



***New Mexico State University  
College of Health, Education &  
Social Transformation***

***School of Teacher Preparation,  
Administration & Leadership***

Master's Degree and Certificate Programs in  
**Early Childhood Education**  
**Handbook**



Effective: March 2024



## WELCOME LETTER

Dear Prospective Graduate Student:

Welcome to the department! We are pleased that you have chosen to focus your Early Childhood Education graduate studies in the School of Teacher Preparation, Administration, and Leadership (TPAL). Our accomplished faculty is dedicated and eager to work with students committed to serving PreK-3rd grade classrooms and the communities of New Mexico and beyond. The NMSU Teacher Education Program is CAEP ([caepnet.org](http://caepnet.org)) accredited and approved by the New Mexico Public Education Department <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ped/index.html>.

In this handbook, we describe three online programs in Early Childhood Education:

1. Master of Arts in Education with a concentration in Early Childhood Education
2. Master of Arts in Education plus Early Childhood Licensure
3. Early Childhood Education Alternative Licensure Certificate program



These programs expect graduate students to increase their capacity to be socially responsive educators and professionals by further developing their dispositions, competencies, and pedagogies to advocate for equitable education and strong communities.

Once fully admitted to the School of Teacher Preparation, Administration, and Leadership (TPAL), be sure to email or meet your assigned faculty advisor within the first semester of your enrollment to plan your program of study. Your advisor's name and contact information are found on your acceptance letter.

We look forward to working with you and are sure you will enjoy the program's many challenging and rewarding learning opportunities. Our best wishes to you as you embark on this road of professional development.

Sincerely,

The Early Childhood Faculty  
<https://tpal.nmsu.edu/faculty-directory/index.html>



## Important Contacts and Definitions

**Master's Degree:** The MA program with a concentration in Early Childhood Education is for persons with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a closely related field who are already teaching or working in early childhood settings. Educators with an MA degree may have or seek employment in public schools, community colleges, and other early childhood education and care agencies.

**CONTACT FOR ECED MA PROGRAM:** Dr. Rhianna Thomas [thomasrk@nmsu.edu](mailto:thomasrk@nmsu.edu)

**Master's Plus Licensure:** Early childhood education (PreK-3rd grade) licensure allows holders to teach in public schools in the State of New Mexico. If you plan to teach in a public school, you can only start your career if you first obtain a teaching license. Obtaining a teaching license **always** requires admission to the Teacher Education Program (TEP) and student teaching (STEP) (see MA+ Licensure programs below).

**CONTACT FOR ECED LICENSURE plus MA PROGRAM:** Dr. Violet Henderson [violeth@nmsu.edu](mailto:violeth@nmsu.edu)

**Certificate Program:** ECED Alternative License: NMSU provides a New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) approved alternative licensure certification program for persons with at least a baccalaureate degree but without a traditional educator preparation program. Candidates for this program qualify for the Alternative Licensure Program on the "condition" that a full-time teacher of record in a PreK to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Public Education Department (PED) approved district, charter, or private school setting has been secured. This pathway is a 21-credit program with the option to pursue a master's degree by completing an additional 12 credits.

**CONTACT FOR ECED ALTERNATIVE LICENSE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM:** Dr. Cecilia Hernandez [cecimh@nmsu.edu](mailto:cecimh@nmsu.edu)

### ~~~~~ **Master's Degree Exit Requirement**

Master's degree students pursuing the Scholarly Master's degree in Early Childhood Education complete either a written exam or action research project. The master's exam is a written exam administered during the final semester. The action research project is carried out during a special Early Childhood section of EDUC 5170 Action Research Projects typically offered during spring semesters.

The Master's Plus Licensure and Alternative Licensure teacher candidates complete an Evidence of Student Learning Portfolio during their student teaching seminar in their final semester as their capstone project.





## Checklist for the Master of Arts Programs

### First Semester

\_\_\_\_ **Contact** your advisor to introduce yourself and discuss any questions.

\_\_\_\_ **Read** the NMSU Graduate Catalog for Graduate School requirements and opportunities such as scholarships. In addition, you can find the complete early childhood education course descriptions in the catalog. <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/>

**NOTE:** Graduate students are beholden to Graduate School policies and are responsible for knowing deadlines, rules, and academic expectations.

### Within First Year

\_\_\_\_ **Submit** a *Transfer of Credit* form if you have graduate level coursework that aligns with your program, is under 7 years old, and signed by your faculty advisor.

<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>

### Final Semester

\_\_\_\_ **Complete either:**

- ✓ Complete a MA Exam or Action Research Project for *traditional Scholarly Master's Program*.
- ✓ Complete a semester of student teaching and Evidence of Student Learning Portfolio for *Master's Plus Licensure* capstone project.
- ✓ Complete Evidence of Student Learning Portfolio for *Alternative Licensure Certificate* capstone project.

\_\_\_\_ **File** the *Application for Degree* Form during the registration period of your final semester (<https://commencement.nmsu.edu/apply-to-graduate/>)



## Master of Arts in Education/ Early Childhood Education (Scholarly, Non-licensure)

The MA program with a concentration in Early Childhood Education is for persons with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a closely related field who are already teaching or working in early childhood settings. This advanced degree prepares the early childhood professional for advanced practice in teacher education, engagement with applied research, staff development, work with families, program management and commitment to issues, and analysis and advocacy related to early childhood education. **CONTACT FOR ECED MA PROGRAM: Dr. Rhianna Thomas**  
[thomasrk@nmsu.edu](mailto:thomasrk@nmsu.edu)

Minimum Number of Credits: 33

Semester	FULLTIME PROGRAM
Fall 1	ECED 6110: History and Philosophy of ECED (3 credit hours, 8-week course) ECED 5310: Issues in Early Childhood Education (3 credit hours, 8-week course)
Spring 1	ECED 5520: Literacy Development in Early Childhood (3 credit hours, 8-week course) ECED 5110: Working with Young Children with Diverse Abilities (3 credit hours, 8-week course)
Summer	BLER 5120: The Bilingual Preschool Child (3 credit hours, 5-week course) ECED 5210: Leadership and Advocacy in ECED (3 credit hours, 5-week course) ECED 5130: Working with Parents of Young Children (3 credit hours, 5-week course) ECED 5220: Play in the Early Childhood Classroom (3 credit hours, 5-week course)
Fall 2	EDUC 5120: Multicultural Education (3 credit hours, 8-week and 16-week options) EDUC 5140: Research in Curriculum & Pedagogy (3 credit hours, 8-week and 16-week options)
Spring 2	EDUC 5170: Action Research Project (taken your last semester) (3 credit hours, 16-week course)





## Master of Arts in Education Plus Licensure in Early Childhood Education

The School of Teacher Preparation, Administration & Leadership at New Mexico State University offers a 39-credit Master of Arts in Education Plus Licensure in Early Childhood Education for individuals who have completed a bachelor's degree. The program is designed to meet the professional education course requirements for teacher licensure as a part of a Master of Arts in Education degree program. A full-time student can complete the program in 2 years. **PROGRAM COORDINATOR - Dr. Violet Henderson** ([violeth@nmsu.edu](mailto:violeth@nmsu.edu))

Credits 39

### Program Requirements:

- Minimum of 2.75 GPA in undergraduate degree
- Apply through NMSU Graduate School, NMSU-Global, <https://global.nmsu.edu/degree-programs>
- Degree - **Master of Arts in Education + Early Childhood Teacher Licensure**
- Complete TPAL Core Courses which are prerequisites for TEP/Licensure Courses; TEP portfolio should be submitted during the semester in which you are completing the TPAL Core Courses.
  - EDUC 5120: Multicultural Education
  - EDUC 5140: Research in Curriculum and Pedagogy

### Admission to the Teacher Education Program (TEP):

- During first semester of enrollment obtain application information at <https://tpal.nmsu.edu/admissions/tep-admission.html>
- Make an appointment with Program Director to complete a Program of Study prior to submitting TEP Portfolio <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>
- Submit TEP portfolio in online portal no later than **12:00 noon (MST)**. TEP portfolio must be successfully reviewed prior to enrolling in Teaching Methods Courses.
- TEP Deadlines:
  - Fall – 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of September
  - Spring - 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of February
  - Summer - 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of July

### Completing Teacher Education Courses:

- Complete ECED Licensure Course Work
- Complete two (2) ECED Electives
- Complete one (1) semester of Student Teaching
- Maintain 3.0 GPA throughout program

### Student Teaching

- One semester prior to student teaching, obtain STEP information at <https://tpal.nmsu.edu/degree-programs/undergraduate-programs/stia.html>
- Meet with the Program Director to review Program of Study on file
- Submit Student Teaching Packet (STEP):
  - Fall – 1st Friday in October
  - Spring – 1st Friday in March
- Student Teaching Semester - must be completed during the final semester
  - Complete 16-week Student Teaching Internship plus Seminar



- o Successful compilation of required Evidence of Student Learning portfolio

### Program Course Work

Semester	Course	Credits
<i>TPAL Core Courses</i>		
Fall or Spring	EDUC 5120: Multicultural Education (mini-semester 1)	3
	EDUC 5140: Research in Curriculum and Pedagogy (mini-semester 2)	3
<i>ECED Licensure Course Work</i>		
Fall only (includes 100 hrs. of practicum)	ECED 5510: Advanced Teaching & Learning for Literacy	3
	ECED 5420: Science/Math Curriculum	3
Spring only	ECED 5520: Literacy Development in Early Childhood (mini-semester 1)	3
	ECED 5110: Working w/ Young Children w/ Diverse Abilities, Ages 3-8 (mini-semester 2)	3
Summer only	ECED 5410: Child Development, Assessment & Well-being of YC	3
	ECED 5220: Play in the Early Childhood Curriculum	3
<i>ECED Electives- Choose two from the list below to be taken at any time during the program</i>		
Summer only	BLED 5120: Bilingual Preschool Child	3
Summer only	ECED 5130: Working w/ Families of Young Children	3
Summer only	ECED 5210: Leadership and Advocacy in ECED	3
Fall only	ECED 6110: History and Philosophy of ECED (mini-semester 1)	3
Fall only	ECED 5310: Issues in Early Childhood Education (mini-semester 2)	3
<i>Student Teaching</i>		
Fall or Spring	ECED 5810: Student Teaching Seminar	3
	SPED 5870: Early Childhood Student Teaching	6
		Total Credits 39

Once you have completed the courses listed above and licensure exams you are eligible to apply for an early childhood teaching license through New Mexico Public Education Department.

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/licensure/>



## Early Childhood Education Alternative Licensure Certificate Program

The Early Childhood Alternative Licensure Graduate Certificate is for persons who have completed a bachelor's degree and are working or have proof of a current job offer as a teacher of record in a PreK to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Public Education Department (PED) approved district, charter, or private school setting. The program is designed to meet the professional education course requirements for teacher licensure as a part of a graduate certificate program at New Mexico State University.

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR - Dr. Cecilia Hernandez** ([cecimh@nmsu.edu](mailto:cecimh@nmsu.edu))

Minimum Number of Credits: 21

### Program Requirements:

- Admission to the NMSU Graduate School
- Acceptance and enrollment in the School of Teacher Preparation, Administration & Leadership Alternative Licensure program
- Employed by PED approved district, charter, or private school in the state of New Mexico as teacher of record in grade levels; PreK to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- GPA of 2.75 or higher in bachelor's degree

Semester	Course	Credits
<i>ECED Licensure Course Work</i>		
<i>Fall</i>	ECED 5510: Advanced Teaching & Learning for Literacy	3
	ECED 5420: Science/Math Curriculum	3
<i>Spring</i>	ECED 5520: Literacy Development in Early Childhood (mini-semester 1)	3
	ECED 5110: Working w/ Young Children w/ Diverse Abilities, Ages 3-8 (mini-semester 2)	3
<i>Summer</i>	ECED 5410: Child Development, Assessment & Well-being of YC	3
	ECED 5220: Play in the Early Childhood Curriculum	3
<i>Fall or Spring</i>	ECED 5810: Student Teaching Seminar	3
		Total Credits 21

### Additional Requirements:

- Complete 4 observations in two consecutive semesters (fees assessed)
- Successful compilation of required Evidence of Student Learning portfolio
- \*Option to complete a Masters of Arts in Education by taking an additional 12 credits which include EDUC 5120, EDUC 5140 and two courses from ECED Graduate Electives.



## Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships are available through the School of Teacher Preparation, Administration, and Leadership, the Department of Curriculum & Instruction.

- **ELIGIBILITY:** Applicants must be admitted for graduate study at New Mexico State University. Students with experience as educators will be given priority in appointments to assistantships. Because of the strong commitment of New Mexico State University, the College of Education, and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to diversity in education, persons from underrepresented groups are especially encouraged to apply.
- **STIPEND:** Stipends are for a nine-month appointment (Fall and Spring semesters).
- **SPECIAL BENEFIT:** All graduate assistants pay only resident tuition fees during their appointments.
- **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Assistants typically work 10-20 hours per week. Duties may be in the areas of instruction, research, or administration. Most assistants are assigned instructional responsibilities such as supervising undergraduates' field experiences, teaching lower-division courses, or assisting a professor with research activities.
- **COURSE LOAD:** Assistants must enroll in 9 hours of graduate coursework per semester.
- **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** To obtain an application, contact the Department of Curriculum & Instruction. Applications should be submitted to the department by March 15 for the following fall semester. The candidate should be admitted to the university for graduate studies and submit an application, a curriculum vita, and three letters of reference to:

Department Head  
School of TPAL  
Attention: Graduate Assistantships  
New Mexico State University  
MSC 3CUR  
Las Cruces, NM 88003-0001



## Forms

Forms mentioned in this handbook can be obtained online from the NMSU Graduate School  
<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>.

**Transfer of [Graduate] Credit form:** If you wish to transfer graduate credits into your degree program from other accredited universities outside of New Mexico State University, you will need to fill out this form and turn it into your faculty advisor as soon as possible. In most instances, you must provide the syllabus and related materials of the course you would like considered for transfer. Please also identify the NMSU course equivalent by researching course descriptions in the NMSU Graduate Catalog.

<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/>

**Degree Audit Exception Form:** If you got approval from your advisor to replace a required course, or your courses differ from the online degree audit, you will need to complete this form with the help of your advisor.

<https://apply.nmsu.edu/register/?id=8427a8e3-bfa7-40b1-85a9-42fa9b0bc817>



## Q & A for the School of TPAL Master's Degree Programs

***What can I expect from my academic advisor?*** You are notified by letter that a faculty advisor has been assigned to you. This information comes in your acceptance letter from the School of TPAL. You can expect advisor assistance in navigating your degree pathway. Each student must chart their own path with help from their academic advisors and the NMSU Catalog <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/nmsu-online/#hybridprogramstext>

***Is there a time limit to transfer credits into my program?*** Any coursework more than seven years old at the time of the final examination will not be included in the program.

***What kind of grades do I need to earn?*** Throughout the program, you must maintain a 3.0 in all graduate coursework. You must earn a minimum of a C in each course or that course must be repeated.

***What if I get sick or need to leave the university for a while?*** Students who are working on advanced degrees and have an interruption in studies must request a leave of absence through the department head or directors. Students submit a formal letter through their department head to the Dean of the Graduate School; an email will not be accepted. The request should include the beginning date and the anticipated ending date for the period of absence. Time spent in the "leave-of-absence" status will not be counted toward the degree time limits. A graduate student who fails to obtain a leave of absence from the Graduate School will be considered withdrawn from the university.

***Where do I find information on resources, funding opportunities, ethical standards, the graduate calendar, and graduation?*** The NMSU Graduate School website has important information for current students. <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu>

***Can I use my own email address for communication?*** No, students are required to use their assigned NMSU email account and check their account regularly for official correspondence relating to student status. Students are responsible for reading and responding to communications sent to their NMSU email account.

***How many years do I have to complete my master's degree?*** Students must complete the master's degree program within seven years (or eight successive summers) of the start of the degree, including completion of the master's thesis or final project/exam.

***How many years do I have to complete the Alternative Licensure program?*** The New Mexico Public Education Department issues an alternative license for two years. A one-year extension may be applied for through the NMPED.