

# Special Education

## Master's of Education and Certification Programs

### General Information

#### Program Overview

The general goal of the Master's Degree program in Special Education is to prepare professional educators with advanced competencies related to a field of special education. The following areas of specialization are offered:

#### Master's Degree Programs

- [Applied Behavior Analysis](#)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
- [Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)
- [Deafblindness](#)
- [Generic Special Education](#)
- [Orientation and Mobility](#)
- [Professional Educational Diagnostician](#)
- [Visual Impairment](#)

#### Non-degree programs

##### National and State Certification ONLY

- Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Generic Special Education
- Orientation and Mobility
- Professional Educational Diagnostician
- Visual Impairment

- Need to apply for certification on your own

##### Graduate Certificates

- [Autism](#)
- [Deafblindness](#)
- [Sensory Impairments and Autism](#)

#### Internship Experience in Teaching Fields

All candidates seeking a Master's Degree and/or certification must complete an internship experience in a field-based setting. 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.
2. The internship requirements will be developed cooperatively between a faculty member and the candidate to provide the best educational experience possible and to allow candidates to develop and grow professionally.
3. The internship requirements should be responsive to licensing/certifying organization requirements so that upon completion of the special education program, graduate candidates will be eligible for certification or licensure.
4. Since the majority of candidates are employed full-time, they may accomplish the requirements in two or more of the following ways as determined by their supervising faculty member.
5. The internship will be supervised by a university faculty member.

Candidates 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). Candidates 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 candidate 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 candidate 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.

### **Graduate Program Reform**

**Goal:** To reform graduate education at Texas Tech University to graduate the measurably best educators. The trademark outcome for each graduate program represents a decisive skill that sets our graduates apart from others in the field.

- Performance-ready upon graduate
- In-depth knowledge and practical implementation experience throughout the program
- Candidates don't just learn about it, they practice it until perfecting it with faculty guidance

**Trademark Outcomes:** Specific competency-based skills demonstrated through performance on multiple occasions throughout the candidate's graduate education. Each graduate program has selected a trademark outcome based on three factors:

- Key findings identified by employers
- Critical standards and objectives recognized by professional organizations
- Valuable results pinpointed through faculty expertise

**Data Available:** Each graduate candidate is tracked through course-related **Apply and Evaluate Activities** and **Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 End of Phase Assessments**. The graduate curriculum in the College of Education is divided into three interrelated phases that assess

mastery of the TO.

**Phases:**

- Phase 1 (P1) consists of the acquisition of knowledge.
- Phase 2 (P2) requires that you apply the knowledge and skills you have learned.
- Phase 3 (P3) entails designing, implementing, and evaluating the information in real- life settings.

**Apply and Evaluate Projects/Activities**

- Each course has an A&E
- A&Es are specific to the content of the course but assess progress towards mastery of the TO
- Progress on individual A&Es provides both faculty and candidates with opportunities for both remediation and enrichment
- Feedback on A&Es is immediate and within the framework of the course
- Rubrics are completed and made available to candidates

**P1-P3 End of Phase Assessment**

- P1 End of Phase Assessment- Reflects mastery of all Phase 1 knowledge and skills
- P2 End of Phase Assessment- Requires that the candidate actually does something in a scaffolded project to demonstrate mastery
- P3 End of Phase Assessment- Signals mastery of the Trademark Outcome through performance-based demonstration of what the candidate has learned

**Rubrics for A&Es and P1-P3 End of Phase Assessments**

- Based on standards of professional practice
- Made available prior to assessment and after completion of activities
- Rubrics and scores are maintained in the College of Education database

**How Does the Reform Change Practice?**

Performance-based mastery ensures that our graduates will contribute with real-world solutions in their jobs. Graduate education is based on standards of the profession and expectations of employers.

**Master's Program Options:**

**Non-thesis Option: Comprehensive Evaluation**

**Comprehensive Examination Project**

For Applied Behavior Analysis, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Educational Diagnostician, Generic, and Transition Master's Program Students.

1. Register electronically with the College of Education Graduate Office for the Comprehensive Examination choosing the paper option by the due date. Let your advisor know that you will be completing the Collaborative Consultation Project.
2. Submit your Intent to Graduate electronically with the Graduate School.

3. Candidates are required to complete a Comprehensive Examination Project to evaluate the impact of a behavioral or instructional intervention developed through the collaborative consultation process using data gathered from assessment procedures. You have practiced for this project across a variety of courses including EDSP 5303 and EDSP 5307.
4. Complete the Comprehensive Examination Project by gathering data to demonstrate mastery of the goals. Requirements and rubric for the Comprehensive Examination Project can be found in the handbook specific to each concentration area.
5. A passing score for the Comprehensive Examination Project will reflect the candidate's ability to perform and describe the descriptors for the collaborative consultation skills in the four areas at the "Meets Expectations" level.

**Important: You must file an Intent to Graduate with the Graduate School and an application to take the Master's Comprehensive Exam with the College of Education early in your last semester. You will receive an email notice from the COE Graduate School Coordinator containing instructions pertaining to graduation requirements prior to your final semester.**

### **Thesis Option**

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

If interested in completing a Master's thesis, candidates 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 Bookstore.

#### 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 candidate 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 candidates must adhere to these guidelines. It is the candidate's responsibility to keep track of all deadlines. Should a candidate 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.

### **Useful Resources**

- [Steps required for Master's Program](#)
- [Certifications](#)
- [Evaluation Form for Comprehensive Exam Paper](#)
- [Master's Degree Plan](#)

### **Additional Information**

- [CEC Code of Ethics](#)
- [Graduate College Website](#)
- [Fellowships and Grants](#)