I've always wanted to get a PhD. I had a great experience with Mason, and the literacy program was so personalized that I could apply what I learned immediately. I went to work as a literacy coach and then as an ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] Specialist at the district level, and was able to extend the reach of my expertise. I now have a job as a senior research advisor and consult for K–12 districts across the country.”

— Marriam Ewaida  
MEd Curriculum and Instruction ’09, PhD Education ’17

This program is dedicated to the improvement of literacy research and education, teaching PhD students to be better researchers, educators, and administrative leaders.

Where this degree can take you

With this specialization, a graduate can seek employment in academia, think tanks, and education non-profits. The degree also qualifies graduates to prepare other teachers in the latest literacy learning methods, and ascend to positions of leadership in K-12 school districts.

cehd.gmu.edu/phd-literacy
Course Work

Doctoral candidates complete a sequence of core courses and primary specialization courses as well as 18 credits from the secondary emphasis of their choosing. Find more details about secondary emphasis area options at cehd.gmu.edu/phd.

Core Courses
- EDUC 800  Ways of Knowing
- EDUC 810  Problems and Methods in Education Research
- EDUC 812  Qualitative Methods in Educational Research
- Two additional Educational Research Course Electives

Specialization Courses
- EDRD 829  Advanced Foundations of Literacy Education
- EDRD 830  Theory, Research, and Practice in Literacy: Birth through Middle Childhood
- EDRD 831  Theory, Research, and Practice in Literacy: Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood
- EDRD 832  Research Methodologies and Trends in Literacy
- EDRD 833  Literacy and Learning in the Digital Age
- EDRD 834  Research in Reading Motivation

Additional Course and Program Requirements
- Secondary specialization emphasis, 18 credits
- Portfolio Review
- Dissertation, 12 credits

Faculty

Faculty in this program have research interests spanning teachers’ beliefs, literacy coaching, teacher education, professional development, adolescent literacy best practices, social equity through science education, adaptive teaching, digitally supported reading and writing, urban teacher education, social justice education, elementary students and fiction reading, and coding literacy. Mason professors have served as president of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, led international literacy education boards, published dozens of articles and books, served as educational consultants for school systems at home and overseas, garnered numerous awards for literacy learning research, and been awarded millions in research grants from the National Department of Education.

Application Information

Information on the requirements and process for applying can be found at cehd.gmu.edu/phd. To apply for fall admissions, applications must be received by January 15. For spring admissions applications are due by October 1.