



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
BAKERSFIELD

Master of Arts Degree
in
Special Education
Program Handbook

DEPARTMENT OF ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

Master of Arts in Special Education Program Handbook

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Mr. Ryan Otawka, Department Coordinator
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Student Services Departments
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Financial Aid
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Services for Students with Disabilities Office
661-654-3036
661-952-5061 (Antelope Valley)

Introduction

The Special Education Master of Arts (M.A.) degree program at CSUB is designed to provide candidates with knowledge and competence necessary for those who will take leadership roles in the field of Special Education. In order to apply and be admitted to the Special Education

M.A. Degree program, candidates must complete an application file. A program information session is scheduled twice each semester and candidates must attend the information session one semester before they intend to start the program.

Program Design and Coursework Sequence

The CSUB Special Education M.A. degree program is designed to reflect the standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, and all components of the program are congruent with the expectations set forth by the CEC.

Program Design

Phase I: Foundation and Basic Understanding

During the first program phase, “Foundation and Basic Understanding,” M.A. degree candidates study how special education students relate to the entire spectrum of students enrolled in today’s classrooms. It is critical for M.A. candidates at this level to develop a basic understanding of: (a) characteristics of students with Mild/Moderate/Severe Disabilities; (b) research in learning theories and instructional practices both in general education and special education; (c) communication and collaboration issues, and (d) issues related to the curriculum and instructional adaptation for special needs students (K-12).

Phase II: Skills Development

During the second programmatic phase, M.A degree candidates will study and acquire specific knowledge and skills for assessing and teaching special needs students, behavior/classroom management through their coursework with built-in field experience components.

Phase III: Culminating Activities

In the third and final stage of the program, M.A. degree candidates internalize what they have learned and experienced during the first two phases. Candidates are required to complete their culminating activities by either taking: (1) EDSP 6810: Master’s Project in Education, (2) EDSP 6820: Master’s Examination in Special Education, or (3) EDSP 6830: Master’s Thesis in Special Education.

Coursework Sequence

Education Specialist in Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Disabilities Master’s Degree Program

Development Phase	Educational Research	Special Education		
		Mild/Moderate	Moderate/Severe	Electives
0. Prerequisites	EDRS 4600			
1. Phase I <i>Foundation</i>			EDSP 5230 EDSP 5250	
2. Phase II <i>Skill Development</i>		EDSP 5050 EDSP 5100 EDSP 5450 EDSP 6200 Two	EDSP 5050 EDSP 5100 EDSP 5320 EDSP 6200 Two Electives	EDSP 5510 EDSP 5520 EDSP 5530 EDSP 6100
3. Phase III <i>Culminating Activity</i>			EDSP 6810 or EDSP 6820 or EDSP 6830	

NOTE. Please see the below table for course numbers and according titles.

**** Course Numbers and Titles ****

1. Special Education	
EDSP 5050	Classroom Management and Positive Behavior Support
EDSP 5100	Assessment of Students with Disabilities
EDSP 5230	Collaboration and Transition of Special Education
EDSP 5250	Characteristics of Students with Mild to Severe Disabilities
EDSP 5320	Curriculum and Instruction in Moderate/Severe Disabilities
EDSP 5510	Introduction to Early Childhood Special Education
EDSP 5520	Family Systems & Services for Young Children with Disabilities
EDSP 5530	Assessment and Intervention/Instructional Strategies: Birth through Pre-K
EDSP 5450	Curriculum and Instruction in Mild/Moderate Disabilities
EDSP 6100	Teaching Students with Autism
EDSP 6200	Research in Special Education
EDSP 6810	Master’s Project
EDSP 6820	Master’s Examination
EDSP 6830	Master’s Thesis

Program Application/Admission Procedures

1. Apply for admission to CSUB on a post baccalaureate program.
2. Attend an information session. Get application materials.
3. Submit a complete application package by a due date.
 - Special Education program application form.
 - Three recommendation forms.
 - Autobiography.
 - Verification of Bachelor's Degree from an accredited College or University (degree must be posted on your transcript from graduating institution).
 - GPA 3.0(4.0 scale).
 - B or better in last 90 quarter units or 60 semester units of undergraduate level courses.
 - Writing competencies (41 or higher in CBEST writing section or the GWAR).
 - Special Education program specification form completed by the faculty advisor.
 - Verification of fingerprint clearance: Valid Certificate of Clearance or Substitute Teaching Permit posted on the CTC website: www.ctc.ca.gov.
 - Tuberculosis Clearance: Provide evidence of freedom from tuberculosis within the last four years.
 - Certificate of Clearance: Evidence of Fingerprint Clearance from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.
 - Professional Liability Insurance: Purchase from Cashiers Office.
 - Mandatory Reporter Training: Complete a Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training (<http://mandatedreporterca.com/>).
4. Candidate Interview
5. Academic advising: Program Plan.

Transfer Units

For the M.A. Program, only eight semester units from other institutions may be transferred toward their degree at CSUB, and they should have been taken within the past seven years.

Time Limit to Complete Requirements for Graduate Degrees

All the requirements for the M.A. degree should be completed within *a seven-year period* to include the filing and awarding of the degree. This means that no more than seven years may elapse between the start term of the earliest dated course and the date that the last course on the program is actually completed, and the application for graduation is filed. With outdated requirements the candidate may complete a Petition Form for an extension of the time limit or substitution of other appropriate courses, but is not guaranteed that the courses will be accepted.

Requirements for Continuing in the Special Education Program

A. Grade Point Average (GPA)

Candidates must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all required credential courses attempted after entry in the program. Candidates whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be put on probation for one semester and expected to raise the GPA above 3.0 during a subsequent term. If candidates earn below 3.0 over two terms, they may be dropped from the program.

B. Advancement Through the Program

Candidates whose performance is judged to be inadequate in any phase will be expected to improve or repeat the problem courses before advancing to the next phase. The special education program faculty will meet regularly to discuss candidates' progress and make recommendations that will best assist candidates to acquire the requisite professional skills and maintain the integrity of the program.

C. Candidate Dispositions

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

- *Professional Collaboration:* Candidates will participate in action-oriented collaboration that will enable them to learn from others and provide leadership in partnerships with all stakeholders.
- *Reflective Practitioner:* Candidates are reflective, life-long learners who apply problem solving and critical thinking strategies and the respectful appreciation of differing points of view.
- *Ethical Professional:* Candidates' actions are based on accepted professional standards of conduct and reflect insight and awareness with respect to diverse perspectives, opinions, obligations and ethical responsibilities of the profession.
- *Student/Client Centered:* Candidates, throughout their programs, will prioritize the needs of the students/clients they serve by maintaining trusting relationships built upon caring, nurturing (respective) and meaningful interactions.

- *Professional Leader*: Candidates, throughout their programs, will be strong, determined, professional leaders with a clear instructional focus using effective communication skills and a willingness to take risks to ensure the advancement, safety, and welfare of all students in our communities.
- *Professional Competence*: Candidates will maintain high programmatic outcomes that reflect research-based practices, principles of learning differentiation, and standard-based instruction

Culminating Activities

At the final phase of the M.A. degree program, all candidates are required to complete one of the three culminating activities. Candidates have an option of taking either: *EDSP 6810 Master's Project in Special Education*, *EDSP 6820: Master's Examination in Special Education*, or *EDSP 6830: Master's Thesis in Special Education*. Candidates must form the Culminating Activities Committee **by the 4th week of the semester prior to** enrolling in the Culminating Activities course. Candidates must work with the committee members (especially the chair of the committee) closely in order to complete the culminating activity. For the Master's examination, it is usually held on a Saturday (8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.) the 5th to 7th week of the semester. Candidates must check the date for the examination at the Graduate Studies Office (Mrs. Julia Bavier, 654-3193, Mr. Eric Anderson, AV campus, 661-952-5083).

The Culminating Activities Committee is comprised three members: *A Committee Chair* (Full Time Instructor holding a doctoral degree) and *two Committee Members* (at least one of the Committee members should be full time faculty in the SPED program). It is highly preferable that all three committee members are from CSUB/SPED. It is the candidate's responsibility to contact potential committee members and request their consent and to submit the completed Culminating Activities Committee Form to the Graduate Studies Office in a timely manner.

Committee members' minimum qualifications include:

- M.A. or higher degree in Special Education or in a related field.
- Proven record of successful professional experience in Special Education.
- Approved by the program director or committee chair.
- Excellent interpersonal relationship.

*** Please see Appendix A for more details about Culminating Activities

Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Other Approvals

If any human subjects are involved in research for projects/theses, students must see the Research Office for legal clearance forms, approval of research, and deadline dates. IRB approval must be obtained before any human research is conducted. In many cases, research involved in school or community settings must have the approval from that district, office, or school board. The student should seek approval well in advance of starting the Culminating Activity in order to prevent delays.

How to Reach Program Faculty

Every faculty member maintains regularly scheduled office hours and responds to voice mail messages. Please see page ii for contact information.

Appendix A

M.A. Culminating Activity Requirements

Section 1. General Information

1. The candidate has three options of meeting the M.A. Culminating Activity Requirement.
 - a. Competency Exam
 - b. Thesis
 - c. Project
 2. The candidate must meet the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). Coursework (e.g., B.A. degree under CSU institutions) or CBEST Writing Exam with a score of 41 or greater will be accepted (candidates should double check with their Committee Chair).
 3. The candidate should download and review the following materials:
MA Project/Thesis check list:
http://www.csub.edu/academicprograms/_files/Masters%20Thesis%20or%20Projects%20General%20Information%20and%20Guidelines.pdf
NOTE. The candidate is responsible for information even if not covered in this advising session.
 4. The candidate must complete and turn in **Advancement to Candidacy, Culminating Activity, and Grad Check forms**. The Graduate Studies office will enroll the candidate in the culminating activity course, HOWEVER, the candidate must pay tuition and make sure they are properly enrolled (i.e., check on-line schedule). It is the candidate's responsibility to confirm online that this has been done. *NOTE. In the event the candidate postpones the culminating activity once he or she has submitted the paperwork, the candidate may be required to re-enroll in the university.*
 5. **Grad Check:** Each prospective graduate for a MA degree must complete all requirements and file for graduation by the appropriate deadline. It is important for each candidate to submit a Graduation Application and pay appropriate fees by a deadline. Please check the following link for a due date and procedures.
<http://www.csub.edu/admissionsandaid/graduation/masters/index.html>
 6. The candidate should avoid taking other courses during the semester of the culminating activity.
-

7. The candidate must have a committee consisting of three members: A Committee Chair (Full Time Instructor holding a doctoral degree) and two Committee Members (at least one of the Committee members should be full time faculty in the SPED program). It is highly preferable that all three committee members are from CSUB/SPED. It is the candidate's responsibility to contact potential committee members and request their consent.
NOTE. Please consider formally thanking your committee members upon the completion of your Culminating Activity.
8. The candidate should communicate regularly with their committee chair. The candidate should avoid "shopping" for answers by asking the same question of all committee members.
9. If the candidate believes that they have a condition which qualifies them for having a disability, they may be entitled to accommodations. The candidate should contact the Services for Students with Disability Office
10. The Master's Degree Ceremonies are held once a year after the Spring semester at the Bakersfield campus. MA candidates will be hooded during the ceremony. Please attend the ceremony!

Section 2. M.A. Competency Exam

Date:

The committee chair will conduct a meeting at the beginning of the exam semester to discuss exam day particulars. The exam is usually scheduled about the 5th - 7th week of the semester but schedule is subject to change.

Preparation:

The candidate must meet with the committee chair *by week two of the semester or earlier before the planned Culminating Activity exam semester* to discuss areas of research interest. Three study questions related to the designated areas should be generated. The program encourages the candidate to work on the questions in various areas; hence the questions should not be limited to the same area.

- The candidate is strongly recommended to write out model responses to their study questions and have them reviewed by his or her committee chair at regular intervals. *Please have model responses reviewed by the committee chair a semester before the exam.*
- The candidates should identify a strategy for remembering the salient issues and sources related to their study questions and clearly structuring contents in a logical flow. Strategies could include mind-mapping or memorizing an outline of key issues and authors.

Criteria:

- The minimum passing grade for an M.A. Degree is B.
- The candidate should plan on writing at least approximately 5 – 6 pages per question in the latest APA guideline (e.g., double-spaced, Times New Romans, and 12 font size).
- The candidate must develop a reference list (see the latest APA guideline) consisting of at least 10 *current sources* for each question. The sources must be used and cited in the text of your exam. The sources should be of a quality nature (e.g., peer-reviewed journals) but avoid using sources from text books, the popular press, and websites. *The reference list will be made available to the candidate during the exam.*
- The candidate must embed the questions in his or her responses (see the APA guideline for writing the first page with a title). The committee members should not have to hunt through the responses to double-check that the candidate has answered the questions properly.

The candidate should avoid using direct quotes, bullets, or technical definitions during the exam. It is suggested that the candidate summarizes authors' key ideas or findings in a concise manner and provide them appropriately to support their responses with accurate citation.

Important Note:

** Students who fail to pass the exam receiving below minimum passing grade B (i.e., B- or below) may be allowed to retake the exam within the same semester of the

exam. However, the decision for reattempt is made by the MA committee and Department Chair; and is strictly contingent on the student's possibilities of improvement after thorough evaluation of the performance and disposition during their master's program.

Section 3. M.A. Project

- 1) The candidate's M.A project should be an academic work that significantly contributes to the fields of special education and/or general education.
- 2) The candidate is required to **submit a proposal** to get approved for a M.A. project (e.g., action research). Please see a template at the end of this document.
- 3) Once the proposal has been approved by the chair of the committee, the candidate should review the following materials for a project format. Review *Graduate Studies Handbook* at the following website:
<http://www.csub.edu/academicprograms/files/Masters%20Thesis%20or%20Projects%20General%20Information%20and%20Guidelines.pdf>
- 4) The candidate must develop research questions which will be addressed in completing a project (e.g., current critical issues in the field) at the beginning of a project. The rationale for a project including importance of the selected topics should be addressed. Please note that the candidate should meet with their committee chair on a regular basis to review their progress.

I have received a copy of MA Requirements and have reviewed it with _____.
(Advisor Name)

Signature

Date

Culminating Activity Assessment Evaluation

Candidate Name:				Date of Exam:			Reviewer:	
Primary Concentration:				Chair of Committee:			Committee Members:	
	Did the candidate grasp the central intent of the question and write directly to that topic? (1-5)	Was the flow of language smooth and well-structured? Grammatically correct? (1-5)	Did the use of language reflect a clear and extensive mastery of the professional vocabulary of the topic? (1-5)	Were the generalizations supported by sufficient details and documentary evidence? (1-5)	Did the scope of content reflect reasonable mastery of the topic? (1-5)	Did the documentation fairly reflect the relevant literature of the field? (1-5)	Was the total volume of the writing appropriate for the time allowed for the writing? (1-5)	Were the elements of content accurate? (1-5)
Q1 Topic:								
Specific feedback:								
Q2 Topic:								
Specific feedback:								
Q3 Topic:								
Specific feedback:								
CHECK YOUR RECOMMENDATION FOR ITEM			Q1:	PASS	FAIL	OVERALL GRADE		
			Q2:	PASS	FAIL			
			Q3:	PASS	FAIL			PASS FAIL

Action Research Proposal Template/Format

Principal Researcher/Investigator
<i>Name</i> <i>Email</i> <i>Current Work info.</i>
Project Title
Introduction
Problem statement/Justification (What is the problem for which support is being sought, and why is it important?)
Purposes of the Study
Methodology (data collection and data analysis method)
Timeframe
References