

Reading Specialist Certification Program

The Reading Specialist Certification Program at Penn State Harrisburg is designed to provide full-time and part-time graduate candidates with a focused program of study leading to a Pennsylvania Department of Education certificate as a K-12 Reading Specialist. The program is aligned with the standards of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the International Literacy Association. Following successful completion of the program, students are eligible to take the Praxis examination for certification as a K-12 Reading Specialist.



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**School of Behavioral
Sciences and Education**



**Reading Specialist
Certification Program**

Curriculum

Certification Requirements

The Reading Specialist Certification program consists of 24 credits. Candidates must show evidence of having completed an undergraduate literacy course with a grade of C or better. Individuals must also show evidence of successful completion of both child and adolescent development coursework with a grade of C or better for certification as a K-12 Reading Specialist.

Reading specialist candidates must enroll in EDUC 863 (Literacy Methods) and EDUC 864 (Literacy Clinic) during their final full year of study. At the conclusion of all program requirements, program completers are eligible to register for the Reading Specialist exam.

Retention

Reading Specialist candidates must maintain a minimum 3.00 grade point average, satisfactorily complete all required key assessments, attain a grade of "C" or better in all required core courses. Candidates who do not make satisfactory progress will be notified in writing noting the specific deficiencies and requesting that they meet with the program coordinator to develop a remediation plan. Failure to meet or to satisfactorily complete the remediation plan will result in termination from the program.

All persons enrolled in Teacher Education Programs at Penn State Harrisburg are expected to demonstrate the professional dispositions that are aligned with the unit's vision statement. The faculty shall evaluate the approved dispositions demonstrated by the candidates in class and during their clinical field experience. Candidates may be rated as exemplary, acceptable, or unacceptable. Candidates are expected to attain acceptable or exemplary ratings in order to be recommended for certification.

Applying for Certification

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that each candidate submit his/her application online using the Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) at www.pde.state.pa.us. Application should be made after the completion of all requirements which includes obtaining a passing score on the Reading Specialist Praxis Exam and receiving one's final GPA.

Please note that the Praxis exam is a fee-based test and test takers must individually register for the exam. All scores must be reported to Penn State Harrisburg and The Pennsylvania Department of Education. For more information about the Praxis exam, go to their web site at www.ets.org or call 1-800-772-9476

Courses Overview

The Reading Specialist Certification program at Penn State Harrisburg prepares full-time and part-time graduate students with a comprehensive approach to literacy education. The 24-credit program infuses current research and policy to prepare reading/literacy specialists to meet the varied and diverse literacy needs of K-12 learners.

In courses such as Theoretical Foundations of Literacy, students become reacquainted with mainstream theories and are introduced to those of critical theorists who challenge traditional perspectives that have often marginalized race, class, and linguistic variety in learning and in literacy development.

In later courses like Literacy Leadership, students critically evaluate the dispositions, social practices, and sociocultural roles of literacy leaders in school contexts. They apply their knowledge about adult learning theory and literacy practices to develop a needs assessment survey and a literacy-needs assessment professional learning initiative for their colleagues.

Students also participate in a final capstone course that provides the opportunity to work closely with K-12 learners in a faculty-supervised, clinical setting. Throughout the program, students work closely with faculty members and cultivate strong peer support networks. Our course offerings include a combination of face-to-face and hybrid meetings throughout the year.

Following successful completion of the program, students are eligible to take the Praxis examination for certification as a K-12 Reading Specialist. The Reading Specialist Praxis Exam consists of questions about assessment, literacy development, leadership skills, and case study analysis. Our program completers continue to have a high success rate with 100 percent of students passing the exam.

For course descriptions and requirements, see the [University Bulletin](#).

Program Requirements for Admission

Note: In addition to the [general prerequisites for admission to the Graduate School](#), the following is required by this degree program:

Admission is on a rolling basis. Candidates must meet the following admission requirements:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with an overall GPA of at least 3.0 out of 4.0
- Official transcripts of undergraduate and/or graduate course work
- A state-issued teaching certificate
- Updated resume
- Two letters of recommendation

If you experience difficulty using our online application, please contact:
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