acceptable level of competency
- Behaviors that can reasonably be predictive of poor future professional functioning (e.g., extensive tardiness, excessive late work, unwillingness to accept feedback)
- Disrespect shown towards faculty, staff or other students

Members of the faculty evaluate student performance on an ongoing-basis. The faculty makes judgments as to students' professional conduct based on observations of course performance, evaluations of students' oral and written work, and performance in internships (if applicable). Formal evaluations are also conducted at key stages of the student's program. When, in the professional judgment of a program faculty member, a student is not meeting professional guidelines or meeting university standards, the faculty member will consult with the department head to determine appropriate actions. Actions may include (but are not limited to) formal reprimand, unsatisfactory grades, a mandatory leave of absence, additional course work, formal probation, encouragement to withdraw from the program, or formal dismissal.

Computer Requirements

Many of the courses offered through our programs are taken at a distance through online technologies. Currently, our programs use eCollege as our course management system to deliver instruction. Faculty and staff are not required to provide technical support for your equipment. However, they will do their best to help you access course content and resources. To ensure that you can access and respond to course assignments and discussion you must have up-to-date computer equipment with high-speed Internet access.
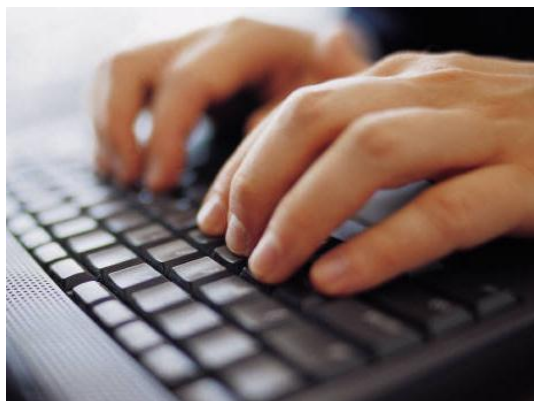
Hardware:
You may use either a Macintosh or Windows based personal computer during this program. The list below provides minimum requirements for selecting a computer suitable for your program.

Macintosh:
Must run OS X.5 or later
- 2.0 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor or better
- 2 GB RAM or greater
- 160 GB hard drive or larger

Windows PC:
Must run Windows 7 or better
- 2.0 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor or better
- 2 GB RAM or greater
- 160 GB hard drive or larger

Other courses may have additional hardware requirements (e.g., headphones, microphones, etc.).

Internet:
Because several courses are offered in an online format, you are required to have reliable access to a high-speed Internet connection (e.g., broadband, DSL, satellite, etc). Phone and cable companies are the most common carriers of these services. However, depending on your residence you may have to find alternative options. You will need a speed of at least 256 kbps for this program but faster speeds (1.5-6 mbps) are recommended.

Remotely Accessing Campus Computer Labs:
University students can remotely access campus computer labs to freely take advantage of software offerings that may be difficult or costly to acquire otherwise—including SPSS. Directions for remote access are found at http://microlab.uwyo.edu/UWSremote/

Software:

You will use a variety of software tools are you progress through this program. Below is a list of required and suggested titles.

Required Software:
- *Microsoft Office*: (Mac and PC) This is the industry standard office application (word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation suite). All assignments should be submitted in a format that is readable in MS Office. Mac users should purchase Office 2008 and PC users should purchase Office 2007. Discounts on these applications are available through the University of Wyoming. See http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/SOFTWARE/students/

Other courses may have additional software requirements.

Suggested Free Software:
- *Audacity*: (Mac and PC) A voice recording application. Use it to create podcasts or other voice messages. See http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

- *Mozilla Firefox*: (Mac and PC) An alternative to Internet Explorer for browsing the Internet. It provides more customization and security than Microsoft's browser and allows you to run Zotero (see below). See http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/

- *Skype*: (Mac and PC) This download allows you to freely communicate via voice and/or video with others over the Internet. See http://www.skype.com/

- *Zotero*: (Mac and PC) A reference management application that lives in the cloud. It helps you collect, organize, and retrieve research resources. See http://www.zotero.org
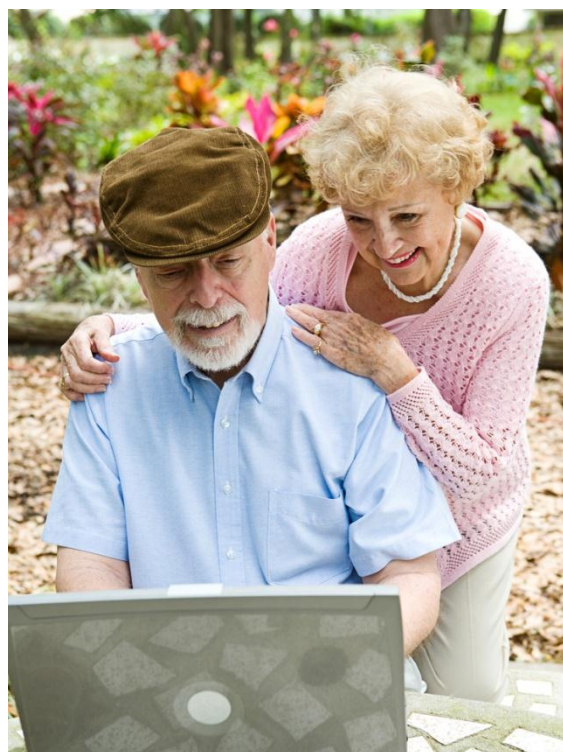
Research Software:
- *SPSS*: (Mac and PC) This application helps researchers collect and examine data for quantitative and statistical analyses. A student version is available for reduced price through the University of Wyoming. See http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/SOFTWARE/students/

- *NVIVO*: (PC only) This application helps researchers collect and examine data for qualitative analyses. A student version is available for reduced price through the manufacturer's website. See http://www.qsrinternational.com/

Capstone Project

During your final semester, you will enroll in a capstone course and prepare your capstone project. All courses in your program should provide grounding in appropriate theories, principles, and skills for this course. The capstone project provides an opportunity to integrate and apply prior learning by developing decisions regarding specific case and research studies.

Capstone students develop three reports for presentation at the Capstone defense. These reports include: 1) a team project on an instructor-assigned research study; 2) an individual or team project on an instructor-assigned case study; and 3) an individually generated and analyzed case study.
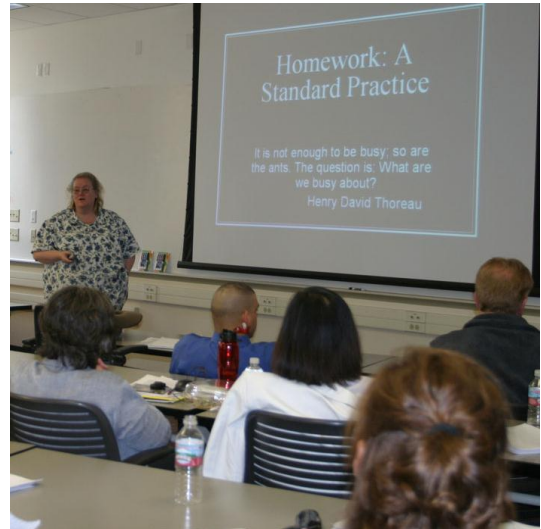
Reports will be evaluated in terms of their general acceptability before your committee (consisting of two program faculty members and one external faculty member). However, "general acceptability" does not guarantee successful performance at the oral examination. Allow for adequate time to complete your capstone project. Although your committee wants you to complete your work in an efficient and timely manner, they require a high quality project. There may be occasions where you are asked to make revisions on your presentation, writing, analysis, and data interpretation. To help you maintain balance in this portion of your life, set small goals that lead to your final capstone project. Developing support groups with other graduate students will also assist you in writing and research.

Capstone Defense:
The capstone defense consists of the following components:
- A question and answer session to address your professional development and goal attainment
- The presentation and defense of your individual case study
- The oral examination of your team research synthesis and case study

The oral examination is a professional discussion focused upon the written materials you provide. Our program uses a team approach to ensure that students have an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues prior to the examination. Examination discussions are framed by the work you have completed. You may bring notes and other materials if you wish.

Graduation and Beyond

The conclusion of your graduate work can be stressful. Not only are you finishing your capstone project and planning for a defense, but you may also be applying for jobs or promotions, anticipating future moves, and establishing yourself in a professional community that extends beyond the university. Obtaining a masters degree is hard work. Getting this far is reason to celebrate. Take the time to enjoy the moment and reflect on your accomplishment.

If you are looking for employment when you conclude your degree, learn how and when positions are posted for your field. Identify the positions you would like to obtain. Try to do this early in your program. When time permits, carefully review position postings and become familiar with the required and desired qualifications for appointment in your field. As you enter the last year in your program, consider applying for one or two of these positions to become familiar with the process. You will also need to think about how will you organize your resume to position yourself for the posting and who will complete letters of recommendation. Most search committees expect you to offer references from faculty members and colleagues who can speak to your leadership experience, problem solving ability, and potential to implement change.

Above all, do your homework before you apply for positions. Learn about the organization's stated mission, values, and operational goals. What is its leadership structure, primary programs and services, reputation in the community and state, primary business clients and partners, and history and viability of its main funding streams? You may not be able to acquire current or complete information about each of these conditions. Remember however that employers are searching for leaders who will add value to their organization. You can only discuss your potential value if you are familiar with the organization.

Additionally, consider whether you are a good fit for the position? Are you a good fit for the working environment? Would you enjoy living in the community? As a general rule it is best to apply for positions that you would accept. Doing this research in advance of an interview will set you apart from other candidates. When you receive telephone and onsite interviews you will have an opportunity to ask informed questions. Have your own questions for the hiring committee. Above all, don't get discouraged if you do not receive an offer.