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Introduction

This handbook provides information about the Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Please use this handbook as a tool to better understand application procedures, program expectations, and graduation requirements. In addition to this handbook, you should obtain a copy of NIU’s Graduate Catalog and familiarize yourself with the Graduate School website (www.grad.niu.edu). It is your responsibility to know and observe all policies and procedures related to this program as well as those of the Graduate School.

After reading this handbook, if you have further questions about the program, please contact the department and/or your faculty academic advisor. We hope that you find the information helpful and welcome any input or suggestions for improvement.

Description of the Master of Science Program in Curriculum & Instruction

The major in curriculum and instruction prepares knowledgeable, reflective practitioners and instructional leaders to work in both formal and non-formal educational settings. Courses help educational practitioners clarify their professional purposes and improve the pedagogical environments in which they function. This program provides three paths - Teacher Leadership; Curriculum and Cultural Practices; or, Academic Literacy and Language and Culture.

- **Teacher leadership** courses focus on building leadership capacity in classrooms, schools and districts through courses that qualify educators for a teacher leader endorsement on their professional educator license.
- **Curriculum and cultural practices** courses focus on examining teaching and learning from a global perspective.
- **Academic literacy, language and culture** courses focus on the social and cultural dimensions of language and literacy learning.

Description of the Master of Science Program in Curriculum & Instruction with Teacher Leader Endorsement

The Teacher Leader Endorsement (TLE) program is designed to prepare licensed educators for leadership roles as instructional coaches, mentor teachers, department chairs, curriculum directors, deans, and other leadership positions designated by a school district. Therefore, the course of study is designed to support curriculum and instructional leadership, which aligns with teacher leader needed skills and responsibilities. Students can either choose to earn the Teacher Leader Endorsement as part of a 33-credit hour MS.Ed program in Curriculum and Instruction or, for those teachers who already possess a master’s degree, as a 24-credit hour stand alone endorsement program.
Program Entry
There are two entry pathways into the TLE program:

Entry Option 1
Candidate applies to and enrolls in the MS.Ed in Curriculum and Instruction degree program and elects to pursue the Teacher Leader Endorsement option as she/he completes this degree.

Entry Option 2
A student who already possesses a master’s degree applies for the 24-credit hour Teacher Leader Endorsement only.

Description of the Master of Science Program in Curriculum & Instruction pursuing the Curriculum and Cultural Practices

The Curriculum and Cultural Practices path is an engaging and challenging path that places more focus on how aspects of culture, identity, curriculum and instruction intersect. Recognizing the influence of various aspects of culture and identity, such as race, gender, sexuality, ability, socioeconomic class, and other aspects of identity, provides teachers with the knowledge and skills to reach all learners and create empowering opportunities. By exploring critical practices and ideas -- like Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Critical Race Theory, Multicultural and Social Justice Education, and other ideas -- this path challenges students to enhance both their understanding of the relationship between culture and curriculum and essential practices for critical thinking. Regardless of subject area, developing such understanding and skills is essential for educators as schools and society become increasingly diverse.

Description of the Master of Science Program in Curriculum & Instruction pursuing the Academic Literacies, Language, and Culture

The Academic literacy, language and culture (ALLC) pathway is designed to enhance the understanding and instruction of licensed educators around the social and cultural dimensions of language and literacy. Questions that coursework in this pathway would particularly address would include:

- How do students read and write differently in the content areas?
- How can I better help my English Language Learners?
- How can be me more inclusive of all students in my instruction?

As such, the program of study includes important courses in such topics: contemporary issues of curriculum and instruction, multicultural education, foundations of language-minority education, gender, and global perspectives in citizenship education.
Applying to the Program

Process, Deadlines, and Requirements for Degree-Seeking Students
In order to pursue a Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction, one must apply and be admitted to the Graduate School, as well as be accepted for admission by the program area, in this case Curriculum and Instruction. Applications are available online at http://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/apply-now.shtml. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

The admissions requirements for the Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction include the following:

- An undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or higher on a 4.00 system.
- Completion of either the GRE general test or the Miller Analogies Test*
- Completed admissions application to the Graduate School (i.e., completed application, official transcripts, required test scores, career goals statement, two letters of recommendation, and payment of the $60 application fee).**

* In accordance with the Graduate School requirements, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction requires official scores on all sections of the GRE or MAT standardized tests to complete your application to the graduate program. Waivers will not be issued. If you have any questions, please contact NIU Testing Services (815-753-1203) for information regarding the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Miller Analogies Test (MAT).

** As per the Graduate School Catalog, applicants for admission to the Graduate School assume all responsibility for the completion of their admission files; the Graduate School assumes no obligation to inform applicants about erroneous or missing credentials.

Prospective students who fail to satisfy either the GPA or the GRE/MAT criterion may request special consideration of their applications. Such a request must be in writing, must include compensatory evidence related to the deficiencies, and should accompany the application for admission to the Graduate School. Final decisions regarding admissions are made by the department program area committee on the basis of a total profile of an individual’s qualifications.

Prospective students have the ability to have the GRE/MAT waived. This can be done under one of two conditions: 1) if students graduated NIU with a 3.00 GPA or above; or 2) if students have taken graduate level coursework (at NIU or elsewhere) and earned a 3.00 GPA or above.
**Applying as a Student-At-Large**

If you are interested in taking a course(s) prior to being admitted to the Graduate School, you may enroll as a Student-at-Large (SAL). To enroll in a course(s) as an SAL, you will need to submit an SAL application electronically using the following Graduate School web site: [https://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/at-large/index.shtml](https://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/at-large/index.shtml). To submit an application to be a student-at-large, applicants must upload proof that they have received a baccalaureate or higher degree. Such proof may be an unofficial copy of a transcript, teaching license or photocopy of a diploma.

After four working days you will be able to enroll in courses. **NOTE:** You may take up to 15 semester hours of graduate credit as a SAL before officially applying to the program. Any courses selected while an SAL should be chosen in consultation with an academic advisor from the program area so that classes count towards the degree program, if seeking admission.
**Advising**

**Department Graduate Advisor**
Nicholas Slicer serves as the Graduate Advisor for the department and supports students with general inquiries, program-specific questions, and graduate school topics. Mr. Slicer can be reached at the following: nslicer@niu.edu; 815-753-7948. His office is located in Gabel Hall, Room 152D.

Advisement is given regarding courses in and outside of the major, prerequisites, comprehensive exams, and graduation deadlines. *Students are responsible for contacting their academic advisor, making appointments, and communicating with him on a regular basis.* It is recommended that the student meet with his/her faculty academic advisor at least once a semester.

**Program Faculty**
Every graduate student will be assigned a faculty academic advisor upon admission to the program. The faculty academic advisors for the graduate program in Curriculum and Instruction include the following:

- Dr. James Cohen  jcohen@niu.edu
- Dr. Mary Beth Henning  mhenning@niu.edu
- Dr. Joseph Flynn  jflynn@niu.edu
- Dr. Euikyung Shin  ekshin@niu.edu
- Dr. John Evar Strid  jstrid@niu.edu
- Dr. Corrine Wickens  cwickens@niu.edu
- Dr. Elizabeth Wilkins  ewilkins@niu.edu

**Advisement Worksheet**
The Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction requires a minimum of 33 semester hours of graduate work beyond the baccalaureate degree. Your faculty academic advisor will use the following Advisement Worksheet with you in planning your courses. Please use the worksheet to ensure accurate completion of program requirements. As stated previously, ongoing contact with your faculty academic advisor is important.
Master’s in Science in Curriculum and Instruction - Advisement Worksheet
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Z-ID:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Advisor/Phone Number/Email:</td>
<td>Catalog Year:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School 815-753-0395</td>
<td>Dept of C &amp; I: 815-753-7948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Requirements:**
- 33 hours total & 18 hours in the major, Curriculum and Instruction

### Core Courses in C & I – 9 Sem. Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hrs/Grade</th>
<th>Sem/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TLCI 500</td>
<td>Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; the Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLCI 510</td>
<td>Critical Practices in Curriculum &amp; Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLCI 598</td>
<td>Master’s Culminating Project</td>
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### Educational Research – 3 Sem. Hours

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hrs/Grade</th>
<th>Sem/Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETR 528</td>
<td>Educational Assessment</td>
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</table>

### Educational Psychology – 3 Sem. Hours

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<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hrs/Grade</th>
<th>Sem/Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPS 518</td>
<td>Motivation in Classroom</td>
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</table>

### Curriculum & Instruction Courses – 9 Sem. Hours

Three courses approved by the adviser from the extensive list below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hrs/Grade</th>
<th>Sem/Year</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Leader Endorsement</th>
<th>Curriculum and Cultural Practices</th>
<th>Academic Literacies, Language and Culture</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TLCI 505</td>
<td>EPFE 505  TLCY 592</td>
<td>EPFE 505  EPS 519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLCI 537</td>
<td>LTIC 501  LTLA 539</td>
<td>LTCY 536  LTCY 592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLCI 595</td>
<td>TLCI 567  TLCI 534</td>
<td>LTIC 553  LTLA 541</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLCI 795</td>
<td>TLCI 540  TLCI 579X</td>
<td>LTLA 543  LTRE 505</td>
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<td>TLEE 535  TLEE 541</td>
<td>LTRE 510  LTRE 511</td>
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<td>LTRE 519  LTRE 592</td>
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### Electives – 9 Sem. Hours

Three courses approved by the adviser. Electives may be additional courses in Curriculum and Instruction or from other areas in the Department, College, or University.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hrs/Grade</th>
<th>Sem/Year</th>
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**Degree Time Limit**

Master’s degree programs must be completed within six years. For additional information, please consult the Graduate School Catalog, under the Requirements for Degree section (Limitations of Time).

**Revalidation of Courses**

If you take any NIU courses that do not fall within the six year period allowed for degree completion, the department may require that you retake the course for credit or demonstrate current knowledge of the subject matter. If any courses in your program expire before your graduation date, please see your faculty academic advisor for assistance.

**Leave of Absence**

As a graduate student you may take a leave of absence from coursework for up to one year. To do so, please go to the Graduate School website and fill out the Leave of Absence form: [http://www.niu.edu/its/asp2/OnBaseForms/gradschool/RcGrLeave.aspx](http://www.niu.edu/its/asp2/OnBaseForms/gradschool/RcGrLeave.aspx). If you take more than a year of absence, the Graduate School requires that you re-apply to the program for admission. Please notify your faculty academic advisor when you submit a leave of absence form.

**Independent Study**

If interested in taking an independent study, you must secure permission from a program area faculty member to supervise the project. Together, you and the faculty member must complete and submit the “Independent Study Form” below before being gaining admission to the course.
# Independent Study Request Form

**Date:** [Insert month/day/year]

**To:** [Insert student’s name, Z-ID number, address, and phone number]

**From:** Dr. [Insert name]  
Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction

**Course Request:** TLCI [add course number and number of semester hour credits]

**Independent Study Requirements to be Completed by the Student**  
<table>
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<th>Requirement</th>
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**Grading Scale**

- __________ = 90 to 100% = A = Superior
- __________ = 80 to 89% = B = Satisfactory
- __________ = 70 to 79% = C = Marginal Achievement

I understand and agree with the terms listed above required to successfully complete this course.

**Faculty Signature**  
**Student Signature**

**Please submit completed form to:**

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<tr>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>E-Mail</th>
<th>Facimile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIU-Department of C &amp;I</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nslicer@niu.edu">nslicer@niu.edu</a></td>
<td>815-753-7948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attn: N. Slicer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeKalb, IL 60115</td>
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Professional Expectations, Dispositions, and Academic Integrity

Professional Expectations and Dispositions Document
As per the “Professional Expectations and Dispositions” document, all graduate students are expected to act professionally, show respect for the learning process, and possess appropriate dispositions throughout their degree program.

Dispositions for Teaching
Dispositions for teaching are assessed and monitored throughout all classes in order to intervene with support as needed. All students are required to read the dispositions information included in this handbook. Questions regarding the dispositions assessment protocol, the supportive intervention process, or the dispositions forms should be directed to the C & I MS.Ed. Program Coordinator in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is expected of all students. The attempt by any student to present as his/her own work which he/she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration of NIU as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they turn in an assignment written in whole or in part by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy from books, magazines, Internet, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them.
Professional Expectations and Dispositions for Graduate Programs in Curriculum & Instruction

Professional expectations and dispositions are attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as graduate students interact with faculty, staff, and colleagues. These positive behaviors support effective classroom teaching, professional interactions, and learning. The professional expectations and dispositions are assessed during all classes, phone conversations, email/Internet transactions, and face-to-face meetings.

A graduate student consistently
1. values and works to create positive learning environments, respects the learning process and is a reflective learner.
2. demonstrates trust, respect for others, and mutual responsibility in whole class, group work, written products, and presentations.
3. demonstrates ethical decision making by maintaining confidentiality in all situations and displaying academic integrity.
4. shows respect for the learning process by being engaged, on-task, prepared, and responsive.
5. shows respect for the learning process by attending class sessions, arriving at class and returning from breaks on time, staying until the end of class sessions, and punctual submission of assignments.
6. demonstrates an overall work ethic (e.g., initiative, self-direction, diligence, responsibility, fairness, commitment to quality, dependability, compliance with required procedures, honesty).
7. demonstrates appropriate interpersonal, listening, and communication skills.
8. shows the ability to respect others’ opinions, is receptive to new ideas and multiple perspectives.
9. appreciates course content, including details related to writing mechanics, content, and reflection.
10. encourages creative and critical thinking among others by sharing new ideas and generating possibilities.
11. seeks lifelong learning and scholarship, investing significant effort in learning.
12. interacts respectfully with diverse colleagues, faculty, staff, and other individuals.
**Tuition and Fees**

Graduate students are charged a single tuition rate based on the program into which they are admitted. The tuition that they are charged includes a base rate (which consists of instructional and operational components), out-of-state tuition (if applicable), and any program tuition. Additionally, in some instances, students may be charged materials fees to cover supplies (like beakers, for example) used in a course. More information about graduate tuition rates here: [http://www.niu.edu/bursar/tuition/graduate.shtml](http://www.niu.edu/bursar/tuition/graduate.shtml)

**Tuition Waiver in Partnership District**

NIU presents tuition waivers to partnership districts where NIU pre-service teachers are placed. Since districts vary in how they distribute tuition waivers, students are encouraged to inquire at their respective district HR regarding the availability of tuition waivers.

**Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate students are occasionally hired to provide assistance to the department in several areas: teaching assistants, non-instructional teaching assistants, research assistants and staff assistants. Positions are typically filled in the spring/summer for the following fall. Contact the department or your faculty academic advisor for information regarding openings. The university also hires graduate students to assist in roles other than teaching or research, such as residence hall advisors, counselors, administrative assistants or library assistants. NIU’s Human Resources Services posts job openings.

**Non-Thesis and Thesis Options**

Students in the Masters of Science program must elect to take either the non-thesis or thesis option. Those who select the *non-thesis* option must complete all requirements as stipulated in NIU’s Graduate Catalog. Students in the non-thesis option fulfill the comprehensive examination requirement by successfully completing and formally presenting a project while enrolled in TLCI 598. Students who elect to complete a *thesis* option must complete the requirements as stipulated in NIU’s Graduate Catalog as well as work closely with their faculty academic advisor.

**Graduation Requirements & Procedures**

Students planning to graduate should familiarize themselves with the dates relating to application for graduation and other Graduate School deadlines. [https://www.niu.edu/grad/resources/graduation.shtml](https://www.niu.edu/grad/resources/graduation.shtml)

Whether or not you plan to attend the commencement ceremonies, it is important that you apply for graduation by the specified deadline in order to graduate in a particular term. Deadlines should be discussed with your academic advisor. To apply for graduation, log-in to your MyNIU account and look under *Degree Progress/Graduation* and complete the required fields.

There is a one-time fee per degree (Please check the Graduate School website for details). After completing the graduation application process in MyNIU, this fee will automatically be charged to your student account.