

Buena Vista University established a graduate program with the master of science in education degree in 1996. The online master of education degree programs, established in 2005, are designed to provide working professionals with opportunities to deepen their understanding of current educational best practice, and to broaden their knowledge base as educational practitioners and leaders.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION (M.S.ED.) – SCHOOL GUIDANCE & COUNSELING

The Master of Science in Education Program is intended to enhance the skills of practicing professionals that they might become effective school counselors. The North Central Association for Colleges and Secondary Schools and the Iowa Department of Education accredits the program and courses. Licensure in school guidance and counseling includes the K-6 and 7-12 levels. A minimum of 37 credit hours is required in the program. The program can be completed within three years, during which the student accumulates graduate credit through course work delivered during summers and evenings. In keeping with the practical orientation of the program, the major involves supervised field experiences within the student's own work setting.

Application Time-line

A new program cycle begins each summer on the Monday of the first full week in June.

Applicants are encouraged to submit application materials as early as possible, but no later than the April 15 deadline preceding the first summer course. The Admissions Committee will review completed applications following the April 15 deadline, and notice regarding the admission decision will be mailed by April 25. The application materials are available online or upon request from:

Buena Vista University
Graduate Studies Office
610 W. Fourth Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588
Phone: 800.383.2821, ext. 2162
E-mail: grad@bvu.edu

Admission Requirements

- Bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree, completed prior to start of summer courses.
- A minimum undergraduate college grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale)

- The BVU Analytic Writing Assessment (administered by BVU staff on campus and BVU Professional & Online Studies locations)
- Three letters of recommendation from specified sources
- Official transcripts from all undergraduate or graduate institutions attended
- Access to minimum technology requirements
- Acceptance by the Admissions Committee into the program

** Note: Preference will be given to candidates who have an education background or school based work experience.*

*** Note: Applicants for Iowa Counseling License are not required to hold a bachelor's degree in education, nor a teaching license. Non-education majors must complete two undergraduate education courses to obtain the counseling license: Exceptional Learner (or an equivalent course in special education) and Classroom Management. Each course must be a minimum of two credits each. The additional state requirement for Human Relations is met through GEDU 544.*

Admission Procedures

Online and printable application forms are available at www.bvu.edu/grad, through links on the "Apply Now" page. Submitting applications through our web site is preferred, but applications by mail are acceptable.

1. Complete the application form, including autobiographical statements. The three autobiographical questions are:
 - Describe significant personal experiences that influenced you to pursue the counseling profession
 - Describe significant professional experiences that influenced you to pursue the counseling profession
 - Discuss how you would make a contribution as a school counselor to the counseling profession, both within a local school district and the profession at large
2. Obtain three letters with supportive endorsement or recommendation from:
 - Your current supervisor
 - A professional colleague, and
 - A person of your choice who has direct knowledge of your professional experience.
 Recommendation forms are available online in a .pdf (Adobe Acrobat) format or by mail
3. Request official transcripts be forwarded to the Graduate Program Office

4. Prepare for and take the BVU Analytical Writing Assessment Test, as arranged by the graduate assistant following submission of the application

Contact Information

Graduate Program, Box 2980
 Buena Vista University
 610 W. Fourth Street
 Storm Lake, IA 50588

Toll-Free: 800.383.2821, ext. 2162
 Direct: 712.749.2162
 FAX: 712.749.1468
 E-mail: grad@bvu.edu
 Web site: www.bvu.edu/grad

Admission Decisions

The Admissions Committee of the program makes admission decisions. The committee is made up of three individuals, including the assistant dean of education and graduate studies and two graduate faculty members from the School of Education who are approved by the dean of the school.

Upon receiving application materials, an admissions packet is compiled by the administrative assistant of the Graduate Program. The completed admissions packet is forwarded to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies, who screens the applicants to ensure that they meet the admission requirements itemized above. If requirements are met, the application packet is submitted to the Admissions Committee for review. Each member of the committee submits a recommendation with regard to admission. A simple majority vote of the three members determines the decision. The result of the decision is communicated to the applicant in writing.

All students are admitted to the program on a provisional status. Students must earn a grade of “B” or better in all course work in the completion of the nine-credit hour core (GEDU 519: Professional Orientation to School Guidance and Counseling, GEDU 546: Methods in School Guidance and Counseling, and GEDU 544: Social and Cultural Foundations of School Counseling). Students successfully completing this core will be granted full candidacy in the program. Students admitted on a provisional status who do not earn a minimum grade of “B” or better in all course work while on provisional status will be reviewed by the Graduate Council and may be dismissed from the program. The provisional status agreement is communicated to the applicant in writing.

Transfer of Graduate Credit

Only students who are in good standing as graduate students at a regionally accredited institution are eligible to apply as graduate transfer students. Transfer credit guidelines are applicable to both

degree-seeking (master’s degree) and non-degree seeking (licensure only) candidates.

Transfer of credits is limited as follows:

- No more than nine semester hours of credit may be transferred into the student’s program. The Admissions Committee will examine the courses for similarity of content and will approve or disapprove the transfer by a simple majority vote
- Transfer credit must consist of course work that has been obtained from an accredited graduate program within the past eight years
- Only course work with an obtained grade of “B” (3.0) or above may be transferred

The acceptance of the full nine credit hours is conditional on the applicability of the requested credit to the student’s planned degree program. The student must request, in writing, consideration of potential transfer credit to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies. If the student chooses to pursue transfer of credit, he or she must provide the Admissions Committee with an official transcript along with a catalog description and/or syllabus of the course or courses from the offering institution.

Only work evaluated “B” or above is acceptable for transfer credit and applicable to a specific master’s in education degree specialty area. Course work taken for ungraded credit cannot be used toward a degree. Official transcripts must show that the credit is at the graduate level. No transfer credit will be accepted for courses taken by correspondence.

Courses will be prescribed in lieu of specific requirements for those who have already completed these requirements at another institution.

After completing graduate courses at Buena Vista University, a student seeking to take a course elsewhere and transfer it to the program must secure the prior approval of the assistant dean of education and graduate studies that the course meets the conditions described above, with a copy of the approval note filed in the Graduate Office.

Buena Vista University has the option of not accepting transfer credit from a regionally accredited institution for courses offered by that institution in a state outside of the state where the institution has its home campus.

Retention Policies

Following successful completion of the first three courses, the student must continue to maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 in order to remain in good standing. If the cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0 at the end of any semester, the student may continue to attend for one more semester with the approval of the Graduate Council. If, following approval to continue through a

probationary period, the CGPA has been raised to 3.0, the student may continue with the program in good standing. Students who fail to improve to the level of good standing after one semester of probation will be dismissed from the program. Courses with a grade lower than "C" do not count toward the degree and must be repeated.

The structure of the curricular offerings necessitates that students maintain active continuous enrollment in the program. If students find it necessary to skip a semester offering, they may maintain good standing if the course can be made up at a later time. However, if the student fails to enroll for two consecutive semesters, he or she will be classified as inactive and advisory services will be curtailed.

If, for whatever reason, a student fails to engage in continuous enrollment (as defined above), he or she must petition the Graduate Council for consideration for re-admittance. The petition must be done formally in writing to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies, and must outline the student's request and plan for program completion. Depending on the circumstances of a student's departure from the program and the availability of space in the current cohorts, the Graduate Council may provide varied recommendations and requirements for re-admittance. Students will be notified in writing, of the council's decision and re-entry requirements.

Technology

BVU's graduate program uses computer technology to deliver course information over the internet through e-mail and web sites. Student access, whether at home or school, is essential to graduate study at Buena Vista University.

Recommended Computer Hardware & Software Requirements:

- A PC with a Pentium IV processor or newer or a Macintosh with a G3 or newer processor
- 512MB or RAM or more
- Windows XP or Vista or Macintosh OS X
- Internet Explorer 6 or Mozilla FireFox 2
- Internet Access with DSL or Cable Modem
- Access to Microsoft Office XP, 2003, or 2007 on Windows or Macrosoft Office 2001, 2004, or 2008 for the Macintosh. (Word, Excel, and PoserPoint programs required)

Minimum Requirements:

- A PC with a Pentium II processor running at 450 MHZ or higher OR a Macintosh PowerPC running at 300 MHZ or faster (G3 or faster recommended)
- 96MB of RAM (128 MB or higher recommended)
- Windows 98, ME, 2000, or XP operating system (Windows 2000 or XP recommended) or Macintosh 8.6 OS or higher

- Internet Explorer 5.0 or Netscape Communicator 4.7 or higher
- Access to an internet service provider at 56kbps or faster speed
- Access to Microsoft Office 2000 or XP on Windows or Microsoft Office 98 or 2001 for the Macintosh. (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint programs required)

Students who do not have recent versions of Microsoft Office may purchase the software at significant savings through an agreement between BVU and Microsoft. A student ID is required. For information go to click on the Student Benefits link at www2.bvu.edu/academics/grad/resources.asp.

Course Delivery and Schedule

The program is scheduled so that it will be accessible to teachers and others with full-time employment. Two courses will be offered each summer, while one course will be delivered each fall and spring semester. The program will require three years to complete, assuming the student maintains consistent enrollment.

Each summer, graduate students come to the Buena Vista University campus for two 2-week courses to complete six hours of graduate instruction during the month of June. Classes meet Monday through Thursday (eight days total) for six hours per day for each three credit hour course. The format and content of the courses that are offered on campus in the summer is conducive to research study in the library, access to the Information Technology Center, "hands-on" preparation of materials, integrated computer laboratory experiences and real time interaction with peers and the graduate faculty.

During the first two fall and spring semesters, one course will be taught via a combination of ICN, on-line and face to face instruction. The classes meet one evening per week for three-hour sessions. One or two six-hour Saturday sessions may be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor to allow face-to-face instruction for certain assignments. This course format meets the 45 contact hours required per graduate course.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION

The 2008-2009 tuition cost for the program is \$313 per credit hour. Registration for the two summer courses (six credit hours) occurs at orientation for new students and through Campus Connect for returning students. Registration and payment for all courses must occur prior to the first class meeting.

Methods of payment include check, MasterCard, Discover, Visa, online through Campus Connect, by

mail, phone, or in person at the Business Office. Contact the Business Office at 800.383.2821, ext. 2041, or mail to Business Office, Buena Vista University, 610 W. Fourth St., Storm Lake, IA 50588.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Year One:

- GEDU 519 Professional & Ethical Orientation to School Counseling - Summer I
- GEDU 546 Methods in School Guidance & Counseling - Summer II
- GEDU 544 Social and Cultural Foundations of School Counseling - Fall
- GEDU 543 Administration of Comprehensive Guidance in the Schools - Spring

Year Two:

- GEDU 527 Developmental Assessment & Guidance Curriculum in School Counseling- Summer I
- GEDU 548 Group Guidance & Counseling in the Schools - Summer II
- GEDU 528 Action Research, Data Analysis, & Informational Resources - Fall
- GEDU 529 Human Development & Learning in the School and Family - Summer I

Year Three:

- GEDU 549 Career Development & Assessment in the Schools - Spring
- GEDU 538 Consultation, Leadership & Advocacy Roles in School Counseling - Summer II
- GEDU 551 Supervised Prepracticum in School Counseling - Fall
- GEDU 547 Elementary Field Practicum - Spring or
- GEDU 550 Secondary Field Practicum - Spring and
- GEDU 555 Capstone Professional Portfolio in School Counseling

* Additional practicums for those seeking K-12 licensure are offered on an arranged basis

Application for School Counseling License

Upon satisfactory completion of the appropriate program, the Buena Vista University School of Education licensure officer will recommend the student for Counseling License from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. The recommendation is contingent upon the successful completion of the specific program requirements (K-6, 7-12) and application for licensure and fee submitted by the student to BVU's certification officer. Applications are available on the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners web site (www.state.ia.us/boee) or from the graduate office.

Licensure Only Admissions

Persons who have completed a master's degree may be eligible for licensure in school guidance and counseling. An analysis of the applicant's graduate transcript(s) is necessary to determine the courses that are needed to obtain the license. Individuals interested in licensure only may contact the Graduate Office at 800.383.2821 extension 2162 for further information and to arrange for a graduate transcript analysis. Licensure only candidates must take at least six hours of course work from BVU, not including the practicum and capstone experiences, in order to be recommended for licensure. That is, students are not allowed to enroll in only the practicum or capstone experiences in order to be recommended.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION (M.S.ED.) - CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION WITH EMPHASIS IN READING

The master of science in education (M.S.ED.). This program is a joint effort by Buena Vista University (BVU) and Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency 8. Only teachers involved in a reading improvement program in their respective schools are eligible for the program. (Please contact the Buena Vista University Graduate Office to determine your eligibility for this program.) The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the Iowa Department of Education accredits the program and courses. This is a partnership program that allows one to obtain the K-6 Iowa Reading Endorsement (24 hours) or to continue with an additional 12 hours for the master's degree. In keeping with the practical orientation, the program involves school based coursework and applications.

Admission Requirements

- Bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree, completed prior to start
- Official transcripts from all undergraduate or graduate institutions accepted
- A minimum undergraduate college grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale
- Application form
- Three letters of recommendation from specified sources
- The Buena Vista University Analytic Writing Assessment
- Acceptance to the program by the Admissions Committee

Course Registration and Tuition

Course registration occurs through AEA who notifies BVU Graduate Office.

The 2008-2009 tuition cost for the reading endorsement and master's degree is \$313 per credit hour.

Course Delivery and Schedule

Courses taken for graduate credit will be offered at the appropriate school/AEA 8 training site or on the Buena Vista University Storm Lake campus. Course delivery is primarily face-to-face. Some courses may be offered in either an on-line or ICN format.

Transfer of Graduate Credit

- No more than a total of nine graduate credit hours, six of which may be professional development credit hours taken as graduate credit, may be transferred into the program from an outside institution.
- Transfer credit must consist of coursework that has been obtained from an accredited graduate program within the past eight years.
- Only graduate coursework with an obtained grade of "B" (3.0) or above may be transferred.

The acceptance of the full nine hours is conditional on the applicability to the student's planned degree program. The student must be accepted for admissions and working on a specific master's degree at Buena Vista University in order to receive consideration for eligible transfer credit.

Only work evaluated "B" or above is acceptable for transfer credit and applicable to a specific Master of Science in Education degree specialty area. Official transcripts must show that the credit is at the graduate level. No transfer credit will be accepted for courses taken by correspondence.

A BVU graduate student desiring to take a course elsewhere and transfer it as part of his/her program must secure prior approval of the assistant dean of education and graduate studies. Approval signifies that the course meets the conditions described above. A copy of the approval letter must be filed in the Graduate Office.

Technology

Buena Vista University's graduate programs use computer technology to deliver course information over the Internet through e-mail and web sites. Student access, whether at home or school is essential to graduate study at BVU.

Recommended Computer Hardware & Software Requirements:

- A PC with a Pentium IV processor or newer or a Macintosh with a G3 or newer processor
- 512MB or RAM or more
- Windows XP or Vista or Macintosh OS X

- Internet Explorer 6 or Mozilla FireFox 2
- Internet Access with DSL or Cable Modem
- Access to Microsoft Office XP, 2003, or 2007 on Windows or Macrosoft Office 2001, 2004, or 2008 for the Macintosh. (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint programs required)

Minimum Requirements:

- A PC with a Pentium II processor running at 450 MHZ or higher OR a Macintosh PowerPC running at 300 MHZ or faster (G3 or faster is recommended)
- 96 MB of RAM (128 MB or higher recommended)
- Windows 98, ME 2000 or XP operating system (Windows 2000 or XP recommended) or Macintosh 8.6 OS or higher
- Internet Explorer 5.0 or Netscape Communicator 4.7 or higher
- Access to an Internet Service Provider at 56kbps or faster speed
- Access to Microsoft Office 2000 or XP on Windows or Microsoft Office 98 or 2001 for the Macintosh (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint programs required)

Students who do not have recent versions of Microsoft Office may purchase the software at significant savings through an agreement between Buena Vista University and Microsoft. A student ID is required. For information go to www2.bvu.edu/academics/grad/resources.asp and click on the Student Benefits link.

Retention

Following successful completion of the first three courses, the student must continue to maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 in order to remain in good standing. If the cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0 at the end of any semester, the student may continue to attend for one more semester with the approval of the Graduate Council. If, following approval to continue through a probationary period, the CGPA has been raised to 3.0, the student may continue with the program in good standing. Students who fail to improve to the level of good standing after one semester of probation will be dismissed from the program. Courses with a grade lower than "C" do not count toward the degree and must be repeated.

Because the school based courses will not be available after the school's reading improvement initiative is completed, continuous enrollment in this program is necessary for completion.

Degree Requirements

- GRDG 511 Foundations of Reading
- GRDG 512 Implementing a Comprehensive Reading Program
- GRDG 521 Reading in the Content Area

- GRDG 522 Exploring Informational Texts
- GRDG 531 Practicum I Guided Reading
- GRDG 532 Practicum II
- GRDG 541 Language Development
- GRDG 551 Oral Communication
- GRDG 552 Written Communication
- GRDG 553 Word Journeys
- GRDG 554 The Elementary Writing Process or
 - GRDG 555 Introduction to the 6+ Traits of Writing for Teaching and Assessing Composition
- GRDG 561 Policies and Practices of Reading Assessment, Diagnosis and Evaluation
- GRDG 562 Reading Assessment, Diagnosis and Evaluation
- GRDG 571 Children’s Literature – Fiction and Non-Fiction
- GRDG 581 Reading Instructional Strategies
- GRDG 582 Vocabulary Instructional Strategies
- GRDG 583 Fluency Instructional Strategies
- GRDG 584 Phonemic Awareness/Phonics Instructional Strategies
- GRDG 585 Comprehension Instructional Strategies – Read Aloud, Talk Aloud and Think Aloud
- GRDG 586 Comprehensive Instructional Strategies – Picture Word Inductive Model
- GEDU 510 Introduction to Graduate Studies and Research
- GEDU 517 Social and Cultural Foundations of Education
- GEDU 518 Assessment and Evaluation of Classroom Learning
- GEDU 542 Human Growth and Development in School and Family

MASTER OF EDUCATION (M.ED.) - CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

WITH EMPHASIS IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP OR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The master of education in curriculum and instruction program is an online program intended to enhance the skills of practicing professionals. The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the Iowa Department of Education accredits the program and courses. Within the program, students choose one of two tracks, effective teaching and instructional leadership or teaching english as a second language. The teaching English as a second language track also includes the option of earning an endorsement in the area, from the State of Iowa. The program requires 30-31 credit hours of

study, and can be completed in as little as two years. In keeping with the practical orientation of the program, the program curriculum involves field experiences and application opportunities within the student’s own work setting.

Application Time-line

Applications to the program are accepted on a continual basis, with students being allowed to begin the program during the first available course cycle after acceptance into the program. The Admissions Committee will review completed application files and will notify candidates in writing of their status. The application materials are available online. For assistance with completing application forms for the online program contact:

BVU Online
 Buena Vista University
 610 W. Fourth Street
 Storm Lake, IA 50588
 Phone: 877.288.0423
 E-mail: bvunonline@bvu.edu

Criteria for Full Admission

- Completed application packet.
- Completed undergraduate degree from an accredited institution. An official transcript denoting the degree awarded must be submitted as part of the application package
- A minimum cumulative undergraduate college grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale)*
- Submission of a writing sample/autobiography (see application procedures below)
- Three letters of recommendation from specified sources (see application)
- Official transcripts from all undergraduate or graduate institutions attended
- Copy of a valid K-12 teaching certificate or license. Candidates must have appropriate access to a classroom in order to be successful in this program, due to its practical and application oriented nature
- Access to minimum technology requirements.
- Acceptance by the Admissions Committee into the program
- Applicants who cannot meet this requirement may be considered for probationary admission status and may enroll in up to nine credit hours of graduate study at BVU. These applicants will be reviewed at that time and pending successful completion of these nine credit hours (at least a “B” in each course), may be granted full status

Admission Procedures

Online and printable application forms are available at www.bvu.edu/online, through links on the “Apply Now” page. Applications for this program are submitted online. For any assistance with the application process contact the BVU Online Office.

The process for successful completion of the application packet is as follows:

1. Complete the application form, including written responses (please limit responses to approximately 250-300 words each) to the following questions:
 - Why are you applying to this program at this time?
 - How do you plan to contribute to this program? What do you expect to take from it?
 - How will support your own success in this program. That is, what steps will you take to ensure your success in this academically rigorous endeavor?

Candidates are advised that these written responses ought to reflect both depth and breadth of understanding and/or interest in the program. These statements are considered by the Admissions Committee as a writing sample indicative of the candidate's command of the English language, ability to engage in graduate level writing both mechanical and conceptual/analytical, and the applicant's readiness for graduate study.

2. Obtain three letters with supportive endorsement or recommendation from:
 - Your current supervisor
 - A professional peer, and
 - A person of your choice who has direct knowledge of your professional experienceRecommendation forms are available online in a .pdf (Adobe Acrobat) format.
3. Request official transcripts to be forwarded to the Graduate Studies program. If you are a graduate of Buena Vista University, we can access those documents for you.
4. Submit an application processing fee of \$50 with completed application.

Admission Decisions

Upon receiving ALL application materials, an admissions packet is compiled by the BVU Online Office. The completed admissions packet is forwarded to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies, who screens the applicants to ensure that they meet the admission requirements itemized above. If requirements are met, the application packet is submitted to the Admissions Committee for review. The result of the decision is communicated to the applicant in writing. Students must confirm acceptance to BVU Online in response to the acceptance notification.

All students are admitted to the program on a provisional status. Students must earn a grade of "B" or better in all coursework in the completion of the

first nine credit hours of coursework attempted. Students meeting this criteria will be granted full candidacy in the program. Students admitted on a provisional status who do not earn a minimum grade of "B" or better in all coursework while on provisional status will be reviewed by the Graduate Council and may be dismissed from the program. The provisional status agreement is communicated to the applicant in writing.

Special Admissions Status

Students may be allowed to take a single graduate level course from BVU. Candidates must be granted special permission to do so from the assistant dean of education and graduate studies, and permission to do so will be only granted if there is course space available, with full admission candidates given first priority for registration in these courses. Candidates interested in this status must submit all previous official transcripts, provide a copy of a valid teaching license, and send a request in writing to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies for consideration to take courses on this status. Students may be granted special admissions status for up to nine credit hours of course work. Students will not be allowed to continue enrollment after this time until full admission is sought and gained.

Admissions Appeal

Students may appeal a negative admission decision. A formal letter of appeal must be written to the vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty at BVU, outlining the concerns regarding the admissions decision. The case is forwarded to the appeals panel comprised of the associate dean of faculty, the vice president for enrollment and student services, and the assistant dean of education and graduate studies. The student may request an interview with the panel. After review of the evidence provided by the applicant, the panel makes a second ruling with regard to admission.

Advising

If the admissions decision is positive, the applicant is notified and an advisor is assigned by the assistant dean of education and graduate studies to assist the student (in most cases, the assistant dean of education and graduate studies acts as the initial advisor).

Transfer of Graduate Credit

Only students who are in good standing as graduate students at a regionally accredited institution are eligible to apply as graduate transfer students. Transfer credit guidelines are applicable to both degree-seeking (master's degree) and non-degree seeking (licensure only) candidates.

Transfer of credits is limited as follows:

- No more than six credit hours may be transferred into the student’s program. The Admissions Committee will examine the courses for similarity of content and will approve or disapprove the transfer by a simple majority vote.
- Transfer credit must consist of course work that has been obtained from an accredited graduate program within the past eight years.
- Only course work with an obtained grade of “B” (3.0) or above may be transferred.
- No transfer credit will be granted for the required introductory course, GEDU 510 Introduction to Graduate Study

The acceptance of the full six credit hours is conditional on the applicability of the requested credit to the student’s planned degree program. The student must request, in writing, consideration of potential transfer credit to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies. Only work evaluated “B” or above is acceptable for transfer credit and applicable to a specific master’s in education degree specialty area. Course work taken for ungraded credit cannot be used toward a degree. Official transcripts must show that the credit is at the graduate level. No transfer credit will be accepted for courses taken by correspondence.

If students wish to seek graduate credit from an institution while enrolled at Buena Vista University and the student wishes that coursework credit to be applied to his/her current program of studies, the transfer student must secure the prior approval of the assistant dean of education and graduate studies. This is to ensure that that the course meets the conditions described above. A copy of the approval note will be filed in the Graduate Office.

If the student chooses to pursue transfer of credit, he or she must provide the Admissions Committee with an official transcript along with a catalog description of the course or courses from the offering institution. Students must request that a specific course be considered for transfer credit for a specific course within the BVU program of studies. Requests for blanket consideration of entire transcripts will not be honored.

Registration and Tuition

The 2008-2009 tuition cost for the program is \$408 per credit hour for all online courses.

Tuition payment is due by the first day of the term/semester. It is the student’s responsibility to pay fees and any other financial obligations to the University as they become due. The non-payment of any financial obligation may result in the administrative withdrawal of the student or in legal action. Records (grade and academic transcript) will

be held for failure to meet payment deadlines, and the student will not be allowed to register for the next sequenced course. Student accounts may be viewed through Campus Connect at any time.

Methods of payment include check, MasterCard, Discover, Visa by mail, phone, or in person at the Business Office. Contact the Business Office at 800.383.2821, ext. 2041, or mail to Business Office, Buena Vista University, 610 W. 4th St., Storm Lake, IA 50588.

Statements concerning fees are announcements and are not to be regarded as offers to contract. The university reserves the right to change fees and other charges at any time by published notice before the opening of any semester or session.

Registration

Registration for online graduate courses is open on a rolling basis. However, space in courses may be limited. We recommend students register for courses at least four weeks prior to the start of a term to ensure availability and to allow time to order books. The schedule of courses is posted on the web at www.bvu.edu/online.

Deadlines and policies for late registration, adds, drops, and withdraws follow those established for BVU Professional & Online Studies term schedule.

Typical Course Load

The normal class load is 3 credit hours per eight week term for 5 terms per year in order to complete the minimum required 30-31 credit hours during a two-year program of study through BVU Online. Students in the online graduate program cannot take more than three credit hours per term with the exception of Term 6 (July-August) when students may enroll in a maximum of 6 credit hours.

The university reserves the right to regulate class size, add, delete, or otherwise alter the published course listings.

Retention Policies

Following successful completion of the first three courses, the student must continue to maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 in order to remain in good standing. If the cumulative grade point average drops below 3.0 at the end of any semester, the student may continue to attend for one more semester with the approval of the Graduate Council. If, following approval to continue through a probationary period, the CGPA has been raised to 3.0, the student may continue with the program in good standing. Students who fail to improve to the level of good standing after one semester of probation will be dismissed from the program. Courses with a grade lower than “C” do not count toward the degree and must be repeated. All coursework from courses must be complete and a

final grade assigned, with no outstanding circumstances such as change of grade contract, before students will be permitted to continue on in the program.

Continuous enrollment will allow a student to complete his or her M.Ed. in as little as two years. If students find it necessary to skip a term offering, they may maintain good standing if the course can be made up at a later time. However, if the student fails to enroll for more than three consecutive eight week terms, he or she will be classified as inactive and advisory services will be curtailed.

If, for whatever reason, a student fails to engage in continuous enrollment (as defined above), he or she must petition the Graduate Council for consideration for re-admittance. The petition must be submitted formally in writing to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies, and must outline the student's request and plan for program completion. Depending on the circumstances of a student's departure from the program and the availability of space in the current courses, the Graduate Council may provide varied recommendations and requirements for re-admittance. Students will be notified in writing, of the council's decision and re-entry requirements.

Attendance and Absentee Policy

Students are expected to follow the participation parameters set by each instructor. Difficulties or conflicts with this expectation should be addressed through the individual instructor for each course. Students who do not log in to the course site for a period of more than seven consecutive days may be considered as no longer attending. Access to the online course may be blocked for non-attending students and may require instructor permission to reactivate access. Students deemed to be non-attending and blocked from course access are not withdrawn from the course unless they indicate in writing

Time Limitations

All requirements submitted in fulfillment of the master of education degree requirements must have been completed within a period of eight years. These limitations will be extended only for the period of active duty of students entering the military service. The student must submit a petition upon his or her return from military service.

Correspondence Courses and Workshops

Buena Vista University does not accept any course work taken by correspondence for graduate credit.

Grading System

Graduate courses are evaluated only by letter grade; no courses for graduate credit may be taken on a pass/fail basis.

Graduation

The student must have been already admitted to candidacy, and he or she must have been recommended for graduation in the prescribed manner. Recommendations for award of the graduate degree originate with the Graduate Advisory Committee, and are acted upon by the president and the Board of Trustees.

Technology

The BVU graduate program online uses computer technology to deliver course information over the internet through a course management system. Student access, whether at home or school, is essential to successful study at Buena Vista University. Students are responsible for their own computer access that meets the minimum technical requirements for BVU Online as well as internet service of at least 56k or faster speed (high speed recommended).

For the most current technical requirements for computer hardware, check the www.bvu.edu/online web site under the "Getting Started" tab.

In addition students enrolled in a fully online program are required to pay a one time technology fee (\$80 for 2008-2009). This fee entitles the student to a personal copy of Microsoft Office Professional, SPSS, and Mathematica. Software CD-ROMS will be included with a welcome kit mailed to an enrolled student shortly after registering for the first course. This technology fee also covers access to 24X7 technical help and other technology services as part of BVU Online. The fee is not refundable after initial course registration.

Students are also required to use a current and supported web browser, such as Internet Explorer (recommended). Students may also need certain plug-ins to access multimedia files used as part of BVU Online courses. BVU Online maintains a browser checker that will determine whether your browser version is supported and if you have the necessary plug-ins. The checker will provide links to free download sites for any missing plug-ins or for supported browser versions. You should check your software configuration by pointing your browser to: www.bvu.edu/online. You will find a link to the browser checker under Technology in the middle of the page.

Degree Requirements

Master of education in curriculum and instruction (M.ED.) students in either emphasis (effective teaching and instructional leadership or teaching English as a second language) complete a common core of classes (GEDU) in addition to courses in their area of emphasis (GECI).

The common core of courses are: GEDU 510 Introduction to Graduate Study and Research, GEDU 512 Learning, Development and Motivation, GEDU

517 Social and Cultural Foundations of Education, and GEDU 518 Assessment and Evaluation of Classroom Learning.

In addition to the common core, students pursuing the effective teaching and instructional leadership complete GECI 501 Principles of Instructional Design and Curriculum Planning, GECI 502 Cognition and Instruction: Research Based Instructional Strategies, GECI 503 Differentiating Instruction for Diverse Learners, GECI 504 Professional Development and Instructional Leadership, GECI 505 Collaborating with Home, School and Community Partners, and GEDU 591 Capstone Portfolio: Effective Teaching and Instructional Leadership.

In addition to the common core, students pursuing the teaching english as a second language complete GECI 541 Second Language Acquisition for Classroom Teachers, GECI 542 Applied Linguistics, GECI 543 Methods and Curriculum Development in Teaching English as a Second Language, GECI 503 Differentiating Instruction for Diverse Learners, GECI 544 Assessment Issues in Second Language Learning, GECI 558 Practicum in Teaching English as a Second Language (K-6) or GECI 559 Practicum in Teaching English as a Second Language (7-12) and GEDU 592 Capstone Portfolio: Teaching English as a Second Language.

See Course Description section of the catalog.

GRADUATE STUDENT APPEAL PROCESS

Graduate students having concerns in the academic area are encouraged to resolve these concerns through direct communication with the professor or administrative office involved, with the assistant dean of education and graduate studies, the dean of the School of Education or the vice president for academic affairs. Often these concerns will involve a dispute over a grade. On those rare occasions when disagreements may not be resolved directly, the appeals process detailed below may be used.

Students having academic related concerns should first consult with the faculty member involved. In the case of a grade, no grade may be changed after it has been filed in the Registrar's Office except by action of the faculty member or the decision of an appeal by the vice president for academic affairs. If a grade remains uncontested for a period of six weeks into a subsequent semester/term following the date published as the official end of the semester/term, it will be assumed to be correct and will not be eligible for change. For example, a grade from the spring semester must be appealed no later than six weeks into the following fall semester.

Prior to a formal appeal, the student should discuss his/her questions with the faculty member involved. The appeal process is intended for those rare occasions when students and faculty cannot come to understanding of the faculty member's assessment of the student's work.

Steps students must take in this process must include:

1. In writing, the student identifies his/her concerns by drafting a letter indicating the course, instructor, the grade received, the grade the student believes he/she should have received, and the reasons why a grade different from the one assigned is more appropriate in his/her judgment.
2. The letter must include the student's signature and is delivered or mailed to the assistant dean of education and graduate studies.
3. Generally within a week's time, the assistant dean of education and graduate studies will meet with the student. The student should bring any related course materials from the course in question with him/her to this meeting.
4. The assistant dean of education and graduate studies will meet with the faculty person involved with the grade challenge. At this point, the faculty member may also have documents for review (papers, final exams, etc. for which the student does not have ownership).
5. Based on the materials and information from the student and faculty member, assistant dean of education and graduate studies resolves the question(s) identified in the appeal. The assistant dean of education and graduate studies may choose to ask for a meeting with the student and faculty member or consult with others as appropriate; the assistant dean of education and graduate studies decision of the appeal will be communicated in writing to the student and faculty person involved within two weeks of receiving the request for appeal from the student. If a change of grade is warranted, appropriate paperwork for a change of grade will be initiated by the assistant dean of education and graduate studies.
6. The student or faculty member in the graduate program may appeal the assistant dean of education and graduate studies' decision to the dean of the School of Education. Such an appeal must state the reason(s) and be presented in writing within two (2) class days after receiving the decision from the assistant dean of education and graduate studies and includes forwarding the paperwork the assistant dean of education and graduate studies received to the dean of the School of Education who reviews the materials and may ask for meetings with the

student and/or faculty member involved. The dean of School of Education may also need to confer with appropriate school deans or others. The dean of the School of Education communicates her/his decision in writing within two weeks of receiving the request for appeal.

7. The student or faculty member may appeal the dean of the School of Education's decision to the vice president for academic affairs (VPAA). Such an appeal must state the reason(s) and be presented in writing within two (2) class days after receiving the decision from the dean of the School of Education and includes forwarding the paperwork the dean received to the VPAA. The VPAA reviews the materials and may ask for meetings with the student and/or faculty member involved. The VPAA communicates her/his decision in writing within two weeks of receiving the request for appeal. The decision of the VPAA is final.

Student concerns which are for issues other than grades should be handled similarly. Because of the specific nature of a concern a student may have about how the interaction with a faculty member is occurring, it may be most appropriate for the student to meet with the assistant dean of education and graduate studies initially rather than first speaking to the faculty member.

GRADUATE FINANCIAL AID

Financial support for graduate education is limited in comparison to undergraduate education. Graduate financial aid in the form of student loans is available to students enrolled in at least three credits per semester. The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) must be filed annually to apply for financial aid. At this time, there are one potential source for loans for graduate education available through Buena Vista University:

- The Federal Stafford Loan program, provided by an individual lending institution from federal funds. Awards are restricted to students who are enrolled in the M.S.Ed. program as a full-time student. Full-time status is defined as continuous enrollment in the prescribed series of courses. www.fafsa.ed.gov/

Please contact the Office of Financial Aid at Buena Vista University, 800.383.2821, ext. 2164, for assistance.