

# Graduate Programs

## Department of Special Education



### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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**GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT  
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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# GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

10/11/06

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland is devoted to the preparation of professionals who will work with individuals who have disabilities. Our special education graduate programs prepare leadership personnel including teachers, research and policy specialists, and administrators for school systems, institutions of higher education, local, state, and federal agencies, and social services. The Department of Special Education is one of five departments within the College of Education (COE) and offers graduate programs of high quality, which fulfill priority needs at the local, state, regional, and national level. Graduate degrees in Special Education emphasize research, teacher preparation, instruction, and policy studies. The student and advisor develop an appropriate program of study within the guidelines established by the Graduate School, College, and Department. The specific goals of the graduate program in the Department of Special Education include:

1. To provide appropriate and effective instructional practices in preparing professional personnel in the field of special education;
2. To prepare highly qualified teachers, consumers, researchers, and scholars in the field of special education; and
3. To prepare leaders, advocates, and policy developers who will make an impact upon the education and lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.
4. To uphold the College of Education's Conceptual Framework

We, in the Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland, believe that the philosophical base for our personnel preparation programs is based on the following rationale:

1. Individuals with disabilities, regardless of type and degree of disability, have unique needs that require individualized accommodations and supports.
2. All individuals with disabilities, regardless of age or severity of condition, are entitled to equal educational opportunities from birth through adulthood.
3. Full participation of individuals with disabilities in society enriches all communities; therefore, educating students with disabilities along with their nondisabled peers who have diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds prepares all individuals to participate in increasingly diverse global societies.
4. Professionals in special education must: (a) focus on families rather than treat children in isolation; (b) recognize family strengths; (c) respect a variety of diverse family structures, values, and priorities; and (d) be sensitive to the concerns that are faced by families of individuals with disabilities.
5. The complex needs of persons with disabilities and their families require interagency collaboration among numerous service providers and advocacy groups who contribute to a broad range of outcomes including literacy, community functioning, physical and mental health,

social skills, vocational skills, and independent living skills; special educators need to be knowledgeable about and respectful to other service providers and advocates.

6. Advancements in knowledge and technology regarding how to educate all individuals (including those with disabilities) and how to support their families are increasing; this requires consistent monitoring, synthesis, and integration of research, technology, and policy analysis into current practices.
7. Services for individuals with disabilities and their families should promote making choices and learning to exercise responsible control of one's life; evidence suggests that self-determination is a critical component of effective service delivery.
8. Special education teachers should seek to uphold and improve the laws, policies, and practices in special education and related therapeutic and community services to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities and their families.
9. Special educators should provide leadership and contribute to creating schools that better educate all students focusing on inclusive practices.

Faculty in the Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland believe that special education professionals must be prepared:

1. to provide special education services in diverse, multi-cultural settings including home, community, recreational, and work environments;
2. to deliver specialized educational services to persons with disabilities and their families;
3. to be knowledgeable of and skillful in delivering empirically validated educational methods;
4. to be knowledgeable of emerging technologies and skillful in the application of those technologies to all individuals with disabilities;
5. to demonstrate critical thinking, reflection, and problem solving in their practices;
6. to understand the concept of providing a full range of services from infancy to adulthood;
7. to serve as advocates and change agents in the schools, institutions, and organizations;
8. to become consumers and producers of research in special education;
9. to support, enable, and empower families of children having disabilities;
10. to collaborate with families and professionals in their and other disciplines acting as team leaders, case managers, or service coordinators;
11. to communicate effectively in writing and orally; and
12. to demonstrate the highest professional and ethical standards with respect to the education of individuals with disabilities.

The university community, the state of Maryland, and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area provide an unparalleled setting for graduate study. The department's proximity to the United States Congress and governmental agencies, including the US Department of Education Special Education Programs Office, provides opportunities for on-site experiences for graduate students. National organizations and services, such as the Council for Exceptional Children, the ERIC Clearing House for Exceptional Children, and the Library of Congress, are within the metropolitan area. Public and private schools in the state of Maryland provide diverse programs that enhance the learning opportunities for graduate students in special education.

### Disability Support Services (DSS)

The Disability Support Service coordinates services that ensure individuals with disabilities equal access to University of Maryland programs. The office provides and coordinates direct

services for students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors with disabilities. Services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals based on their specific disabilities. Presently, the services provided by DSS include but are not limited to: testing services for students needing accommodations for classroom exams; interpreting and captioning services for individuals who are Deaf and hard of hearing; readers for students and faculty who are blind and visually impaired as well as for individuals who have learning disabilities; priority registration services; library and laboratory assistance, note taking services, campus transportation services and classroom and campus wide accommodations. The office also educates and provides consultation to University faculty, staff, and administrators to increase their awareness and sensitivity toward individuals with disabilities. They also provide students and staff with disabilities the opportunity to gain the skills necessary to effectively advocate for themselves within the University community.

## **II. DEGREES OFFERED**

### **Master's Program in Special Education**

Master's degree program goals consist of the following:

1. To prepare highly qualified Master's level personnel in the field of special education
2. To prepare personnel who are critical thinkers and consumers of research so as to experiment, reflect, and revise instruction for students with disabilities
3. To prepare change agents and advocates who will make an impact upon the education and lives of individuals with disabilities and their families

Students pursuing the Master's degree program in Special Education may earn the **Master's of Education (MEd)** or the **Master's of Arts (MA)** degree. Students who are interested in completing a thesis pursue a MA degree. The master's program provides students an opportunity to develop competence in special education and expand their knowledge in other areas as well. The student and advisor develop a program of study that complements the student's background and career plans. The Master's programs in special education offer the following options:

- 1) **BS/MEd Combined** Program with initial special education certification only for University of Maryland EDSP undergraduate majors
- 2) **MEd with UM Minor** from the Department of Special Education with initial special education certification
- 3) **Master's of Education (MEd) Teacher Certification Program** for students *who are seeking special education certification* (see IMPORTANT NOTE below). Certification areas include:
  - a. Early Childhood Special Ed (EC): Birth to Grade 3 (MSDE: Infant/Primary)
  - b. Elementary Special Ed (EL): Grade 1-8 (MSDE: Elementary/Middle)
  - c. Secondary/Middle Special Ed (SM): Grade 6-12 (MSDE: Secondary/Adult)
  - d. Certification in Age Based Area & Severe Disabilities in one of the following:

EC and Severe Disabilities:	Birth-Grade 3; (Infant/Primary)
EL and Severe Disabilities:	Grade 1-8 (Elementary/Middle)
SM and Severe Disabilities:	Grade 6-12 (Secondary/Adult)
  - e. Severe Disabilities: Severe Disabilities Certification only if already certified in EC, EL, or SM Special Education in the state of Maryland

- 4) **Master’s of Education (MEd) Specialty Program** (30 hrs) (See IMPORTANT NOTE) for:
- Students entering *with special education certification*; the specialty areas include:
    - Behavioral and Learning Disorders
    - Early Childhood Special Education (including Infancy)
    - Secondary and Transition Special Education
    - Severe Disabilities (including Autism)
  - Students from allied professionals (e.g., occupational, physical, speech therapists) or from general education (early childhood, elementary, or secondary)
- 5) **Master’s of Arts (MA) Thesis Program** (36 hrs) for students interested in conducting research and defending a thesis. *Students must take and submit GRE or MAT scores for admission into this program.* Specialty areas the same as in (4a) above.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students applying to any MEd program must pass Praxis I: Academic Skills Assessments before admission into the graduate program meeting the State of Maryland’s passing score found at the following MSDE web site: [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/certification\\_branch/](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/certification_branch/) These scores must be included in the application packet. Information on Praxis Tests is available at: <http://www.ets.org/> Also, all teacher candidates must pass Praxis II (Tests 0351 and 0352) prior to student teaching.

	<b>Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Test Code</b>	<b>MD Score</b>
<b>Applicants may take the PPST in paper &amp; pencil or computerized format.</b>	PPST <u>Reading</u> : Multiple Choice, 60 mins OR	0710	177
	Computerized PPST Reading: Multiple Choice, 75 mins	5710	177
	PPST <u>Writing</u> : Multiple Choice, 60 mins OR	0720	173
	Computerized PPST Writing: Multiple Choice, 75 mins	5720	173
	PPST <u>Mathematics</u> : Multiple Choice, 55 mins OR	0730	177
	Computerized PPST Mathematics: Multiple Choice, 75 mins	5730	177

<sup>1</sup>Applicants may meet the testing requirement in one of two ways: (a) submitting individual scores at or above the state qualifying scores on *Praxis I: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics* or (b) submitting a composite score that is at or above the state qualifying score. **The composite score for the PPST and CPPST is 527.**

Advanced Graduate Specialist Certificate

The Advanced Graduate Specialist (AGS) program is designed to promote a high level of professional competence in an area of concentration in the field of special education. This program is available to students planning to take extended graduate work beyond the master's level, within any of the specialty areas indicated for the master's program. The AGS is not a degree program, but a certificate awarded by the College of Education at the completion of all requirements. The candidate for the Advanced Graduate Specialist program must have a master's

degree or its equivalent earned either at the University of Maryland or at another accredited institution. The minimum number of graduate hours for the A.G.S. is 60 including 30 applicable credits from the student's Master's program. The core of the program should be made up of special education courses and other work within the University. Additional information is available in the Graduate Studies in the College of Education Guide for Students and Advisors available on the COE web site:

[http://www.education.umd.edu/studentinfo/graduate\\_info/GradStudHandbooks.html](http://www.education.umd.edu/studentinfo/graduate_info/GradStudHandbooks.html)

### Doctoral Program in Special Education

Doctoral program goals consist of the following:

1. To prepare highly qualified scholars and researchers in the field of special education
2. To prepare highly qualified teacher educators in the field of special education who can prepare personnel in the field of special education
3. To prepare leaders, advocates, and policy developers who will make an impact upon the education and lives of individuals with disabilities and their families

Students pursuing doctoral studies in the Department of Special Education pursue the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. The preparation for the PhD prepares individuals to conduct and disseminate research and prepare future teachers in special education. After admission into the program, the student and advisor develop a program of study that complements the student's background and professional goals. The doctoral program in special education at the University of Maryland focuses on research, personnel preparation, and educational leadership. This overall goal is achieved in and through the selection of one of the following concentration areas:

- \* **Learning Disabilities**
- \* **Behavior Disorders**
- \* **Early Childhood Special Education**
- \* **Secondary and Transition Special Education**
- \* **Severe Disabilities**
- \* **Policy Studies**

More information about UM Department of Special Education can be found at our web site:

<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDSP/>

### III. ADMISSION TO GRADUATE STUDY IN THE DEPARTMENT

Applicants who wish to pursue graduate studies in the Department of Special Education are admitted to the Graduate School on recommendation of the Department. Applications for Graduate Admission are obtained at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/admission.htm> The Department Graduate Admission Committee reviews applications when all required materials have been received. After review, the applications are placed into one of three recommendation categories: (1) admit, (2) provisional admit, or (3) reject. The Graduate Studies Office in the College of Education forwards an admission recommendation to the Graduate School after receiving the department's recommendation.

#### Application and Routing

The University strongly encourages all applicants to the Graduate School to apply online. Applications can be completed at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/admission.htm>

All additional materials listed below must be sent to:

University of Maryland College Park  
Enrollment Services Operations  
Application for Graduate Admission  
Room 0103 Mitchell Building  
College Park, MD 20742

1. **One complete set of official transcripts** reflecting all undergraduate and graduate work completed or in progress. Each transcript must bear the signature of the registrar and the seal of the granting institution and should include the years of attendance, courses taken, grades received, class standing and the degree, certificate or diploma received. If the applicant attended the University of Maryland, the Graduate School will obtain your records of courses completed at the College Park campus.
2. **A Maryland In-State Status Form**, if you wish to apply for Maryland resident status. Students who apply online do NOT have to submit this form in hardcopy as well.
3. A minimum of **three (3) current letters of recommendation** from present and/or former professors or employers who can assess to the quality of the applicant's academic performance and scholastic potential. Recommendation Letter Forms can be downloaded at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/forms/recform.pdf>
4. A 300-500 word **statement of goals, experiences, and research interests**.
5. **Standardized Test Scores**. The following standardized tests are required for the following degrees/certificate:

Degree	Test <sup>1,4</sup>	Code
PhD	GRE	5814
MA	GRE or MAT <sup>2</sup>	
MEd	Praxis I <sup>3</sup>	5814
AGS	Praxis I <sup>3</sup>	5814

<sup>1</sup> Examination scores should be sent to the University (see UM Code above) by the testing authority.

<sup>2</sup> The MAT is offered weekly at the University of Maryland; for information call 301.314.7688.

<sup>3</sup> If applying to any MEd or AGS program, students must pass the Praxis I: Academic Skills Assessments (PPST 10710; 10720; 10730) before admission into the graduate program, at the State of Maryland passing score. Information on Praxis I is available at: <http://www.ets.org/>

<sup>4</sup> For Foreign Students: Information on the application process and international student services can be found at the Department of International Educational Services. International students must demonstrate a proficiency in the English language by taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Visit the following website: [http://www.intprog.umd.edu/ies/Adm\\_International/englangprof.html](http://www.intprog.umd.edu/ies/Adm_International/englangprof.html)

The Graduate Admissions Office in the College of Education maintains applicants' files and sends a letter to applicants informing them of incomplete files. Only when an applicant's file is complete is it forwarded to the Department of Special Education. Applications must be fully completed in a timely manner or miss being reviewed before the next semester. Students can call the COE Office of Student Services at 301.405.2364 to check on their application.

Once the file is forwarded to the Department of Special Education, it is reviewed by the EDSP Graduate Admissions Committee. Applicants' files are kept in the department office accessible to all faculty for review. The EDSP Graduate Admissions Committee makes a recommendation to the Department Chairperson. The file and recommendation of the committee are reviewed by the Department Chairperson. The Department Chairperson's recommendation is then sent to the College of Education's Graduate Admissions Office and the College sends its recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Graduate School sends a formal Offer of Admission to students accepted into the department. This letter serves as the student's permit to register. The letter also indicates the advisor. It is the student's responsibility to contact the advisor for an initial advising appointment to plan a program of study. Faculty information is available at: <http://www.education.umd.edu/EDSP/Faculty/index.html>

#### Admission to Graduate Programs

The decision to admit an applicant to a graduate program is based on a combination of factors. Consideration is given to: (a) previous undergraduate and graduate coursework; (b) letters of recommendation; (c) score on standardized test; and (d) statement of academic goals and research interests.

#### **MA, MEd, or AGS program admission requirements include:**

- 1) Grade point average of 3.0 or better (based on a 4.0 system) from an accredited undergraduate institution;
- 2) Grade point average of 3.5 or better in any previous graduate work from an accredited institution;
- 3) Test scores: for all MEd and AGS applicants--Praxis I: Academic Skills Assessments (PPST 10710; 10720; 10730) test scores meeting the state of Maryland passing scores; for all MA applicants--a score on the Miller Analogies Test or the Graduate Record Exam placing the student at or above the 40th percentile rank;
- 4) Three (3) letters of recommendation from individuals with direct knowledge of the applicant's academic capabilities, work experience, and professional characteristics;
- 5) Statement of career goals including: (a) relevant background information, professional experiences, certification status (type/state); (b) if not certified, whether you wish to be certified in special education and which age level (early childhood; elementary; or secondary/middle); (c) intended area of study if seeking the Master's Specialty Program (Learning and Behavior Disorders, Early Childhood, Severe Disabilities; Secondary and Transition); and (d) other information the candidate feels is pertinent to the decision of the admissions committee;
- 6) Evidence of writing skills via the statement of career goals and educational interests; and

### **PhD program admission requirements include:**

- 1) Master's degree or equivalent academic coursework in Special Education or a related area from an accredited institution;
- 2) Grade point average of 3.0 or better (based on a 4.0 system) from an accredited undergraduate institution;
- 3) Grade point of 3.5 or better in previous graduate coursework;
- 4) Score on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) placing the student at or above the 50th percentile;
- 5) Two (2) years of research or work experience with individuals having disabilities;
- 6) Three (3) letters of recommendation from individuals who have direct knowledge of the applicant's academic capabilities, work experience, and professional characteristics;
- 7) a statement of academic goals including a description of the applicant's previous background, preparation, intended area of study, research interests, and plans for future employment;
- 8) evidence of writing skills via that statement of academic and research goals; and
- 9) an interview with a faculty member from the Department of Special Education (see below).

For all doctoral applicants, an interview with a faculty member and/or the Department Chairperson is required. A list of the Special Education Graduate Faculty and their research interests is sent to prospective doctoral students when information is requested. Applicants are urged to contact faculty with similar professional interests to arrange an interview. Faculty contact information is available at: <http://www.education.umd.edu/Depts/EDSP/index.html>

### International Students

Every foreign student must report to the Office of International Education Services for admission requirements which assist not only with various problems regarding immigration, housing and fees, but also with general problems relating to orientation to university and community life. Questions concerning criteria and requirements for international applicants should be addressed to International Education Services, 3117 Mitchell Building, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-5215 (301-314-7740).

### Provisional Acceptance

The Departmental Admissions Committee *may* recommend provisional acceptance for a limited number of applicants. Provisional acceptance is considered appropriate when the applicant does not meet the grade point or MAT/GRE minimum requirements, but provisional admission is recommended on the basis of the applicant's supporting credentials. For MEd applicants, there is no exception to any Praxis exam cut scores because these are set by the state of Maryland. Stipulated conditions (e.g., fulfillment of prerequisite coursework, maintenance of a specific G.P.A.) accompany provisional acceptance.

### Admission Decisions

Applicants to the graduate program are considered by the EDSP Graduate Admissions Committee. Final recommendations for admission are approved by the Department Chairperson. Final decisions regarding acceptance are made by the Dean of Graduate Studies. A written offer of admission specifying the admission date is made to all applicants accepted by the graduate

school. A student must accept or decline an offer of admission by the date specified.

In some cases, students may have the date of admission extended; however, a written request must be made to the Director of Graduate Records, Admissions Office, Graduate School, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742. The student should also notify his/her advisor of the request.

### Advisor Assignments and Responsibilities

Faculty members are informed of all graduate applicants and their areas of study before the Departmental Admissions Committee considers their application. If a faculty member is interested in having a particular student as an advisee, a memo addressed to the department chairperson is placed in the applicant's file. Advisor assignments are made by the department chairperson at the time of the recommendation for admission. To recommend the assignment of an advisor, the Department must have a clear understanding of the major professional interests of the graduate student. Students should clearly specify major areas of interest on their application as part of their statement of career goals. Additionally, students should add if they are certified in special education or not. Final assignment of an advisor will be determined by the Department Chairperson based upon the recommendation of the faculty and with full consideration of faculty advisement loads at time of admission. An applicant can request in writing the assignment of an advisor, with the understanding that it may not always be possible to assign the advisor requested.

Advising is viewed as one of the most important professional responsibilities of faculty members. The responsibilities of the advisor focus on these critical activities:

- 1) Providing assistance in program planning;
- 2) Assuring that applicable department, college, and graduate school policies and requirements are presented, discussed, and adhered to;
- 3) Completing and submitting required forms for which the advisor is responsible (e.g., thesis and dissertation sign off forms, committee appointment forms);
- 4) Informing students it is their responsibility to contact their advisor each semester and to complete and submit required forms for which they are responsible (e.g., comprehensive exams, program of study, Praxis II exam, Progress to Degree)
- 5) Monitoring a student's progress toward degree completion; and
- 6) Serving as an advocate for the student in his or her relationships with other faculty or units in the university when needed.

A relationship of quality and trust between advisor and advisee is considered essential to an effective graduate program. To ensure optimal effectiveness of the relationship, all graduate students will be assigned to graduate faculty who will serve on a continuing basis for the completion of degree requirements. In this capacity, the faculty member serves as a course and program advisor, a mentor, a facilitator of ideas leading to thesis proposal and dissertation, and as the director of the final oral examination committee. In view of the nature of the continuing relationship, whenever possible, choice of faculty as major advisors for doctoral students shall be assigned by the Department Chairperson after considering congruency of interest, the balance of faculty advising, and teaching loads. Graduate students may be reassigned to a new faculty advisor upon the written request of either the student or the advisor. Approval of the change request and reassignment shall be given by the Department Chairperson, following the agreement of the faculty member to serve in the capacity of advisor. Equalization of advisee load shall be a consideration in the Chairperson's action regarding the change request.

### Continuous Registration Policy

Starting Fall 2005, all graduate students must be registered for a minimum of 1 credit each fall and spring semester (excluding summers, unless graduating). This policy applies to master's and pre-candidacy PhD students. Petition forms for non-registration must be filed prior to classes starting, for each student who is not registering. Students should file the appropriate form in accordance with their circumstances, either the "Petition for Waiver of Tuition and/or Mandatory Fees (for Master's or Pre-Candidacy Doctoral Students only)" and the "Request for Leave of Absence", which may be found on the web at [www.vprgs.umd.edu/gss/forms](http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/gss/forms). Only the "Leave of Absence" (see below) stops the student's time-to-degree clock.

### Full-Time Status

To be considered full time, a student must be registered for a total of 48 units. The student is referred to the on-line Graduate Catalog for further explanation of units which can be found at: [http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/registration\\_new.htm](http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/registration_new.htm)

### Progress to Degree Requirements

It is important to the successful completion of a graduate program for students to move steadily toward their degrees. Progress to Degree requirements have been developed consistent with the College of Education and Graduate School Graduate Council approved policy (11/09/04). The time frames indicated below are the requirements of the Graduate School and/or the expectations of the Department of Special Education. Graduate students are expected to make satisfactory progress to degree completion for failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program. In March each year, the Department sends each student an *EDSP Progress to Degree Checkpoints Form*. Each student must fill out the form by listing all academic activities (e.g., coursework, examinations, publications) completed between August to July each year. Advisors must conduct an annual review of each advisee's progress every April and give students written results of such review that includes at a minimum an assessment of satisfactory progress to degree. The following are Graduate School requirements which all graduate students must adhere to:

1. Continuous Registration: All graduate students must register for at least one credit hour each fall and spring semester. Summer registration is required for students who are using UM facilities or for students who are graduating in August. Students who do not have a valid University of Maryland Identification card are not entitled to use University resources, such as the libraries, recreational centers, shuttle buses, and other services covered by mandatory fees. Students seeking information on use of the Libraries while on an official leave of absence may find it at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/PUBSERV/spcmck.html>. Any student who cannot register must request a waiver of the requirement. Not all students are eligible for a waiver.
2. Minimal GPA: All graduate students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0.
3. Master's Timeline Requirements: MEd students must complete all requirements for the degree including 30 hours of coursework within five years; MA students must complete all requirements for the degree including 36 hours of coursework within five years. All master's students must pass 3 hours of comprehensive examinations.
4. Doctoral Timeline Requirements: Doctoral students must be admitted to candidacy within five years of admission to the program. All requirements, including the dissertation, must be completed within four years after advancement to candidacy.

5. Transfer credits: Up to six credits may be transferred from other universities for the master's degree, but no course may be counted toward the degree if it is more than seven years old at the time of graduation.

If any graduate student is not making satisfactory progress to degree, s/he will be required to develop a remedial plan to be reviewed and approved by a program committee. In such cases, the written assessment provided to the student will include timelines for the completion of such a plan. A student who is judged on two separate annual reviews to be making unsatisfactory progress will be placed formally on probation, consistent with Graduate School procedures. A student on probation who is subsequently judged to be making unsatisfactory progress on a third annual review shall be dismissed from the program.

#### **IV. MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS**

Students admitted to the Master's program in the Department of Special Education pursue a **Master of Education (MEd) or Master of Arts (MA)** degree. The Master's program offers students a wide range of coursework and practical experiences, which will enable them to expand their knowledge in areas such as instruction, research, and policy related to special education. The determination of whether a student pursues a MEd or MA degree is made by the student prior to admission into the department. The MA and MEd programs in special education offer the following options:

- 1) **BS/MEd Combined** Program with initial special education certification only for University of Maryland EDSP undergraduate majors
- 2) **MEd with UM Minor** from the Department of Special Education with initial special education certification
- 3) **Master's of Education (MEd) Teacher Certification Program** for students *who are seeking special education certification* (see IMPORTANT NOTE below). Certification areas include:
  - a. Early Childhood Special Ed (EC): Birth to Grade 3 (MSDE: Infant/Primary)
  - b. Elementary Special Ed (EL): Grade 1-8 (MSDE: Elementary/Middle)
  - c. Secondary/Middle Special Ed (SM): Grade 6-12 (MSDE: Secondary/Adult)
  - d. Certification in Age Based Area & Severe Disabilities in one of the following:

EC and Severe Disabilities:	Birth-Grade 3; (Infant/Primary)
EL and Severe Disabilities:	Grade 1-8 (Elementary/Middle)
SM and Severe Disabilities:	Grade 6-12 (Secondary/Adult)
  - e. Severe Disabilities: Severe Disabilities Certification only if already certified in EC, EL, or SM Special Education in the state of Maryland
- 4) **Master's of Education (MEd) Specialty Program** (30 hrs) (See IMPORTANT NOTE) for:
  - a. Students entering *with special education certification*; the specialty areas include:
    - Behavioral and Learning Disorders
    - Early Childhood Special Education (including Infancy)
    - Secondary and Transition Special Education
    - Severe Disabilities (including Autism)
  - b. Students from allied professionals (e.g., occupational, physical, speech therapists) or from general education (early childhood, elementary, or secondary)
- 5) **Master's of Arts (MA) Thesis Program** (36 hrs) for students interested in conducting research and defending a thesis. *Students must take and submit GRE or MAT scores for admission into this program.* Specialty areas the same as in (4a) above.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students applying to any MEd program must pass Praxis I: Academic Skills Assessments before admission into the graduate program meeting the State of Maryland’s passing score found at the following MSDE web site: [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/certification\\_branch/](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/certification_branch/) These scores must be included in the application packet. Information on Praxis Tests is available at: <http://www.ets.org/> Also, all teacher candidates must pass Praxis II (Tests 0351 and 0352) prior to student teaching.

Master’s Teacher Certification Program (MEd) in Special Education

Students seeking initial certification in special education must select one certification program sequences presented above: Early Childhood (EC); Elementary (EL); Secondary/Middle (SM); EC/Severe; EL/Severe; SM/Severe; and Severe Disabilities (if you are already certified in EC, EL, or SM Special Education). Prior to acceptance into the program, applicants must pass the Praxis I: Academic Skills Assessments (PPST 10710; 10720; 10730) at the state of Maryland passing scores; refer to the following web site: <http://certification.msde.state.md.us/TestInfo/TestingInfo.html>.

Additionally, students are required to complete practicum and student teaching/internship experiences; the number and type of field experiences will vary according to each student's background, interests, and program goals. Prior to student teaching, teacher candidates must have good academic standing (GPA of 3.0 or better) and pass the following Praxis II tests meeting the State of Maryland passing scores.

Test Code	Test Title	MD Score <sup>1</sup>
0351	Special Education Knowledge Based Core Principles (1 hour)	155
0352	Special Education Application of Core Principles Across Categories (1 hour)	147

<sup>1</sup>A composite score of 302 (the sum of both required Praxis II tests) is acceptable.

A student who is accepted into our department and successfully completes the specified program of study and all requirements will be recommended for Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) certification in special education at the time of graduation. Also, each year, all teacher candidates are required to attend the annual EDSP “Red Folder” Professional Meeting (held on a Friday morning in November) to obtain current information on MSDE certification requirements, College of Education (COE) Conceptual Framework, MSDE Technology Standards, and COE Technical Standards.

Master’s Specialty (MEd) Program (30 credits)

Students pursuing a degree in special education in the Master’s Specialty Program indicate one of the following specialty areas: Behavioral and Learning Disorders, Early Childhood Special Education, Secondary and Transition Special Education, and Severe Disabilities. The student pursuing the MEd degree must take at least 15 credits in courses at the 600 level or above. No graduate credit is given for coursework below the 400 level. A program of study is developed including a common core of specialty courses. Students are required to take the following courses:

1. EDMS 645 - Quantitative Research Methods I, an introduction to research design and basic statistical principles in education.
2. ONE of the following:
  - EDMS 646 - Quantitative Research Methods II, presents advanced statistical and measurement procedures.
  - EDSP 670 - Single Subject Design, examines design and analysis of single subject research in special education.
  - EDSP 671 - Qualitative Research in Special Education, examines qualitative methods and procedures (or equivalent).
3. All master's student must enroll in the following seminar:
  - EDSP798E: Evidence-Based Practices for Special Education

The College of Education requires one seminar paper for the MEd degree. The seminar paper is written under the direction of the student's advisor. Another faculty member may be the director of the paper with the advisor's consent. In those circumstances when another faculty member other than the advisor directs the seminar paper, the specified director and the advisor should stipulate in writing their respective responsibilities before the student starts the paper. The student must submit the seminar paper with the appropriate title page found at: [http://www.education.umd.edu/studentinfo/graduate\\_info/FormsExplanGrad.html](http://www.education.umd.edu/studentinfo/graduate_info/FormsExplanGrad.html) In all cases, the advisor must sign the paper and submit it to the College of Education. The seminar paper, which is a synthesis of theory and research on a selected topic, may take the following forms:

1. a review and analysis of the literature;
2. a comprehensive research proposal; or
3. a capstone research inquiry project.

Students may submit a paper written in a course (e.g., EDSP 630, 640, 650, 690), but it is the advisor's discretion to accept, reject, or recommend modifications, additions, or further research.

#### Master's of Arts (MA) Degree (36 credits)

Students must take and submit GRE or MAT scores for admission into the MA program. Specialty areas are the same as in the Master's Specialty program. Students pursuing the MA degree take a minimum of 30 hours of coursework and 6 hours of thesis credit (EDSP 799). Students must take 12 hours of credit in coursework at the 600 level or above. No graduate credit is given for coursework below the 400 level. For the thesis requirement, the student develops and implements a research study under the direction of the advisor or other faculty member with expertise in the student's area of interest. The student registers for six credit hours of thesis credit (799) with his/her advisor, or an assigned research advisor. The thesis must demonstrate the student's ability to do independent work and it must be written in APA literary style. The student must also successfully complete an oral defense of the thesis, a minimum of one hour in length. If students use human subjects as part of their thesis research study, they must file the "Departmental Application for Review of Research Using Human Subjects" form. Approval must be obtained prior to conducting the thesis research.

In the semester in which completion of the thesis is anticipated, the student requests the appointment of the oral defense committee by filing the "Nomination of Thesis or Dissertation Committee" form. This form must be submitted by the published deadline in "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer". The student defends his or her thesis research orally before an examining committee. The names of the desired committee members are listed on the form. The Thesis

Committee makeup must be in compliance with Graduate School regulations. The Thesis Committee must have of a minimum of three members. Two members must be regular tenured or tenured-track graduate faculty of the University of Maryland. The third person may be a member of the University of Maryland graduate faculty from the following categories: regular tenured or tenure-track member, adjunct member, or special member. The student's advisor will serve as Chair, and must be a regular member of the University of Maryland graduate faculty. Adjunct members may not serve as chair unless the Graduate School grants special permission. For more detail on the construction of a committee see the University of Maryland Graduate School Catalog at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/>

The oral examination on the thesis is the final stage in a master's program. The chair (advisor) of the committee, and/or student selects the time and place for the oral examination and notifies the other members of the committee and the candidate. The candidate is obligated to see that each member of the committee has at least ten days to examine a copy of the thesis prior to the examination. A student will be admitted to final oral examination only if all other requirements for the degree have been met. The candidate takes a final oral examination of not less than one hour in defense of the thesis.

Effective September, 2003 the Graduate School requires all masters' theses to be submitted in a digital format. Guidelines for the submission of electronic theses may be found on the web at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/publications/> Any student submitting a thesis must follow the manual, which outlines the physical requirements. It is suggested that students have their theses reviewed for format requirements by the Graduate School in the Graduate Enrollment Management Services Office, Room 2123, Lee Building, (301 405-0376). The candidate is responsible for submission to the Graduate School prior to the deadline (see "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer") of the anticipated semester of graduation.

#### Time Limit and Revalidation of Coursework

Students must complete all requirements for a master's degree within 5 years of their admission date. Any coursework taken at the University of Maryland (including **Advanced** Special Student Status) extending beyond the five year time limit (but not more than 7 years) must be revalidated. Revalidation requests must be submitted using the form "Petition for Waiver of Regulation" form. If the credit is to be transferred into the student's program then in addition to the petition form the "Request for Transfer or Inclusion of Credit for the Master's Degree" form must be submitted. How the coursework is being revalidated must be indicated either on the petition form or on the "Request for Transfer or Inclusion of Credit for the Master's Degree" form. The criteria for revalidation are as follows: (a) examination; (b) advance course that includes course knowledge; (c) comprehensive examination that includes course knowledge; (d) teaching comparable course; (e) publishing research demonstrating course knowledge; (f) other reason explained. Revalidation requests must be included with any "Request for Time Extension for Completion of Graduate Degree" forms.

#### Transfer Credits

Students may transfer or apply up to six credit hours of graduate coursework taken at other regionally accredited U.S. institutions, or a foreign university toward the master's degree. In the case of transfer credit from a foreign university, the credit will need to be evaluated by the International Education Services Office and the Graduate School. Transfer work must have been taken within five years of the award of the University of Maryland master's degree for which the

student is currently enrolled. All other coursework must also fall within the five-year time frame of the master's degree. Coursework older than 5 years, but not more than 7 years, may be petitioned for use.

Transfer credit must be approved by the advisor, the department chair, the Graduate Studies Office in Education, and the Graduate School, by submission of the "Request for Transfer or Inclusion of Credit for the Master's Degree" form. If the credit is taken after admission to the program, permission to take the course must be received from the advisor to recommend transfer to the Graduate School. In either case, the advisor must be assured that the coursework is appropriate to the student's program, and that the student is receiving graduate level credit. Transfer work satisfies only the 400-level requirements for the master's degree and does not apply to the upper level requirements. A grade of "B" or better must have been earned in the work taken. The student is subject to final examination by this institution in all such work offered for the degree. The request for transfer credit should be submitted for approval at the earliest possible time, however the transfer of credit cannot be awarded until the Graduate School has received an official transcript from the outside institution. In no circumstance will transfer credit be allowed for any course which has been used in fulfillment of the requirements of *any other degree*. No credit is granted for correspondence courses or for "credit-by-examination" courses. Transfer credits are not calculated in the UM grade point average.

### Grade Requirements

All coursework must be passed with a minimum average of "B" (3.0 GPA) in courses approved for graduation. Any "D" or "F" grade on the record may be repeated with the second grade counting toward the cumulative GPA. If the course is repeated, the first course registration remains on the transcript. If courses with "D" or "F" grades are not repeated, they will be computed in the grade point average the same as an "F" (zero quality points). However, they may be balanced by "A's". In such cases, however, the "D" and "F" grades will not be counted as a part of graduation requirements and additional coursework must be taken.

### Approval of Program

Students meet with an advisor before beginning any coursework to plan or update their program of study. The program of study must be approved by their advisor before 15 hours of coursework is completed. During the semester that students expect to graduate, they must file an "Approved Program Form" with the College of Education. The form must be typed and signed by the advisor and Department Chair by the appropriate date listed in "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, or Summer." This form is available on line at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/forms/>

### Master's Comprehensive Examinations (MEd and MA)

Comprehensive examinations are given at the end of the student's program. They are intended to: (a) evaluate the student's knowledge in the field of special education; (b) assess the student's ability to integrate information acquired during the program; and (c) provide evidence of the student's ability to articulate knowledge in written form. The three-hour examination for the MEd and MA degrees is taken during the last semester of coursework for full time students and during the last six hours of coursework for part time students. All applicants are to fill out the form, "Application for Graduate Comprehensive Exams", have it signed by the advisor, and return it by the due date to Room 1308, Department of Special Education. The exam must be taken on the date scheduled by the Department of Special Education; department faculty proctor all

examinations. Students who for religious reasons cannot take the exam on the scheduled date may arrange an alternative day with the advisor.

**The exam consists of a minimum of two questions.** The student's advisor is responsible for preparing the examination in accordance with the student's program. The first question tests understanding of instructional content in the student's specialty area; and the second question tests the student's ability to critically analyze research and apply it to educational practice. Questions can be given in advance, but no notes, books references, etc. are allowed in the examination room. Comprehensive examination procedures are as follows:

- 1) There must be two readers per question: the advisor and an additional faculty member (who is chosen by the advisor and student based upon the nature of the question).
- 2) A copy of the questions in an envelope is given to the department secretary.
- 3) Students need to specify if the exam is to be hand written or on the computer.
- 4) Upon completion of the examination, the student's responses are forwarded to the advisor.
- 5) Responses are evaluated on a three-point scale: (1) fail; (2) pass; and (3) high pass. The student must average across readers a score of 2.0 or higher on each question to pass.
- 6) Immediately after the readers evaluate the student's responses, the advisor writes a summary of the examination, which is given to the Department Chair (via the departmental secretary).
- 7) The Chair notifies the student of the results in writing; a copy of this letter is sent to the College Graduate Office and to the advisor.
- 8) A copy of the Chair's letter, examination responses, and readers' evaluations are kept in the student's file.
- 9) Students who fail the examination must generate a remedial plan with their advisor. The examination can be retaken only once. After a second failure, the student may appeal in writing to his/her advisor and department chair for permission to take an examination a third time. This appeal must then be forwarded to the Associate Dean in Graduate Studies for final approval. Results of the examination will be provided by a letter to the student by the department chair.

### Application for Diploma

A student must file an application for graduation during the semester in which graduation is expected (see "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer" found on line at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/forms/> If the candidate does not graduate in the semester applied for, the Application for Graduation will carry over to subsequent semesters until graduation requirements are met. Additionally, students must be registered in the semester of graduation, including one of the Summer Sessions if applying for August diploma.

### Filing the Required Forms

1. All students are responsible for filing the correct electronic forms in fulfillment of graduation requirements by the deadlines published in the College of Education's "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer". All graduate school forms are found at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/forms/>
2. To assist students in this process, the Graduate Studies Office in the College of Education provides a graduation "AUDIT". This is a personalized package for the student that will inform them of what forms are required to graduate. Audits may be requested in person with a picture identification in Room 1204 Benjamin Building. Audits can also be mailed to the

student address on record by calling 301.405.0006. The information needed to produce an Audit is the student social security number and the degree they are seeking.

## **V. DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM**

The Department of Special Education offers the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. **There is a minimum 90 credit hour requirement beyond the bachelors of which 50 credit hours must be taken at College Park.** Table 1 presents a diagram of doctoral study milestones which are discussed below.

### Progress to Doctoral Degree

The following are PhD expectations leading to graduation to be evaluated each year:

1. Students are required to interact by phone, by email or combination thereof with their advisor at least once each semester. In March each year, students will be sent the *Progress to Degree EDSP Doctoral Checkpoints Form* which must be completed and returned to the advisor. The advisor must provide a written update of progress which is sent to the student and placed in the student's file annually in March.
2. Full-time doctoral students who have not yet been advanced to candidacy are expected to take and successfully complete with a grade of "B" or higher at least 9 program relevant credits each semester. Part-time students not yet admitted to candidacy are expected to take and successfully complete 9 program relevant credits per year. All coursework is to be completed prior to advancement to candidacy. Once advanced to candidacy doctoral students will be automatically registered for 6 hours of EDSP 899 per semester. Any incomplete grades (except in EDSP 899) are to be converted to regular grades within the following semester. These expectations are to be monitored by the advisor each semester.
3. Doctoral students must file with the College Graduate Studies Office an Approved Program of Study (listing all completed and proposed courses and their semester and year), signed by the advisor, before their 21st post-masters credit hour following admission into the Program.
4. Doctoral students must take and pass the Doctoral Pre-Candidacy Examination after an Approved Program of Study is on file with the College Graduate Studies Office and prior to advancement to candidacy, in consultation with the advisor.
5. A doctoral student is expected to be advanced to candidacy (i.e., a status in which the student has completed all formal degree requirements other than the doctoral dissertation and the final defense examination), within 5 years after acceptance into the doctoral program and must complete the remaining degree requirements within 4 years after advancement to candidacy. Doctoral students advanced to candidacy are automatically registered by the University for 6 dissertation credits (EDSP 899) per semester. Students graduating in August must register for one of the summer sessions.

**Start**

# EDSP PhD Degree Milestones (09/29/06)

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Before 21 credits...

Within 6 credits of completion of course work...

**Required Doctoral Seminars**  
EDSP 860 (F), 875(S), 872 (F)

**Develop and Submit an Approved Program of Study**  
• Program of Study must be filed before one can register beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> post masters credit  
• Any changes to the Approved Program of Study must be sent to Chair and College Graduate Office

**Enrollment in EDSP 898 Pre-Candidacy Seminar** (spring)  
for a maximum of 6 credits to write Pre-Candidacy Paper/Study.

**Doctoral Pre-Candidacy Examination**  
by Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC)

**Advancement to Candidacy\*\***  
• Application made only after passing Pre-Candidacy Examination  
• Application must be made within 5 years of matriculation

**Completion of All Coursework**

**Automatic Registration for EDSP 899**  
ALL students *will be registered automatically* by the Graduate School for six (6) credits of EDSP 899 for each Fall and Spring semester following advancement to candidacy until graduation.

**Application for Research using Human Subjects (IRB):**  
Must be approved before dissertation research is begun.

**Dissertation Proposal Committee Meeting**

**Implementation of Dissertation Research**

**Application for Graduation**

**Oral Examination of Dissertation Defense**

**Completion of all Student Learning Outcomes:**  
Submission of publication and presentation, grant writing, college teaching, diversity, technology, etc.

Minimum of **18 hours of Dissertation Research** of which 12 credits must be EDSP 899

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**Please Note:**

1. Not shown is a 2-semester **Residency Requirement**.
2. **Continuous Registration** is required until graduation unless one applies for a waiver to Graduate School.
3. **Progress to Degree Checkpoints Form** completed with advisor every March until graduation.

**Graduation**

6. Prior to dissertation completion and hopefully before advancement to candidacy, doctoral students are expected to complete the following in consultation with their advisor: a grant/contract proposal, refereed presentation submission, or refereed journal article submission. Doctoral students are also required to teach or assist a professor in teaching a college level course and submitting the EDSP College Teaching Contract. These activities are verified by the advisor with a notation to the student's EDSP Progress to Degree Doctoral Checkpoints Form.
7. At some point prior to the dissertation defense, doctoral students are expected to submit evidence of a satisfactory rating for professional practice competencies from their advisor. These activities are verified by the advisor with a notation to the student's EDSP Progress to Degree Doctoral Checkpoints Form.
8. A student must be advanced to candidacy prior to seeking approval of a doctoral research committee. The advisor must give initial approval of the topic and of the committee members. Students should obtain the Certification of Doctoral Research Committee and Dissertation Proposal form prior to the proposal meeting, fill-out the form, and present it at the proposal meeting. Approval of all research involving human subjects by the campus Institutional Review Board is also required prior to starting the dissertation research.
9. Doctoral students are required to complete the dissertation and dissertation defense within two years of acceptance of the dissertation proposal.
10. Students must be registered in the semester of graduation, including a summer session if graduating in August.

#### Time Limits

A doctoral student must be admitted to candidacy within 5 years after acceptance into the program and complete all remaining degree requirements, including the dissertation and final examination, within 4 years after advancement to candidacy. Time limit extensions are granted only in unusual circumstances with a written request using the Graduate School approved form "Request for Time Extension" available at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/forms/>

#### Residency Requirement

At least one year (2 consecutive semesters excluding summer) must be spent at the University of Maryland (College Park) in full time study to fulfill the residency requirement. A student may not be engaged in full time employment during this period, unless employed by the University of Maryland in a relevant position. However, an internship that takes a student away from his/her regular job and into an entirely different situation may be considered the fulfillment of the residency requirement, if approved by the student's advisor.

#### Doctoral Research Seminar

All doctoral students are required to enroll in EDSP 860 Doctoral Research Seminar in Special Education in the first Fall semester of their program. The course provides students with an orientation to the doctoral program and an opportunity to meet faculty members and discuss their research interests. Students conduct an extensive review of literature in an area of interest and make a formal oral presentation to faculty members and students.

### Program of Study

Doctoral students develop a formal program of study before completing 21 post-masters credit hours. DOCTORAL STUDENTS SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO REGISTER FOR COURSEWORK BEYOND THE SEMESTER IN WHICH THE 21ST POST-MASTERS CREDIT HOUR FOLLOWING ADMISSION IS EARNED UNLESS AN APPROVED PROGRAM OF STUDY IS ON FILE WITH THE COLLEGE. Program forms are available from the College Graduate Studies Office and must be approved by the student's advisor, and the person(s) designated at the departmental level to approve programs, prior to submission to the College Graduate Studies Office. The program of study should contain: (a) a statement of professional goals; (b) a list of completed graduate coursework appropriate to the student's program; (c) a list of projected coursework according to specialization, college teaching requirements, and research methods; and (d) a copy of the student's vita.

The program of study is developed between the advisor and the student. It must conform to all policies and procedures of the university, college, and department with special regard for minimum graduate hours, residency requirements, course requirements, and degree program expectations. The final approved program must be signed by the major advisor and department chairperson. If there are any changes in the program of study, they must be submitted in writing to the Department Chair and a copy sent to the College Graduate Studies Office. A copy of any changes should be kept in the advisor's file. As a part of graduate clearance, variances from the approved program will be noted and the advisor and department notified.

### Minimum Course Requirements

All doctoral students' programs of study must include the following types of coursework. Any pertinent master's degree coursework can be counted if considered relevant and approved by the student's advisor. Accredited graduate coursework may be applied to the student's program upon recommendation of the advisor. It must be appropriate to the student's area of study and shall be submitted for approval at the time of application for advancement to candidacy. The Graduate School requires official transcripts for all coursework in the student's program of study. Required doctoral coursework consists of the following:

- EDSP 860: Doctoral Research Seminar in Special Education
- EDSP 875: Policy Issues Affecting individuals with Disabilities
- EDSP 872: Theory & Empirical Design in Special Education
- EDMS 645: Quantitative Research Methods I or Equivalent
- EDMS 646: Quantitative Research Methods II or Equivalent
- EDSP 670: Single Subject Research in Special Education
- EDSP 671: Qualitative Methods in Special Education or equivalent
- EDSP 651: Applied Multiple Regression Analysis OR 3 credit course equivalent at the intermediate level demonstrating performance level competence in single subject or qualitative research methods
- EDSP 888A: Internship in Special Education (College Teaching)
- EDSP 898: Pre-Candidacy Seminar
- EDSP 899: Dissertation Research - minimum of 18 credit hours

### Determination of Full and Part Time Status

The Graduate School uses the unit system in making calculations to determine full or part-time student status. Please note that graduate units are different than credit hours. The number of graduate units per credit hour is calculated in the following manner:

Courses in the series: 000-399 carry 2 units/credit hour.

Courses in the series: 400-499 carry 4 units/credit hour.

Courses in the series: 500-599 carry 5 units/credit hour.

Courses in the series: 600-898 carry 6 units/credit hour.

Research course: 799 carries 12 units/credit hour.

Research course: 899 carries 18 units/credit hour.

To be certified as full-time, a graduate student must be officially registered for a combination of courses equivalent to 48 units per semester. Audited courses do not generate graduate units and cannot be used in calculating full-time or part-time status.

### Doctoral Pre-Candidacy Examination (aka Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations)

The EDSP Doctoral Pre-Candidacy Examination approved 09/29/06) is designed to ensure that doctoral students have attained specific knowledge and skills as identified in EDSP Doctoral Student Learning Outcomes: (1) Specialty Knowledge and Teacher Education and (2) Research prior to Advancement to Candidacy. Specifically doctoral students must be able to: (a) propose and identify important issues on a selected topic; conduct a critical analysis of the literature; and identify and defend research questions for future research; (b) effectively communicate in writing the findings of a critical literature review or research study; and (c) orally defend results and research directions. Doctoral students, with guidance from their Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC), must select one of the following options:

#### Option 1: Pre-Candidacy Review of Literature Paper

- Conduct an extensive search of the literature on a selected topic
- Select a method for a literature analysis (e.g., analysis of relevant policies, analysis of research and scholarly literature, meta-analysis)
- Evaluate literature based on the selected method for analyzing the literature
- Summarize strengths and weaknesses of the literature
- Determine research question(s) for a dissertation proposal
- Pre-Candidacy Paper will become the student's Chapter II in the dissertation

#### Option 2: Pre-Candidacy Study

- Conduct a search of the research and scholarly literature on a selected topic
- Determine research question(s) for study
- Select an appropriate methodology (i.e., single subject, quantitative, qualitative) to answer the research question(s)
- Collect data or identify an extant data base
- Analyze data
- Interpret results, identify strengths and weaknesses of the study, and propose research directions
- Pre-Candidacy Study must include all the components of a research study: Review of literature, Methods, Results, and Discussion

All doctoral students will enroll in EDSP 898: Pre-Candidacy Research for a variable amount of credit (1-6) depending on student program/credit needs. Only doctoral students who are ready to advance (i.e., coursework completed; research direction and questions determined) attend the seminar in which a Faculty Facilitator will meet 3 times/each Spring semester to review student progress on Pre-Candidacy Paper or Study, present dissertation examples, review graduate policies, etc. Students meet with advisor to write and discuss drafts of Pre-Candidacy Paper or conduct and write Pre-Candidacy Study to prepare for the Faculty Advisory Committee meeting; however, doctoral advisors are responsible for grading EDSP 898. Students only attend the seminar for one semester; they can continue to enroll in EDSP 898 credits with direction from advisor.

As part of the EDSP doctoral pre-candidacy examination process, students select one of the two options and present Pre-Candidacy Paper or Study to a Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). The committee must include a minimum of two EDSP faculty members within the student's area of specialty and one member from outside the specialty area (within the department, college, or university).

**The Advisor's responsibilities include:**

- Meet as frequently as necessary to provide feedback to the student on drafts of the Pre-Candidacy Paper or Study
- Determine when the student's Pre-Candidacy Paper or Study is to be given to the FAC for review and evaluation
- Provide a grade for EDSP 898

**The FAC's responsibilities include:**

- Attend the pre-candidacy examination meeting to provide feedback on the student's pre-candidacy paper or study;
- Evaluate the student's written product and oral presentation

**The Students responsibilities include:**

- Determine time, date, and location of the Pre-Candidacy Examination Meeting
- Provide a copy of the Pre-Candidacy Paper or Study to the FAC two weeks prior to the meeting
- Present findings to their FAC (1 hour)

Advancement to Candidacy

Following successful completion of the Doctoral Pre-Candidacy Examination, a student must apply to the Graduate School for Advancement to Candidacy and an approved program must be on file in the College Graduate Office. Students must apply for advancement to candidacy within 5 years after admission to doctoral study. All doctoral students who have been advanced to candidacy must be registered each semester following advancement to candidacy. No continuous registration is required during the summer sessions for students not using university facilities. Once a student has been advanced to candidacy, s/he has four years to complete the doctoral program.

Post-Candidacy Registration

ALL post-candidacy doctoral students will be registered automatically by the Graduate School for 6 credits of EDSP 899 for each Fall and Spring semester following formal advancement to

candidacy until they complete their Ph.D. Accordingly, all post-candidacy students will be considered “full-time” by the University. EDSP 899 will no longer be available by variable credit and can only be taken 6 units at a time. Students may register for 6 dissertation credits during the summer with permission from the Graduate School, but are not required to do so. Students graduating in August must still be registered for at least one credit. Although such students may register for an additional 6 credits of EDSP 899, they may instead register for one credit of independent study with their advisor.

### The Doctoral Dissertation and Examining Committee

Earning the Ph.D. in the Department of Special Education requires that the doctoral candidate conduct an original research study, which carefully utilizes scientific research methods. The study must contribute to the knowledge base of the student's major field. The dissertation is the carefully prepared and scholarly document that fully describes the problem investigated, the method, the results, the conclusion, and related findings in the literature. It should demonstrate the student's capacity for scholarship and for making original and creative contributions to the field. The student should refer to the Graduate School Policy Manual for Theses and Dissertations available on line at: <http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/publications/>

The candidate must register for a minimum of 18 hours of doctoral research (EDSP 899). The student receives a grade of "Incomplete" until the dissertation is completed. The Graduate School has established the following procedures for the doctoral Dissertation Committee:

- *Dissertation Examining Committee membership.* The Committee must consist of a minimum of five members; additional committee members may be required or invited to serve at the discretion of the program. All members of the Dissertation Examining Committee must be a members of the Graduate Faculty of University of Maryland under one of the following membership categories: Tenure / Tenure Track Member; Adjunct Member; Special Member. At least three of the committee members must be Tenure / Tenure Track Members of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty.
- *Nomination of the Dissertation Examining Committee.* Membership on a Dissertation Examining Committee requires nomination by the student's advisor and the director of graduate studies in the student's graduate program, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. The nomination of a Dissertation Examining Committee should be provided to the Graduate School at least six weeks before the date of the expected dissertation examination. The dissertation examination cannot be held until the Graduate School approves the composition of the Dissertation Examining Committee. Furthermore, if the Graduate Faculty status of any member of an approved Dissertation Examining Committee changes, the approval of the Dissertation Examining Committee may be void, and a new Dissertation Examining Committee nomination form may be required to be approved by the Graduate School.
- *Chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee.* Each committee will have a chair, who must be a Tenure / Tenure Track Member of the Graduate Faculty or, by special permission, has been otherwise appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. Dissertation Examining Committees may be co-chaired upon written recommendation of the program's director of graduate studies and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School; at least one of the co-chairs must be a Tenure / Tenure Track Member of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty.

- *Representative of the Dean of the Graduate School.* Each Dissertation Examining Committee shall have appointed to it a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School who should have some background or interest related to the student's research. The Dean's Representative must be a Tenured Member of the Graduate Faculty and must be from a graduate program other than the student's home program. In cases where a student is in an interdisciplinary graduate program, the Dean's Representative may not be a faculty member participating in the interdisciplinary program.
- *Special Members.* Individuals from outside the University of Maryland who have been approved for Special membership in the Graduate Faculty may serve on Dissertation Examining Committees, but must be in addition to the required three Tenure / Tenure Track Members of the Graduate Faculty. To nominate an individual to serve as a Special Member, directors of graduate studies need to submit to the Dean's Office of the Graduate School the nominee's curriculum vitae, a nomination form, and a letter of support. Contact 405-4206 for more information on Special Members.

### Dissertation Proposal Committee

The student and the advisor must choose at least three professors (including the advisor) and up to five to form the dissertation proposal committee, who assist the student in planning the dissertation. The major advisor usually functions as the chair and must be a regular member of the Graduate Faculty (see above). In cases where the advisor is not a member of the regular graduate faculty, a qualified chairperson can be appointed, with the advisor directing the research effort. The committee should include a faculty member with expertise in the research methodology; this faculty member may be from any department in the university. The examining committee chair shall report the names of the proposed committee members to the Department Chairperson and to the Graduate School for official appointment of the committee. This committee is responsible for approving the candidate's dissertation proposal, using the "Certification of Doctoral Research Committee and Dissertation Proposal" form, available from the College Graduate Studies Office and is due at least 6 weeks before the proposal defense. The form also addresses clearance of human subjects regulations (see below). The members of the Dissertation Examining Committee should receive the proposal at least 10 working days before the scheduled defense.

### Human Subjects Review

All research that involves human subjects must be approved before the research begins. Students conducting research complete an application that is available on line at the Institutional Review Board (IRB) web site <http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/irbsrp.html> or from the College Graduate Studies Office in Room 1210. The application is completed by the student and signed by the student's advisor. That application is then submitted to the chair of the EDSP Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC). Once the HSRC Chair approves the application, it is forwarded to the University's IRB. Research cannot begin until the student (and the advisor) receives approval from the IRB. Students should allow 2-4 weeks to secure approval from the IRB after the application has been approved by the department HSRC. Assistance in completing the application can be obtained from the Human Subjects Review Committee Chair.

### Announcing the Oral Defense Date and Location

The Graduate School requires that an announcement of the oral defense be disseminated to all faculty and graduate students within the department in which the candidate's degree is to be

awarded. The oral announcement must include the candidate's name; the date, time, and location of the defense; and the dissertation title. It is the Department's responsibility to disseminate the dissertation defense date announcement to its faculty and students. Oral defenses must be held in University facilities that are readily accessible to all members of the Dissertation Examining Committee and all others attending the defense. The chair of the Dissertation Examination Committee selects the time and place for the examination.

### Final Oral Examination

The final oral examination allows the candidates to briefly present the dissertation and explain the conclusions, and for the committee to question the candidate. The student must be registered for EDSP 899 the semester of the exam and must provide a complete copy of the dissertation to committee members at least ten days before the oral examination. The advisor serves as chairperson and arranges the time and place for the examination. The proper form, "Nomination of Thesis or Dissertation Committee" (forms are available in room 1210 of the Benjamin Building) must be submitted by the advisor to the Graduate School at least six weeks before the final exam, and by the date published in "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer". The names of the desired committee members are listed on the form and an abstract of the dissertation must accompany this form. The student's advisor, department chair, College Graduate Studies Office, and Graduate School must approve the committee. Upon approval of the committee by the Graduate School, the "Report of the Examining Committee" form is generated and sent to the College Graduate Studies Office. The Dean for Graduate Studies then appoints the committee and returns the form to the advisor. It is the advisor's responsibility to notify the Department Chairperson of the outcome of the final oral examination. All five members of the examining committee must be present for the examination. At the final stage of the oral defense, the candidate leaves the room. Only the members of the Dissertation Examining Committee are present for the final deliberation and vote on the success of the defense. Two or more negative votes constitute a failure. Candidates may present themselves for the oral examination only twice. After the vote of the Dissertation Examining Committee Members the "Interim Report of Examining Committee" and the "Report of the Examining Committee" forms are signed.

### Oral Defense Attendees

By action of the Graduate School Graduate Council on October 7, 1999, the platform of the dissertation defense changed and has become an "open" defense in two parts. Policies and procedures are as follows:

- Part 1: A public presentation by the candidate on the main aspects of the research reported in the dissertation. Questions from the audience to the candidate will be permitted. For questions from persons who are not members of the Dissertation Examining Committee, the Chair of the Dissertation Examination Committee shall have discretion to decide whether such questions are germane to the topic of the dissertation and how much time shall be allotted for the answers.
- Part 2: A formal examination of the candidate by the Dissertation Examination Committee. This part shall be open only to the Dissertation Examination Committee, other members of the Graduate Faculty, and graduate students from the candidate's department/graduate program. During Part Two, only members of the dissertation Examination Committee shall be permitted to ask questions. After examination, the Committee deliberates and votes in

private. Attendance at the final discussion and vote shall be limited to the members of the Dissertation Examining Committee.

All members of the Dissertation Examining Committee must attend the oral defense. The Graduate School, prior to the defense, and in conjunction with the College Graduate Studies Office must approve last minute changes in the constitution of the Committee. The Dissertation Chairman must submit in writing any requested substitution to the Associate Dean of the College of Education. The substitution is not official until the Graduate School grants the approval and the written confirmation is received by the Associate Dean. The oral may not be held until the official written substitution has been made. A defense that is held with one or more substitute members on the committee, but without prior written confirmation from the Graduate School that the substitution(s) have been approved, will be voided and the defense will have to be repeated. See Established Procedures for Conduct of the Doctoral Dissertation Defense.

#### Report of the Examining Committee Forms

Upon satisfactory completion of the defense, the Dissertation Examining Committee Members sign the "Report of the Examining Committee" form. Typically the Chair of the Committee holds the Report and does not sign until the candidate presents all of the corrected revisions in a satisfactory manner. When all signatures are obtained the "Report of the Examining Committee" must be submitted to the College Graduate Studies Office for Associate Dean approval prior to the deadline of the dissertation to the Graduate School (see "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer"). The Chair should also indicate the grade to be recorded for all 899 dissertation credits on the Report, and clear any provisional admission conditions. The "Report of the Examining Committee" form is interpreted by the Graduate School as the certification by the College of the student having met all departmental and college requirements for the degree. Therefore this form should not be submitted or released by the student's advisor unless all requirements for the degree have been completed (e.g., the pre-candidacy examination, all grades recorded for coursework included in the doctoral program form, internship completion, dissertation revisions).

#### Filing the Dissertation

Effective September, 2003 the Graduate School requires all masters' theses and doctoral dissertations to be submitted in a digital format. Guidelines for the submission of electronic and dissertations may be found on the web at <http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/publications/>. Any student submitting a thesis or dissertation must follow the manual, which outlines the physical requirements. It is suggested that students have their dissertations reviewed for format requirements by the Graduate School in the Graduate Enrollment Management Services Office, Room 2123, Lee Building, (301 405-0376). The candidate is responsible for submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School prior to the deadline (see "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer") of the anticipated semester of graduation.

#### Application for Diploma

Students who are planning to graduate should apply for their diploma as directed in the College of Education's "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, Summer" found in Room 1210. The candidate makes application for graduation in the semester in which graduation is anticipated and prior to the deadline set by the Registrar's Office. If the candidate does not graduate in the semester applied for, the Application for Graduation will carry over to subsequent semesters until graduation

requirements are met, unless the time of admission status expires in the interim, in which case a student must reapply for graduation after an extension has been granted. The candidate must be registered for credit in the semester of graduation (including one of the summer sessions for August graduation). Students may apply to graduate via the web at <http://www.testudo.umd.edu/Registrar.html>.

All graduating students are reminded that all outstanding accounts due to the University must be paid before the degree will be conferred. This includes such items as late registration fees, library fines, parking tickets, etc., as well as the diploma fee. Neither the diploma nor any transcripts will be issued the student until all outstanding bills are settled. If the student does not graduate as planned, she/he must apply for the diploma again when she/he is able to graduate.

### Filing the Required Forms

1. All students are responsible for filing the correct forms in fulfillment of graduation requirements by the deadlines published in the College of Education's "Important Dates: Fall, Spring, or Summer". Forms are at: <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/forms/>
2. To assist students in this process the Graduate Studies Office in the College of Education provides a graduation "AUDIT". This is a personalized package for the student that will inform them of what forms are required to graduate. Audits may be requested in person with a picture identification in Room 1204 of the Benjamin Building. Audits can also be mailed to the student address on record by calling 301.405.0006. The information needed to produce an Audit is the student social security number and the degree they are seeking.

### Graduation

Academic costume is required for all candidates at graduation. This may be rented from the University Book Store eight weeks before commencement.

## **VI. DEPARTMENTAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Department of Special Education has a limited number of departmental supported assistantships available to graduate students. The number of new students hired for these positions depends on the number of openings that exist, which varies from year to year. Also, depending on federally research and personnel preparation grants, the Department has grant supported assistantships. These tend to be related directly to activities supported in projects. These assistantships are generally advertised in professional journals and the department web page at: <http://www.education.umd.edu/EDSP/> It is highly recommended that students contact their advisors directly and inquire about assistantship and tuition remission possibilities. It is recommended that students do this each semester.

## **VII. FIELD EXPERIENCES**

Appropriate practicum placements are viewed as a critical component of a student's graduate program and are required to receive special education certification. There are specific requirements that must be arranged for a successful experience to occur in the field. Such arrangements should be made as early as possible and are indicated for each type of practicum: field placements, field experience (EDSP 489), apprenticeship (EDSP 888), and internship (EDSP 889). Specific requirements for EDSP 489, 888, and 889 are presented in Table 2 and discussed

below. In all cases where schools are to be used as a practicum site, the Department Practicum Coordinator must be notified beforehand by filling out the yellow card, "Graduate Field Placement Record". Additionally, advisors are responsible for all supervisory responsibilities of graduate students assigned to practicum placements and for developing an appropriate practicum contract.

Field Placements

Graduate students seeking special education certification must enroll in field placements and seminars which are associated with age based teacher education coursework. Graduate students will be responsible for the requirements delineated in each field placement practicum handbook and field based performance assessments.

Field Experiences (EDSP 489)

The course EDSP 489: Field Experience in Special Education is a specially designed practicum not necessarily associated with a course but is designed by the student and advisor to provide experiences which will enhance the student's program. The arrangements for the experience must be defined in writing and a copy is given to the student, cooperating professional, advisor, and Department Field Liaison. Field experience credit completed as part of one's program counts toward one's graduate degree. Graduate students can register from one to four credits per semester.

Apprenticeship in Special Education (EDSP 888)

The course EDSP 888: Apprenticeship in Special Education allows placements for graduate students who seek a placement that is intensive and can register for 3 to 8 credit hours per semester. Students and their advisors must fill out a contract form.

Apprenticeship in College Teaching (EDSP 888A)

As of Fall, 2003 all doctoral students must enroll in EDSP 888A for three credits. Each doctoral student and his/her advisor must complete the *College Teaching Contract* which delineates specific requirements for college teaching.

Internship (EDSP 889)

Any doctoral student who has been advanced to candidacy is eligible to enroll in EDSP 889: Internship in Special Education. Each intern is assigned to work on a full-time basis for at least one semester with a selected staff member in a school, school system, educational agency, governmental agency, legislative body, etc. The internship must be undertaken in a site different from the one where the student is employed. Students and their advisors must fill out a contract form.

Table 2. Field Based Offerings in Special Education

EDSP Course	Credit Hours		Prerequisite	Minimum # of Contact Hours	Differentiating Features
	Min	Max			
EDSP 489: Field Experience	None	None	None	3 contact hrs/wk for each credit registered	Overview or instructional experience

<b>EDSP 888:</b> Apprenticeship in Special Education	3	8		3 contact hrs/wk for each credit registered	Intensive professional experience
<b>EDSP 888A:</b> Apprenticeship in College Teaching	3		Document: College Teaching Contract		
<b>EDSP 889:</b> Internship in Special Education	9	12	Advancement to Candidacy	4 contact hrs/wk for each credit registered	Full-time; intensive, role-focused experience

## **University of Maryland Helpful Web Addresses**

- A. University of Maryland. Home Page  
<http://www.umd.edu>
- B. University of Maryland. Graduate School Home Page  
<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/index.htm>
- C. University of Maryland. Graduate Admissions Information  
<http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/admission.htm>
- D. University of Maryland. Graduate Catalog  
<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/publications/>
- E. University of Maryland. Schedule of Classes Registration  
<http://www.testudo.umd.edu>
- F. Graduate School Forms  
<http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/gss/forms/>
- G. University of Maryland. College of Education and Departments
  - 1. **College of Education**  
<http://education.umd.edu>
  - 2. **Counseling and Personnel Services**  
<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDCP>
  - 3. **Curriculum and Instruction**  
<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDCI>
  - 4. **Education Policy and Leadership**  
<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDPL>
  - 5. **Human Development**  
<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDHD>
  - 6. **Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation**  
<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDMS>
  - 7. **Special Education**  
<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDSP>
- H. University of Maryland. College of Education. Student Services Office. Graduate Information and Publications <http://education.umd.edu/StudentInfo/>
- I. University of Maryland Testing Center: Information on the GRE, MAT, or PRAXIS  
[http://www.counseling.umd.edu/Services/srv\\_test.htm](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/Services/srv_test.htm)
- J. University of Maryland. Apply to Graduate  
<http://www.testudo.umd.edu/apps/candapp/>
- K. University of Maryland. Commencement Information  
<http://www.urhome.umd.edu/commencement/>
- L. University of Maryland. Institutional Review Board (IRB)/Human Subjects Review  
<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/index.htm>
- M. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Web Site  
<http://www.gre.org/services.html>
- N. Miller Analogies Test Web Site  
<http://harcourtassessment.com/haiweb/Cultures/en-US/dotCom/milleranalogies.com.htm>
- O. Praxis Test Web Site  
<http://www.ets.org/praxis/index.html>
- P. Maryland State Department of Education  
<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE>