



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

College of Education™

## Special Education – Autism

*Master of Education Program in Special  
Education with Autism Concentration  
&  
TTU Graduate School Certificate in  
Autism (Non-Master Degree Seeking)*

### **Handbook**

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# Special Education

## *Master of Education - Autism and Graduate School Certificate in Autism Programs Handbook*

### **Program Overview**

The M.Ed. in Special Education with a concentration in Autism is unique in that it provides students the opportunity to advance their skills through an online learning program from anywhere in the world. This concentration includes courses in applied behavior analysis (ABA), augmentative and alternative communication, and additional coursework on low-incidence disabilities. Students who complete the program will be provided with multiple opportunities to engage in *collaborative consultation for addressing social-communication, learning difficulties, and challenging behaviors* exhibited by individuals with autism. This is the *trademark outcome* for the autism concentration that many future employers seek when making hiring decisions.

### **Career Opportunities with this degree:**

Teachers with M.Ed. degree with autism concentration will be able to work in general and special education classrooms or in private agencies that provide educational services to children with autism spectrum disorders.

**\*\*\*\*\*Please note:** This specialization does not lead to any teaching certification or credential. Additionally, a teaching certificate or credential is neither required nor necessary to pursue this degree or certification.

Hello and welcome to the program! Please hold onto to the Handbook document found at [https://www.depts.ttu.edu/education/graduate/psychology-and-leadership/special\\_education\\_autism.php](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/education/graduate/psychology-and-leadership/special_education_autism.php). It is your roadmap to your masters – it lists **all** requirements – not just the required courses – so please read it carefully, take notes over it, and contact me with questions and points of discussion. On page 4 – make a similar table and add a column for you to check off the required 36 hrs of coursework. If you have procedural questions about how to register for classes through the online registration system – please contact the Registrar’s office or Student Support telephone support, or Dr. Gould (Gould, Lj [Lj.Gould@ttu.edu](mailto:Lj.Gould@ttu.edu)) – she administratively coordinates the Autism program – and she is your go-to contact for procedural questions about forms, etc. for the Autism concentration. Another tip: Don’t have your TTU email forwarded to your private email account – some very important emails that are computer generated from TTU will not come through the forwarding. This will increase the probability of you missing key due dates for academic tasks while at TTU.

Again – welcome to the program and don’t hesitate to contact me to set up an advising meeting via Skype or a phone call - # below in signature.

## Graduate Faculty:

|                                                                                                                                            |              |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Devender Banda, Ph.D., BCBA-D<br>Autism Program Advisor<br><a href="mailto:devender.banda@ttu.edu">devender.banda@ttu.edu</a><br>Professor | Edu Room 228 | 806-834-4827 |
| Stacy Carter, Ph.D., BCBA-D<br><a href="mailto:stacy.carter@ttu.edu">stacy.carter@ttu.edu</a><br>Professor                                 | Edu Room 222 | 806-834-3343 |
| David Richman, Ph.D., BCBA-D<br><a href="mailto:d.richman@ttu.edu">d.richman@ttu.edu</a><br>Professor                                      | Edu Room 368 | 806-834-4960 |

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **MEd Special Education with Concentration in Autism and Autism Graduate School Certificate**

- Applicants will be admitted to begin coursework in the **Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.**

### **Specific Application Requirements for the MEd Autism:**

1. GPA of 3.0 or better from undergraduate or most recent graduate coursework
2. Three recommendation letters required from professionals (a special education teacher or behavior therapists/specialists, administrator, etc.).
3. Applied experience in providing services to individuals with disabilities (e.g., work in a clinic, as a SPED teacher, paraprofessional or as a direct care provider) as evidenced in resume and personal statement.
4. A typed, two page, single-spaced personal statement covering the following areas: (1) prior coursework in or related to autism, (2) applied/clinical/teaching/volunteer experiences in autism, psychology, special education teacher, paraprofessional, internship or volunteering in schools or centers for autism or developmental disabilities, and (3) future career goals.

### **TTU Graduate School Only a Certificate in Autism Applicants:**

The certificate can be undertaken during a master's, doctoral, or as a stand-alone certificate for candidates that already hold a masters degree. ***All students must apply to the autism concentration through the College of Education and be approved by the concentration faculty.***

*This certificate is issued by the TTU Graduate School and is not endorsed by any agency (e.g., Texas Education Agency or Behavior Analyst Certification Board). This does not lead to teaching credentials or certification.*

All *certificate only* students must begin and complete the entire coursework sequence and meet all specified prerequisites to receive the TTU Graduate School Autism Certificate. No transferring or substitution of prior coursework will be permitted.

*Certificate only* students wishing to switch to a master’s degree seeking program must complete a new application and undergo review and be voted on by the faculty.

**Program of Studies for**  
**Master’s of Education (MEd) in Special Education with Autism**  
**Concentration**

**\*\* REGISTER FOR 3 SEMESTER HOURS FOR EACH CLASS BELOW \*\*\*\*\***

|                                                    |                        |                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Core Courses</b><br>6 semester hours            | EPSY 5379<br>EPSY 5331 | Introduction to Educational Research<br>Human Development in Education                                                                                |
| <b>Special Education Core</b><br>3 semester hours  | EDSP 5307              | Collaborative Problem Solving in Special Education                                                                                                    |
| <b>Specialization Courses</b><br>27 semester hours | EDSP 5300              | Exceptional Children and Youth                                                                                                                        |
|                                                    | EDSP 5301              | Educational Appraisal of Exceptional Children                                                                                                         |
|                                                    | EDSP 5303              | Applied Behavior Analysis in Special Education                                                                                                        |
|                                                    | EDSP 5306              | Instructional Strategies for Teaching Students with Low Incidence Disabilities                                                                        |
|                                                    | EDSP 5308              | Authentic Assessment for Students with Exceptionalities                                                                                               |
|                                                    | EDSP 5320              | Children and Youth with Low Incidence Disabilities                                                                                                    |
|                                                    | EDSP 5345              | ABA II: Data Collection Methods and Single Subject Designs                                                                                            |
|                                                    | EDSP 5344              | Augmentative and Alternative Communication                                                                                                            |
|                                                    | EDSP 5093              | Internship in Special Education ( <u>change registration to 3 semester hours – it will be auto-populated with 1 semester hour when you register</u> ) |
| Total of 36 semester hours                         |                        |                                                                                                                                                       |

### **Course Sequence EXAMPLE for MEd Autism Concentration:**

EDSP 5300

EDSP 5301

EDSP 5307

EDSP 5303

EDSP 5306 > Take after EDSP 5320

EDSP 5308 > Take mid-way through your coursework.

EDSP 5320

EDSP 5344 > Only offered in Spring semesters.

EDSP 5345 > Take after EDSP5303

EDSP 5093 > Take it in a semester prior to your graduating semester. Can only be taken Fall/Spring semesters.

EPSY 5331\*

EPSY 5379\*

Most of the courses are offered in Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters except for EDSP5344 which is only offered in Spring.

\*Make sure to register in EPSY 5331 and EPSY 5379 as soon as the registration opens as these courses tend to fill faster.

### **Internship Experience in Settings that Support Individuals with ASD**

All students seeking a Master's Degree must complete an internship experience (EDSP 5093: ABA/Autism Concentration Section – **register for 3 semester hours of 5093**) in field-based settings that support individuals with ASD (schools, clinics, autism centers, supported living centers, etc.). Field experiences are governed by the following policies adopted by the special education faculty.

1. A total of 350 hours must be completed for a Master's Degree in Special Education with Autism concentration.
2. The internship requirements will be developed cooperatively between a faculty member and the student to provide the best educational experience possible and to allow students to develop and grow professionally.
3. Since the majority of students are employed full-time, they may accomplish the requirements as determined by their supervising faculty member and/or internship instructor.
4. The internship will be supervised by a university faculty member.

Students are placed full-time or part-time in programs that comply with standards established for educational programs by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), CEC, ACVREP and CAEP (or other recognized accrediting body). Students work under the direction of a mentor/supervisor who is an experienced educator of students with disabilities and who must:

- Be appropriately certified by the Texas Education Agency or other recognized accrediting agency to teach where the student is assigned for the field

- experience.
- Demonstrate professional practices that are consistent with the program in special education.
  - Be assigned no more than one internship student for a given period.
  - Have 3 years of teaching experience in teaching students in the area of emphasis.
  - Be recognized by his or her supervisor as exemplary.

### **You have two options:** **Thesis Option vs Comprehensive Evaluation Project**

**The TTU Graduate School requires that all students earning a master's degree must complete a thesis or comprehensive exam/project.**

**\*\*\*Thesis Option (Only available to on campus MA students – If you are a distance student, you will complete the Comprehensive Evaluation (Exam) in your 5093 Internship class.**

Each Master's Degree student will have an option of completing a thesis as part of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Special Education. Under this option, students enroll in 6 semester hours of EDSP 6000, and this becomes part of the minimum of 36 semester hours on the degree plan. Students completing a Master's thesis are exempt from taking the comprehensive evaluation. However, students must complete a final oral defense.

If interested in completing a Master's thesis, students should discuss these plans with their advisor. A thesis committee of at least two full-time faculty members of the College of Education will be recommended by the advisor and approved by the Graduate School. This committee will provide ongoing guidance as the student prepares the proposal, carries out the research project, and completes the written document. The process of planning the thesis, ideally, should begin in the semester in which the student takes Introduction to Educational Research.

The final copy of the thesis is prepared in accordance with the requirements in Instructions for Preparing and Submitting Theses and Dissertations, available online and in the Texas Tech University Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.ttu.edu/>).

Evaluation for the Master Degree Thesis

1. Check with your advisor, and with your advisor's help, choose at least a 2-member thesis committee. This committee should match your degree plan.
2. Set up a meeting with your thesis committee to talk about your selection for an appropriate topic.
3. Your thesis committee should guide you through the process, including the Need for Human Subject approval. However, it is the responsibility of the student to fill out and submit paperwork to his/her advisor.
4. Thesis defenses should be completed by early November for fall or late March for spring to file the thesis with the Graduate School. Remember that the Graduate School has deadlines for submission, and students must adhere to these guidelines. It is the student's responsibility

to keep track of all deadlines. Should a student miss the deadlines or fail the thesis defense, he or she has one semester to complete and successfully defend the thesis. Otherwise a failing grade will be recorded.

## Non-thesis Option: Comprehensive Evaluation

**For MEd Students (all masters distance autism students):**

### **Option 1: Comprehensive Project**

**For MEd (Autism) Students:**

1. **Register electronically with the College of Education Graduate Office** for the Comprehensive Examination by the due date (you need to check your TTU email – an email will be sent each semester asking for students that intend to graduate this semester to file an Intent to Graduate Form. Your graduation will be delayed if you miss the date to file the form with Dr. LJ Gould). Let your advisor know that you will be completing the Comprehensive Examination Project this semester in your 5093 class.
2. Submit your **Intent to Graduate** electronically with the Graduate School at the very beginning of your final semester – the semester you intend to graduate. The College of Education (COE) may require additional documentation and notification. Failure to meet the deadlines may result in an inability to graduate and requirement to take additional coursework as required by the Graduate School. **If you are pursuing additional graduate certificates, you must submit a separate Intent to Graduate form for each certificate.**
3. Candidates are required to complete a single-case experimental design or provide a rationale for utilizing a less comprehensive design to evaluate the impact of a behavioral or instructional intervention with individuals with challenging behaviors developed through the collaborative consultation process using data gathered from assessment procedures. This project will be completed in EDSP 5093 (ABA/Autism Internship course). The procedure should include:
  - a. An initial consultation with parents and/or teachers to plan an intervention based on the assessment data. Select only one behavior or academic skill to change during this process.
  - b. The intervention plan should include the exact methodology that you will use and presented to the stake holder for their input. Non-experimental designs must include a clear rationale for why such an approach is appropriate.
  - c. Implementation of intervention and evaluation within a single-case design.
  - d. Baseline and intervention data collection concerning behavior or skill deficits should be presented in graph format. It is recommended that you should have a stable baseline with sufficient data points and an intervention phase (6-10 data points are recommended), along with demonstrating functional control

over the dependent variable or provide a clear rationale for why establishing functional control is not appropriate or possible.

- e. The results of the intervention should be presented to stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, administrators) in another collaborative consultation meeting utilizing graphs and future action plan.

4. Complete the Project by gathering data to demonstrate mastery of the following goals as addressed on the Comprehensive Examination rubric:

- Conduct indirect assessment to identify primary target behaviors to treatment, and complete operational definitions
- Complete a functional analysis within a single-case design that is appropriate for the environment and the stakeholders
- Develop a function-matched treatment and evaluate the effects within a single-case design that is appropriate for the environment and stakeholders

**5. Steps for Completion of the Comprehensive Examination Project:**

- a. You will create one document. **You will write no more than 6 pages of written report including graphs and data collection sheets.** Make sure to de-identify the participant, school, agency, etc. You will include the following sections:

- i. Information about the participant's characteristics
- ii. Operational definition of problem behavior or skill deficit
- iii. Assessment report (e.g., summaries of ABC analysis, MAS, FAI, functional analysis if relevant).
- iv. Description of intervention plan (clearly describe your intervention in detail)
- v. Baseline and intervention graphs and interpretation of data using an appropriate design
- vi. Description of future goals/plans (e.g., intervention modification, generalization)

- b. **You will make a 5-minute video presentation on above areas. Make sure to cover all areas in the evidence template.** You will upload your videos on YouTube and provide the link to the faculty. All assessment reports and videos should have no identifying information about participants or schools, agencies, etc.  
Instructions to upload YouTube videos:

**Unlisted You-Tube Instructions:**

- Instructions for Video Submissions via UNLISTED You Tube
- \*Set up a YouTube Account (<http://www.youtube.com>).
- \*After you have recorded your Video, you need to save it to



your computer.

- \*Sign in to YouTube and select the “Upload” link.
- \*You will be asked to give a title, description, tags (education, consulting, etc.) and a category.
- \*You will then be asked how you want to publish your video. The choices are “Public” (Everyone sees your video and it is searchable); Unlisted (Only those who have a link can view it) or Private (only you can view it).
- \*Select “UNLISTED”
- After you have uploaded the video, go to “My Videos” and click on the video that you want to share. There is a share button. When you click on it, you will be given a URL that you can copy and paste to e- mail, Blackboard, etc. Make sure to watch it yourself before sending the link.
- \*When your video is uploaded as “UNLISTED” this is the only way your information can be shared. It is not searchable and only those who have the URL can view your video.

- c. Turn in the finished product to your course instructor, your graduate advisor (Dr. Banda – [devender.banda@ttu.edu](mailto:devender.banda@ttu.edu); and Dr Gould), and to the Office of Dean of Graduate Studies during the semester you plan to graduate by the COE posted due date (which is earlier than the Graduate School deadline). This will serve as your comprehensive project. The TTU Graduate School will send the results of Comprehensive Projects within 5-7 weeks after the due date.
- d. The COE will send information about the due dates for submission of Comprehensive Project at the beginning of each semester. It is the student responsibility to file all required paperwork including the ‘Intent to Graduate’ and other required documents to the Graduate School and/or the College of Education at the very beginning of their final semester.

6. A passing score for the Comprehensive Examination will reflect the candidate’s ability to perform skills as listed on the rubric.

**The project will be scored using an ABA Content Mastery Rubric. Candidates must receive 3 (Meets Expectations) or better score on all items to pass the required Master’s Comprehensive Project.**

**Comprehensive Project Scoring For Autism MEd Content Mastery:**

| <b>Subskill</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>Exceeds Expectations -5</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>4</b> | <b>Meets Expectation-3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>2</b> | <b>Unacceptable-1</b>                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Conduct indirect assessment to identify primary target behaviors for treatment, and complete operational definitions of the behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a complete operational definition with examples and non-examples; based on social validity analysis</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |          | Provides a complete operational definition with examples and non-examples                                                                                                                                           |          | Incomplete operational definitions                                                                |
| Complete systematic direct observations within a single-case design that is appropriate for the environment and stakeholders          | Complete some type of functional assessment semi-structured interview, descriptive data collected, hypothesis development for function or discriminating a skill vs motivation deficit for a behavioral acquisition program, and some form of direct observation of the |          | Complete some type of functional assessment semi-structured interview, descriptive data collected, hypothesis development for function or discriminating a skill vs motivation deficit for a behavioral acquisition |          | Complete some type of functional assessment semi-structured interview, descriptive data collected |

# CERTIFICATE ONLY

## TTU Graduate School Certificate Only in Autism (non-degree seeking)

Graduate certificates are intended to meet the supplemental post-baccalaureate education needs of professionals.

### **Program description:**

The 15-hour Graduate Certificate in Autism allows students to specialize in the area of autism while developing additional skills in working with children with autism spectrum disorders. The certificate can be undertaken during a master's or as a stand-alone certificate.

*This certificate is issued by the TTU Graduate School and is not endorsed by any agency (e.g., Texas Education Agency or Behavior Analyst Certification Board). This does not lead to teaching credentials or certification.*

### **Specific Application Requirements for the Graduate School Certificate in Autism :**

1. GPA of 3.0 or better from undergraduate or most recent graduate coursework
2. Three recommendation letters required from professionals (a special education teacher or behavior therapists/specialists, administrator, etc.).
3. Applied experience in providing services to individuals with disabilities (e.g., work in a clinic, as a SPED teacher, paraprofessional or as a direct care provider) as evidenced in resume and personal statement.
4. A typed, two page, single-spaced personal statement covering the following areas: (1) prior coursework in or related to autism, (2) applied/clinical/teaching/volunteer experiences in autism, psychology, special education teacher, paraprofessional, internship or volunteering in schools or centers for autism or developmental disabilities, and (3) future career goals.

### **Offering Mode:**

All courses are offered online (distance) through Blackboard. Some courses require field work and the student need to contact the course instructor for more details.

### **Total Credits Required to Graduate:**

15 credit hours

### **Required Courses (15 credit hours)/ Semesters Offered**

| Course          | Title                                                            | Semesters Offered*   |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>EDSP5303</b> | ABA I- Applied Behavior Analysis in Special Education            | Fall/Spring/Summer 1 |
| <b>EDSP5306</b> | Instructional Strategies for Teaching Low Incidence Disabilities | Fall/Spring/Summer 1 |
| <b>EDSP5320</b> | Children and Youth with Low Incidence Dis                        | Fall/Spring/Summer 2 |
| <b>EDSP5344</b> | Augmentative and Alternate Communication                         | Spring ONLY          |
| <b>EDSP5345</b> | Data Collection Methods and Single Subject Designs               | Fall/Spring/Summer2  |

\*Tentative; may be offered in a different semester based on enrollment.

### **Fee and Financial Assistance:**

For fee and financial assistance, please visit the Student Business Services at TTU.

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentbusinessservices/>

### **Application Process:**

Applications can be submitted anytime for any semester (Fall, Spring, or Summer) and there is no specific deadline. Prospective students are encouraged to apply for admission at least 1-2 months prior to the start of the semester to have enough time to register in the courses.

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/education/apply-now/graduate.php>

### **Program Advisor:**

Devender Banda, PhD., BCBA-D  
Professor, Department of Special Education  
College of Education  
3008 18th St. | Box 41071  
Texas Tech University  
Lubbock, TX 79409

Phone: (806) 834-4827

Email: [devender.banda@ttu.edu](mailto:devender.banda@ttu.edu)

### **Frequently asked questions:**

1. Is there a typical degree plan for this program? Or do you know how long it typically takes students to complete the program? **There is a degree plan (scribe) in DegreeWorks for the autism masters. Dr. Banda will give you more information on**

the courses required. We typically say that a 36 hour program takes about two years to complete.

2. When applying for courses and there are 2 courses available, what is the difference in section 1 vs. section 2? For most courses, there is likely to be no difference. The exception to this can be ABA courses. If you have a question about a course section to take, contact Dr. Banda.
3. The program says there are 6 allowable transfer hours. Does that mean I can take 6 hours of classes at another college and transfer them towards my degree? If so, do you know of any online colleges that have transferable courses? Primarily, this is for students who have already attended another college working on master's level coursework, although you could certainly take a course at another school and transfer it in. However, transfer courses are subject to specific requirements: (1) they must be an equivalent to a TTU course; (2) they must have a grade of B or higher; and, (3) they cannot be more than 10 years old.
4. How can I get advanced registration for fall? I read on the graduate catalog that graduate students have advanced registration, but when I try to register for fall it says I don't have access. Is this something you could help me with? You will automatically be in the advanced registration for next spring. You probably don't have access because it does take some time for your acceptance to work through the system and list you as an active student. If you've not heard from the IT department about setting up email account and getting an R-number, you should contact them on Monday.
5. I am aware that I am only allowed to take 6 hours per summer session unless approved by the graduate dean. Since I will be working full time in the fall and spring, I have a lot more time over summer to complete coursework. I would like to take 9 hours per summer session if possible. Do you know how I would go about requesting approval? I can put through a request for additional hours with Dr. Banda's permission, but I would strongly discourage you from taking 9 hours both sessions. Summer sessions are very short (approximately 4-5 weeks), and courses can be intense.

Document end.