Online Masters Degree in Special Education with Educational Diagnostician Certification Program Handbook

2013–2014
Welcome to The University of Texas at Tyler educational diagnostician program. This handbook will serve as a guide for you throughout your program. Information contained in this handbook does not replace information from your advisor. When in doubt, please contact your advisor with questions or concerns you may have along the way. We are always happy to visit with you.

Best of luck to you in this endeavor,

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Online M.Ed. in Special Education  
with Educational Diagnostician Certification

COE Vision

The College of Education and Psychology is nationally recognized and respected for its academic programs and opportunities. It is a center of academic excellence, scholarly inquiry, and public service. The College prepares leaders to meet the critical challenges of the 21st Century, to make significant contributions to local and global communities, and to work toward individual and cultural equity.

COE Mission

The mission of the College of Education and Psychology is to provide a positive environment that fosters the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The mission is individually and collectively realized through a community of scholars that contributes to knowledge through scholarly inquiry; organizes knowledge for application, understanding and communication; and provides leadership and service. Additionally, the College is committed to affirming and promoting global perspectives, cultural diversity, and respect for individual differences as a means of enhancing learning, service, and scholarship.

Special Education Program Objectives

At the conclusion of the Special Education Masters Degree program, graduates should:

• Understand the theories and research in the field of special education and be able to apply them to improve learning for exceptional learners;

• Know and use appropriate assessment instruments with individuals, groups, and for identification and program effectiveness;

• Identify and implement appropriate instructional strategies with diverse learners, preschool through adult; know and develop effective individualized education plans;

• Serve as advocates for children with disabilities;

• Work collaboratively with students, parents, administrators, related service personnel, and other colleagues.
Overview of the Educational Diagnostician Program

The Special Education Masters Degree program is aligned with national and state standards for educational diagnosticians. Students are prepared to practice in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators adopted by the Council for Exceptional Children. Our curriculum has been aligned with state standards and we share accountability with our candidates for their performance on the Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES). Additionally, our program is aligned with the Advanced Special Education Diagnostician Specialist Standards set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION (SBEC) STANDARDS FOR EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIANS

Standard I: The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of the purpose, philosophy, and legal foundations of evaluation and special education.

Standard II: The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethical and professional practices, roles, and responsibilities.

Standard III: The educational diagnostician develops collaborative relationships with families, educators, the school, the community, outside agencies, and related service personnel.

Standard IV: The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision-making.

Standard V: The educational diagnostician knows eligibility criteria and procedures for identifying students with disabilities and determining the presence of an educational need.

Standard VI: The educational diagnostician selects, administers, and interprets appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations.

Standard VII: The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity and the significance of student diversity for evaluation, planning, and instruction.

Standard VIII: The educational diagnostician knows and demonstrates skills necessary for scheduling, time management, and organization.

Standard IX: The educational diagnostician addresses students’ behavioral and social interaction skills through appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies.

Standard X: The educational diagnostician knows and understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for individuals with disabilities.
CEC Advanced Special Education
Diagnosticians Specialist Standards

Advanced Standard 1: Leadership and Policy

Special educators in advanced programs learn to use their deep understanding of the history of special education, current legal and ethical standards, and emerging issues to provide leadership. Special educators promote high professional self-expectations and help others understand the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs. They advocate for educational policy based on solid evidence-based knowledge to support high quality education for individuals with exceptional learning needs. As appropriate to their role, they advocate for appropriate resources to ensure that all personnel involved have effective preparation. Special educators use their knowledge of the needs of different groups in a pluralistic society to promote evidence-based practices and challenging expectations for individuals with exceptional learning needs. They model respect for all individuals and ethical practice. They help to create positive and productive work environments and celebrate accomplishments with colleagues. They mentor others and promote high expectations for themselves, other professionals, and individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Advanced Standard 2: Program Development and Organization

Special educators apply their knowledge of cognitive science, learning theory, and instructional technologies to improve instructional programs. They advocate for a continuum of program options and services to ensure the appropriate instructional supports for individuals with exceptional learning needs. They help design and deliver, as appropriate to their role, ongoing results oriented professional development designed to support the use of evidenced-based practices at all relevant organizational levels. They use their understanding of the effects of cultural, social, and economic diversity and variations of individual development to inform their development of programs and services for individuals with exceptional learning needs. Special educators continuously broaden and deepen their professional knowledge, and expand their expertise with instructional technologies, curriculum standards, effective teaching strategies, and assistive technologies to support access to learning. They use their deep understanding of how to coordinate educational standards to the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs to help all individuals with exceptional learning needs to access challenging curriculum standards.

Advanced Standard 3: Research and Inquiry

Research and inquiry inform the decisions of special educators who have completed advanced programs in guiding professional practice. Special educators know models, theories, philosophies, and research methods that form the basis for evidence-based practices in special education. This knowledge includes information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies. Special educators evaluate the appropriateness of research methodologies in relation to practices presented in the literature. They use educational research to improve instructional techniques, intervention strategies, and curricular materials. They foster an environment supportive of continuous instructional improvement, and engage in the design
and implementation of action research. Special educators are able to use the literature to resolve issues of professional practice, and help others to understand various evidence-based practices.

Advanced Standard 4: Individual and Program Evaluation

Evaluation is critical to advanced practice of special educators. Underlying evaluation is the knowledge of systems and theories of educational assessment and evaluation, along with skills in the implementation of evidence-based practices in assessment. Effective special educators design and implement research activities to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices and, as appropriate to their role, to assess progress toward the organizational vision, mission, and goals of their programs. It is critical in evaluation that nonbiased assessment procedures are used in the selection of assessment instruments, methods, and procedures for both programs and individuals. With respect to evaluation of individuals, special educators prepared at the advanced level are able to apply their knowledge and skill to all stages and purposes of evaluation including: prereferral and screening, preplacement for special education eligibility, monitoring and reporting learning progress in the general education curriculum and other individualized educational program goals.

Advanced Standard 5: Professional Development and Ethical Practice

Special educators are guided by the professional ethics and practice standards. Special educators have responsibility for promoting the success of individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, and colleagues. They create supportive environments that safeguard the legal rights of students and their families. They model and promote ethical and professional practice. Special educators plan, present, and evaluate professional development, as appropriate to their roles, based on models that apply adult learning theories and focus on effective practice at all organizational levels. Special educators model their own commitment to continuously improving their own professional practice by participating in professional development themselves.

Advanced Standard 6: Collaboration

Special educators prepared at the advanced level have a deep understanding of the centrality and importance of consultation and collaboration to the roles within special education and use this deep understanding to integrate services for individuals with exceptional learning needs. They also understand the significance of the role of collaboration for both internal and external stakeholders, and apply their skill to promote understanding, resolve conflicts, and build consensus among both internal and external stakeholders to provide services to individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families. They possess current knowledge of research on stages and models in both collaboration and consultation and ethical and legal issues related to consultation and collaboration. Moreover, special educators prepared at the advanced level have a deep understanding of the possible interactions of language, diversity, culture and religion with contextual factors and how to use collaboration and consultation to enhance opportunities for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

Texas Administrative Code
Title 19: Education
Part 7: State Board for Educator Certification
Chapter 247: Educator’s Code of Ethics

Enforceable Standards.

(1) Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices and Performance.
   
   (A) Standard 1.1. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.

   (B) Standard 1.2. The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

   (C) Standard 1.3. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

   (D) Standard 1.4. The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

   (E) Standard 1.5. The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

   (F) Standard 1.6. The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

   (G) Standard 1.7. The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.

   (H) Standard 1.8. The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

   (I) Standard 1.9. The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.
(J) Standard 1.10. The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

(K) Standard 1.11. The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

(L) Standard 1.12. The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

(M) Standard 1.13. The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

(2) Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues.

(A) Standard 2.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

(B) Standard 2.2. The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

(C) Standard 2.3. The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

(D) Standard 2.4. The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

(E) Standard 2.5. The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

(F) Standard 2.6. The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

(G) Standard 2.7. The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

(3) Ethical Conduct Toward Students.

(A) Standard 3.1. The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

(B) Standard 3.2. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

(C) Standard 3.3. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

(D) Standard 3.4. The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny
benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

(E) Standard 3.5. The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

(F) Standard 3.6. The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

(G) Standard 3.7. The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

(H) Standard 3.8. The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

(I) Standard 3.9. The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

   (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;

   (ii) the subject matter of the communication;

   (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;

   (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;

   (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and

   (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Source Note: The provisions of this §247.2 adopted to be effective March 1, 1998, 23 TexReg 1022; amended to be effective August 22, 2002, 27 TexReg 7530; amended to be effective December 26, 2010, 35 TexReg 11242
Program Admission Requirements

Admission to the graduate special education program is based on admission to the Graduate School; therefore a student applying for the Masters in Special Education must first apply to the Graduate School.

Applicants for admission to a master's degree or graduate certificate program at UT Tyler must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, complete an online application for graduate studies, and submit official transcripts of post-secondary work. For most programs, no junior or community college transcripts are required. There is no paper application. Applicants must apply through the ApplyTexas website, which requires that you have an email address. All materials submitted in the process of applying to the University become the property of the university and will not be returned to the applicant.

How to Apply:

- Complete an application through the ApplyTexas website (www.applytexas.org)
- Submit official transcripts to the Office of Graduate Admissions
- Submit official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores to the Office of Graduate Admissions

GRE scores will be waived if your undergraduate GPA is 3.25 or higher (last 60 hours) or if you have a previous master’s degree.

Requirements for Admission:
- Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited institution of higher education
- Texas Teacher Certification (any field)
- GPA (Last 60 Hrs.) > 3.25 OR GPA (Last 60 Hrs.) x 100 + GRE (Old Score Format) > 1100.

CERTIFICATION ONLY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible for this certificate, an individual must already hold a M.Ed. from an accredited program. The minimum number of hours required for the Educational Diagnostician certificate is usually 18 hours; however, the requirements will vary per student based on a review of both the student’s undergraduate and graduate transcripts. In order to determine exactly how many hours you will need in order to pursue your Educational Diagnostician certificate, send official copies of both your undergraduate and graduate transcripts to the Office of Teacher Certification.
New cohorts begin each Long Summer Session. Applicants are only allowed to begin the program during the Long Summer Session

Program Requirements

Course Requirements

The Educational Diagnostician graduate program is designed for the busy educator. All coursework is delivered 100% online. This program allows students to maintain full-time employment and fulfill other duties outside of the classroom. The University of Texas at Tyler utilizes the course management system, Blackboard, to deliver high quality instruction online.

The following course sequence is required for a Masters Degree in Special Education with Educational Diagnostician Certification:

EDSP 5350 Overview of Special Education
EDSP 5370 Learning Theory
EDSP 5364 Assessment in Special Education
EDSP 5365 Developmental Testing
PSYC 5366 Intelligence Testing
EDSP 5366 Full and Individual Evaluation
EDSP 5368 Educational Strategies
EDSP 5378 Administrative and Legal Issues
EDSP 5360 Learning and Neurological Disorders
EDSP 5363 Behavior Disorders
EDSP 5362 Adolescents and Adults with Disabilities
EDSP 5357 Practicum

The following courses are required for individuals seeking Certification Only:

EDSP 5350 Overview of Special Education
EDSP 5364 Assessment in Special Education
EDSP 5365 Developmental Testing
PSYC 5366 Intelligence Testing
EDSP 5366 Full and Individual Evaluation
EDSP 5357 Practicum

Technology Requirements

Access to a computer that has the following components: webcam/microphone, Powerpoint viewing and creating capabilities, Microsoft Word and Excel, digital camera with video recording capabilities (e.g. iPhone or digital-video camera), and digital audio-recorder.

An iPhone or Flip Video Camera or other device used for video recording is mandatory. This type of phone/device creates an mpeg. file that easily transfers to your computer's hard drive. This is a worthy investment because you will be using this type of recording technology for
several special education courses. The Flip Video Camera comes with software for your computer to create the mpeg file. If you already possess a high-quality video camera, then you may use this device to capture your testing sessions and/or record your assignments. Before you submit your recordings for credit, you will need to use a software program to convert your video. Your computer should have software that converts taped video. The MacIntosh Netbook software is called IMovie and the Windows software is called Windows Movie Maker. The directions for these "movie" programs are pretty easy to follow. Be sure that your recordings are functional and saved appropriately before you submit your assignment for grading.

Additionally, you will need the capability to scan test protocols. Protocols will be submitted to Blackboard once they are scanned. Other documents may need to be scanned and emailed.

**Testing Courses**

There are four testing courses in the program. The use of test kits and testing materials is essential during the testing courses. The University has a very limited number of test kits. Since many students enrolled in the program live long distances from the University, it is advisable for you to borrow testing materials from the district where you are employed. The use of district testing kits is an agreement solely between the student and the district. The University of Texas assumes no responsibility in the agreement.

If a student decides to check out a test kit from The University of Texas at Tyler, he/she must come to the university to check out the materials. It is critical that the student understand the responsibility that comes with checking out materials. Student will replace kits, at current expense, if they are lost, stolen, damaged, or returned with missing pieces. There may be a minimal fee associated with the use of consumable items associated with administering and interpreting assessments. Fees will be discussed at the time of checkout. All materials must be returned to The University of Texas at Tyler before any grade will be given to the student.

**Test Protocols**

Test protocols will be provided by the School of Education. Students within driving distance of the University may schedule a time to pick up the protocols needed during the semester. For students who are not within driving distance of the university, protocols will be mailed.

**Practicum/Field Experience**

The educational diagnostician student must complete 160 clock hours of practicum in a TEA accredited school. Students will register for EDSP 5357, Practicum in Special Education, after approval by the major advisor, during the last semester. The purpose of this structured experience is to place the practicum student in actual situations that he/she will encounter in the profession.

Students will be required to submit a request outlining the specifics regarding the mentor who is a certified educational diagnostician, campus principal/special education director, and the
The practicum student will maintain a detailed log of approved activities throughout the practicum and will be verified by the mentor educational diagnostician. Observation hours must be verified by a mentor diagnostician or campus principal/director and completed in an acceptable instructional/educational setting.

The practicum student can expect two observations to assess progress and compliance throughout the practicum. The observations will be conducted by a certified educational diagnostician assigned as the practicum supervisor/mentor. Data will also be collected from the mentor educational diagnostician at the midterm point and end of semester. It is the practicum student’s responsibility to arrange the meeting arrangement between the mentor educational diagnostician and the faculty supervisor. Additional information regarding documentation of field-based experience will be provided in Blackboard upon enrollment in EDSP 5357. During the practicum, you will be expected to participate in two virtual meetings with your faculty advisor. These meetings will allow you and the faculty advisor to review your progress.

**Background Checks**

Many school districts require a criminal history check before granting access to the campus. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the hosting school district with the information required and pay any fees associated with the background checks.

**Degree Plan/Certification Plan**

A degree plan will be completed during at the end of your first semester in the program. Please keep a copy of your signed degree plan for your records. Students seeking a Masters degree will have a degree plan, while students seeking certification only will have a certification plan.

**TExES Certification Exam**

Students in the educational diagnostician program must take the TExES exam during the last semester of their coursework while enrolled in the practicum. Registration information as well as registration deadlines and test dates can be found online at [http://cms.texas-ets.org](http://cms.texas-ets.org). The test preparation manual may be downloaded from the following site:


If the TExES exam is not passed, a remediation plan will be developed prior to approval to retest.

**Certification**

In order to apply for certification for the standard Educational Diagnostician Certificate, the following must be completed:
1. Complete the educational diagnostician program;
2. Hold a valid Texas teaching certificate;
3. Hold an earned master’s degree;
4. Complete a minimum of two years teaching in a TEA accredited school;
5. Pass TExES Educational Diagnostician examination.

Following the successful completion of all program requirements, you will apply and be recommended for your certificate by The University of Texas at Tyler.
Program Faculty

Frank Dykes Ed. D., has more than 25 years of experience in education as a general education teacher, special education teacher, educational diagnostician, central office administrator and university professor. He maintains an active role in public education as an educational consultant in the areas of assessment, evidenced-based strategies, cultural diversity and learning disabilities. Dr. Dykes has several publications to his credit and is a speaker at the international, national, and state level. He is currently the program director for the educational diagnostician program at UT Tyler. His research interests include special education assessment, learning disabilities, teacher training, RTI, minority overrepresentation in special education, and LGBTQ youth issues. Dr. Dykes is the past state treasurer for the Council for Exceptional Children-Texas and is a member of CEC, TED, DDEL, TEDA and is the secretary for the Small Special Education Programs caucus.

Jessica A. Rueter is an assistant professor at The University of Texas at Tyler in the School of Education. Dr. Rueter has 19 years of experience as a special education teacher, educational diagnostician, and as a university professor. Dr. Rueter has several publications to her credit and is a frequent speaker at the international, national, and state level. She is an assessment consultant to school districts in East Texas and in the Dallas Fort Worth metropolitan area and has served as an expert witness in due process hearings. Her research interests include best practices of assessment of students with disabilities and translating assessment results into evidence-based instructional practices. Dr. Rueter serves as the Past-President of the Texas Council for Exceptional Children and is a member of CEC, CEDS, TED, CLD, and TEDA.