

Special Education Program Handbook

Master of Arts Degree

In

Mild/Moderate Support Needs
Extensive Support Needs

Special Education Program

Department of Advanced Educational Studies

California State University, Bakersfield

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I. Program Overview

The Special Education Master of Arts (M.A.) degree program at CSUB is designed to provide candidates with the 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 each semester, and candidates must attend the information session a semester before they intend to start the program.

Educator Preparation Programs Mission and Vision

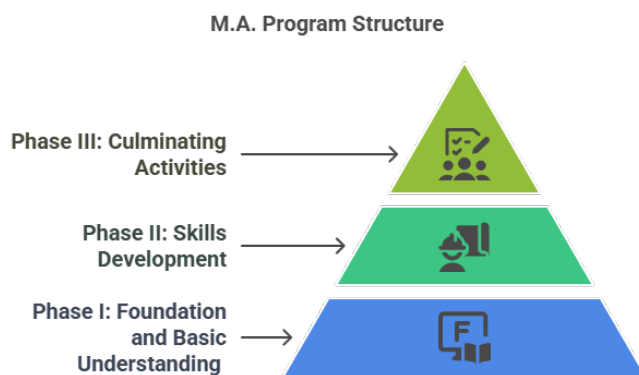
Mission: CSUB Educator Preparation Programs cultivate school, university, and community partnerships that prepare highly qualified education professionals, who work collaboratively to nurture an equitable and informed education community.

Vision: The CSUB Educator Preparation Programs will be the nexus of a network of ethical educational leaders who promote student growth and improve the quality of life in their communities.

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 Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), and all components of the program are congruent with the expectations set forth by the CEC. <https://exceptionalchildren.org/special-education-preparation-standards>

Program Design



There are three phases of the Master of Arts (M.A.) degree program, detailing the focus and objectives of each phase. The program is structured to provide candidates with a comprehensive understanding of special education, from foundational knowledge to practical skills and culminating activities.

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 to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN) and Extensive Support Needs (ESN); (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

The final phase, "Culminating Activities," provides M.A. degree candidates with the opportunity to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the previous phases. Candidates are required to complete one of the following culminating activities:

- **EDSP 6810: Master's Project in Education:** An applied project demonstrating the candidate's ability to address a specific issue or challenge in the field of education.
- **EDSP 6820: Master's Examination in Special Education:** A comprehensive examination assessing the candidate's mastery of core concepts and principles in special education.
- **EDSP 6830: Master's Thesis in Special Education:** An original research study contributing to the body of knowledge in special education.

Coursework Sequence

The coursework is organized into clearly defined phases that reflect a developmental progression from foundational knowledge to advanced competencies and culminate in a capstone course.

Phases	Special Education		Electives
	MMSN	ESN	
Prerequisite	EDRS 4600		
Phase I: Foundations	EDSP 5610 EDSP 5620		EDSP 5710 EDSP 5720
Phase II: Skill Development	EDSP 5630 EDSP 5640 EDSP 5650 EDSP 6200 Three Electives	EDSP 5630 EDSP 5640 EDSP 5660 EDSP 6200 Three Electives	EDSP 6100 EDSP 5650 EDSP 5660
Phase III: Culminating Activity	EDSP 6810 or EDSP 6820 or EDSP 6830		

Course Numbers and Titles		
Course Number	Units	Title
EDSP 5610	3	Charac. and Needs of Students with Mild to Extensive Support Needs
EDSP 5620	3	Collaboration and Transition in Special Education

EDSP 5630	3	Assessment of Students with Mild to Extensive Support Needs
EDSP 5640	3	Classroom Management and Positive Behavior Support
EDSP 5650	3	Curriculum and Instruction in MMSN
EDSP 5660	3	Curriculum and Instruction in ESN
EDSP 5710*	3	Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families
EDSP 5720*	3	Assessment and Intervention/Instr. Strategies: Birth through Pre-K
EDSP 6100*	3	Teaching Students with Autism
EDSP 6200	4	Research in Special Education
EDSP 6810	3	Master's Project
EDSP 6820	3	Master's Examination
EDSP 6830	3	Master's Thesis

Note: * = electives. Course descriptions are found [HERE](#).

II. Program Application/Admission Procedures

The application process is a two-step process: 1. Apply to the university. 2. Apply to the master's program. A summation/checklist of the application process is available in the [program information sheet](#) and on the [program application](#).

Special Education Graduate Program Application/Admission Timelines

Candidates must submit the application packet one semester prior to the semester they wish to enroll and observe the following sample procedural timelines. Please contact the program admission advisor or program website (<https://www.csub.edu/specialed/>) for an application due date (Ms. Amani Hernandez: 661-654-3193, Bakersfield; Ms. Jenny St. George: 661-952-5080, Antelope Valley).

Program Checklist

Prior to Beginning Your MA Program

- ☐ Apply and be admitted to the University
- ☐ Review [application requirements](#) and submit a complete Special Education graduate program application.
- ☐ Participate in a small group interview.
- ☐ Apply and be admitted to the Special Education MA program.
- ☐ Read [the MA Program Handbook](#)
- ☐ Attend Program orientation
- ☐ Meet with the Program Advisor to develop a Program Plan

Throughout MA Program

- ☐ Meet regularly (at least once per semester) with the Program Advisor
- ☐ Update the Program Plan if you make changes to your program plan
- ☐ Notify the university about any change of address or other contact information
- ☐ Take program courses
- ☐ Begin thinking about ideas for culminating activity: thesis, project, or examination

Preparation for Program Completion – One semester prior to your proposed graduating semester

- ☐ Form a culminating activity committee by the 4th week of the semester prior to enrolling in the culminating activities course.
- ☐ Constitute a committee with one chair and two members. Work closely with your committee chair to complete the culminating activity requirement.
- ☐ Communicate with a graduate advisor to complete the following forms
 - Advancement to Candidacy
 - Culminating Activity
- ☐ Submit the Graduation Application and pay the appropriate fees by the deadline. File for Graduation according to the university deadlines. Follow [this link](#) for a due date and procedures (<http://www.csub.edu/admissionsandaaid/graduation/masters/index.html>)

- ☐ If completing an exam, submit your final products to the committee chair by **the 7th week** of your graduating semester.
- ☐ If completing a thesis/project, submit the final copy to the University Graduate Studies Office by **the university deadline** of your graduating semester.

Transfer Units

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

Graduate credit from another accredited college or university may be applied toward the fulfillment of requirements in the student's graduate program at CSUB, if accepted by the faculty of the respective graduate degree program. In addition, graduate-level course work taken through the Extended University may be used to satisfy prerequisite requirements or specific degree requirements when such work is approved in advance by the appropriate graduate program director. A maximum of 20% of the required semester units for a graduate degree program may be accepted toward a graduate degree program from another college or university or from the Extended University, and all such units must satisfy the time limit requirements specified by the graduate program. Individual graduate programs may have more restrictive policies, and may permit fewer transfer or non-resident units to apply toward the degree. In limited special circumstances, these policies may be waived or altered by the CSU for specific degrees and pilot programs (from <https://catalog.csub.edu/policies-procedures/academic-policies/graduate/division-graduate-studies/>)

Time Limit to Complete Requirements for Graduate Degrees

The California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Education, specifies that all the requirements for a graduate degree shall be completed within a seven (7) year period. This time limit requirement means that no more than seven (7) years may elapse between the start of the term for the earliest dated course approved for the Plan of Study and the date the application for graduation is formally approved.

Graduate students should check with the appropriate graduate program director to discuss the specific time limit requirements of the respective graduate degree program. If the student is unable to complete all graduate program requirements (generally course work) within the time limits specified by the graduate degree program, the student may formally petition the graduate program director for an extension of the time limit or for the substitution of other appropriate course work. (<https://catalog.csub.edu/policies-procedures/academic-policies/graduate/division-graduate-studies/>)

III. Requirements for Continuing in the Special Education Program

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Candidates must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all required credential courses attempted after entry into 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. Candidates earning below 3.0 over two terms may be dropped from the program.

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' dispositions and academic progress and make recommendations that will best assist candidates in acquiring the requisite professional skills and maintaining the integrity of the program.

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

IV. 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*.

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.

- **When should candidates form your committee?**

Candidates should form a MA committee by the 4th week of the semester prior to enrolling in the culminating activity course.

- **How many members serve on your committee?**

The Culminating Activities Committee (CAC) is comprised of three members: A Committee Chairperson should be a tenure-track or tenured faculty member with a doctoral degree in the SPED program. At least one of the two committee members should be a full-time faculty member in the SPED program. It is highly preferable that all three committee members are from CSUB/SPED.

- **Who is eligible to serve as a culminating activity committee member?**

- ✓ M.A. or higher degree in Special Education or a related field.
- ✓ Proven record of successful professional experience in Special Education.
- ✓ Approved by the MA program coordinator.
- ✓ Excellent interpersonal relationships.

- **Whom should you ask to serve on the committee?**

First, understand that candidates will be asking busy faculty members whether they are willing to work with them. It may not be possible for a particular professor or instructor to accept your invitation to be on a master's committee.

Candidates should select a committee chair first. Then, discuss other potential committee members with the chair. It is usually a good idea to get the chair's approval before asking anyone else to serve on the committee.

- **What are the roles of the Committee Chair?**

Candidates must work with the committee chair closely throughout the culminating activity process, including developing exam questions, reviewing exam essays, communicating with exam results, and any other culminating activity-related questions.

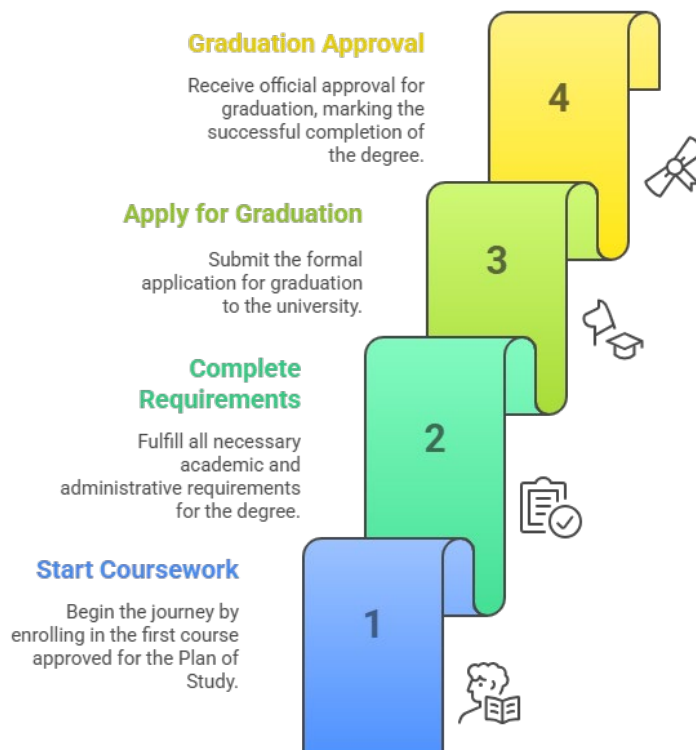
The committee chair is also an important person to guide a candidate through the culminating project or thesis. The chair may help you set up timelines, research/project topic, and will be candidates' first point of contact when they have questions about completing a MA culminating activity.

- **How often should candidates meet with the committee?** Candidates should continuously communicate with the committee chair about the progress of their culminating activity throughout each semester.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Other Approvals

- If any human subjects are involved in research for projects/theses, students must see the [Human Subjects Institutional Review Board 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.

Achieving Graduation within Time Limit



V. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **How do I apply to the MA program in Special Education?**

To apply, you must complete a two-step process:

1. Apply for graduate admission to CSU Bakersfield.
2. Submit the MA program application to the Special Education Department.

You are also required to attend a program information session in the semester prior to your intended start date.

- **Are there prerequisite courses I need to complete?**

Yes. The course EDRS 4600 is required before beginning coursework in the MA program sequence.

- **How is the MA program structured?**

The program is organized into three phases:

- Phase I – Foundations
- Phase II – Skill Development
- Phase III – Culminating Activity

Each phase builds upon the previous one to ensure progressive learning and mastery of essential skills.

- **What are the culminating activity options?**

Candidates must complete one of the following options as the final requirement for the MA degree:

- EDSP 6810: Master's Project in Special Education
- EDSP 6820: Master's Examination in Special Education
- EDSP 6830: Master's Thesis in Special Education

- **How often should I meet with my advisor?**

You are required to meet with your program advisor at least once per semester to review your academic progress and update your program plan as needed.

- **What is the minimum GPA requirement to remain in the program?**

You must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all credential coursework. Falling below this threshold places you on academic probation and may lead to dismissal if not improved in subsequent semesters.

- **When should I form my Culminating Activity Committee?**

Your committee must be formed by the fourth week of the semester prior to enrollment in the culminating activity course.

- **How many members should be on the committee?**

The committee should consist of three members: one Chair (a tenured or tenure-track SPED faculty member with a doctoral degree) and two additional members, preferably from the

CSUB Special Education program.

- **How do I select my committee members?**

Begin by selecting your Committee Chair, then consult with your Chair regarding other potential members. It is advisable to gain the Chair's approval before inviting other faculty to join.

- **What is the role of the Committee Chair?**

The Chair guides the student through all aspects of the culminating activity, including topic development, timeline management, and final evaluation.

- **How often should I meet with my Committee?**

Candidates should maintain regular communication with their Committee Chair throughout the semester and update the full committee as needed.

- **What is the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and do I need approval?**

If your research involves human subjects, IRB approval must be obtained prior to beginning any data collection. Additional permissions may be required for school or district-based research.

- **What happens if I do not meet the university deadline for my culminating activity?**

Failure to meet university deadlines may result in delayed graduation. Be sure to consult the CSUB Graduate Studies Office and your Committee Chair to stay on track.

- **Can I switch my culminating activity option later in the program?**

Switching options may be possible with advisor and committee approval, but must be done well in advance and may affect your timeline for completion.

- **Where do I submit my final thesis or project?**

Final theses or projects must be submitted to the University Graduate Studies Office by the official deadline of your graduation semester.

- **What is the time limit for completing the MA degree?**

All degree requirements must be completed within seven (7) years from the start of your first approved course. Extensions may be granted through petition in special circumstances.

- **Can I transfer credits from another institution?**

You may transfer up to six (6) semester units from other accredited institutions, subject to approval. All transfer credits must fall within the 7-year time frame for degree completion.

- **Do I need Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for research?**

Yes, if your culminating activity involves human subjects, you must obtain IRB approval prior to beginning research. Approval from school districts or agencies may also be required.

- **What happens if I change my address or contact information?**

You are responsible for promptly notifying the university and your program advisor of any changes to your contact information to ensure proper communication.

VI. List of Program Faculty & Staff

- Dr. Yeunjoo Lee, Professor ylee@csub.edu, 661-654- 6478
- Dr. John Mouanoutoua, Assistant Professor & MA Program Coordinator, Jmouanoutoua2@csub.edu, 661-654-2460
- Dr. Sarana Roberts, Associate Professor Sroberts21@csub.edu, 661-654-2527
- Mrs. Jane Brown, AV campus co-coordinator
- Mrs. Nancy Collins, AV campus co-coordinator
- Mrs. Amani Hernandez, Bakersfield Admissions & Graduation Advisor, aalshaif@csub.edu, 661-654-3193
- Mrs. Jenny St. George, Antelope Valley Admissions & Graduation Advisor jst-george@csub.edu, 661-654-5083
- Mr. Ryan Otawka, Department Coordinator rotawka@csub.edu, 661-654-3055
- Ms. Megan Marshall, Antelope Valley Administrative Assistant, mmarshall110@csub.edu, 661-952-5080

VII. Student Services Departments

- The Graduate Center, gsc@csub.edu, 661 654 2786, <https://www.csub.edu/graduatestudentcenter/>
- Office of Admissions, admissions@csub.edu, 661-654-3036
- Financial Aid finaid@csub.edu, 661-654-3016, <https://www.csub.edu/financial-aid/>
- Services for Students with Disabilities Office, caen@csub.edu, 661-654-3360, <https://www.csub.edu/ssd/index.shtml>
- Antelope Valley Campus, csubav@csub.edu, 661-952-5000, <https://www.csub.edu/av/>

