



*Learning with Purpose*

---

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

---

### Ph.D. Literacy Studies

---

**Faculty:** Elizabeth Bifuh-Ambe, Ph.D.

Lorraine Dagostino, Ph.D.

MinJeong Kim, Ph.D.

## Ph.D. Literacy Studies

### OVERVIEW

The UMass Lowell Ph.D. in Education: Option in Literacy Studies, prepares students to understand the historical, cultural, philosophical, and theoretical roots and implications of these changes, and to engage in the new world of literacy policy and practice with knowledge, research skills, and a vision for leadership. Graduates will be prepared to teach at research universities, create and direct governmental policy, or lead district curriculum development in literacy. To enable graduates to take leadership roles in this variety of professional settings and advocate for equitable distribution of social capital, this program will require substantial work in education theory, philosophy, history, psychology, and research. The program spans both the social sciences and humanities, offering a degree that will prepare a graduate for work in education or composition programs. Because our students come from many professional backgrounds, including elementary, secondary, and higher education, as well as the arts or industry, the program will include not only these foundations of education and rigorous training in social science and/or humanities research methods, but also allow for electives both within the College of Education and across the University and from our collaborating partners, UMass Boston and Salem State University.

Students enrolled in the Literacy Studies Option will take four specialization courses presenting the history, research, theory and current issues in the fields of reading, writing, verbal communication, and literacy and culture. From this common base of knowledge of the field, they are prepared to select four elective courses (12 credits) related to their research interests and potential dissertation. Before undertaking the dissertation, students will enroll in a two-semester seminar (6 credits) devoted to designing and conducting research in literacy. Each student will complete a research study intended to lead to publication and to prepare them for the larger dissertation project.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

### ***Understanding and Applying Theory and Research – Candidates will be able to:***

- 1) understand the theoretical and historical background that shapes curriculum development, assessment and implementation of various forms of instruction and evaluation in literacy and the language arts
- 2) translate findings from research for communication with professional educators in a way that informs curriculum development and classroom instruction and assessment practices
- 3) develop curriculum, instruction and assessment for teacher preparation programs as well as for environments outside of traditional school settings (i.e. community, training in business)

### ***Contributing to Educational Activity through Scholarship and Practice – Candidates will be able to:***

- 4) write academic discourse that meets the standards for conference papers and presentations as well as for manuscripts for journals
- 5) maintain an active role in the professional community of literacy educators and researchers
- 6) establish and maintain a program of research and publication in influential journals and with respected publishers

### ***The Process of Research Activity – Candidates will be able to:***

- 7) carry out independent, self-directed research, curriculum development and professional development work once they are finished with the degree
- 8) carry out advanced data analysis for multiple types of research studies
- 9) conceptualize a significant, theory-based research study that is the basis for developing applications for project funding either within your school district or for external funding agencies
- 10) take your proposals through an Institutional Review Board, or comparable, review process

### ***Establishing a Work Process – Candidates will be able to:***

- 11) work both independently and collaboratively with people of varying backgrounds to accomplish 1- 10 above

## **ADMISSIONS**

***Admission to the Ph.D. begins for the Fall 2015 semester.***

**To qualify for admission to the Ph.D. all applicants must meet the following requirements:**

- Admission statement which addresses the applicant's purpose for embarking on advanced graduate study, research interests and aspirations for future employment.
- Earned master's degree from an accredited institution. The most appropriate master's degree is the M.Ed.; however, other related master's degrees will be considered if the candidate can demonstrate work experience or knowledge of public education policy and/or research. The master's degree must have been earned with a 3.0 GPA or better.
- Resume, which highlights the applicant's education and experience relevant to the degree after completion of the bachelor's degree.
- Satisfactory GRE scores taken within the last five years.
- Satisfactory TOEFL scores taken within the last year for international applicants as appropriate.
- Three letters of recommendation which speak to the suitability of the applicant for advanced graduate work, work ethic and knowledge of the field of education and/or education research.
- Writing sample which demonstrates the applicant's ability to present a cohesive, focused and persuasive response to an education issue.
- Interview on-campus or via a video-conferencing tool for those applicants seeking TA or RA-ships or for those whose application materials raise unanswered questions.

**APPLICATION INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT [HTTP://WWW.UML.EDU/GRAD](http://www.uml.edu/grad)**

**UNIVERSITY RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR DOCTORAL STUDY ARE FOUND IN THE GRADUATE CATALOG <http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate>**

**PROGRAM OF STUDY**

**Ph.D. Education  
60 credits beyond the Master's Degree  
Option: Literacy Studies**

**FOUNDATIONS COURSES TAKEN BY ALL STUDENTS** **6 CREDITS**

---

EDUC.6450 Perspectives and Visions I  
EDUC.6460 Perspectives and Visions II

**RESEARCH COURSES** **12 CREDITS**

---

EDUC.7000 Introduction to Research Design and Methods  
EDUC.7012 Quantitative Data Analysis  
EDUC.7040 Qualitative Research Methods  
EDUC.XXXX One further research course with approval of advisor\*\*

**SPECIALIZATION COURSES** **12 CREDITS**

---

EDUC.6751 History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues in Language, Literacy and Culture. (3)  
EDUC.6761 History, Theory and Research in the Teaching of Writing (3)  
EDUC.6770 Theories of Verbal Communication (3)  
EDUC.6780 History, Research, and Contemporary Issues in Reading Instruction (3)

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION I**

**ELECTIVES** **12 CREDITS**

---

(With approval of advisor)

**ADVANCED RESEARCH** **6 CREDITS**

---

EDUC.7002 Conducting Research in Literacy Studies I (3)  
EDUC.7014 Conducting Research in Literacy Studies II (3)

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION II**

**DISSERTATION RESEARCH** **12 CREDITS**

---

## **TIME LIMIT TO COMPLETE THE PH.D.**

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree have 8 years from the time of admission to complete the degree. A one year extension may be granted by the Dean upon receipt of an academic petition. Such an extension will only be allowed if the student has successfully defended his/her dissertation proposal. Further extension may only be granted by the university's Graduate Policy and Academic Affairs Committee (GPAC).

## **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS**

### **Comprehensive Examination I**

The purpose of the first comprehensive examination is to determine the student's breadth of knowledge in Literacy Studies.

This examination is taken after the four core courses in Literacy Studies have been completed (or while the fourth core course is in progress, with permission of program faculty). Comprehensive I is a written examination requiring the student to select 3 of 6 questions, prepared by program faculty, on a range of topics in Literacy Studies. The student has one week to complete and submit his/her responses.

### **Comprehensive Examination II**

The purpose of the second comprehensive examination is to determine the student's readiness for dissertation work. This examination should be taken when all courses have been completed.

Comprehensive II is a written examination requiring the student to address 1 of 3 problems. The 3 problems are developed by the faculty based upon the topic submitted by the student when s/he applies to take the second examination. In the response, the student must select a research focus for a study and then describe how to organize the study by developing the conceptual point of view, the justification for the study using relevant research to support the justification, and finally the approach to carrying out the study.

The student's response to Comprehensive Examination II may reflect the work s/he has done in EDUC.7002 Conducting Research in Literacy Studies I and EDUC.7014 Conducting Research in Literacy Studies II, or may modify the work done in these courses and be more reflective of the proposed dissertation. Students may also propose something entirely different to the work completed in EDUC.7001 and EDUC.7014.

Comprehensive Examination II will be read by all Literacy Studies faculty and the pass/fail decision will be made by a majority vote. The student has 2 weeks to complete and submit his/her response.

**If a candidate fails either comprehensive examination, s/he may attempt the examination a second time. A second failure leads to automatic dismissal from the Ph.D. degree.**

## **DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

Students are considered doctoral candidates once they have passed both comprehensive examinations and have entered the dissertation research phase.

Doctoral candidates must:

- Complete a minimum of 12 dissertation credits.
- Select a dissertation chair person
- Identify an appropriate dissertation committee
- Complete appropriate forms in a timely manner
- Prepare a proposal and defend it orally
- Complete IRB requirements after the proposal has been approved by all dissertation committee members at the proposal hearing.
- Complete a dissertation and defend it orally

### **COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE**

The chair should be from the candidate's major field of specialization. A second committee member is also chosen from the candidate's major program of study. A third member (faculty member at the College of Education) may be selected from outside the major field of specialization. All Ph.D. dissertation committee faculty must have research credentials. In some instances, the student may wish to select a fourth member who offers particular expertise from another college at UMass Lowell or from another institution of higher education. That individual must hold appropriate research credentials as determined by the Dissertation Chair, the Faculty Chair, and the Dean of the College of Education.

If the student wishes to select a chair from the College of Education who has particular expertise in the main area under investigation, but is not aligned with the candidate's field of specialization, approval must be obtained from the Faculty Chairperson of the College of Education in consultation with faculty in the area of specialization.

Once the student has obtained consent from the faculty members who will constitute the Dissertation Committee, the student should prepare and submit the "Dissertation Committee" form (available in the GSE Office). The student may not schedule a dissertation proposal hearing before the dissertation committee form has been submitted and approved by the department chair.

Changes in committee membership after the proposal hearing may only occur when the following steps are taken. First, the doctoral candidate meets with the committee members to discuss the desired change. If consensus cannot be obtained at that level, the student then meets with the Faculty Chairperson to discuss the desired change. If questions or issues are still unresolved, the Faculty Chair will appoint an ad hoc Dissertation Review Committee (DRC). The DRC is charged with approval or denial of the changes requested

with explanation in writing from the doctoral candidate. The DRC may elect to require a personal meeting with the student and/or member of the original dissertation committee if further clarification is needed.

In some instances, it may be necessary for a faculty member to resign from a dissertation committee. In these cases, the faculty member must provide a written explanation to the candidate, the chair of the committee, the faculty chair and the dean. The candidate may then select another faculty member

### **CONDUCTING RESEARCH (CONSULTANT POLICY)**

The faculty assume that doctoral candidates are solely responsible for designing, researching and writing their own dissertations. Candidates must secure explicit and prior written approval of the nature and extent of any outside assistance then intend to receive, from their dissertation chair and the committee. This record is maintained in the candidates' files until graduation.

Candidates writing dissertation should analyze their own data. They may engage someone to transcribe interviews or input data into a table, but they should run their own analyses and interpret the findings themselves. Consultants may code subsets of data for inter-rater reliability, but data coding is the responsibility of the candidate. Copy editors may correct grammar and APA format, but write the text remains the responsibility of the candidate.

If candidates develop their own instrument, they may find expert consultants on such instruments to check for reliability and validity (construct and content).

As part of the proposal, the candidate will submit a declaration describing what outside help will be used in the completion of the dissertation, including the role and tasks of consultants, and attesting to the fact that the dissertation represents the candidate's own work.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is defined as (i) direct quotation or word-for-word copying of all or part of the work of another without identification or acknowledgement of the quoted work; (ii) extensive use of acknowledged quotation from the work of others which is joined together by a few words or lines of one's own text; and (iii) an unacknowledged abbreviated restatement of someone else's analysis or conclusion, however skillfully paraphrased. All reported violations are handled in accordance with the University's established procedure described in the graduate catalog

<http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx>



## **STRUCTURE AND DEFENSE OF THE PROPOSAL**

While the structure of the proposal may differ depending on the demands of the study, all proposals must include:

- Conceptual framework for the problem
- Justification for the study based upon relevant research
- Description of the approach for carrying out the study

The candidate must gain the approval of all members of the committee to move to an oral defense. Once approved by the committee, the candidate makes application to the IRB and must meet the requirements for Human Subject research before any data may be collected.

## **STRUCTURE AND DEFENSE OF THE DISSERTATION**

The dissertation builds from the proposal to include the data gathered, data analysis, findings, interpretation and recommendations for further study. The candidate must gain the approval of all committee members to move to the final oral defense of the dissertation. In accordance with university policy, the candidate may not receive more than one dissenting vote from members of the dissertation committee.

## **DISSERTATION REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Doctoral candidates must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 dissertation research credits.
- Doctoral candidates must be registered for 3\* dissertation research credits in order to defend a proposal or dissertation. They may not defend either the proposal or dissertation while registered for Continued Matriculation.
- If the doctoral candidate requires the use of University resources to continue his or her dissertation, but has completed the required number of credits for dissertation research, he or she may sign up for 3, 6, or 9 credits of Continuing Graduate Research.
- Doctoral candidates who have completed all the requirements except the writing and defense of the dissertation and who do not need to use university resources (including faculty time) must register for Continued Matriculation (CONT.6010) and pay a fee each semester until they graduate.

\*If the doctoral candidate has completed the required 12 credits of dissertation research, s/he may, with permission of the chair, register for 1 dissertation credit (course # EDUC.7600) in order to defend the dissertation within the first two weeks of the semester. This 1 credit option is for candidates who will not continue to work with their dissertation chair or committee after the dissertation defense.

## DISSERTATION PROGRESS

Doctoral candidates are expected to work closely with their dissertation chair and committee to develop a dissertation proposal. Students are expected to make progress during each semester in which they are registered for dissertation credit, and faculty are required to assign a grade to indicate progress or unsatisfactory progress during a semester. Students who do not make progress on a regular basis are at jeopardy of not completing the dissertation within the eight year time limit. Any student who has not yet defended her or his proposal and who receives a grade of U for three consecutive semesters or receives 15 credits or more graded U shall be dismissed from the doctoral program.

## OTHER GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- No doctoral student may graduate if his/her GPA is below 3.0
- No doctoral student may have more than two grades below B as part of the Ph.D. degree.



## DEGREE CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS AND DISSERTATION BINDING

1. During the semester in which the doctoral candidate intends to defend the dissertation, s/he must submit the INTENT TO GRADUATE FORM [http://www.uml.edu/docs/clearance\\_form\\_tcm18-3565.pdf](http://www.uml.edu/docs/clearance_form_tcm18-3565.pdf) by the required date specified on the graduate calendar. This does not mean that the dissertation must be defended by the clearance date. The defense can occur as late as two weeks before the end of the semester if it is anticipated that no major revisions will be required. The date of the final defense must be set with the agreement of the chair and the committee.
2. Upon successfully defending the dissertation, the doctoral candidate must submit one clean copy (NOT the original) of the signature page for the dissertation to the

Registrar's office (University Crossing) as proof that the dissertation is complete. The signature page must be signed and dated by the dissertation chair and all assenting committee members.

**3. Unless the Registrar's office receives the intent to graduate form, the completed signature page and is informed by the library that the dissertation has been submitted, the candidate will NOT be eligible to graduate.**

4. All doctoral candidates are asked to submit a completed "Survey of Earned Doctorates" obtained from the Registrar's office in University Crossing
5. The original dissertation with the original signature sheet (and any copies the candidate wishes to make) must be submitted to the Library for binding and microfilming prior to the end of the semester.
6. The binding of all dissertations is done through the Theses Office, located on the first floor of Lydon Library, UML North. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Please call (978) 934-5905 to arrange an appointment.

Please read the instructions carefully and hand-deliver the following materials to the library:

1. A completed and signed copy of the UMI Thesis/Dissertation Agreement Form. The form is available at the Registrar's Office, University Crossing
2. The complete dissertation on normal printer paper with the original signature page.
3. Additional copies for personal use may be submitted at this time.
4. A copy is NOT required for the College of Education

Processing charges include the following:

- Binding: \$15, per copy
- Publishing fee: \$65 for Doctoral Dissertations

Make one check for all bound copies and publisher fee payable to: **UML Library Trust Fund.**

Optional Copyright fee: \$55 - Make check payable to: **PROQUEST**