

**BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN  
EDUCATION (GPE)**

**HANDBOOK  
2017-2018**

Bluffton University's Graduate Programs in Education is designed for educators to expand upon their content area knowledge base, to experience professional growth, to be nurtured in a small church-related liberal arts environment in which education can be personalized and to participate in a program that has academic integrity and which forges new perspectives on teaching and learning.

To earn the Master of Arts in Education, students complete the core courses and one of four concentrations: reading, intervention specialist, leadership, and faith-based education. The reading endorsement and intervention specialist concentrations provide early, middle, adolescent/young adult and multi-age licensed teachers the opportunity to earn additional teaching credentials while completing the Master's degree.

**Assumptions underlying the Graduate Programs in Education:**

1. Effective teachers work tirelessly to meet the individual needs of their students.
2. Effective teaching involves the merging of content and methodology.
3. Effective teachers engage daily in research and decision-making related to that research
4. Action research provides teachers one key to genuine educational reform by systematically studying a learning/teaching problem.
5. Education should enlighten, broaden perspectives and increase tolerance of others.
6. The religious and social tenets inherent in the mission of Bluffton can contribute immeasurably to the advanced preparation of teachers.

**The Mission and Vision of Graduate Programs in Education:**

The Bluffton University Graduate Programs in Education seeks to support educators who nurture communities of learning and respect. The programs focus on philosophies, strategies and methodologies that effective educators implement to enhance understanding in classrooms that value and engage all learners.

**Graduate Program in Education Goals**

1. Successful completers of the graduate program in education will expand upon their content knowledge base through conducting educational research and applying that research to classroom practice.
2. Successful completers of the graduate program in education will have the capacity to develop differentiated curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
3. Successful completers of the graduate program in education will be competent in their ability to convey and model a philosophy of teaching that respects all students from all backgrounds.

## **Criteria for Assessment of program Goals**

1. The master's program action research project will be approved by both the Bluffton University Internal Review Board (IRB) and the professor instruction EDU 650 Research Methods.
2. The master's projects and presentations will be assessed using a scoring rubric. Successful achievement will be indicated by 90% of the projects and presentations being rated target on a scale of emerging to target by the professor instructing EDU 695 Teachers as Action Researchers and one additional faculty member.
3. Student Portfolios will be established using Task Stream and will include curriculum materials, projects and artifacts. All projects will be evaluated and scored by the respective professor.
4. Successful achievement of content knowledge will be assessed through OAE scores.

## **Core Courses:**

Bluffton's Master of Arts in Education core courses include six three credit courses which focus on differentiation, technology, use of data, and special topics. The final two course sequence includes a research methods course (EDU 650 Research Methods in Education) and a practical, action research project (EDU 695 Teachers as Action Researchers). Students identify an issue to research, develop a research proposal, implement their plan, analyze the outcomes of the action research process, and present their findings to a group that includes peers, faculty members, and the Director of Graduate Programs in Education.

## **Concentrations:**

### **1. Reading**

The Reading concentration leads to the Ohio Department of Education Reading Endorsement (K-12) that is added to a teaching license. Approval for the endorsement by Bluffton University Educator Preparation includes completion of all prerequisite courses (based on a transcript review) and all required courses with at least a "B" grade, a passing score on the required Ohio Assessment for Educators, completion of all Ohio Department of Higher Education information modules, and a positive recommendation by the Graduate Programs in Education Committee. All required reading concentration courses are offered on-line.

### **2. Intervention Specialist**

The Intervention Specialist concentration leads to the Ohio Department of Education Intervention Specialist: Mild to Moderate Educational Needs (K-12) stand-alone license. Approval for the license by Bluffton University Educator Preparation includes completion of all prerequisite courses (based on a transcript review) and all required courses with at least a "B" grade or credit earned (practicum), a passing score on the required Ohio Assessment for Educators, completion of all Ohio Department of Higher Education information modules, and a positive recommendation by the Graduate Programs in Education Committee. All required intervention specialist courses are offered on-line or by video conferencing in real time.

### **3. Leadership**

The Leadership Concentration is designed for teachers who would like to become a building leader in instructional design and curriculum development. Courses are

taken through Bluffton's Master of Business Administration program and address the nature of the supervisory relationship. The leader's level of self-understanding and emotional intelligence and the role of the leader as an agent of change.

All required leadership courses are offered on-line or by video conferencing in real time.

#### **4. Faith-Based Education**

The Faith-Based Education concentration is an outgrowth of the Mennonite Education Agency's Anabaptist Learning Institute (ALI) program and all courses have a distinct Christ-centered orientation. ALI seeks to unify the Anabaptist community under a common set of educational experiences that encourages dialog about faith and values.

All required faith-based education courses are offered on-line or by video conferencing in real time.

### **ADMISSION**

Students applying for admission to the graduate program must submit the following materials to the director of graduate studies:

1. An application including the completion of three essay questions, as well as a current resume.
2. The program registration form and non-refundable \$200 registration deposit (applied to first semester fees).
3. Official transcripts from all previous college work.
4. Two letters of recommendation from academic and/or professional references.
5. Teaching license and/or evidence of teaching experience.

Upon receipt of all of the above information, the materials will be processed, including an evaluation by the, for admission to the graduate program. The following criteria must be met in order to be fully admitted to the program:

1. Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
2. A 3.0 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) in the last half of the bachelor's degree program.
5. Interview with the director or a designee.
6. Approval for admission by the GPE Committee.
7. Completion of prerequisites for the Reading and Intervention Specialist concentration.

#### **Special student status**

Special student status may be granted to permit students to take up to nine hours before regular admission, if they did not initially meet the regular admissions criteria. Students must demonstrate during the first nine hours an ability to maintain a 3.0 grade point average (4.0 scale) in order to be reconsidered for regular admission.

Special student status may also be granted to non-degree-seeking students, as space allows, if they hold a bachelor's degree and have completed the special student status forms and other materials requested as part of the application process. Up to nine hours may be completed under this status.

Although the program is designed for classroom teachers with experience, a limited number of those without experience may be admitted, as space allows.

The following is required for admission as a special student:

- Complete the special student application form

Pay the \$20 admission fee

#### Transfer credit

Up to six semester hours or nine quarter hours of transfer credit may be applied to the program as long as the credit is for graduate courses, from an accredited institution and approved by the Bluffton content professor or a designee (core courses) and the program director or designee (elective credit). In accordance with program policy, workshop credits will not be transferable. In addition, in order for work to be accepted it must be completed no more than 10 years prior to application.

#### Advising

Bluffton provides for advising of students in the following ways:

1. Students meet with the director of graduate studies or a designee for an initial program orientation either on campus or through video conferencing.
2. Each degree-seeking student will have a program adviser designated by the director from the point of admission to the program until completion of the program

#### Academic Probation

Any time that a student's end-of-the-semester cumulative GPA in the GPE program falls below 3.0 the student is placed on academic probation. A student who is placed on probation must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the end of an additional nine hours or he/she will be placed on academic suspension.

#### Academic Suspension

A student is suspended when he/she has failed to achieve a 3.0 GPA at the conclusion of any nine-hour probationary period.

A student who has been suspended may retake courses for which he/she received less than a grade of B and may be considered for readmission and regular coursework once the repeat course work has raised the student's GPA to 3.0. Tuition for courses that are being retaken is charged at the current tuition rate.

#### Conditional Admission

When an applicant fails to meet the regular admission requirements and there is cause for significant concern about the student's success in the program the GPE faculty committee (or the director/designee and a subgroup of two GPE committee members during the summer) may choose to grant conditional admission to that applicant. A conditionally admitted student who fails to achieve a GPA of 3.0 during the first nine hours will be placed on academic suspension. At this point the regular suspension procedures apply.

#### Degree Completion

Courses in the graduate programs will be listed for students on graduate transcripts that will be maintained separately from undergraduate transcripts. Evaluation of satisfactory progress toward graduation and of completion of graduation requirements will be done at the conclusion of each semester by the Registrar's Office in conjunction with the Director of the GPE.

Graduation is held spring each year. Students who will not complete their program until the summer after graduation may still participate in the spring exercises.

The following are degree completion requirements:

1. The student must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours and have maintained at least a 3.0 accumulative GPA.
2. Students must earn a grade of C or above in all courses required for the degree. Students who do not earn a grade of C or above in a required course may repeat that course to earn a satisfactory grade. Students will pay for the course each time it is taken and only the most recent grade will be included in the GPA or in total credit hours passed, although all grades will appear on the permanent transcript.
3. The student will complete an exit interview survey.
4. The student will submit an "intent to graduate" form by the end of fall semester prior to spring graduation. The recommendations for the degree will be submitted to the graduate programs in education faculty committee and the dean of academic affairs for approval.

### **Program overview**

The Master of Arts in Education program consists of the following components:

#### **Required core:** 18 semester hours

|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| EDU 615 | Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction<br>(May be fulfilled by SED 601/602) | 3 |
| EDU 629 | Data Informed Educational Leadership   | 3 |
| EDU 645 | Educational Technology   | 3 |
| EDU 634 | Special Topics   | 3 |
| EDU 650 | Research Methods in Education  | 3 |
| EDU 695 | Teachers as Action Researchers   | 3 |

#### **Concentrations:**

**Reading** (15 credits - Phonics + 12 credits)

#### **Prerequisites**

ECE/IS/MC MAJORS—12 credit undergraduate reading core including 3 credits in Phonics  
AYA/Multiage—9 credits of undergraduate/graduate reading including 3 credits of Phonics

#### **Courses**

|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| EDU 627 | Curriculum and Instruction: Reading & Writing        | 3 |
| EDU 655 | Instructional Design: Literacy across the Curriculum | 3 |
| EDU 665 | Advanced Reading Assessment, Diagnosis & Evaluation  | 3 |
| EDU 642 | Teaching Students with Reading Disabilities          | 3 |

#### **Intervention Specialist** (23 credits)

**Prerequisites** may be graduate or undergraduate coursework

3 semesters in Introduction to Students with Disabilities

3 semester of Human Growth and Development (inc. EC and MC/AYA)

**Additional Requirements for ODE licensure** – may be graduate or undergraduate coursework

12 semester credits in teaching reading including one 3 credit course in Teaching Phonics.

### **Courses**

|         |   |   |
|---------|---|---|
| SED 600 | Students with Disabilities in a Diverse Society                   | 3 |
| SED 601 | Instructional Strategies: Young Children with M/M<br>Ed. Needs    | 2 |
| SED 602 | Instructional Strategies: Young Adolescents with M/M<br>Ed. Needs | 2 |
|         | (SED 601 and 602 fulfill the need for EDU 615 in the core)        |   |
| SED 603 | Classroom Organization: for Diverse Learners                      | 3 |
| SED 604 | Diagnosis and Educational Planning                                | 3 |
| SED 605 | Language Development: Diverse Learners                            | 3 |
| SED 606 | Issues in Special Education                                       | 1 |
| SED 607 | Collaboration   | 3 |
| SED 608 | Practicum   | 3 |

### **Leadership** (12 credits)

#### **Courses**

|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| MGT 660 | Assessing and Developing Leadership Skills     | 3 |
| MGT 661 | Leading Innovation and Change                  | 3 |
| MGT 662 | Managing People in Organizations               | 3 |
|         | Choose One Elective from EDU or MGT<br>Courses | 3 |

### **Faith-Based Education** (13 credits)

#### **Courses**

|         |   |   |
|---------|---|---|
| EDU 531 | Building Caring Communities                                       | 3 |
| EDU 521 | Understanding the Roots/Community                                 | 3 |
| EDU 541 | Shaping a Community of Learners                                   | 3 |
| EDU 511 | Learning the Lang of Community                                    | 1 |
| EDU 655 | Literacy Across the Curriculum OR<br>EDU 627 C&I: Reading/Writing | 3 |

### **Descriptions of Courses**

#### **EDU 511 Learning the Language of Community** (1)

An overview of key concepts critical to successful operation within the Mennonite Anabaptist community will be presented including an introduction to the people, the organizations and the vision of the church. Three key questions will be examined: What is the ethics base for Mennonite Education? What is discipleship within the Mennonite Anabaptist community? What do you believe and model about truth seeking?

**EDU 521 Understanding the Roots of Community (3)**

This course explores the theology and history of the Anabaptist movement, inviting students to articulate the significance of this movement for themselves as person and teacher. Who are the Anabaptists? Where do they come from? What is their story? What do Anabaptists believe? How do I fit into or respond to this story?

**EDU 531 Building Caring Communities (3)**

This course will explore the essential components of a vibrant diverse community with attention to service, conflict transformation, respect, simplicity and social justice.

**EDU 541 Shaping a Community of Learners (3)**

Personal values and beliefs form the integrity of the teachers' soul and ultimately the learning environment. Teachers will be asked to reflect on their spiritual journey, to craft a personal mission statement for teaching, and to integrate faith seamlessly into their classroom instruction. Faith development for children and youth will inform teaching practice that is content and grade specific. Pedagogical methods will be introduced and/or reviewed for their congruence with Anabaptist Mennonite faith and practice.

**EDU 615 Differentiated Curriculum and Instruction (3)**

This course explores differentiated instruction for the mixed-ability/achievement classroom. It includes the rationale for differentiated instruction, instructional strategies and assessment for the differentiated classroom, and ways to work collaboratively with colleagues, families and the community.

**EDU 627 Curriculum and Instruction: Reading and Writing (3)**

This course provides candidates knowledge of a wide range of instructional practices, approaches, methods, and curriculum materials to support reading and writing instruction. This course meets Standard Two: Curriculum, Instructional Strategies, and Materials for the Literacy Specialist Endorsement and Standard Four: Creating a Literate Environment. 20 field hours embedded in the course.

**EDU 628 Educational Collaboration and Consultation (3)**

This course provides candidates knowledge in collaboration and consultation to provide professional development to teachers for the purpose of high levels of student learning in reading, writing, and mathematics. Prerequisite: [EDU 627](#).

**EDU 629 Data-informed Educational Leadership (3)**

This course focuses on the data-driven educational environment. Topics include: gathering and interpreting data, school-based data, district-based data, responses to data at the student, classroom, school, and district levels, and establishing and supporting cultures of inquiry.

**EDU 634 Special Topics (3)**

This is a topical umbrella course for students in educational settings. Topics will be from a wide variety of disciplines. This course may be repeated by the student.

**EDU 635 Nurturing Respectful Classrooms (3)**

This course, part of the Instructional Leadership concentration, provides students research and practical application to a student centered classroom management approach using theories and techniques of conflict resolution. The course focuses on developing a model of classroom management that embraces a philosophy of discipline with dignity, including an understanding of peer mediation. Students will also be expected to attend training sessions on mediation.

**EDU 642 Teaching students with reading difficulties (3)**

This course focuses on the dyslexia standards required by the state. It addresses multisensory strategies for reading, spelling and writing instruction. It provides the scientific definition of dyslexia, its common characteristics standardized by the International Dyslexia Association, and the most effective research-based methodologies to address the instructional needs of individuals with dyslexia. Multisensory structured language techniques based on the Orton-Gillingham approach for teaching the alphabetic principle, reading, spelling and writing will be the primary focus of the course, with a particular emphasis on phonological training/word-attack skills as well as systematic, explicit multisensory instruction relative to the structure of the English language. Mastery of sound/symbol correspondences is not an end in itself; the ultimate goal of instruction is the effective application of these skills for proficient reading and writing. 30 field hours embedded within the course.

**EDU 645 Educational Technology (3)**

The intent of this course is to provide the candidate with skills necessary for using educational technology creatively in the classroom. Candidates work in small groups with defined responsibilities and create and use the class as a lab for practice teaching. Simple non-traditional tools are explored and used. The course focuses on hands-on teaching, exploring the literature on technology and education, and current technology tools used in the classroom.

**EDU 650 Research Methods (3)**

Introduces research terminology, methods, purposes, and procedures. Specific attention is devoted to appropriate measurement concepts, quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, and statistical and qualitative data analysis methods. Formal methods for writing research reports in APA style and the critical 221 evaluation of research are discussed. By the conclusion of the course, each student proposes a plan of research for investigating a problem meaningful to classroom teachers. The proposal becomes a permanent part of the student's file.

**EDU 655 Instructional Design: Literacy Across the Curriculum (3)**

This course, part of the Instructional Leadership concentration, provides students with theoretical concepts and practical applications for designing strategies and skills in the development of effective classroom teaching techniques, focusing on discipline specific content. Curriculum mapping, alignment of content to ODE Academic Content Standards and the inclusion of specialty professional association thematic strands will also be

covered. The course focuses on developing a research based series of units and lessons for the classroom. 20 field hours embedded in the course.

### **EDU 665 Advanced Reading Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation (3)**

This course focuses on the concepts and techniques of reading assessment with an emphasis on 1) Comparing/contrasting/using/interpreting/recommending a wide range of literacy assessment tools and practices including informal and standardized measures; 2) developing skills to support and train classroom teachers in using and interpreting appropriate assessments for individual pupils; 3) Using in-depth assessment information to plan individual instruction for struggling readers; 4) Collaborating with professionals to implement appropriate reading instruction; and 5) Communicating assessment information to various audiences for accountability and instructional purposes. This course meets the International Reading Association Standard Three: Assessment, Diagnosis and Evaluation outcomes at the Reading Specialist Level. 30 field hours embedded in the course.

### **EDU 695 Teachers as Action Researchers (3)**

A continuation of research methods where students complete the approved research project developed in [EDU 650](#). Final projects are presented to the Bluffton University community in an Action Research Symposium. The final project becomes a permanent part of the student's file.

## **Special education courses**

### **SED 600 Students with Disabilities in a Diverse Society (3)**

This course is designed to enable educators to place students with exceptional learning needs (ELN) in the context of a diverse society. Prerequisites: Undergraduate or graduate level course in Introduction to Students with Disabilities (determined by transcript review).

### **SED 601 Instructional Strategies: Young Children with M/M Educational Needs (2)**

This course is designed to develop educator competency, to analyze the young learner (ages 3-8) with exceptional learning needs (ELN), and to plan the least restrictive environment for the young child with ELN. Skills focus on designing, implementing and evaluating appropriate educational interventions in the areas of language, math, reading, social studies, science, the arts and movement. Fifteen field hours in an inclusive early childhood setting are required. Prerequisite: [SED 600](#).

### **SED 602 Instructional Strategies: Young Adolescents with M/M Educational Needs (2)**

This course is designed to develop educator competency, to analyze the young adolescent and AYA learner with exceptional learning needs (ELN), and to plan the least restrictive environment for the learner with ELN. Skills focus on designing, implementing, and evaluating appropriate educational interventions in the areas of language, math, reading, social studies, science, the arts and movement that are age and ability appropriate. Field

experiences in a middle school and high school setting are required (21 hours total). Prerequisite: [SED 600](#).

**SED 603 Advanced Classroom Organization: Intervention Specialist (3)**

This course is designed as an advanced course to assist prospective intervention specialists in understanding student and teacher behaviors as they apply to good classroom organization. Students explore techniques for maximizing learning in a variety of classroom settings, building students self concepts, and understanding the use and abuse of power. The focus is on building communities of respect that nurture and support high levels of student learning. Prerequisite: [SED 600](#).

**SED 604 Advanced Diagnosis and Educational Planning (3)**

This course is designed as an advanced course and focuses on information and practical experiences relating to assessment and the development of academic and social planning for the learning of individuals with ELN. Fifteen hours of field experience required. Prerequisite: [SED 600](#).

**SED 605 Reading and Language Arts for Diverse Learners (3)**

This course focuses on speech and language acquisition of the typically and atypically developing child. It also presents an overview of various disorders and their effects on receptive and expressive language functions and learning. Ten hours of field experience required. Prerequisite: [SED 600](#).

**SED 606 Issues in Special Education (3)**

This course is designed to present current issues affecting the education of individuals with ELN. Students examine contemporary research, current federal and state regulations, and special education service delivery models. Students also reflect upon their role as a professional educator and life-long learner and how to access on-going professional development. Prerequisite: [SED 600](#).

**SED 607 Collaboration (3)**

This course prepares the prospective special educator to work effectively with individuals with ELN, families, school and community personnel, and general educators to develop and implement individualized programs. Communication skills, methods to access support services, and team processes are covered with special emphasis on respect when working with individuals from differing cultural, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds. Prerequisite: [SED 600](#).

**SED 608 Practicum: Intervention Specialist (3)**

This practicum provides supervised experiences in applying the principles techniques learned in the professional courses to actual classroom situations under the guidance and direction of a cooperating teacher. Practicum students spend full days in their assigned classroom for 10 weeks. Prerequisite: All courses in the intervention specialist program.