Master’s Student Orientation & Handbook

Welcome to Bilingual Education Programs at Texas A&M University! This booklet will provide new students with information about the master’s program and its courses. Please review this information prior to beginning your program.

Note: The content in this handbook is for general information purposes. Faculty meets annually to make recommendations for improvement. For any questions, please contact the program director.

The Master’s Program

The 36 semester-hour master’s degree in bilingual education provides preparation for teaching and coordinator/director positions focusing on development, coordination, and evaluation of bilingual and dual language programs.

The M.Ed. or M.S. offers a sound combination of theory, methodology, and substantive application, with some coursework flexibility within areas of program emphasis. Prescribed courses may be waived or substituted with committee approval, based on your experience and previous training, or demonstration of required skills. The program develops curriculum theory, instructional content, teaching methodology, accountability/evaluation strategies and family/community partnering.

Classes are delivered in a variety of formats including face-to-face, video conferencing in TTVN, and online via eLearning and eCampus.

M.S. students complete a thesis according to university standards and requirements. M.Ed. students complete a comprehensive examination. The thesis is a formal summary of scholarly investigation involving original data or re-analysis of data originally collected for other purposes. The thesis or comprehensive examination is formally evaluated by your committee and must be presented in your final oral defense.

It is important to note that students are classified as either on-campus or distance students. During the program application process, you will have applied as either an on-campus student or a distance student. Once this decision has been made, you cannot change your classification (although you can still take online or traditional face-to-face courses as needed). Your classification will effect how you are billed and in which course sections you can enroll.
Your Faculty Advisor

When you receive your letter of acceptance for the program, it will list your temporary faculty advisor. It is recommended that you contact your temporary advisor. You have the option to choose another advisor based on your interests.

The Degree Plan & Graduate Committee

You should contact your advisor during your first semester to begin to develop your degree plan. The degree plan requires that you appoint a faculty committee. One of the members will be from outside the program and department. This committee will serve on your thesis (for M.S. students) or comprehensive examination (for M.Ed. students). See http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/select-your-graduate-committee/.

Your advisor typically becomes your committee chair. However, you also have the option to request another faculty member to serve as your chair, based on mutual agreement. Your committee chair will work with you in selecting your other committee members. You will specify your graduate committee members when you submit your degree plan.

The degree plan will outline the courses you plan to take as a master’s student. It must include the required courses for the bilingual program. Your degree plan must be submitted before you have taken 18 credit hours, or you will be blocked from registering for any courses.

To submit your degree plan to the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS), visit https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/default.aspx.

If your degree plan is approved, you may later need to make a change in terms of coursework or committee members. You can do this via petition. The appropriate forms can be found here: http://ogs.tamu.edu/incoming-students/student-forms-and-information/.

To view the required steps towards graduation, see http://ogs.tamu.edu/incoming-students/student-forms-and-information/getting-a-degree/masters-degree-requirements/.

Required Courses

You must take 36 credit hours to qualify for graduation. Note that M.S. students take 12 credit hours of EPSY 691 Research.

Required Courses M.Ed. & M.S.
(3 credit hours each; 30 hours)
BIED 610 Hispanic Bilingual Assessment and Monitoring Students
BIED 611 Dual Language Programs Methodologies
BIED 612 Content Area Instruction for Hispanic Bilingual Programs
BIED 613 Spanish/English Biliteracy
BIED 614 Bilingual Education Curriculum Development
BIED 615 Teacher Action Research in Bilingual Education
BIED 616 Spanish for Bilingual and Dual Language Classrooms
EPSY 636 Techniques of Research
EPSY 683 Field Practicum in Bilingual Education
EPSY 685 Directed Studies in Bilingual Education

**Prescribed Elective Courses (M.Ed.)**
(3 credit hours each; 6 hours)
EPSY 683 Field Practicum in Bilingual Education
EPSY 685 Directed Studies in Bilingual Education

**Prescribed Elective Courses (M.S.)**
(6 credit hours)
EPSY 691 Research (Thesis)

**Other Available Courses**
Other courses may be considered with the approval of the graduate committee.
(3 credit hours each)
BIED 617 Evaluation of Programs with Bilingual and Language Minority Students K-12 (with committee or instructor approval)
BIED 620 Current Issues in Bilingual Education
BIED 632 Research in Second Language Education
EPSY 689 Special Topics: BIED Early Language and Literacy

**M.S. 36 semester credit hours**
**M.Ed. 36 semester credit hours**

**Thesis or Comprehensive Examination**
The university requires that you complete a final demonstration of learning in the form of a thesis (for thesis-option M.S. students) or comprehensive examination (for M.Ed. students and non-thesis option M.S. students). This work involves an oral defense. You will work closely with your graduate committee to determine the exam date and content of your final examination. The thesis option requires that you develop a thesis proposal, meet with your committee, and receive approval.

**Graduation**
Once you are close to fulfilling all degree requirements, you should meet with the EPSY graduate advisor and work with her to complete all required paperwork as well as verify that you are eligible to take the final exam. You will file for your degree online in the Howdy Portal and pay the graduation fee for your diploma.
This is done during the first week of your final semester. You will also officially file your final examination date with OGS at least 10 days before the exam date. If you will be completing a thesis, you must meet the submission deadlines established by the Thesis Office. See http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/graduation/steps-to-graduation/.

**Academic Honesty**

All Texas A&M students are expected to follow the Aggie Honor Code: "An Aggie does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do."

This code also applies to student academic work. All students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity, including — but not limited to — avoiding plagiarism, cheating, complicity, etc. Academic dishonesty will be reported to the Aggie Honor System Office for possible further action. For more information, see http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

More information is also available in the Graduate Student Catalog: http://catalog.tamu.edu/.

For information on how to avoid plagiarism, see http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/2010/consultant-resources/level-2-projects-spring-2010/todoavoiding-plagiarism/.

**Maintaining Adequate Progress**

Students must make adequate progress to remain in good standing in the master’s program. The program offers the following guidelines for maintaining adequate progress. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will be asked to meet with program faculty to determine a remediation plan as described below.

Students are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their advisor/chair and should seek advisement prior to registering for courses and planning research activities each semester.

For grade purposes, the program follows policies already in place with the department, college, and university.

Students must maintain a cumulative GPR of 3.0. In the event that a student’s GPR drops below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student must raise his or her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next nine hours of coursework. More information can be found in the Graduate Catalog (http://catalog.tamu.edu/).
Students must attend to all program requirements. In addition to successful credit hour completion, students must work with their advisor/chair to ensure that their degree plan (a) adheres to the program requirements and (b) complies with committee recommendations.

Per university regulation, master’s students have seven years to complete their program. Students who are not enrolled for three consecutive semesters are withdrawn from the program.

**Remediation Process for Failure to Make Adequate Progress**

It is critical that students make adequate progress consistent with program guidelines. Grades of “incomplete” are the rare exception and are given only under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor. In the event a student is not making adequate progress, he or she will be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances to the faculty. The purpose of this meeting is to identify barriers to progress and to generate a remediation plan and corresponding timeline.

Potential outcomes of this meeting may include a plan for remediation of the problem that is discussed by the faculty and student; a formal reprimand from the program — with or without a remediation plan or sanctions; and/or probationary status. Such probation will include a written list of behaviors that must be performed by the student during the probationary period and a description of sanctions to occur if the requirements of the probationary period are not met. Such a probation plan will include a specific time frame in which these behaviors must occur.

The sanctions listed above do not have to be applied in any particular order; however, fairness in determining sanction(s) appropriate to the student problem is the goal. Additional departmental expectations and procedures serve as a general guide as well.

**Academic Probation**

In the event that a student’s cumulative GPR drops below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. Students are required to inform their advisors if they receive a grade of C or below in any course. The student must raise his or her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next nine hours of coursework. More information can be found in the Graduate Catalog ([http://catalog.tamu.edu/](http://catalog.tamu.edu/)).

**Dismissal from the Program**

Leave of Absence
Under unusual circumstances, a student may petition for a leave of absence from the doctoral program. For information regarding leave of absence, see the Graduate Catalog (http://catalog.tamu.edu/).

Student Grievance Process
In addition to the grievance procedures established by the university (see http://student-rules.tamu.edu/studentgrievanceprocedures), the department has developed, after extensive student and faculty input, the following process. It is known as the Student Advocate Office. An EPSY faculty member selected by the department head serves as the ombudsperson. Currently, Dr. Laura Stough serves in this capacity.

In the event of a conflict of interest between a student and the current ombudsperson, an alternate faculty member may fill this role. There is also an ombudsperson at the college level (Dr. George Cunningham), as well as one at OGS (see http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/ombudsperson/). The following policies were derived by EPSY faculty, students, and the department head:

Pre-condition to Student’s Initiation of the Grievance Process
Students are encouraged to meet with and attempt to resolve problems with the faculty member. If the student has met with the faculty member and the problem has not been resolved, he or she should contact the ombudsperson. If a student does not choose to meet with the faculty member due to the nature of the problem, he or she may directly contact the ombudsperson and initiate the grievance process.

Overview of Grievance Process
A student who has a faculty-student concern and who has addressed the preconditions for initiation of the grievance process is encouraged to meet with the ombudsperson; however, a student may choose to meet first with other EPSY faculty member(s). Depending upon the nature of the student’s concern, the ombudsperson may consult with the identified faculty member, the program coordinator or the department head.

At the discretion of the department head, the student’s concern may be communicated to the CEHD Dean’s Office. When there is a discussion of a particular faculty-student concern, maintaining anonymity of the student may not be possible. Similarly, all activities will be consistent with the requirements and limits set under FERPA with regard to student records.

Resolution of Student Concerns
Resolution of a student’s concern may occur as a result of:
1. Student’s dialogue with the faculty member or the ombudsperson.
2. Ombudsperson holds discussions with the faculty member.
3. Ombudsperson’s discussion of the student’s concern with the program coordinator or the department head. As a result of these discussions, the ombudsperson, and/or the department head may confer with the faculty member.

4. Pending the outcome of the above mentioned, or the nature of the student’s concern, the department head, and/or student may enter into discussion with the CEHD Dean’s Office and appropriate university committees and administrators.

**Online Courses & Expectations**

Many of the courses are either completely online or a hybrid of online and traditional components. Online coursework is presented in eCampus ([http://ecampus.tamu.edu/](http://ecampus.tamu.edu/)) and eLearning ([http://elearning.tamu.edu/](http://elearning.tamu.edu/)). The university is in the process of transitioning from eLearning to eCampus, which is why both learning management systems are addressed here. Both systems are online applications, also known as Blackboard or Vista, that contain the readings, presentations, discussions, chats, email system, and other items students will need to successfully complete the program.

The coursework is designed to be interactive and completed in a timely fashion over the course of the semester. The following guideline should be considered when taking online courses:

1. Within the first week of school, visit the course site (or attend orientation).
2. Read the course syllabus and any other documents related to the course to be sure you are aware of any and all instructor policies.
3. Adhere to course schedules and deadlines. Distance learning courses are not designed to be self-paced.
4. Participate in weekly online activities, including discussions.
5. Log into the course one or more times per week (preferably daily) to view announcements, participate in class activities, assignments, online discussions, quizzes, and tests.
6. Use the communication procedures established by the instructor for submission of assignments and for completing course requirements.
7. Students should confirm that they have the necessary equipment and technical skills to undertake online courses.
8. Students should familiarize themselves with the information and policies contained in the Graduate Catalog (see [http://catalog.tamu.edu/](http://catalog.tamu.edu/)) and program-specific student handbook.
9. Assignments submitted to an online course or contributions to threaded discussions must observe the same prohibitions against plagiarism that
apply to assignments in classroom courses, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct procedures that are described in the Graduate Catalog.

10. Students should notify their instructor in advance if they are unable to complete an assignment by the published submission deadline.

11. Students should contact their instructor with course-related questions by course email well in advance of due dates, as they may need to wait 48 hours for a response to their questions.

12. If home computer issues occur, students must find time to access a functional computer on campus or in another location. Late policies will not be waived due to home computer issues.

13. Assignments are due at the date and time established by the instructor. These guidelines are strictly enforced.

14. Plan to turn assignments in on time and in the format stipulated by instructors, to participate in class discussions, and to prepare for quizzes and exams.

15. Discussions are part of class participation and must be completed during the week they are assigned.

16. Plagiarism is taken very seriously in the online environment. A first occurrence of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that assignment. A second offense will be brought to the department head for further disciplinary action that may result in failing the course. It is the student’s responsibility to cite his or her sources and complete coursework in a professional and academically honest manner.

**How to Access eLearning**

eLearning may be accessed through the Howdy Portal as a button on the upper right. You may also go directly to the eLearning site at [http://elearning.tamu.edu/](http://elearning.tamu.edu/). You will be prompted to provide your Net ID and password.
eLearning Homepage and Logon Window

eLearning has an online orientation here: [http://its.tamu.edu/elearning-orientation/](http://its.tamu.edu/elearning-orientation/).

Courses Page in eLearning
Inside a Course in eLearning

System Requirements for eLearning
eLearning will run on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS platforms and in a variety of popular browsers. To view the specific operating systems versions and browsers, visit [http://kb.blackboard.com/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=76087304](http://kb.blackboard.com/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=76087304).

eLearning has a feature that will allow the user to test the compatibility of the browser with eLearning. To test a browser, see [http://elearning.tamu.edu/](http://elearning.tamu.edu/) and click on the Check Browser button on the left.

How to Access eCampus
eCampus can be accessed through [http://ecampus.tamu.edu/](http://ecampus.tamu.edu/). You will be prompted for your Net ID and password.
eCampus Homepage and Logon Window

eCampus has online documentation here: https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_10_and_SP_11/Student.

Courses Page in eCampus
Inside a Course in eCampus

System Requirements for eCampus

eCampus will run on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS platforms and in a variety of popular browsers. To view the specific operating systems versions and browsers, visit https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_10_and_SP_11/Student/002_Browser_Support_SP_11.

The Department of Educational Psychology

The Department of Educational Psychology is one of four departments in the College of Education & Human Development. These departments include:

- Education Administration & Human Resource Development (EAHR)
- Educational Psychology (EPSY)
- Health & Kinesiology (HLKN)
- Teaching, Learning, & Culture (TLAC)

The heads of the various departments work with the dean of the college on matters of departmental or college interest. Graduate students within the College of Education & Human Development (CEHD) are also subject to the administrative oversight of the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS).

At the graduate level, the department offers the Master of Science, Master of Education, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. Doctoral specializations include school psychology; counseling psychology; bilingual education; learning sciences; and special education. At the master’s level, specializations include bilingual education, educational technology, special education, and learning sciences. EPSY
also offers undergraduate degrees in bilingual education and special education for pre-service teachers.

**How to Contact the Bilingual Education Programs**
The Bilingual Education Programs office is open normal business hours.

**Mailing Address:** Department of Educational Psychology  
Bilingual Education Programs  
Texas A&M University  
4225 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-4225

**Physical Address:** 100 Harrington Tower (EDCT)  
**Email:** bilingualed@tamu.edu  
**Phone:** (979) 845-2599  
**Fax:** (979) 458-0192

**EPSY Graduate Advisor**
The graduate advisor for the Department of Educational Psychology (EPSY) is Kristie Stramaski. She can help you with questions about scheduling, degree plans, graduation, etc.

**Kristie Stramaski**  
Academic Advisor II  
Department of Educational Psychology  
4225 TAMU  
Phone: 979.845.1833  
Email: kstramaski@tamu.edu

**Our Faculty**

**Rafael Lara-Alecio,**  
Ph.D.  
Professor  
Director of Bilingual Programs  
107H Harrington Tower  
MS 4225  
Phone: 979.845.3467  
Email: a-lara@tamu.edu

**Research Interests**  
Bilingual assessment and evaluation  
Bilingual pedagogy  
Theory and validation  
Bilingual content areas of instruction  
Hispanic parental involvement  
Hispanic gifted identification  
International bilingual education  
Multicultural education
Yolanda N. Padrón, Ed.D.
Professor
Undergraduate Bilingual Coordinator
107E Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.845.5625
Email: ypadron@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Bilingual education
At-risk students
Classroom observations
Classroom instruction for second language students
Reading strategies
Resiliency

Fuhui Tong, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
107I Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.845.7979
Email: fuhuitong@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Program effectiveness for language minority students
Quantitative methodology in bilingual/ESL education
Second language acquisition and linguistic transfer among ELLs
Assessment and testing

Sandra Acosta, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
107F Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.458.4211
Email: sacosta@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Bilingual education leadership
Bilingual education teacher preparation models
Oral language development
Classroom discourse
Second language acquisition

Miranda Nava-Walicchowski, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor
Field Placement Coordinator
107J Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.862.4612
Email: m-walicchowski@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Language brokering
Oral proficiency
Teacher effectiveness
Teacher preparation
Vocabulary development within the field of bilingual education
Hector Rivera, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
107G Harrington Tower  
MS 4225  
Phone: 979.862.4663

Research Interests
- Child and community development
- Classroom learning environments
- Efficacy of school programs
- Teacher professional development in urban and rural settings

For more information about the program, faculty, and their work, see [http://ldn.tamu.edu/](http://ldn.tamu.edu/).